

**ON BECOMING SELF-EMPLOYED:
GENDER, CLASS AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN PORTUGAL**

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Abstract

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The main purpose of this study was to analyze the ways in which women and men, who set up a business in the service industries, perceive their pathways into self-employment, and the interaction between their business and family life. This thesis addressed two problems identified in current literature. Firstly, the gendered tradition and the reductionist approach of the push-pull theory, which does not offer an adequate understanding of paths into self-employment where both push and pull forces are involved. Secondly, the low visibility of the interactions between business and family life, and also the tendency for some research to portray partnerships between spouses in a harmonious light. Given the dominance of phenomenon-driven research, this study was aimed at adding to the theoretical consolidation of the study of gender and entrepreneurship. In theoretical terms, this research relied mainly on a synthesis between feminist theorizing, Bourdieu's theory of practice and insights from studies that focus on biographical experiences leading to self-employment.

This study adopted a qualitative research strategy, and used qualitative interviews as a research method. A theoretical sample was constructed, based on two criteria: gender and the industry in which the self-employed person operated. The sample focused on the Lisbon Region, and targeted self-employed people who set up a business between 2005 and 2008. A total of forty-eight interviews were conducted, involving twenty-three women and twenty-five men. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed in their original language: Portuguese. Only those quotations which have been used in the thesis were translated into English. The interpretation of interviews was based on a thematic analysis.

Different pathways into self-employment were found. These were grouped under two main perspectives: seeing self-employment as a *primary way of working*; or as an *alternative plan*. The lived experiences of the interviewees also gave strength in exploring the various situations that can trigger a leap into entrepreneurship. These were conceptualized as *trigger experiences*. Two main sorts of *trigger experiences* were identified: *crises (disruptive or corrosive)* and *encounters*. These were deeply embedded in the interviewees' educational, occupational and family experiences, going back to their social background, and the ways in which these experiences interact with gender relations.

Two main contexts of interaction between family and the business were studied: "copreneurships" and "non-copreneurships". Ambivalent feelings towards the former were illustrated through the cooperation and tensions involving spouses, as well as by the strategies that they devised in order to cope with these tensions. In "non-copreneurships", the multiple contributions of spouses to interviewees' activities as self-employed people revealed the connections between the family and business in these types of situation. Gender relations, social background in self-employment, and spouses' positions in the business were decisive for placing interviewees' lived experiences into context in this respect.

Declaration

I declare that no portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.

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*To my Mother, Margarida,
with love and profound admiration*

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1 Introduction

This preliminary chapter offers an overview of this thesis¹. It opens with a brief presentation of the context that underpins the aims, the research questions, and also the research process of this present study. After, it moves into a discussion of the terms “self-employment” and “entrepreneurship”, in order to clarify the sense in which these concepts are used in this research. The final section explains the structure of this thesis and presents the focus of each of the chapters that it includes.

1.1 The context and aims of this present thesis

Entrepreneurship has become a recurring theme in the public debate on how to boost economic growth, promote gender equality and combat the economic crisis (EEO, 2010). The documents produced by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and by the European Union show the current international interest in fostering entrepreneurship (EC, 2003b, 2011; OECD, 1998, 2001a, 2001b); and Portuguese policy-makers are not indifferent to this trend (see Chapter 2, below).

The creation of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor², in 1999, and its regular cross-national surveys and reports, are symptomatic of this state of affairs and have helped to secure a place for entrepreneurship on the political agenda. Despite the increased visibility of these reports, the discussion of the levels and evolution of entrepreneurship over the last decade has been greatly influenced by the 2000 edition of the OECD *Employment Outlook*; namely by the chapter on self-employment. Actually, its title “the partial renaissance of self-employment” set the tone for several analyses produced in the 2000s, such as those by Arum and Müller (2004) and Muehlberger (2007).

The idea of revival is a result of recognizing that self-employment has not begun the slippery slope towards historical extinction, and that self-employed workers are a substantial minority of the working population, since they account for at least ten percent of total employment in most OECD countries (See Table 1,

¹ This research was funded by a grant from the Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (FCT) – Portuguese Ministry of Education and Science (Doctoral grant ref. SFRH/BD/36771/2007).

² See: <http://www.gemconsortium.org/>

below). With the exception of Spain, southern European countries, including Portugal, are among the states which report the highest rates of self-employment within the OECD.

By classifying this renaissance as being “partial”, the OECD *Outlook* and the following analyses intend to underline the stability of self-employment figures, during the last two decades. This is an important remark because, as Müller and Arum (2004: 4) emphasize, it compromises expectations of “an ever-expanding renaissance of self-employment”.

Table 1. Self-employment rates as a percentage of total employment in OECD countries, in 2010

<i>Countries with a SE rate of 20 % and more</i>		<i>Countries with a SE rate between 10% and less than 20 %</i>		<i>Countries with a SE rate of less than 10 %</i>	
Turkey	39.1	Czech Republic	17.8	Canada	9.2
Greece	35.5	Ireland	17.4	Denmark	8.8
Mexico	34.3	Slovenia	17.3	Estonia	8.3
Korea	28.8	Spain	16.9	Norway	7.7
Chile	26.5	Slovak Republic	16.0	United States	7.0
Italy	25.5	Belgium	14.4		
Portugal	22.9	United Kingdom	13.9		
Poland	22.8	Austria	13.8		
		Finland	13.5		
		Israel	12.8		
		Iceland	12.6		
		Hungary	12.3		
		Japan	12.3		
		Australia	11.6		
		Germany	11.6		
		Sweden	10.9		

*No available data for France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

Source: OECD (2011), *OECD Factbook*, p. 161.

Table 2 (below) illustrates this trend with data on the average share of self-employment in OECD countries, the Euro Area and the European Union, for the last decade. In the Euro Area, self-employment rates have varied slightly around 16%, whereas the OECD and the European Union numbers show small decreases in this respect, between 2001 and 2009.

Table 2. Self-employment as a share of civilian employment in OECD countries, the Euro area and in the European Union, from 2001 to 2009

Regional Area	Year				
	2001	2003	2005	2007	2009
OECD - Total	17.5	17.2	16.6	16.0	15.8
Euro Area	16.8	16.7	16.7	16.5	16.0
European Union	18.2	17.6	17.3	16.8	16.5

Source: OECD (2010), *Labour Force Statistics, 1989 – 2009*, p. 41.

Furthermore, the OECD *Outlook* (2000: 157) underlines that the “most striking development” underpinning this “partial revival” is the increased level of participation of women in self-employment, in comparison to men.

During the last decade, the debate on fostering women’s access to self-employment has evolved from the organization of international conferences on the topic (OECD, 2001a) into a pragmatic effort to produce sound comparative statistics on gender and entrepreneurship through the OECD Gender Initiative (OECD, 2011). The significance of these developments is shown by women’s lower rates of self-employment, in comparison to men, in all OECD countries, with the exception of Turkey and Mexico (See Table 3 below).

Table 3. Self-employment rates as a percentage of total employment in OECD countries for women and men, in 2010

Countries with a SE rate of 20 % and more for women			Countries with a SE rate between 10% and less than 20 % for women			Countries with a SE rate of less than 10 % for women		
	Women	Men		Women	Men		Women	Men
Turkey	49.3	35.1	Poland	19.9	25.1	Slovak Republic	9.4	21.3
Mexico	35.1	33.8	Italy	18.5	30.3	Finland	9.0	17.7
Greece	31.0	38.6	Slovenia	14.0	20.0	Australia	8.9	13.9
Korea	27.1	30.0	Spain	12.4	20.5	United Kingdom	8.9	18.2
Chile	24.9	27.5	Czech Republic	12.2	22.0	Hungary	8.8	15.4
Portugal	20.1	25.3	Japan	11.4	12.9	Germany	8.4	14.4
			Austria	11.3	16.0	Iceland	8.4	16.4
			Belgium	10.8	17.3	Canada	8.1	10.2
						Israel	8.0	17.0
						Ireland	7.8	25.8
						Sweden	6.4	15.0
						United States	5.6	8.3
						Denmark	5.5	11.7
						Estonia	5.3	11.5
						Norway	4.4	10.8

*No available data for France, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

Source: OECD (2011), *OECD Factbook*, p. 161.

This atmosphere, in terms of policy-making, and the figures that support it suggest that further research on gender and self-employment is pertinent and timely, especially in a southern European country, as is the case with Portugal.

In addition, academic debates have pinpointed that research on entrepreneurship needs to address four specific problems: the complex circumstances and motivations that channel people into self-employment (Hughes, 2005; Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan, 2010); the low visibility of the interactions between the family and entrepreneurship (Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2007; Kirkwood, 2009b); the dominance of theoretical and conceptual constructs that neglect women's experiences in business (Ahl, 2006; Hughes, 2005); and the fact finding research tradition (Bruin, Brush and Welter, 2007).

These elements shape the two main aims of this thesis: to develop an in-depth analysis about the ways in which self-employed women and men, who set-up a business in the service industries, understand their pathways into self-employment and the interaction between their business and their family life; and to contribute to the theoretical consolidation of the research on gender and self-employment by building upon sociological and feminist theory. In line with these aims, this research is structured around the following four research questions.

1. How do self-employed women and men, who have set up a business in the service industries, describe their educational, occupational and family paths before entering self-employment?
2. How do they understand the moment when they became self-employed?
3. How do they make sense of the reasons that led them into self-employment?
4. How do they describe the interactions between self-employment and the family since they have become self-employed?

The focus of this study on meanings, social processes and theory building has underpinned the reasons for adopting a qualitative research strategy, and the use of qualitative interviews as research method. These aims also support the construction of a theoretical sample for this research, based upon two criteria: gender and industry. The consideration of regional business demographics and the focus on

current experiences of self-employment have also shaped the sample of this study. Accordingly, this research relies on a sample of forty-eight individuals (twenty-three women and twenty-five men), who set-up a business in the Lisbon Region, between 2005 and 2008, in one of the following three service industries: restaurants, trade and high-end services (which include professional, scientific and technical activities, as well as computer programming, consultancy, and related activities). For interpreting the empirical material obtained from the qualitative interviews, this thesis has relied mainly on thematic analysis. All the interviews were analyzed in Portuguese, in order to preserve the linguistic system (Sausurre 1995[1916]), in which interviewees' thoughts were originally formulated. Accordingly, only the excerpts included in this thesis were translated into English. This translation tries to combine the readability of selected quotations in English while trying to maintain their original voice.

1.2 Self-employment and entrepreneurship: a preliminary clarification

Since there has been a wide tendency to employ these notions interchangeably, despite the fact that there is no necessary juxtaposition between them, this section clarifies the way in which these terms are used in this present study.

Current debates show that there is no consensus about a minimal definition of entrepreneurship (Bosma, Jones, Autio and Levie, 2008; Brush, Manolova and Eldeman, 2008; Gartner, 2001; Hughes, 2005; Lundström and Stevenson, 2005; OECD, 1998). Some authors emphasize that entrepreneurship assumes either a “Schumpeterian sense”, which stresses the “activity of introducing “new combinations” of productive means in the market place”, or a “broad economic sense”, which looks at “owning and managing a business, or otherwise working on one’s own account” (van Stel, 2005: 106). Other authors distinguish between the entrepreneur as being “someone who transforms inventions and ideas into economically viable entities, independent of whether in the process he/she creates or operates a firm”; or as being “someone who creates and then organizes and operates a new firm, independent of whether there is anything innovative in the act” (Lundström and Stevenson, 2005: 42)

When it is exclusively related to innovation, an entrepreneur's action does not necessarily match with any of the activities of self-employed workers. As Dale (1991: 44) rightly notes, "only in particular conditions will both coincide". The same can also be said about the view that the entrepreneur is someone who creates, owns and manages an organization, being it innovative or not (Lundström and Stevenson, 2005). This is true for at least two reasons. On the one hand, some self-employed people inherit or buy an existing enterprise, instead of setting it up. On the other hand, cases of entrepreneurs who focus only on managerial tasks do not fit into a version of self-employment, which combines the property of the means of production with a direct involvement in the production/provision of a product/service.

This research focuses on empirical situations that are close to this latter version of self-employment (See Chapter 2, below, for further detail), and involve a business set-up. This is because this study is also shaped by the view that entrepreneurs create and operate a business (Lundström and Stevenson, 2005), and by policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship through schemes that support the creation of businesses (see Chapter 2, below).

Accordingly, this research uses these two terms to refer to these cases. However, there is a certain preference for the term "self-employment". This is so, for two main reasons. Firstly, self-employment has been part of sociological lexis for a longer time. Secondly, the innovative aspect that sometimes justifies the current dominance of the word "entrepreneurship" is not relevant for the analytical approach developed within this study.

1.3 The structure of this present thesis

This present thesis is structured around eight chapters, the contents of which are briefly described below.

The first four chapters set the scene for the research problem of this thesis, and review the different bodies of literature that shape the analytical approach and the design of this research. Following this introductory chapter, the second chapter begins with a discussion of the key issues for understanding self-employment in contemporary societies, such as the transitions between professional statutes throughout an individual's working life. It also explores the gendered distribution of

self-employment from a comparative perspective, characterizes the patterns of self-employment in Portugal, in terms of industry and levels of formal education, and considers the current policies regarding entrepreneurship in Portugal. The third chapter considers the literature on class, gender, self-employment and entrepreneurship that informs the analytical approach of this study. In this context, it presents the synthesis of feminist thought and Bourdieu's theory that this thesis proposes, in order to address two gaps in existing research: the conceptualization of the social processes that underpin an individual's pathway to self-employment; and the low visibility of the interactions between self-employment and family life. The fourth chapter focuses on the decisions behind the design of this research. It returns to the aims and research questions that originally prompted this study, and explains the rationale behind its research strategy, its research method and its sample strategy. This chapter also includes a section on ethics, a characterization of the sample, as well as some final comments on reflexivity and the limitations of this research.

The following three chapters (5 to 7) focus on the analysis of the empirical material. The fifth and the sixth chapters, in particular, address the first three research questions of this thesis. The fifth explores the notion *orientation towards self-employment*, by considering the themes that interviewees develop with regard to their pathways into becoming self-employed. This analysis supports the construction of two main forms of *orientation*: seeing self-employment either as a *primary way of working* or as an *alternative plan*. In the former, interviewees associate the idea of working as a self-employed person to a relatively early stage of their lives. In the latter, they consider their leap into self-employment as being prompted by a *trigger experience*; a turning point which introduced self-employment into their lives, or made it a feasible alternative. This chapter also includes an in-depth analysis of the type of patterns that interviewees report when they consider self-employment as being their *primary way of working*. This analysis explores the ways in which these same patterns are shaped by gender relations, as well as by interviewees' forms and levels of "capital", in Bourdieuan terms.

The sixth chapter focuses on cases in which self-employment is considered by interviewees as being an *alternative plan*. It presents an in-depth analysis of the themes that interviewees develop with regard to the way in which they live their *trigger experiences*. This analysis enables the identification of two major types of

trigger experiences: crises (disruptive or corrosive) and encounters. Interviewees perceive their *crises* as being negative occurrences, which affect their position towards the labour market. Alternatively, they describe their *encounters* in a positive tone, as being a meeting of wills. In line with the analytical procedures adopted in the fifth chapter, this conceptualization of the *trigger experiences* includes an analysis of the different patterns of entry self-employment that each one of them encapsulates, and the way in which these are shaped by gender relations, as well as by “capitals” in Bourdieuan terms.

The seventh chapter addresses the last research question of this thesis. It explores interviewees’ views about the interaction between their self-employment and family life, by focusing on cases in which they are either in business with their spouses, or without them. In the initial section, this chapter explores the ambivalence with which interviewees experience their day to day partnerships with their spouses. It does so by focusing on the forms of cooperation and tension which they report, as well as on the coping strategies that they develop, in order to deal with such tension. As a result, the analysis explores the features that interviewees associate with the theme *cooperation* and how it fits into the more or less gendered forms of division of work between spouses that they report. The analysis of tensions, and how these are shaped by gender relations, revolves around three major themes: *family life being taken over by the business; exhaustion and domination.* The former concerns dilemmas involving interviewees’ children, whereas the latter both concern the tensions affecting the conjugal relationship. The second part of this chapter uncovers the contribution made by spouses to interviewees’ businesses, when they develop their activities as self-employed workers alone, or in association with other people. The analysis identifies two major themes in this respect: *income and resources*, as well as *support and help*; and explores the gendered features that pervade interviewees’ views in this respect.

Finally, the eighth chapter, the conclusion, summarises the main aims and findings of this research; and discusses the contribution it makes to the study of self-employment. It also pinpoints some avenues for future research, and ends with a brief reflection on policy-making regarding self-employment in Portugal.

2 Understanding Self-Employment in Contemporary Societies: Issues, Patterns and the Portuguese Case

This chapter sets the context of this thesis. It addresses the “qualitative change” that self-employment has undergone in the last few decades (Meager and Bates, 2004), by discussing both its nature and composition today.

In particular, it focuses on five dimensions, which are crucial for the development of this thesis. These are the following: the distinction between solo and non-solo forms of self-employment; the place that self-employment occupies in individuals’ trajectories in the labour market; the complex relationship between autonomy, economic independence and self-employment; the participation of women in self-employment and the main characteristics of self-employment from a comparative perspective; and, the current policies on entrepreneurship and gender.

In terms of structure, this chapter begins with a discussion that further clarifies the way in which self-employment is understood and studied in this present thesis. This is followed by an analysis of the main empirical patterns concerning self-employment in the European Union and in southern European countries. Current policy-making on entrepreneurship and gender is analyzed subsequently. The final section summarises the contribution of this chapter to the overall design of this thesis.

2.1 Self-employment as a solo and a non-solo experience

Differences between solo and non-solo forms of self-employment were central to the sociological debate on the “petite bourgeoisie”, in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s, both in Europe and in the United States. This discussion has lost a degree of visibility with the ascendancy of the term “entrepreneurship”, during the last few decades, and the contribution of economics and management to the study of this topic. In this context, conceptual discussions have shifted into a reflection on whether entrepreneurship corresponds to an innovative behaviour, to a business set-up, or to both (See Chapter 1, above).

This section builds upon this preliminary debate to consider whether the study of self-employment accommodates cases in which people employ the work of

others³. There are two strands to this debate: the Marxist tradition, which emphasizes the distinctiveness of not employing wage labour; and the authors who group self-employed persons *with* and *without* employees together, as long as the labour employed does not substitute the work of the employers.

The Marxist position stems from its emphasis on establishing a division line between productive labour and the exploitation of others' productive labour. Poulantzas' (1975: 151) observations on the "petty bourgeoisie" underscore this feature: "the petty bourgeoisie is not a bourgeoisie smaller than the others; it is not part of the bourgeoisie at all, since it does not exploit, or at least is not chiefly involved in exploiting wage labour."

Wright (1997) follows a similar path when he speaks of a "pure petty bourgeoisie", who do not employ the work of others. However, he considers that this "bourgeoisie" is one of the three class locations that can be identified among self-employed persons; that is, among those who neither sell their potential labour, nor live from an income without working (Wright, 1997). The other two class locations are "small employers" and "entrepreneurial capitalists".

The "small employers" employ waged labour, but only in limited numbers (Wright, 1997). In this context, Wright argues that "small employers" occupy a "contradictory location within class relations" because they have a foot in "two distinct forms of class relations": the "pure petty bourgeoisie" and the "capitalist class" (Wright, 1997: 122). The "pure petty bourgeois" becomes a "small employer" when she/he is involved in "the appropriation of surplus value through the exploitation of workers in the labour process" (Wright, 1979: 45). However, it is a restricted form of appropriation, in that it involves fewer waged-workers, in comparison to "entrepreneurial capitalists" (Wright, 1979). The assumption that "small employers" are structurally closer to "pure petty bourgeois", than to "entrepreneurial capitalists", explains Wright's (1997) aggregation of these two categories in order to measure the "petty bourgeois".

³ This is therefore still a relevant debate. Most of the authors reviewed in this section have strongly influenced the discussions on social class in Portugal (Almeida, 1981; Mendes and Estanque, 1997); and the most cited study on self-employment in this country (Freire, 1995). These circumstances, and the scarcity of sociological research on self-employment in Portugal, explain the minimal number of Portuguese references used in this section.

Bechhoffer and Elliott (1981, 1985) present a somewhat different approach in their studies in the United Kingdom. They focus upon the “petite bourgeoisie”, in a broad sense, and consider employer’s “personal labour” (and “personal capital”) for distinguishing between “petite bourgeois” and “small capitalists” (Bechhofer and Elliott, 1985: 188). Accordingly, they include employers of a restricted number of employees in the “petite bourgeoisie”, provided that their workers are “an extension of, rather than a substitute for” their labour (Bechhoffer and Elliott, 1985: 188).

In a similar vein, Scase and Goffee (1982) focus on the “work role”, that is, on the individual’s participation in the business, and identify four strata within the “entrepreneurial middle class”⁴: the “self-employed”, the “small employers”, the “owner-controllers”, and the “owner-directors”. The former are the main producers, who do not employ waged workers, and rely upon family labour and savings; whereas the second intervene directly in the production along with their workers, undertake the management of the business, and count upon family help. “Owner-controllers” focus on administrative tasks; while “owner-directors” run their business through the division and delegation of administrative work. Despite this distinction, Scase and Goffee (1982) recognize that there is a structural proximity between the “self-employed” and the “small employers”. They state that both are “active proprietors of petty productive assets”, who are found in the marginal section of the “entrepreneurial middle class” (Scase and Goffee, 1982: 188).

One of the few (and most cited) sociological studies on self-employment in Portugal relies on a broad conceptualization of this phenomenon, by considering that self-employed persons may combine a direct intervention in production with “the collaboration of a restricted number of colleagues who do not substitute [their] own technical intervention, which remains central.” (Freire, 1995: 28, my translation).

This thesis also builds upon a broad understanding of self-employment, which includes both solo and non-solo situations, as long as individuals report being involved in the operational tasks of the business. Nonetheless, this involvement may vary over time due, among other reasons, to the demands of the business or events in an individual’s personal life.

⁴ The authors define the “entrepreneurial middle class” as follows: “those who own property which, together with their own and others’ labour, they use for productive purposes” (Scase and Goffee, 1982: 23).

Sources of official statistics, such as the *Labour Force Survey*, do not allow a direct measure of solo and non-solo forms of self-employment, since the latter is diluted into the wider category: “employers”. For a preliminary picture, even if not very precise, Graph 1 (below) illustrates the proportion of own-account workers in self-employment both for services (which are the focus of this research – See Section 2.4 and Chapter 4, below), and for all activities (NACE Rev.2⁵). Calculations behind Graph 1 (below) consider only data for own-account workers, since data for employers is problematic⁶. The resulting picture indicates that own-account workers represent almost 60% of all self-employment, in each country under analysis. These figures suggest some prudence in the idea that self-employment has a “multiplier effect” (Bögenhold, 2000). However, micro enterprises⁷ are still the top employer in a number of service sectors (Eurostat, 2011: 14). The proportion of own-account workers in service activities is slightly lower than in all activities, in almost every country under analysis. This may suggest an opposite trend for employers. Portugal (PT), Greece (EL) and Italy (IT) report high percentages of own-account workers in all economic activities, but not in the service industry. Portugal stands out by having the lowest figure in this respect (61%). However, this position should be observed with caution due to the lack of data for some service activities in this country (See Graph 1 reference ° below).

The relevance of including non-solo self-employment in this present study is further supported by the high share of businesses that operate on a small scale in Portugal. According to the latest figures, this country reports the highest percentage of businesses with 1 to 4 employees (74.9%), in the European Union⁸. Portugal also displays the highest percentages of newly formed businesses, in services and in all

⁵ This statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community has been in use since January 2008.

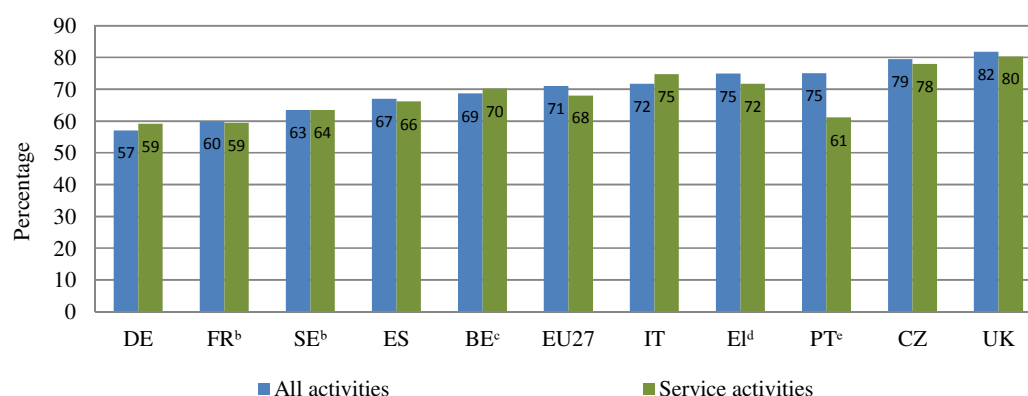
⁶ The existing problems are due to the sampling techniques used in official surveys and the small number of employers. As a consequence, available statistics report a high number of cells with unreliable data or no data at all for employers, which are broken down by industry. This situation is not as evident among own-account workers.

⁷ According to the EU recommendation 2003/361, micro enterprises employ less than ten employees and report an annual turnover, or balance sheet, which does not exceed two million Euros.

⁸ Again, this is not a direct way of measuring non-solo self-employment, as defined above. The percentages for the other size categories are 15.4% (enterprises with no employees); 5.3% (enterprises with 5 to 9 employees) and 4.3% (enterprises with 10 or more employees). Own calculations based on Eurostat, 2012, *Business Demography Statistics*. Available data excludes agriculture and insurance activities of holding companies; and does not include Greece. Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/european_business/special_sbs_topics/business_demography

activities, which employ 1 to 4 employees in first their year of existence. The figures are: 85.3% (for services) and 84.3%⁹ (for all activities).

Graph 1. Own-account workers' share of self-employment in the service activities and in all activities (NACE Rev. 2) in the EU, in 2011^a



^a Excludes EU members states that report unreliable values in more than one industry.

^b Calculations exclude “Financial and insurance activities” due to unreliable data.

^c Calculations exclude “Education” due to unreliable data.

^d Calculations exclude “Real estate activities” due to unreliable data.

^e Data not available for “Information and communication”, “Financial and insurance activities”, “Real estate activities” and “Administrative and support service activities”.

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

2.2 Self-employment, trajectories and transitions in the labour market

Several authors have challenged the conventional view that once a person becomes self-employed, she/he remains so for the rest of her/his life (Arum and Müller, 2004; Meager and Bates, 2004).

Three main factors contribute to this situation. Firstly, economic uncertainty and flexible labour markets expose employees to discontinued work trajectories and reduce the opportunity costs of becoming self-employed. Secondly, the development of service industries opens up business opportunities with fewer demands, in terms of

⁹ Own calculations based on Eurostat, 2012, *Business Demography Statistics*. Available data excludes agriculture and insurance activities of holding companies; and does not include Greece. Source: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/european_business/special_sbs_topics/business_demography

seed capital, in comparison to industry or agriculture. Thirdly, there is a set of institutional mechanisms aimed at helping people in creating their own jobs¹⁰. These factors encourage new influxes into self-employment, and facilitate transitions between professional statuses (Arum and Müller, 2004; Hakim, 1988; Hyytinen and Rouvinen, 2008; Meager and Bates, 2004).

Table 4 (below) compares individuals' current professional status in the European Union, to their professional status one year before¹¹. The figures indicate that there are lower percentages of status reproduction among employers and own-account workers, in comparison to employees. In addition, there are considerable influxes from employees into becoming own-account workers (40.7%); and from own-account workers into employers (48.6%). This data suggests that transitions between solo and non-solo self-employment are relevant, and that preliminary experiences of self-employment may start with own-account work. This last observation is in line with the findings of research, which compares Germany, Italy, The Netherlands, Sweden and The United Kingdom, between 1993 and 2003 (Bushcoff and Schimdt, 2006).

Table 4. Current professional status compared to professional status one year before, within non-agricultural industries, in the European Union, in 2011 (values in percentages)*

<i>Current professional status</i>	<i>Professional status one year before the survey</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Own-account workers</i>	<i>Employers</i>	
<i>Employees</i>	98.8	0.4	0.7	100
<i>Own-account workers</i>	40.7	59.3	0.1	100
<i>Employers</i>	0.3	48.6	51.2	100

* Due to the poor reliability of the data extracted, calculations consider only transitions within non-agricultural industries and between the professional statuses under analysis.

Source: Own calculations based on extraction from Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

Similarly, Table 5 (below) shows that inactive and unemployed persons become own-account workers in higher percentages (12.7% and 8.7%, respectively), than those who become employers (1.8% and 0.1%, respectively).

¹⁰ Current policy-making is analysed in section 2.5.

¹¹ Calculations by country were not undertaken due to the unreliability of the data extracted.

Table 5. Inactive and unemployed persons one year before, by current professional status, in the European Union, in 2011 (values in percentages)*

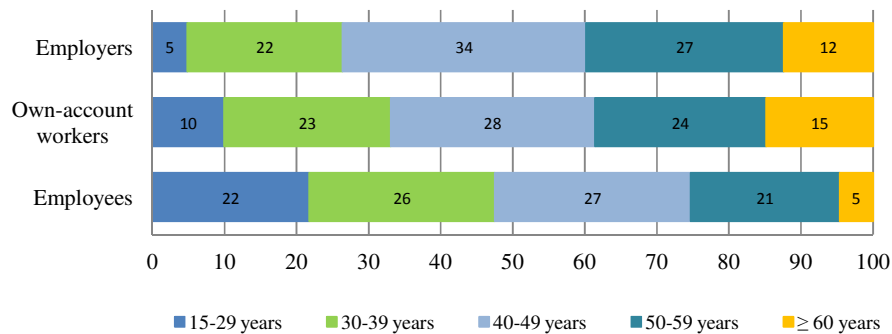
	<i>Current professional status</i>			<i>Total</i>
	<i>Employees</i>	<i>Employers</i>	<i>Own-account workers</i>	
<i>Inactive persons</i>	85.5	1.8	12.7	100
<i>Unemployed persons</i>	91.2	0.1	8.7	100

* Due to the poor reliability of the data extracted, calculations consider only transitions into employees, employers and own-account workers.

Source: Own calculations based on extraction from Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

Moreover, the lower proportion of the two youngest age groups among employers and own-account workers (See Graph 2, below), suggests that these professional statutes may emerge at a later stage of an individual's life, in comparison to dependent employment.

Graph 2. Employees, own-account workers and employers by age group in the EU27, in 2011 (values in percentages)



Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

These figures suggest the relevance of analyzing an individual's previous experiences, in order to reach a better understanding of the circumstances in which she/he enters self-employment. This is precisely the focus of the first research question of this thesis (See Chapters 1, above, and 4, below). Chapter 3 explores this issue further.

2.3 Ambivalence in self-employment: autonomy and economic independence

In addition to the idea of stability (discussed above), autonomy and economic independence are often associated with self-employment. The former entails no subordination to an employer and a direct relationship with the market (Burchell and Rubery, 1992), whereas the latter implies that income is obtained from a number of clients (Grimshaw et al., 2005).

These two features contrast with key elements of “standard” dependent employment. This involves both subordination and economic dependence for an employee with regard to her/his employer (Felstead and Jewson, 1999; Grimshaw et al., 2005; Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Perdesini, 2002; Perulli, 2003; Supiot, 2001).

The institutionalisation of the social usefulness of work, via the emergence of labour laws and the affording of specific social rights to people working in “standard” jobs, was a way of compensating employees for these two conditions (Castel, 1995). This advance was made possible by the Fordist mode of production, and by the development of welfare states, which were aimed at promoting economic growth and full employment for men¹² (Méda, 1999; Rubery, 2005). This development has taken place in several western societies, and has had particular effects in countries, such as Portugal, in which there has been a tradition of defining access to social rights according to an individual’s position in relation to economic activity.

In this context, self-employment was seen as being a more privileged professional status, thereby not requiring the same level of regulated protection that was being afforded to employees. However, the Fordist employment system has witnessed a profound crisis since the 1980s due to policies aimed at increasing organizational flexibility (Rubery, 2005; Amin, 1991). This has affected not only employees, but also self-employed persons, and the relationship between these two professional statutes (Supiot, 2001). For instance, the distinction between dependent and independent employment is blurred when freelancers, independent contractors and franchisees find themselves trapped in the chains of dependence dominated by major businesses (Cebrián et al., 2003; Fagan and Ward, 2003; Grimshaw et al.,

¹² Like most of the “classic” concepts of sociology of work, employment is not a gender free notion.

2005; Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Meager and Bates, 2004). This blurring of boundaries explains the use of expressions, such as “second generation of self-employment” (Cebrián et al., 2003), “dependent self-employment” (Fagan and Ward, 2003; Houseman and Osawa, 2003; Muehlberger, 2007), “economically dependent workers” (Perdesini, 2002; Perulli, 2003), “economically dependent self-employed workers” (Pereiro, 2008), “pseudo self-employment” (Barbieri and Bison, 2004; Grimshaw et al., 2003; Kreide, 2003; Meager and Bates, 2004; Müller and Arum, 2004), “bogus or spurious forms of self-employment” (Beck, 2000; Bögenhold and Staber, 1991; Freire, 1995; Kovács, 2005; Perdesini, 2002; Rebelo, 2003; Rosa, 2000). Accordingly, there is a grey zone of unclear and false cases of self-employment, which coexists with autonomous and economically independent situations (Supiot, 2001). In this context, there are indications that further action is needed in some European countries, in order to improve the protection of self-employed persons facing shortages of work, illness or experiencing childbirth (EEO, 2010). By means of illustration, the Portuguese government has only recently (in 2012) approved legislation that offers some protection against unemployment for economically dependent workers, that is, for self-employed workers who obtained at least 80% of their annual revenue from one client¹³.

Meanwhile, several authors have focused on the benefits of self-employment (Smeaton, 2003) against the backdrop of a political and managerial discourse that promotes an “enterprise culture”¹⁴ (du Gay, 1996; see Section 2.5). For instance, Handy (1994: 175) describes “going portfolio” as “exchanging full-time employment for independence”; and Bridges (1995: 102-119) highlights the benefits of a successful “self-managed career”.

Surveys on people’s perceptions about working as a self-employed person portray a similarly optimistic view. To start with, self-employment is preferred to, or ranks near, dependent employment in several countries. As the Eurobarometer report on entrepreneurship (2009) reveals, 50% or more of the population in Cyprus, Greece, Romania, France, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Iceland, Turkey, The United States of America, China, and South Korea prefer self-employment to dependent

¹³ For the full text of the law, see Decreto-Lei N° 65/2012, at: <http://dre.pt/pdf1sdip/2012/03/05400/0124201244.pdf>

¹⁴ In this culture, “certain enterprising qualities – such as self-reliance, personal responsibility, boldness and a willingness to take risks in the pursuit of goals – are regarded as human virtues and promoted as such” (du Gay, 1996: 56).

employment. The same answer is reported by 40% to 49% of the population in Poland, Ireland, Lithuania, Slovenia, The United Kingdom, Latvia, Luxemburg, Estonia, The Netherlands, Finland, Austria, Hungary, Germany, Spain, Croatia, Switzerland, and Norway¹⁵. The connection between autonomy and self-employment is evident in the reasons that individuals give to justify their preference for working as a self-employed person. In particular, these justifications revolve around three motives: personal independence/self-fulfillment/interest in tasks (68%); freedom to choose place and time of work (35%); and better income prospects (20%).

The picture is less optimistic when other features are taken into account. For instance, self-employed persons report longer working hours, despite their higher levels of job satisfaction and lower preference for other professional statuses, in comparison to employees (EEO, 2010; Eurofound, 2010; Gasparini, 2000; Freire, 1995; Raindbird, 1991). Furthermore, as pinpointed by a qualitative study (in The United Kingdom), there are cases in which long working hours coexist with a somewhat illusionary sense of autonomy due to “self-exploitation”; that is “not remunerating oneself for the full number of hours at the appropriate rate of pay” (Raindbird, 1991: 212). There are also indications that the economic situation of some individuals may be difficult, since a recent report on Europe concludes that 18% of the self-employed population falls into the working poor category, against 6% of employees (Eurofound, 2010b: 9). However, further research on this aspect is still needed (Pedersini and Coletto, 2010).

Self-employment is, therefore, a heterogeneous phenomenon, which includes ambivalent situations, in terms of autonomy and economic independence. The way in which the grey side of self-employment affects individuals varies with age, educational levels, occupational class, gender and ethnicity (Barbieri and Bison, 2004; Burchell and Rubery, 1992; Ehlers and Main, 1998; Meager and Bates, 2004; Kallerberg et al., 1997; Kovács, 2005; Scase, 1982). However, more qualified individuals are not immune to this ambivalence, in that they experience different degrees of autonomy, according to their actual control over their portfolio (that is, over their number of clients, workflows and levels of earnings) (Fraser and Gold, 2001).

¹⁵ See Eurobarometer (2009: 13): http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/facts-figures-analysis/eurobarometer/fl283_en.pdf.

The elements considered above inform the analytical approach of this thesis in two ways. On the one hand, they support the focus on the ways in which social circumstances shape individuals' references to autonomy and economic independence as a motivation for entering into self-employment¹⁶ (See also Chapters 3 and 4 below). On the other hand, they inform the decision to study entry into self-employment through an in-depth approach, which considers the circumstances in which individuals make the leap into self-employment (See the second and the third research questions, in Chapters 1, above, and 4 below).

2.4 Understanding patterns of self-employment from a comparative perspective: Portugal and Southern Europe

This section examines patterns of self-employment by industry, level of education and gender, from a comparative perspective. By so doing, it explores the way in which the institutional specifics of the southern European model leads to an understanding of self-employment in Portugal.

The argument that there is a southern European model, involving specific interactions between state, production and family, has been put forward by several authors, in the aftermath of Esping-Andersen's text (1990). There, southern Europe is not considered as a broad institutional context in its own right. It is subsumed within the conservative and "corporatist" welfare states/"continental European welfare model" (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 2002). This categorization is based upon the following features: selective schemes of social protection, which vary between jobs and benefit primary labour markets; a "traditional family-hood" (Esping-Andersen, 1990), which provides direct support to individuals; and a limited development of private systems of social protection¹⁷. Countries such as Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and Italy/Southern Europe illustrate this kind of welfare example (Esping-Andersen, 1990; 2002).

However, these countries have been categorized differently, as has been pinpointed by the literature on varieties or models of capitalism (Bosh, Lehnendorff

¹⁶ Autonomy is also a key ingredient of the debate on the push-pull factors leading people into self-employment (see Chapter 3).

¹⁷ Esping-Andersen (1990) identifies two additional types of welfare regime: the "liberal" and the "social democratic universalist".

and Rubery, 2009), by the feminist critique of Esping-Andersen's proposal (Anxo and Fagan, 2005), and by the work on the southern European social model (Karamessini, 2008).

This section builds upon the analysis of the southern European model to explore the characteristics of self-employment in Portugal, from a comparative perspective. In addition to southern European countries, the analysis includes France, Germany, Sweden, and The United Kingdom because of the diversity that these countries represent, in terms of welfare/capitalism (Bosh, Lehndorff and Rubery, 2009: 10).

The first part of this section examines the characteristics of self-employment, by considering country-variations, with regard to rates of self-employment, and the distribution of self-employed workers by industries and levels of education. In the second part, this section focuses on the gendered side of self-employment, which is crucial for the aims of this thesis. These analyses collate data for solo and non-solo self-employment due to problems of the reliability of the data.

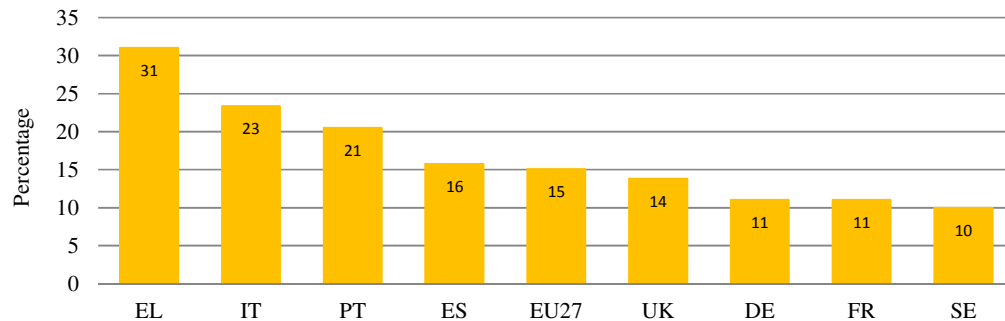
2.4.1 Portugal in the southern European pattern of self-employment: the weight of traditional industries and low levels of education

Portugal, Greece, Italy and Spain report a number of similarities, with regard to rates of self-employment and to the distribution of self-employed persons, by industry and education. However, there are also differences within these countries regarding the intensity with which some traditional patterns emerge in Portugal and Greece, in comparison with Spain and Italy.

Rates of self-employment for Greece (EL), Italy (IT), Portugal (PT), and Spain (ES) stand above the overall figure for the EU27, unlike the other states under analysis (See Graph 3 below). Greece reports a rate as high as 31%. Portugal (21%) falls slightly behind Italy (23%), but remains above Spain (16%). This pattern, including Spain's comparatively low rate of self-employment, has been reported by other research, which analyzed earlier data (from the 1990s to 2000s) (Whiteford, 2006). In general, these high rates of self-employment are explained by the later industrialization of southern Europe, by its pattern of post-industrial employment,

and by the weight of small businesses in its economies (Mingione, 2001; Zambarloukou, 2007).

Graph 3. Shares of self-employment in employment, in Portugal, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, in the United Kingdom and in the EU27, in 2011



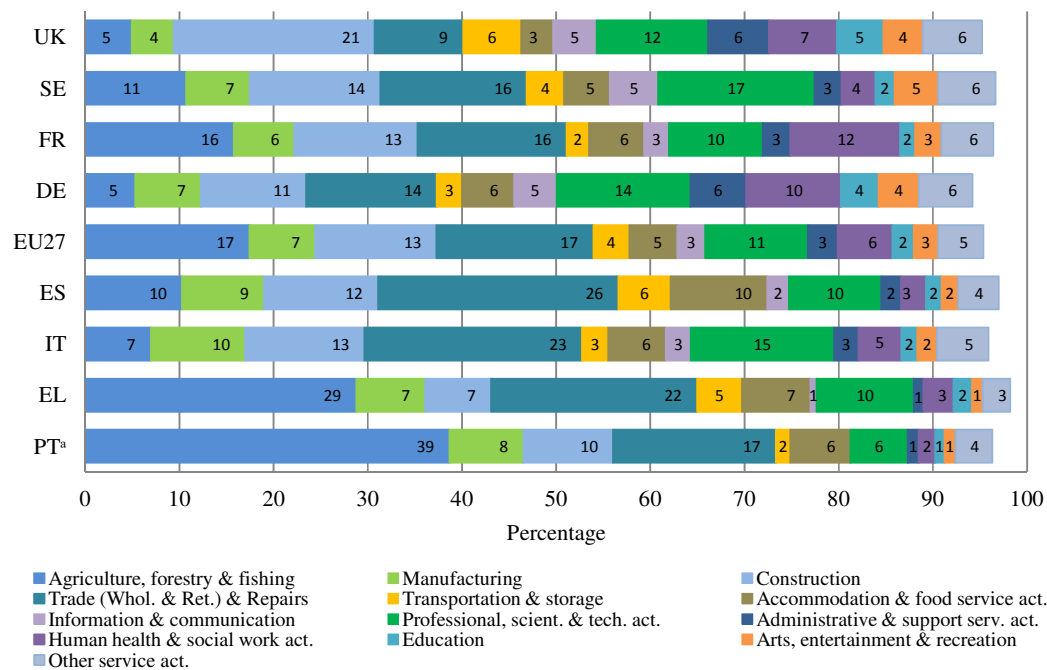
Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

The distribution of self-employment by industry suggests both similarities and differences within the southern European cluster (See Graph 4 below).

Similarities concern the concentration of about one quarter of the total self-employment in these countries in “agriculture, forestry and fishing” or in “trade and repairs”. High levels of employment in agriculture and low end services have been pinpointed by some authors to characterize these four countries (Zambarloukou, 2007). In Portuguese rural areas, for instance, agriculture has been used as a source of additional income and/or products in families’ strategies to maximize their earnings (Cabral, 2000).

As to differences, Spain and Italy report a much lower incidence of self-employment in “agriculture, forestry and fishing” than Portugal and Greece. This may result from the striking contraction of the agricultural sector in Spain, from the 1960s onwards (Benyuls et al, 2009); and from the current north/south divide of the Italian model of production (Simonazzi, Villa, Lucidi and Naticchioni, 2009). This divide may also explain the higher incidence of “professional, scientific and technical activities” in Italy (15%), in comparison to Greece (10%), Spain (10%), and Portugal (6%).

Graph 4. Self-employment by industry (NACE Rev. 2) in Portugal, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, and in The United Kingdom, in 2011



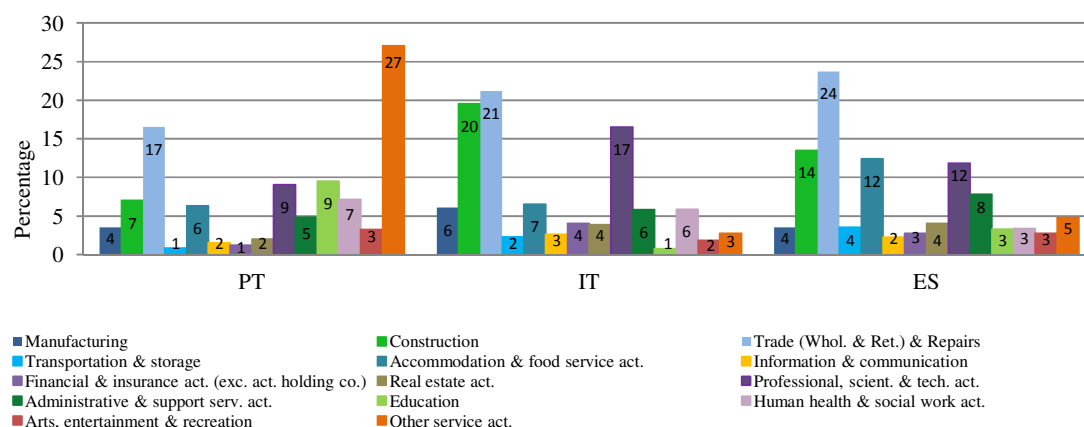
^a Notwithstanding “information & communication”, for which Portugal reports no data, this graph includes only the industries for which there is data available for each country under consideration.

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

The distribution of newly created businesses by industry is in line with some of the patterns reported above (See Graphs 5 and 6 below). Spain, Italy and Portugal report high percentages of new businesses in “trade and repairs” and in “other service activities”, in 2009¹⁸. In Sweden (SE) and in The United Kingdom (UK), “professional, scientific and technical activities” display a similarly high position. In comparison with Portugal and Spain, Italy stands out with a higher percentage of new businesses in this industry. Finally, the percentage of new business set-ups in “information and communication” services is considerably lower in southern Europe.

¹⁸ These are the latest figures; no data available for Greece.

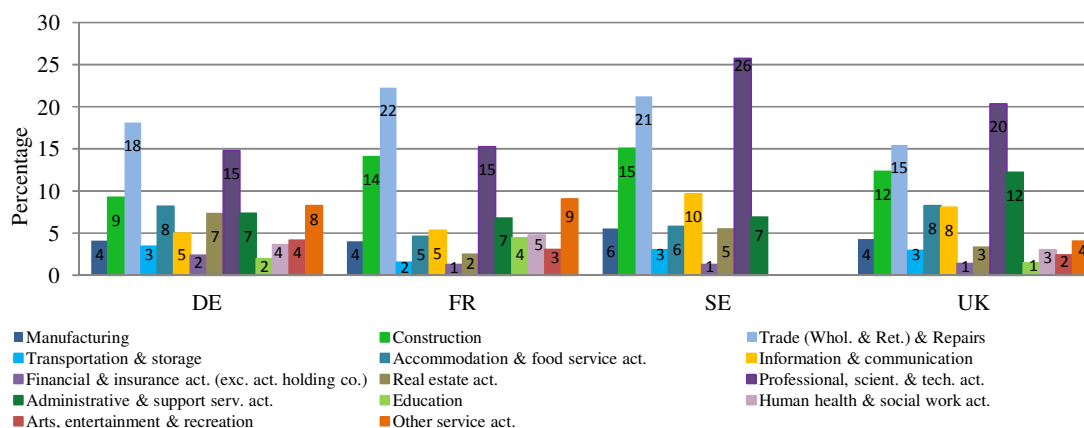
Graph 5. Birth of businesses by industry (NACE Rev.2) in Portugal, Italy and Spain, in 2009^a



^a Available data does not include “agriculture, forestry & fishing”. Graph does not include industries which account for less than 1% of the births of businesses in most of the countries under analysis.

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Business Demography Statistics*.

Graph 6. Birth of businesses by industry (NACE Rev.2) in Germany, France, Sweden and in The United Kingdom, in 2009^a



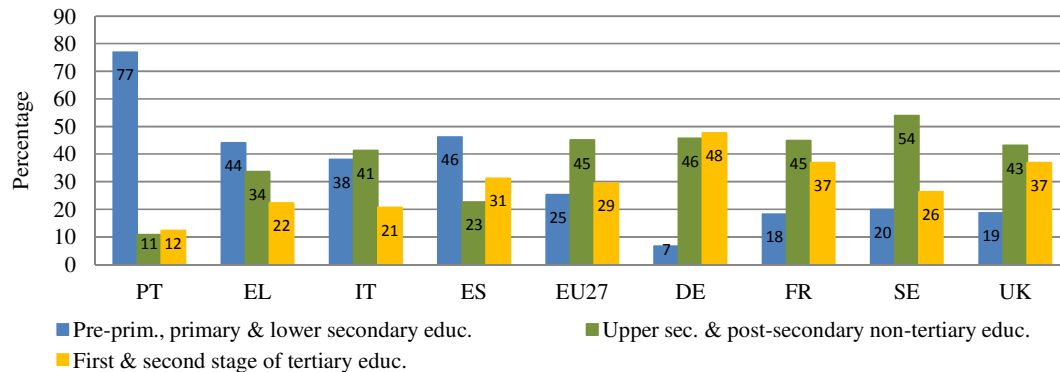
^a Available data does not include “agriculture, forestry & fishing”. Graph does not include industries which account for less than 1% of the births of businesses in most of the countries under analysis. Sweden reports no data for the following industries: “education”; “human health & social work activities”; “arts, entertainment & recreation”; and “other services activities”.

Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Business Demography Statistics*.

The characterization of self-employed workers, by their level of education, shows the high incidence of less qualified forms of self-employment, in southern Europe. Portugal reports the highest percentage of self-employed people with at least lower secondary education (77%); whereas Germany displays a very different picture: almost half of its self-employed population (48%) has experienced tertiary

education. Once more, Italy reports a somewhat peculiar situation within southern Europe, in that 41% of its self-employed population has completed “upper secondary & post-secondary non-tertiary education”.

Graph 7. Self-employment by level of education in Portugal, Greece, Italy Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, The United Kingdom and the EU27, in 2001



Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

The analysis presented above depicts some of the traditional features that characterize the high number of small and micro businesses in southern Europe. Several factors contribute to this picture. Firstly, the weight of family businesses has contributed to the development of traditional activities and approaches to management (Karamessini, 2008; Mingione, 2001; Zambarlounkou, 2007). Secondly, conservative financing criteria have not facilitated the emergence of businesses when people do not have capital of their own (Mingione, 2001; Zambarlounkou, 2007). Thirdly, the extension of a parallel economy contributes to the reproduction of underground activities (Mingione, 2001).

This section shapes the design of this research in two ways. On the one hand, it highlights the relevance of studying self-employment in Portugal. On the other, it informs the sampling criteria of this research, by pinpointing the economic activities that characterize the southern European pattern of self-employment. In particular, it supports the selection of a diversified set of industries, in order to reach different pathways into self-employment and interactions between family and business life.

Three main economic sectors are included in this present study: trade, high-end services, and restaurants. The relevance of trade in the older and newly created businesses in southern Europe justifies its inclusion in the sample, at the expense of other industries, such as “other service activities”. The latter rank high, in terms of births of businesses in Portugal, but represent only 4% of all self-employment in this country (See Graph 4, above – page 33). Moreover, it would add a lower level of relevant diversity to the sample, in comparison to high-end services. These include professional, scientific and technical activities, as well as computer programming, consultancy and related activities, thereby encompassing a highly qualified type of self-employment. These services depict a smaller, but relevant, slice of self-employment in Portugal, in that they represent a high road towards the development of service economies (Bosh and Lehndorff, 2005). Finally, restaurants are included in the sample as this kind of economic activity traditionally operates as a family business and is more often associated with traditional forms of self-employment in Portugal.

The decision not to include agriculture, manufacturing and construction in the sample is due to the aims of this present research. The exclusion of agriculture and manufacture ensue from the focus upon understanding current experiences of self-employment and the present debate on the service industry economies. Construction is not included since it is difficult to gain access to the minority of women, who operate in this industry, and this would compromise the aim of collecting data from self-employed men and women who both operate in the same type of industry (See Chapter 4, for an explanation of how this research is designed).

2.4.2 The gendered organization of self-employment: cross-national similarities and southern European specifics

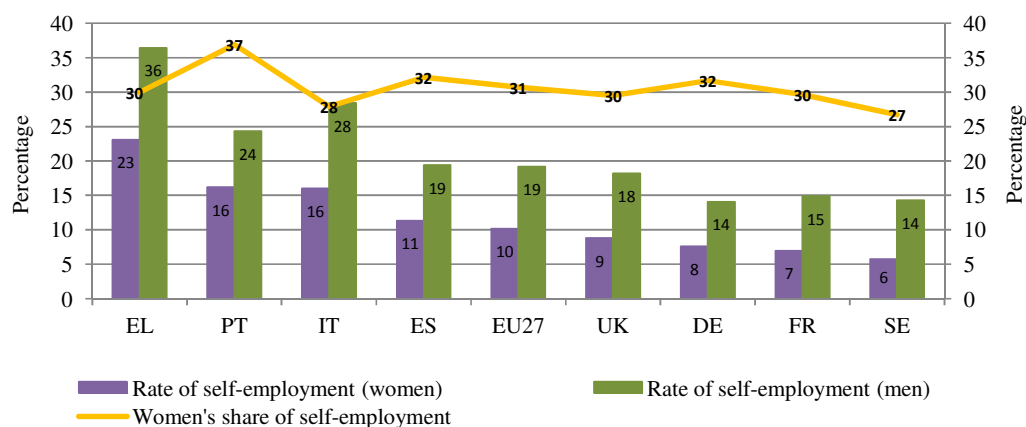
The previous section has shown that self-employment is more prevalent in Southern Europe than in the other European countries under analysis. Despite their limitations, official statistics on self-employment for women and men indicate five gendered patterns across the countries under analysis¹⁹. Firstly, self-employment is

¹⁹ For the sake of consistency, the comparisons presented below involve the countries analyzed in the previous section. The only exception concerns the distribution of self-employment by sex and industry, which compares Portugal with the overall figures for the European Union, in order to avoid

less predominant among working women; secondly, men account for the majority of self-employed persons; thirdly, the opposite is true for family workers; fourthly, women are more segregated from employers than from own-account workers; and fifthly, some female-dominated industries display a higher concentration of self-employed women.

Employment rates are lower for women than for men in every country under analysis (See Graph 8 below - data related to the scale on the left), ranging from 23% (in Greece - EL) to 6% (in Sweden - SE). At the same time, women do not account for more than 40% of the self-employed persons in these countries. Portugal (PT) reports the highest percentage (37%), in this respect, and Sweden (SE) the lowest (27%) (See Graph 8 below – data concerning scale on the right). The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor comparative survey reports similar results with regard to the “total early stage entrepreneurial activity”. This indicator measures the percentage of people aged 18-64, who are involved in setting up or managing a business within less than 42 months (Bosma, Wennekers and Amorós, 2012).

Graph 8. Rates of self-employment for women and men in employment, and women's share of self-employment, in Portugal, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, in The United Kingdom and in the EU27, in 2011

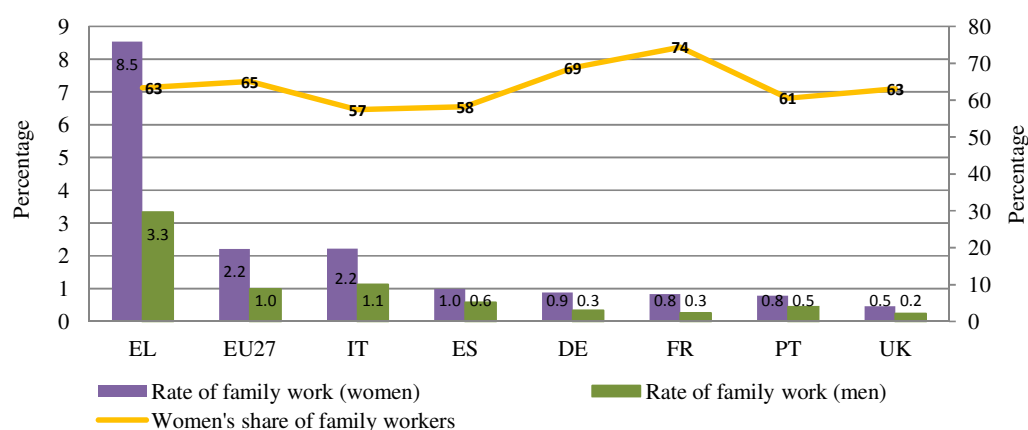


Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

the excess of data. Data limitations concern insufficient data on self-employment by sex, as well as problems with the quality, reliability and comparability of the existing data. The OECD Gender Data Browser (launched in February 2012) attempts to overcome some of these problems. See: http://www.oecd.org/document/31/0,3746,en_2649_34819_47860895_1_1_1_1,00.html#IND7

The data for family workers presents a very different picture. Women display a higher rate of family work (See Graph 9 below – data measured by the scale on the left), and account for the majority of family workers in every country under analysis (See Graph 9 below – scale on the right). In contrast with previous categories, women account for the majority of family workers: almost two thirds of family workers in the European Union are women (65%); and this proportion rises up to 74%, in France (FR), and falls to 57% in Italy (IT).

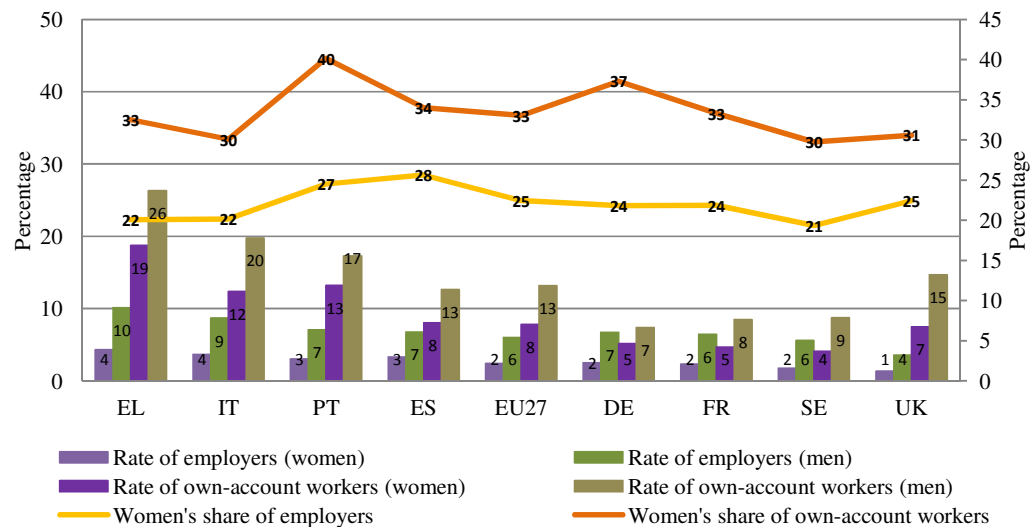
Graph 9. Rates of family work for women and men in employment, and women's share of family workers in Portugal, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, in The United Kingdom and in the EU27, in 2011^a



Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

The rates of employers and own-account workers are lower for women than for men, in every country under analysis; and they shrink among employers (See Graph 10 below – data referring to the scale on the left). Employers are also more male-dominated than own-account workers: women account for less than 30% of all employers, but represent between 30% and 40% of solo self-employed persons (See Graph 10 below – data concerning the scale on the right). There is, thus, a higher segregation of women from employers than from own-account workers. This data is in line with the vertical segregation of employment, which has been reported by both comparative and national research (Anker, 2001; Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1999. For Portugal, see Ferreira, 2010a; Rodrigues, 1990).

Graph 10. Rates of employers and own-account workers for women and men in employment, and women's share of employers and own-account workers in Portugal, Greece, Italy, Spain, Germany, France, Sweden, in The United Kingdom and in the EU27, in 2011^a



^a Calculations exclude Sweden due to lack of reliable data.

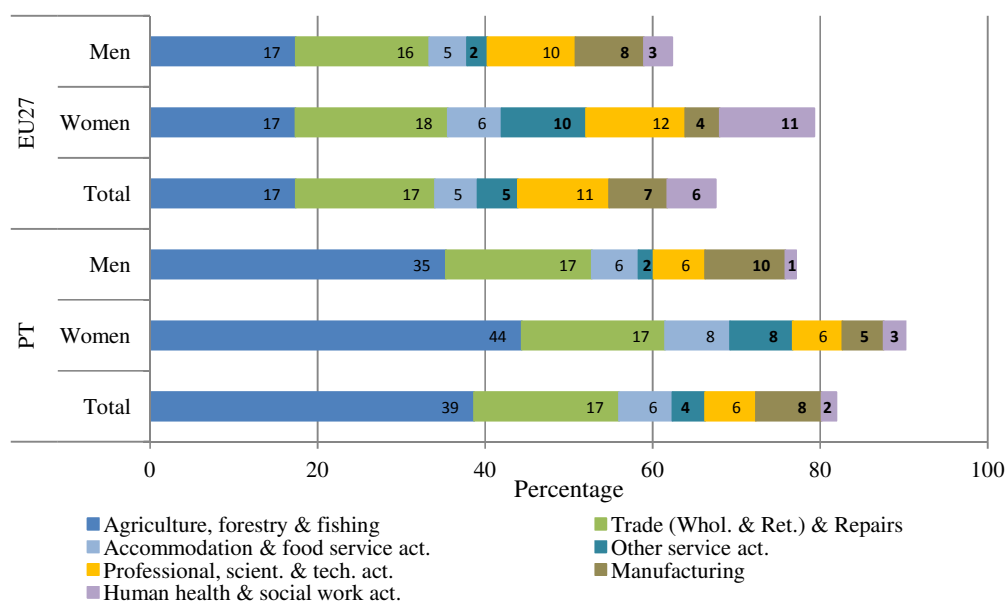
Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

Despite the lack of reliable data for every industry, evidence suggests that there is a horizontal segregation, which echoes the construction of women as a “caring gender” (See Graphs 11 and 12 below).

Self-employed women are more concentrated in “other service activities” (8% - PT and 10% - EU27), and in “human health and social work activities” (3% - PT and 11% - EU27); whereas men are found in greater concentration in “manufacturing” (10% - PT and 8% - EU27) (See Graph 11 below). Women are also the majority of the self-employed people who work in “other service activities” (71% - PT and 64% - EU27), and in “human health and social work activities” (54% - PT and 60% - EU27) (See Graph 12 below). However, they do not account for more than 23% and 18% of the people who operate in “manufacturing”, in Portugal and in the European Union, respectively (See Graph 12 below). Construction, a traditional male-dominated industry, might offer a similar picture, but there is no reliable data to conduct this analysis.

The industries with the highest percentages of self-employed women and men are not as gender-dominated as the three mentioned above (See Graphs 11 and 12 below). In Portugal, “agriculture, forestry and fishing” represent a high percentage of women and men in self-employment (44% v 35%), ranking above “trade and repairs” (8%) and “other service activities” (8%), just as “manufacturing” does for men (10%). Finally, “professional, scientific and technical activities” account for 6% of men’s and women’s activities as self-employed individuals.

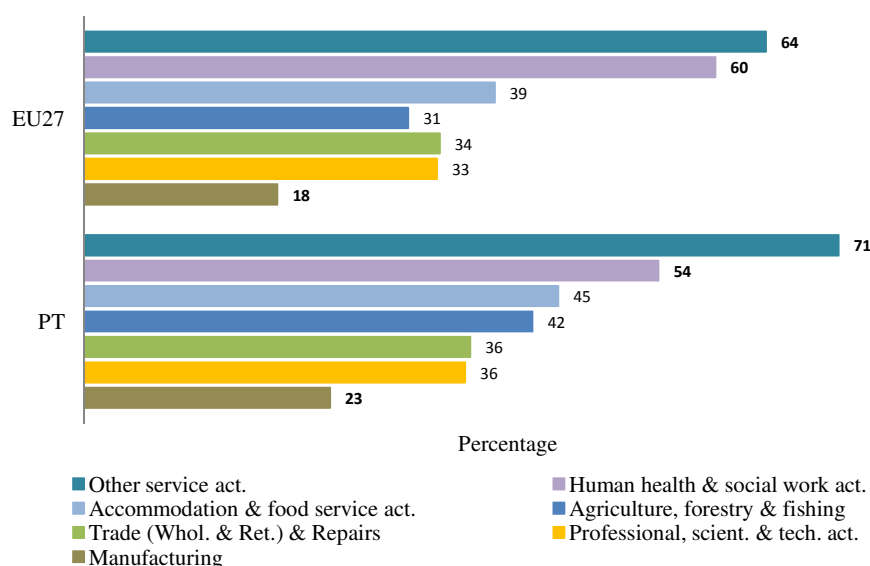
Graph 11. Distribution of women's and men's self-employment by industry (NACE Rev. 2) in Portugal and in the EU27, in 2011^a



^a Calculations exclude industries without reliable data for both women and men.
Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

However, the distribution of women among these industries forms two clusters (See Graph 12 below). In Portugal, “accommodation and food service activities” and “agriculture, forestry and fishing” involve a higher percentage of women: 45% and 42%, respectively; in comparison to “trade and repairs” (36%) and to “professional, scientific, and technical activities” (36%).

Graph 12. Women's share of self-employment by industry (NACE Rev. 2) in Portugal and in the EU27, in 2011^a



^a Calculations exclude industries without reliable data for both women and men.
Source: Own calculations based on Eurostat (2012), *Labour Force Survey*.

In addition to the general patterns reported above, the comparative analysis suggests that there are features which are common to southern European states. These countries display the highest rates of self-employment for women and men, matching, or standing above, the rates for the EU27 (10% v 19%) (See Graph 8, in page 38 – data related to the scale on the left). The picture is similar for employers and own-account workers.

However, statistics on family workers divide the southern European cluster: Greece reports higher rates for women (8.5%) and men (3.3%), ranking above the figures for the EU27 (2.2% v 1%). Italy displays percentages similar to the EU27 averages, whereas Spain and Portugal present lower percentages: 1%, or below, v 0.6%, or below (See Graph 9 above – data measured by the scale on the left).

Portugal displays a somewhat higher presence of women among own-account workers (40%), along with the second highest percentage of women amongst employers (27%), standing below Spain (28%) (See Graph 10 above – data measured by scale on the right). Actually, Spain and Portugal tend to share similar statistics in these indicators, in comparison to Greece and Italy.

2.5 Policy-making on entrepreneurship and its focus on gender

In the 2000s, self-employment, under the guise of entrepreneurship, regained visibility among policy makers as being a means of creating new jobs and fostering innovation (OECD, 1998; EC, 2003). The crisis has boosted this view (EEO, 2010; OECD, 2011), and its assumption that the entrepreneurial potential of all sections of society should be used in order to achieve economic growth and development.

In Portugal, a number of public policies have been devised in the last decade in order to facilitate individuals becoming self-employed. At the bureaucratic level, the implementation of the programme “On the Spot Firm”, in 2005, has simplified the procedures involved in the creation of a business. However, Portuguese labour market policies have a long tradition of using the creation of one’s own job as a tool for promoting unemployed people to become active in the local economy. This is supported by the now extinct “Local Employment Initiatives Programme”, which was known as the “ILE Programme”; and was introduced in the 1980s. Since 2009, the Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP), which is the institution that manages national employment policies, has offered three measures aimed at boosting entrepreneurship. These are the “Supports for the Creation of New Enterprises”, the “National Plan for Microcredit” and the “Creation of One’s Own Job by Beneficiaries of Unemployment Benefits”.

The former targets the following populations: unemployed people, who are registered in one of the employment centers which are under the auspices of the IEFP; first job seekers aged between 18 and 35; people with no previous work experience; and unincorporated self-employed persons. The enterprises created under this scheme cannot exceed an investment of 200,000 Euros, or involve the creation of more than ten jobs. Its users benefit from capped interest rates and technical support to develop their projects. The “National Plan for Microcredit” focuses on people who face particular difficulties when trying to enter the labour market and are at risk of social exclusion. The conditions and benefits associated with this plan are similar to those that are offered under the previously mentioned measure. The one difference concerns the capital invested, which cannot exceed 20,000 Euros. Finally, those in receipt of unemployment benefits are offered the opportunity of receiving their

benefit, in total or in part, immediately in order to set-up a business²⁰. As is the case with the above mentioned measures, this scheme offers technical support to individuals on an optional basis.

More recently, in 2011, the Portuguese government launched the “Strategic Programme for Entrepreneurship and Innovation”. This initiative is associated with the Europe 2020 Strategy, and identifies the development of an integrated government approach to the promotion of entrepreneurship and innovation as being a top priority for action²¹.

In addition to this overall approach to the promotion of entrepreneurship, there has been a wide debate on how to boost women’s participation in self-employment.

At an international level, the OECD conferences on women’s entrepreneurship (held in 1997 and 2000), and the inclusion of this topic into the agenda of the Ministerial Conference on SMEs, in 2005, suggest a growing interest in this matter (OECD, 2005). More recently, the OECD has launched the “Gender initiative”, with the aim of promoting gender equality in entrepreneurship, education and employment (OECD, 2011).

In the European Union, the “Green Paper” on entrepreneurship (2003) includes the promotion of women’s entrepreneurship, despite the photo of a “confident” male figure on the cover of its first publication. The Europe 2020 Strategy considers entrepreneurship as being an additional tool to promote growth and jobs, but it makes no reference to gender equality in self-employment (despite the Strategy focus on inclusive growth through initiatives aimed at helping people in their career shifts²²). Therefore, it seems that the European Union still transmits a mixed message on this topic.

Even so, the European Union has encouraged women’s entrepreneurship through initiatives, such as the “European Network to Promote Women's Entrepreneurship” (WES), the “European Network of Female Entrepreneurship Ambassadors”, the “European Network of Mentors for Women Entrepreneurs” and

²⁰See: http://www.iefp.pt/apoios/candidatos/CriacaoEmpregoEmpresa/Paginas/Prog_apoio_Emp_Cria_prop_emp.aspx

²¹ See: <http://www.dre.pt/pdf1s%5C2011%5C12%5C24300%5C0535105354.pdf>

²² See: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

the “Women Entrepreneurship Portal”²³. There are also initiatives targeted at the development of innovative entrepreneurship among women (EC, 2008). These measures are in line with the actions and recommendations put forward by the “Small Business Act for Europe” (2008).

In Portugal, the “National Plans for Gender Equality” followed these developments, by placing greater importance upon entrepreneurship. In Plan II (from 2003 to 2006), there are two references to “female entrepreneurship”, and a general focus on promoting women’s access to programmes and credit as well as good practices. In Plans III (2007-2010) and IV (2011-2013), these references have increased substantially, and entrepreneurship is described as being an important tool for promoting women’s economic independence and boosting their social inclusion.

These plans are in line with the goals of the “National Strategic Reference Framework” for 2007-2013 (known as QREN²⁴), with regard to the “Human Potential Operational Programme” (POPH), and the “Competitiveness Factors Operational Programme” (POFC).

The POPH considers the promotion of entrepreneurship in four of its ten priority areas: in the fifth (by “Supporting Entrepreneurship and Transition into Active Life” among first job seekers with upper secondary education and unemployed persons²⁵), in the seventh (by boosting “Gender Equality” in entrepreneurship through networking activities among women²⁶), in the eighth (with a regional focus on The Algarve²⁷); and in the ninth (with a regional focus on Lisbon²⁸).

The POFC promotes qualified entrepreneurship, in general, and cases of female or youth entrepreneurship, in particular. These can benefit from accruing ten

²³ See: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/promoting-entrepreneurship/women/index_en.htm

²⁴ QREN – Quadro de Referência Estratégica Nacional (National Strategic Reference Framework). See http://www.qren.pt/item3.php?lang=1&id_channel=44&id_page=312

²⁵ Initiative 5.1. This covers three regional continental areas: the North, the Centre and Alentejo. See http://www.poph.qren.pt/upload/docs/eixos/D_18233_08_TI_5.1.pdf.

²⁶ Initiative 7.6, which covers the same three regional areas identified above. See: http://www.poph.qren.pt/upload/docs/eixos/D_15607_09_TI_7_6.pdf

²⁷ See initiative 8.7.6 in: http://www.poph.qren.pt/upload/docs/eixos/D_15607_09_TI_7_6.pdf

²⁸ See initiative 9.7.6 in: http://www.poph.qren.pt/upload/docs/eixos/D_15607_09_TI_7_6.pdf

percentage points²⁹. In 2008, it carried out the “Projects of Female Qualified Entrepreneurship”³⁰, which targeted qualified women.

In spite of this policy framework, there is no sufficient data to analyze the results of the measures that have been put into practice. For instance, it is not always possible to compare targets and outcomes, in terms of number of businesses. By way of illustration, reports on the execution of the POPH tend to overemphasize the number of jobs, at the expense of the number of businesses created under each initiative. A recent evaluation of the “III National Plan for Gender Equality” describes a similar picture with regard to collating data on specific policies, such as the promotion of qualified entrepreneurship among women (Ferreira, 2010b).

Nonetheless, the available indicators suggest that the number of businesses started-up by women has fallen behind the targets, in every region. According to the latest report (for 2010), the execution in Lisbon, in the Algarve and in the North, the Centre and the Alentejo Region was, respectively, 28.6%, 42.1% and 12.2% of the target (POPH, 2011: 243). The idea that policies have had a limited effect is further supported by the assessment of the “III Plan for Equality”, which classifies most of the initiatives that are aimed at promoting the participation of women in entrepreneurship as being “partially executed”³¹. This report also underlines that most (53%) of the organizations that operate in this field consider that “the promotion of female entrepreneurship in Portugal has not been effective” (Ferreira, 2010b: 190).

Current policies support the focus of this research on self-employment and gender relations. They also justify the interest of making a series of exploratory contacts with organizations that have close contact with people who wish to set-up their own business in Portugal. Finally, this policy framework shows the relevance of exploring whether individuals have benefited from any of the existing policies, and their views about them (See Chapter 4 below, for further detail).

²⁹ See: <http://www.pofc.qren.pt/areas-do-competec/incentivos-as-empresas/inovacao>

³⁰ In Portuguese, *Projectos de Empreendedorismo Feminino Qualificado*. See: http://www.pofc.qren.pt/resourcesuser/avisos/20081127_aac24_siinov_empreendfeminino.pdf

³¹ The authors use the term “partially executed” to categorize those measures which lacked continuity and were not totally executed (Ferreira, 2010b: 179-180).

2.6 Conclusion

The material reviewed in this chapter informs the design of this present research in several ways.

The data reviewed in this chapter shows the relevance of studying the gendered side of self-employment in Portugal. The cross-national patterns analyzed above suggest that self-employment is a gendered professional experience, in terms of rates and composition. They also reveal that there are phenomena of horizontal segregation, by activity; and that family help is mainly a women's domain, in opposition to the "visible" side of self-employment.

The relevance of the topic of this thesis, and of its analytical aims, is further supported by the growing relevance of entrepreneurship for policy-makers, both in Portugal and in the European Union.

In addition, the "older" age profile of self-employed persons suggests that people enter self-employment at a later stage of their lives. At the same time, transitions between different professional statutes indicate that when an individual becomes self-employed this may be connected with previous experiences, as employees or otherwise. These elements support the focus of this thesis on trajectories, as an analytical strategy to understand the way in which people do become self-employed workers.

Some of the contextualizing data which has been analyzed above have also governed the selection of industries for the sample. As has been explained, the sample focuses on three service industries: trade, restaurants and high-end services. Restaurants are a traditional sector, very much associated with family businesses in Portugal, where gender relations often follow a more traditional pattern. High-end services (which include professional, scientific and technical, as well as information activities) represent a more modernized sector of self-employment, involving higher levels of qualification (which are associated with less traditional forms of gender relations - See Chapter 3 below). Trade is a mixed industry, in this respect, depending on the type of product that is traded. Nonetheless, as this chapter has highlighted, this industry represents a considerable segment of the self-employment in the service industry in Portugal.

Finally, the debate on the concept of self-employment has further clarified the scope of this thesis; whereas the discussion on the greyer, less clear side of self-employment has highlighted the importance of an in-depth understanding of the processes involved in becoming self-employed, in which aspirations for autonomy and economic independence are analyzed taking into consideration the context in which these emerge.

3 Self-employment, gender and class: paths, experiences and interactions

The previous chapter has substantiated the relative high levels of self-employment in Portugal, and the general character of some gendered patterns, which distinguish the participation of women from men in entrepreneurship.

This chapter builds upon these patterns to develop the analytical approach of this research. It discusses the implications that locations in social space have upon experiences of self-employment, and emphasizes the insights that a focus on trajectories can give to the study of individuals' entry into entrepreneurship. In addition, it reviews the literature on gender and self-employment, and underscores the contribution that feminist theory can give to the analysis regarding the ways in which gender relations shape women's and men's paths into self-employment and the interaction between their businesses and their family lives.

In terms of structure, the chapter begins with a review of the literature on how locations in social space shape experiences of self-employment; then it discusses the contribution of feminist debates to the way in which gender is understood and analyzed in this thesis; and further, it reviews the research on gender and self-employment. The next section discusses the general terms and the gender dimension of the push-pull debate, which is so closely related to the subject and aims of this thesis. The conclusion summarizes the ways in which the material reviewed throughout this chapter informs the approach and the design of this research.

3.1 *Social space matters*

As discussed in Chapter 2, the “enterprise culture” (du Gay, 1996) tends to establish a link between having “enterprising qualities” and reporting entrepreneurial behaviours, such as setting up a business. This type of discourse is voluntary in tone and masks the social underpinnings that shape how an individual feels about working for herself/himself. It is the contention of this thesis that an individual's entry into self-employment is conditioned by her/his location in social space, in Bourdieuan terms (see below), because depending on an individual's location in social space, she or he might see self-employment as a feasible and desirable option, or the opposite.

Available research supports this contention, by pinpointing the importance of different forms of “capital” (in the Bourdieuan sense) – which are associated with an individual’s social background, educational qualifications, position in the labour market and networks of social contacts – for understanding pathways into entrepreneurship.

Social background may influence paths into self-employment in a number of ways: it may lead to business succession from one generation to another and provide people with resources (skills, financial, attitudinal, and social assets) that they can mobilize to set up their own business³².

In some cases, intergenerational reproduction of family businesses is associated with high levels of success and wealth (Lima, 2003; Mulholland, 2003). In others, succession results from an early involvement in the business and a premature exit from school (Guerreiro, 1996). There is evidence that parents’ efforts to prepare a successor nurture the desire of business succession among their direct descendants (Schröder, Schmidt-Rodermund and Arnaud, 2011; Carr and Sequeira, 2007). As a result, having a self-employed parent is relevant, but does not necessarily per se lead to business reproduction. As Kupferberg (1998: 180) pinpoints “it is [...] the quality of the encounters between the world in which one was born and grew up and the world one meets later in life that are decisive.”³³

A wealthy background may reduce each individual’s sense of financial risk, and make it easier for them to gather the seed capital they need to launch or buy a business (Minniti, 2009; Rodriguez, Tuggle and Hackett, 2009). Family background may also foster a leap into self-employment as a result of its structuring effects on an individual’s social network. Individuals are in a better position to consider working on a self-employed basis when they are in contact with people who have access to strategic resources from an early stage in their lives (Anderson and Miller, 2003). These resources include managerial qualifications and experience, money, and power in critical decision-making processes (bank credit, for example).

³² There is a correspondence between these resources and Bourdieu’s cultural, economic and social types of capital, which are discussed below.

³³ As shall be explored in this section, this insight is important for the approach of this thesis since it highlights the importance of looking at the social processes involved in the (non-)reproduction of self-employment in the family.

When people do not have a family background in self-employment, acquaintances play a crucial role in providing access to business opportunities (Renzully, Aldrich and Moody, 2000). This is in line with Granovetter's argument that "weak ties"³⁴ are relevant for an individual to gain access to "ideas, influence, or information socially distant" (1973: 1370-1371).

Educational qualifications ("cultural capital", in the Bourdieuan sense – see discussion below) may also make the prospect of self-employment more plausible. This association is clear in cases of professional self-employment (Budig, 2006), since such cases depend on an individual's formal education and the institutional organization of the occupation. In non-professional forms of self-employment, family social capital plays a more important role (Arum and Müller, 2004).

Self-employment may be a route to an improved socio-economic situation for individuals with lower educational qualifications ("cultural capital"), or for those who are discriminated against by the labour market (which is an indication of low "symbolic capital" in this respect, in the Bourdieuan sense – see below). It offers the opportunity to replace low wages and hard working conditions, while providing a sense of social integration (Kontos, 2004). By way of illustration, for petit bourgeois aspirants, working for themselves means the chance of improving the standard of living, as shown by a qualitative research on French traditional bakers (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, 1981). Research on migrants and ethnic minorities shows that some set up their businesses in order to improve their standard of living (Harvey, 2005), to counterbalance a "sense of blocked mobility" (Mason, 2003: 222), the "accent ceiling" (Collins and Low, 2010: 108), or to fight for recognition in their larger communities (Kontos, 2004). For some black women, intersections between race, class and gender turn self-employment into the only means of moving up the social ladder and of avoiding the path to low skilled jobs (Harvey, 2005).

Having said this, ethnic minorities may have different reasons to enter into self-employment. In Portugal, a comparison of three ethnic communities pinpointed that the Cape Verdians tend to resort to self-employment in order to avoid discrimination and unemployment, whereas the Indians follow a tradition of family

³⁴ Granovetter (1973: 1370) defines these ties as being the sector of an individual's social connections "in which not only will ego's contacts not be tied to one another, but they will be tied to individuals not tied to ego."

business, and the Chinese seize ethnic business opportunities (Oliveira, 2004). Finally, experiences of microcredit show that self-employment may also be a way of combating poverty³⁵ (Aagaard, 2011; Yunus, 2007).

The evidence reviewed above shows that becoming an entrepreneur is a long process involving resources which depend on individuals' locations in social space originating from their social background. In order to understand the way in which these locations shape individuals' pathways into, and also their experiences of, self-employment, this thesis builds upon Bourdieu's theory of practice and his reflections on class. It is the contention of this thesis that against a backdrop of the "enterprise culture" discourse, Bourdieu's work provides a conceptual framework whereby the multiple social underpinnings of entrepreneurship can be further explored as well as acquire an increased visibility.

The way in which Bourdieu justifies the development of his "habitus", and his theory of practice, shows how the potential of his work can lead to a better understanding of the way in which social context conditions the formation of practices

"[...] the main purpose of this notion is to break with the intellectualist [...] philosophy of action represented in particular by the theory of homo oeconomicus as a rational agent [...]. It is to account for the actual logic of practice [...] that I have put forth a theory of practice as the product of a *practical sense*, of a socially constituted 'sense of the game' [...]. I wanted [...] to account for practice [...] by escaping both the objectivism of action understood as a mechanical reaction 'without an agent' and the subjectivism which portrays action as the deliberate pursuit of a conscious intention [...]." (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 120-121, emphasis in the original)

In this context, "habitus" accounts for the set of dispositions that "agents" rely upon to interpret a situation and act upon it. It has a structured and a structuring nature, in that it is conditioned by the locations in social space and it conditions practice itself (Bourdieu, 1980). It has durable effects, but it does not operate in a mechanical way: it is (re)produced through practice (and therefore being affected by it); and it is developed throughout individuals' lives, starting with the dispositions

³⁵ In Portugal, the National Association for Microcredit was founded in 1998, inspired by Yunus' project. It offers personalized technical and emotional support to people in need, who intend to set-up a business, and facilitates contacts with critical institutions (Public employment services and banks) See: <http://www.microcredito.com.pt/>

inculcated in their first social experiences, in the form of a “primary habitus”³⁶ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000[1970]; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992).

Given the criticism that his theory was “overly reproductionist” (Crompton, 2008: 102), Bourdieu used to emphasize the “open” nature of the “habitus”, by stating that it “is not the fate that some people read into it”, and explaining that “it is an *open system of dispositions* that is constantly subject to experiences, and therefore constantly affected by them in a way that either reinforces or modifies its structures.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 133, emphasis in the original). As Bourdieu (idem) himself “immediately” would add, this is not to deny the weight of social conditions, which he describes in probabilistic (and not deterministic) terms.

In this context, understanding individuals’ strategies³⁷ implies exploring the internalization of “objective chances in the form of subjective hopes” as the (class) “habitus” develops (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 130). These strategies refer to specific “fields”, or structured domains of action, wherein agents occupy different positions according to the volume, structure, and trajectory of their capital (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 99). Bourdieu defines “capital” as “[...] accumulated labor [...] which when appropriated on a private [...] basis by agents or groups of agents enables them to appropriate social energy in the form of reified or living labor.” (Bourdieu, 1986: 46)

Throughout his work, Bourdieu identifies four different types of capital: the “economic”, the “cultural”, the “social” and the “symbolic” (Bourdieu, 1986; Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992). According to his words, the first is “immediately and directly convertible into money and may be institutionalized in the form of property rights”, whereas the second “[...] can exist in [...] the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods [...]; and in the *institutionalized* state”, in the form of educational qualifications (Bourdieu, 1986: 343). He defines the “social” capital as “[...] the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to [the] possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of

³⁶ Primary habitus results from “*the primary PA [Pedagogic Action] (the earliest phase of upbringing), which is carried out by PW [Pedagogic Work] without any antecedent (Primary PW)*”; it is “*characteristic of a group or class*”, and it “*is the basis for subsequent formation of any other habitus*.” (Bourdieu and Passeron, 2000[1970]: 42, italics in the original)

³⁷ Strategies are defined by Bourdieu as “objectively oriented lines of action that social agents continuously construct in and through practice.” (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 129)

mutual acquaintance and recognition.” (Bourdieu, 1986: 248); and considers that the “symbolic” capital is “the form [that] the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate.” (Bourdieu, 1987: 4)

In Bourdieu’s framework, types of capital work as “factors of differentiation”, which are essential in order to understand the structure of social space and construct “classes of conditions of existence” (Bourdieu, 1987: 3-4; Bourdieu, 1979: 112). In particular, the structuring effects of the unequal distribution of capitals are analyzed within three different dimensions of social space: agents’ “global *volume* of capital”; the “*composition* of their capital”; and “the evolution in time of the volume and composition of their capital” (Bourdieu, 1987: 4).

In *La Distinction* (1979:127-144), Bourdieu uses this framework to identify different locations in social space in order to understand lifestyles. He looks at the global volume of capital (mainly economic and cultural) in order to identify “primary differences, which distinguish the major classes of conditions of existence” (Bourdieu, 1979: 128, my translation³⁸). Then, he considers the composition of capital to identify “secondary differences”, that is, class fractions associated with “different forms of distribution of their global capital by the types of capital” (Bourdieu, 1979: 128-129). The result is the construction of a cross-shaped space of social locations, which considers the global volume of capital, on the vertical axis³⁹, and the weight of cultural and economic types of capital, on the horizontal axis⁴⁰. Finally, he looks at trajectories by analyzing the social origins of classes and their fractions.

Bourdieu’s exploration of trajectories also takes into account the ways in which strategies of reproduction work, and may change over time. According to his framework, these strategies are shaped by the relationship between two elements: the “volume and structure of capital to be reproduced” and the “state of the instruments of reproduction”, such as the education system and the labour market, which “set the transmissibility of the patrimony by fixing the conditions of its transmission” (Bourdieu, 1979: 145). When one of these elements changes, the strategies of

³⁸ The quotes from *La Distinction* (1979) presented below were also translated by the author of this thesis.

³⁹ This axis ranges from positions with less global volume of capital to positions with more global volume of capital.

⁴⁰ This axis ranges from positions associated with less economic capital/more cultural capital to positions that display more economic capital/less cultural capital.

reproduction are restructured. This restructuring is described by Bourdieu (idem) as “[...] a *reconversion* of a particular type of capital [...] into another type, more accessible, more profitable and/or more legitimate in a given state of the system of instruments of reproduction, [that] tends to determine a transformation in the patrimonial structure.”

This reconversion is important, for instance, for understanding how investments in school (cultural capital) by families located in the “more economic capital/less cultural capital” areas of the social space can be associated with a low level of occupational inheritance, or also associated with change in the way business is conducted (Bourdieu, 1979: 147-158)⁴¹. This particular insight is important for this present thesis given both its topic and the evolution of compulsory education in Portugal in the last century⁴².

The value of each one of the types of capital varies according to the “specific logic of field” and the “type that is necessary to play [the game]” (Bourdieu, 1979: 126). As a result, understanding practices implies considering the “field” in which these take shape as well as individuals’ “habitus” and the types and volumes of “capital” that they develop throughout their lives.

The framework described above shows the composite and multidimensional nature of Bourdieu’s approach to class, which has been stressed by several authors (Almeida, 1981; Costa, 1999; Savage, Warde and Devine, 2005; Weininger, 2005). In the last few decades, Bourdieu’s work has been discussed (with particular emphasis in the United Kingdom) as a point of departure for a new approach to the study of class. This discussion stems, among other elements, from Bourdieu’s use of cultural capital as a factor for differentiating locations in social space, in comparison with the focus on employment relations by the “employment aggregate approach”⁴³

⁴¹ These investments followed the historical rise in access to schools and levels of education in western societies in the last century. Bourdieu also refers to “vertical displacements”, but these are associated “only to a modification in the volume of the types of capital that is already dominant in the patrimonial structure.” (Bourdieu, 1979: 146, my translation)

⁴² Historically, the duration of compulsory education in this country has moved from three years (in 1938) to twelve years (in 2012). In between, compulsory education increased to four years of education (in 1960), to six years of education (in 1964), and to nine years of education (in 1986). See: <http://www.sg.min-edu.pt/pt/patrimonio-educativo/museuvirtual/exposicoes/escolaridadeobrigatoria/resenha-de-legislacao/>

⁴³ In Portugal, it is possible to identify three main contributions to the macro approach to class: Estanque and Mendes (1997), who use Wright’s theoretical model; Cabral (1998), who adapted Goldthorpe’s schemata; and the typology that has been developed by Almeida, Costa and Machado and their colleagues since the 1980s (Almeida, Costa and Machado, 1988; Costa, 1999). This typology

(Crompton, 2008; Crompton and Scott, 2005; Devine and Savage, 2005; Savage, Warde and Devine, 2005).

In his reflections on class, Bourdieu (1979, 1987) emphasizes the constructed nature of theoretical classes, the multitude of factors and dimensions that may explain practices in a particular field, and the limitations of class typologies. Consequently, his work is less focused on the development of class schemes based upon occupational criteria, than on “processes of class structuring” (Crompton, 2008). Bourdieu’s (1987: 13) assertion that “boundaries between theoretical classes [...] are similar [...] [to] a flame whose edges are in constant movement, oscillating around a line or surface” is paradigmatic of his thoughts in this respect, as Crompton (2008) highlights.

Actually, Crompton’s (2008) considerations on the confrontation between Bourdieu’s own approach and “employment aggregate” approaches to class are insightful since she emphasizes the specific usefulness of each one of them, and recognizes that a “national-level survey approach is not particularly suitable for the exploration of actual *processes* of class formation” (2008: 70, emphasis in the original). This idea of specific usefulness is also adduced by Devine (2010), when she compares the insights provided by a focus on processes of class reproduction (inspired by Grusky’s proposal), with the analytical virtues of a macro approach to class (in particular, Goldthorpe’s analysis).

Bourdieu’s approach is a valuable framework for the focus of this thesis on the process of becoming an entrepreneur, and the ways in which this is conditioned by resources that are socially available to individuals throughout their lives. In particular, this research considers Bourdieu’s focus on “classes of conditions of existence”, which underpin the development of “habitus”, and explores how individuals’ previous experiences, with regard to family, education and employment, shape the development of forms of capital which in turn contribute to their move into

is based upon two occupational indicators: occupation and professional status. Having said this, the influence of Bourdieu’s (1979) work on the theoretical reflections that underpin this work support the following remark: “Of course, socio-occupational indicators, however dense they may be in terms of dimensions, do not cover all the substantive scope of the social class concept. The socio-occupational indicators [...], despite their ability to make some of the most important social cleavages in this domain more operable [...], do so in an indirect and partial way. In general, they are not sufficient to answer, in the operational plan, to the key aspects of the analytical concerns which are raised by more elaborated and broad theoretical frameworks, such as Bourdieu’s [...]” (Costa, 1999: 231, my translation).

the “field” of self-employment, at an earlier or later stage of their lives. Class is, thus, explored by focusing on processes, by considering how critical social contexts contribute to the development of types and volumes of capital that individuals rely upon in order to enter self-employment. In particular, the analysis considers the following contexts: social background, education, occupation before self-employment, and marriage.

Consequently, the interview guide starts by exploring individuals’ social backgrounds, and their (educational, occupational and family) trajectories up until self-employment, in order to look at the development of types, volumes, and possibly, conversions of capital, which support their leap into self-employment at some point in their lives (see Chapter 4 below).

3.2 Gender matters

This section focuses on gender; a very much debated notion, since the 1970s. It clarifies the way in which gender is understood and approached in this present thesis, by discussing key areas of feminist thought. Then, it discusses the available evidence on how gender shapes self-employment, and pinpoints the way in which it contributes to the design of this research.

3.2.1 Building on feminist debates in the study of self-employment

Despite the attention that entrepreneurship has received from media and scientific journals, studying women’s self-employment is not among researchers’ preferences (Baker, Aldrich and Liou, 1997; Brush, 2006; Brush et al., 2010; Downs and Laufer, 2005; Greene et al., 2003; OECD, 2001). Not surprisingly, the study of women’s entrepreneurship is described as being at the “brink of adolescence” (Hughes et al., 2012: 429). Brush (2006: 615) explains this state of art by women’s recent entry into self-employment, by the assumption that this entry does not justify specific research, and by the lack of institutional and financial support for projects aimed at exploring if such justification does exist. As several authors refer, attempts to quantify the current situation “suggest that studies about women entrepreneurs comprise less than 10% of all research in the field.” (Brush et al., 2010: 1).

This bias has concealed women's activities as self-employed, and nurtured the assumption that "entrepreneurship" and "entrepreneur" are male concepts (Ahl, 2006). It is undeniable that research has moved forward since the 1980s, when the first wave of studies came to light. However, as Mirchandani (1999: 225) states "much of the literature on women and entrepreneurship does not address the consequences of adapting theories of entrepreneurship, developed through analyses of men's lives, to the experiences of women."

There is an abundant body of feminist production on employment and/or gender that can inspire such theoretical work (Ahl, 2006; Ahl and Nelson, 2010; Bird and Brush, 2002; Calás, Smircich and Clair, 2009; Greer and Greene, 2003; Hurley, 1999; Mirchandani, 1999; Smeaton, 2003). In particular, it is argued that feminist debates can provide an important contribution to research on gender and self-employment in three key areas: the use of gender (by discussing the implications of its descriptive use); the interaction between gender and other axes of social inequality (by exposing the risks of a mitigated essentialism); and the connection between paid and unpaid work (by pinpointing the bias underlying the view that family and business are independent spheres).

Oakley's (1972: 158) foundational assertion that "'sex' is a biological term" while "'gender' [is] a psychological and cultural one" challenged the assumption that biology determined the attitudes and behaviours of women and men. It emphasized the social construction of what it means to be a woman or a man in society, and was targeted against biological essentialism (Oakley, 1997). This emphasis on the social roots of women's and men's behaviour facilitated the dissemination of the "sex role" theory. In particular, of its assumption that there is a process of socialization by which new generations of women and men learn their specific roles in society (Connell, 1987). Despite its contribution to the discussion of sex roles, as cultural and changeable patterns, this framework presumes that women and men are *passive* learners of a *unified* set of feminine or masculine *traits* (Connell, 2002).

The focus on sex roles as a set of *traits* is problematic as it might lead to a descriptive use of term "gender", as a surrogate for "women" or "sex". A number of texts have shown concern over a widespread descriptive use of this concept, as it obliterates its subversive potential, and does not explain the recurrent asymmetrical

valuation of the masculine, in comparison to the feminine (Amâncio, 2003; Connell, 2002; Lorber, 2011; Oakley, 1997; Scott, 1999; West and Zimmerman, 1987).

Connell (2002: 9) targets this problem by emphasizing that “gender is, above all, a matter of social relations within which individuals and groups act.” The author elaborates on the connection between gender and bodies through the concept of “reproductive arena”, which is devised as the “arena in which bodies are brought into social processes, in which our social conduct does something with reproductive difference.” (Connell, 2002: 10). In this context, Connell (*idem*) defines gender as “the structure of social relations that centers on the reproductive arena, and a set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between the bodies into social processes.”

This view of gender as a structure of social relations, which shapes and is shaped by practices, resonates with West and Zimmerman’s (1987, 2009) defense of “doing gender”, as an alternative to the trait “approach”⁴⁴. They argue that gender “is something that one *does*, and does recurrently, in interaction with others.” (West and Zimmerman, 1987: 140; emphasis in the original).

This is an important insight because it highlights the idea that individuals are not *passive learners* of a set of attributes. The (re)production of gender relations depends on their practices of situated interaction (Connell, 2002).

By moving away from the trait “perspective”, the view that gender is a structure of social relationships also facilitates the discussion of multiple forms of gender relations. It avoids the mitigated essentialism underlying the “sex role” theory, which presumes that men and women develop a set of *unified* masculine or feminine features. The social structural perspective, which underpins Lorber’s and Farrell’s (1991:1) collection of key texts, underscores this problem by speaking “of genders, not simply gender”⁴⁵. In a similar way, West and Fenstermaker (1995: 33) focus on the “situated conduct”, by considering that gender is not disconnected from class, ethnicity and other sources of social inequality (also in West and Zimmerman,

⁴⁴ It also resonates with Bourdieu’s reflections on “habitus”, as a mediator between individuals and social structure (see the previous Section).

⁴⁵ Lorber and Farrell (1991:1) justify their preference in this respect, as follows: “because being a woman and being a man change from one generation to the next and are different for different racial, ethnic and religious groups, as well as for the members of different social classes.”

2009). In Portugal, Torres' work (2002) has analyzed interactions between class and gender through the idea of multiple genders.

Unfortunately, as Crompton (2003) notes, class issues fell into neglect with the "cultural turn" and the long-lasting effects of Butler's groundbreaking book *Gender Trouble* (2006[1990]). This is not to deny the importance of Butler's work, which destabilized the opposition between sex and gender, and inaugurated a relevant strand of reflection on the homophobic consequences of the heterosexism pervading in considering the *woman*, as the subject of feminist discourse (2006[1990]: xi).

Fraser's criticism of Butler's analysis is very useful in this respect, as Crompton (2003) explores and this thesis endorses. Through the "perspectival dualism" framework, Fraser (2003: 217) recovers the economic dimension of social life and emphasizes its interplay with the cultural dimension, without diluting their irreducible character. Crompton (2006: 23) builds upon Fraser's framework to highlight that the segregation and discrimination of women in paid labour stems "largely from the persistence of male breadwinner assumptions in a non male breadwinner era."

These inequalities are not captured by identity politics and its focus on sexual identity.

The interplay between the private and the public spheres of work, and its interactions with occupational class, have been analyzed by studies on employment and family life. Research has shown that women tend to carry out most of the burden of the "second shift" (Hochschild, 1989), to subcontract part of it to other women (who cannot afford to do the same), or to devote themselves to unpaid labour full-time. These patterns are observed in different western countries, despite national variations due to institutional factors (Amâncio, 2007; Barrère-Maurisson, 2003; Crompton, 2006; Crompton and Lyonette, 2007, 2010; Perrons et al., 2006; Scott et al. 2008; Warren, 2003, 2011. For Portugal, see Torres, 2004; Wall and Guerreiro, 2005).

The practical and symbolic division between unpaid and paid labour is central for understanding the ways in which "reproductive difference" (to use Connell's term) is socially processed and produces inequality between women and men.

Delphy's (2009[2001]) elaborations on the social genealogy of both sex and gender are relevant in this respect. By highlighting the idea that bodies are used as markers in social relationships, involving both division and hierarchy, the French author explains the inequality behind the division of labour, and shows that it is crucial for the (re)production of a gendered social order. Delphy's criticism of the original opposition between sex (as biological attribute) and gender (as a social construction) illustrates the skepticism with which French feminists received the latter, given their disagreement with the idea that sex preceded gender (Feuvre, 2002; Kergoat, 2004; Thébaut, 2004). In Portugal, Ferreira (2001) has echoed this concern through a reiterated preference for the Portuguese translation of the French expression "rapports sociaux de sexe", at the expense of gender.

In Connell's (2002) formulation, gender also precedes sex and involves inequality in the division of labour. In particular, gender relations "bring reproductive distinctions between the bodies into social processes" (as quoted above), and involve both power and production relations, as well as emotional and symbolic relations as key dimensions (Connell, 2002). Bourdieu also underlines the social origins of "sexual duality" and the need for considering the connections between paid and unpaid labour, in order to understand change and permanence in gender relations.

"The visible changes that have affected the condition of women mask the permanence of invisible structures, which can only be brought to light by relational thinking *capable of making the connection between the domestic economy, and thus the division of labour and power which characterizes it, and the various sectors of the labour market* (the fields), in which men and women are involved." (Bourdieu, 2001[1998]: 106; emphasis in the original)

This side of Bourdieu's work is less visible in Anglo-Saxon academia. There, his reflections on gender have been the focus of attention of texts aligned with the "cultural turn". These locate themselves in a "post-gender" era (Lloyd, 2003), or at a time when "words" matter more than "things" (Barrett, 1992). As a result, their intellectual enterprise shifts the axes of analysis (Adkins, 2004; Skeggs, 2004). For instance, Adkins (2004) argues that gender and social structure are concepts that no longer adhere to late modern society's movement towards de-differentiation. As a result, she focuses on individualization and difference rather than upon the inequality involved in the division of paid and unpaid labour (Adkins, 2004). In a similar vein,

Adkins works with a specific understanding of social reproduction and social change: her understanding of social reproduction focuses on the “shifting forms of (increasingly media mediated) female embodiment” (and not on the “recursive reproduction of social structures”); and her analysis of social change focuses on the “shifting conditions of social reproduction”, instead of considering “social change as an outcome of resistance to traditions and norms” (2004: 10). In this context, for Adkins (2008: 59-62), discussing “feminization” means analyzing the “‘sovereignty of appearance’ in the presentation of the self at work, instead of considering processes of gender occupational segregation.”

In line with its observations on Butler’s work, this present thesis does not share this type of cultural shift. Despite changes, with women entering male occupations and vice versa, it is the contention of this thesis that there are no empirical grounds for abandoning the analysis of feminization in the “classical” sense. The following patterns are crystal clear in this respect: firstly, more women have entered into male-dominated areas, than the contrary, given the devaluation of “female” occupations; secondly, the possibilities of women entering male-dominated areas are uneven, as they depend largely upon having a tertiary education, and a complex array of interactions between gender and other axes of inequality; thirdly, “choices” of tertiary degrees themselves continue to display a gender biased distribution, with more women in social sciences, arts and humanities than in engineering; and, finally, “gender essentialist” recruitment stereotypes continue to channel women into female occupations (England, 2010). In addition, there is strong cross-national evidence of gender inequality, in terms of occupations, industries, levels of payment and contractual arrangements. In particular, women tend to be under-represented in top management, to be concentrated in clerical and secretarial jobs, to predominate in service industries, to be penalized by the gender pay gap, and to prevail in part-time jobs (Menéndez, Fagan and Ansón, 2012; Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1999; Wajcman, 1998; Warren, 2010; Webb, 2010. For an analysis of the Portuguese situation, see Assunção, 2003; Casaca, 2010; Ferreira, 1999). There are indications of gender segregation even among the self-employed, as the previous chapter has shown.

The connection between this picture and the unpaid side of work is also strongly supported by research evidence, as noted above. Bourdieu (2001[1998]),

himself, identifies three principles, which underlie current stereotypes about women's (and men's) paid and unpaid work, and sustain the reproduction of gender segregation in the labour market. According to these principles, jobs suited to women are associated with domestic activities (education and caring); it is not acceptable for women to have authority over men; and men dominate with regard to the use of machines and technology. Moreover, Bourdieu (2001[1998]) also argues that gender patterns vary according to women's locations in social space.

This present research builds upon the literature reviewed above, in the following manner: it considers gender as a structure of social relations, (re)produced through practices of situated interaction. As a consequence, this thesis takes a classical stance on feminization and reproduction, and considers that the division of paid and unpaid labour is decisive for understanding the way in which gender relations shape both women's and men's pathways into, and also their experiences of, self-employment.

3.2.2 Insights from the research on gender and self-employment

The theoretical choices made in the previous section, with regard to the way in which gender is understood and analyzed in this thesis, support the discussion of the literature on gender and self-employment, in this present section. Three main issues are covered in this review: women's level of participation in self-employment; the types of business that women and men tend to develop; and the connection between family and business⁴⁶.

Official statistics and studies show that there is a lower level of participation of women in self-employment, vis-à-vis men, in western economies (Assunção, 2003; Kelley, Brush, Greene and Litovsky, 2011; Williams, 2000). This pattern is more evident among employers (Fouquet, 2005), as the previous chapter also substantiates.

Two types of strategies may be used to explain this pattern: a traditional approach, which focuses on an individual's traits; and a gender perspective, which

⁴⁶ Motivation for entering self-employment is also a key topic for this research. The literature on this subject is thoroughly analyzed in the next section, given both the analytical challenges that it puts forward, and upon which this thesis is built.

substitutes individualistic explanations for a contextualized understanding of an individual's entry into self-employment.

As Ahl (2006) and Hughes et al. (2012) observe, the former portrays entrepreneurship as a matter of individual "talent", or as an ability to overcome obstacles. It reproduces the "masculine domination" of the "field", by dissimulating the arbitrariness of its patterns (Bourdieu, 2001), and fosters the tendency for some women to conceal their own gendered experiences, as a strategy to avoid being patronized by their peers (Lewis, 2006). Alternatively, the gender perspective underlines the idea that moves into self-employment take shape within the dominant model of gender relations. This model constrains women's sense of being able to go self-employed, and their access to role models on which to rely upon to think otherwise, while nurturing men's relationship with management and entrepreneurship (Godwin, Stevens and Brenner, 2006; Klyver and Grant, 2010; Shinnar, Giacomini and Janssen, 2012; Terrell and Troilo, 2010). The results of the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor's (GEM) report on women, provides cross-national evidence that there are gender differences in terms of perceived opportunities, perceived capabilities, entrepreneurial intentions, and connections with entrepreneurs⁴⁷ (Keeley, Brush, Greene and Litvosky, 2011: 12-13).

Research on business succession lends further support to the gender perspective. Evidence from different countries, Portugal included, suggests that business succession tends to penalize female descendants, in that it is traditionally organized according to the primogeniture criterion: an implicit norm by which a business headed by a man passes into the hands of the eldest son in the next generation (Dumas, 1998; Jimenez, 2009; Lima, 2003; Mulholland, 2003). In these cases, daughters inherit family wealth, but they do not have access to business succession (Lima, 2003; Mulholland, 2003). When they do, they often undertake the job temporarily, and pass the control of the business into the hands of a man in the subsequent generation (Jimenez, 2009; Lima, 2003). Moreover, some women successors report a feeling of being a less viable successor, than a male sibling (Vera and Dean, 2005). This indicates the multiple ways in which gender stereotypes affect

⁴⁷ These indicators are defined as follows: perceived opportunities ("perception that there are opportunities for entrepreneurship in one's area"); perceived capabilities ("belief that one has the capabilities to start a business"); entrepreneurial intentions ("intent to start a business among non-entrepreneurs"), and being acquainted with an entrepreneur ("whether an individual knows an entrepreneur [or not]") (Keeley, Brush, Greene and Litvosky, 2011: 12-13)

the relationship of women with the idea of being in control of a business. In line with this dominant pattern of succession, there is evidence that having a self-employed father improves only men's chances of becoming self-employed (Arum and Müller, 2004; Hundley, 2006). Moreover, adolescent female descendants seem to aspire to getting a job outside their family businesses, or to aim to set-up their own businesses, instead of associating themselves with business succession (Schröder, Schmidt-Rodermund and Arnaud, 2011). This picture may change as traditional forms of gender relations are challenged, and a growing number of women set-up and control their own business (Jimenez, 2009). As a result, women with self-employed mothers may be in a better position to consider self-employment, than those who do not have that background.

This evidence reinforces the relevance of the gender perspective that underlies this study. It also suggests that forms of capital, which are nurtured by a social background in self-employment, may foster the idea in some women of having a business of their own, despite the penalizing effects that gender relations tend to have on their legitimacy to access business succession. However, more research on the interactions between gender and class is needed. This present thesis builds upon the analytical relevance of these interactions (See previous section), by focusing on the ways in which social background, as well as family, educational and occupational trajectories, contribute to the development of forms and volumes of capitals (in Bourdieuan terms) that are key for understanding the process of becoming self-employed (See research questions - Chapters 1, above, and 4 below).

The types of industry in which women and men tend to operate are also amongst the patterns more widely discussed by researchers. By and large, women report a higher incidence of businesses in retail trade and personal services (Anna et al., 1999; Godwin, Stevens and Brenner, 2006; Sappleton, 2009. For an analysis of the Portuguese case, see Assunção, 2003, 2006, and Chapter 2 above). As a consequence, the businesses of women tend to require a lower amount of seed capital; to be on a smaller scale; and to report lower levels of profitability (Downs and Laufer, 2005, Hundley, 2001; Manolova et al., 2012; Marlow and Patton, 2005; Mirchandani, 1999; Orser, Riding and Manley, 2006; Shaw et al. 2009). Some researchers have pinpointed that the idea that women under-perform in self-employment holds no water when analyses control for industry (Manolova et al.,

2012). It is undeniable that this procedure is crucial for an accurate picture of the current situation, and to dismiss any “trait” type of interpretation. However, it does not explain the higher concentration of women in economic areas where businesses are smaller and less profitable.

There are considerable parallels between the businesses that women tend to develop and the jobs that are predominantly occupied by female waged workers (Assunção, 2003; Downs and Laufer, 2005; Mirchandani, 1999; Sappleton, 2009). Research has shown that educational investments and labour market experiences are highly gendered (and classed) dimensions of people’s lives (Crompton, 2006; Crompton and Lyonette, 2007; Devine, 2010; Fagan et al., 2008; Rubery, Smith and Fagan, 1999; Scott, Crompton and Lyonette, 2010; Schoon, 2010. For Portugal, see Costa, Machado e Almeida, 2007; Casaca, 2010; Ferreira, 2010a; Lopes and Perista, 2010).

Ehlers and Main (1998) use the metaphor “pink-collar businesses” to emphasise the close connection between the industries where women are more concentrated, the smaller dimension of their businesses, and the tasks that are traditionally associated with their share of the division of work between genders. This parallel is explained by the tendency for people to develop businesses in areas that they are already familiar with, and where they can use their accumulated experience (Arum and Müller, 2004).

In addition, women with higher levels of education are in a better position, vis-à-vis other women, to get access to professional self-employment (Budig, 2006). Typologies of women entrepreneurs, developed in the 1980s (Cromie and Hayes, 1988; Goffee and Scase, 1985), underline interactions between gender and occupational class to explain different experiences of self-employment. By way of illustration, both teams found an “innovative” type of entrepreneur: a woman with a tertiary degree, a career path, and an experience of the glass ceiling before self-employment; who operates in highly-qualified areas and is critical of traditional gender roles (Cromie and Hayes, 1988; Goffee and Scase, 1985). These typologies show that there is an implicit essentialism in the analyses that focus on the “typical” profile of the woman entrepreneur, as Mirchandani (1999) notes.

Practices, in terms of investment and access to credit, seem to contribute the gendered picture described above. There is cross-national evidence that women and

men tend to self-finance their business start-ups, but that women usually invest smaller amounts of seed capital (Minniti, 2009). Similarly, a piece of research on small business owners shows that financial capital has a higher impact on the levels of profitability of men's businesses (Coleman, 2007). Studies on women's and men's access to credit portray a somewhat mixed picture. Some studies conclude that banks impose strict conditions on women's loans due to the poorer profitability prospects of their businesses (Carter and Rosa, 1998; Coleman, 2000; Marlow and Patton, 2005; Orser, Riding and Manley, 2006; Wu and Chua, 2012). However, other analyses indicate that women who enter non-traditional industries face obstacles in accessing resources (Godwin, Stevens and Brenner, 2006), or feel that they are not taken seriously by banks (Anna et al., 1999). As Wu and Chua (2012) note, discriminatory processes are subtle, and sample designs may neglect existing practices by categorizing as a female loan request every case in which women control more than fifty per cent of the business capital, irrespective of their association with male partners and actual distribution of power between them.

There are indications that social networks also contribute to the reproduction of gender inequalities in self-employment. In Bourdieuan terms, social capital is a structured social energy that multiplies an individual's volume of economic, cultural and symbolic capital with regard to self-employment (see section 3.1, above). As a result, the higher incidence of women in women entrepreneurs' social networks (Aldrich, Elam and Reese, 1997), and the development of homogenous founding teams, in terms of occupation, gender and ethnicity (Ruef, Aldrich and Carter, 2003), might reproduce the inequalities stemming from intersections between social background, gender and ethnicity. This pattern is acute for women operating in male-dominated industries, as they face the closure of dominant social networks through which strategic resources circulate (Sappleton, 2009). On the contrary, men benefit from larger and more diverse social networks (Keeley, Brush, Greene and Litvosky, 2011); and from a higher incidence of advice from other men and people external to their private circle (García and Carter, 2009; Keeley, Brush, Greene and Litvosky, 2011). There is also some evidence of gender differences with regard to the role that closer social circles have on business activity. Women tend to rely more on the advice of a spouse, whereas men report a higher incidence of advice from their friends (Keeley, Brush, Greene and Litvosky, 2011).

Altogether, these findings indicate that there is a mutual reinforcement of the gendered patterns regarding the conditions in which women and men have access to credit, their social networks, and the types of business that they tend to develop. These patterns support the gender perspective of this present thesis, which is not aligned with the “trait approach” (See discussion in previous section), but rather “focus[es] on gender as a process integral to businesses ownership”, as Mirchandani (1999: 231) argues. The available evidence also indicates that these gendered patterns interact with occupational class. Accordingly, they support the focus of this thesis on exploring the ways in which gender relations interact with social background, education and occupational experiences; and shape the processes by which women and men become self-employed in different areas of the economic activity (one of them highly qualified): restaurants, trade and high-end services (See Chapters 2 and 4 for a discussion on the selection of these industries). In this thesis, these interactions are explored through their implications on women’s and men’s different forms and levels of capital, according to Bourdieu’s framework (See discussion in Section 3.1 above).

Family has received scant attention from research on entrepreneurship (Anthias and Mehta, 2003; Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2007; Fitzgerald and Muske, 2002; Heck et al., 2008; Jennings and McDougald, 2007; Jimenez, 2009; Kirkwood, 2009a). As Ahl (2006: 604-605) notes, this is explained by the tendency for researchers to assume that entrepreneurship is a male concept; that there is “a division [...] between a public and a private sphere of life”; and that “‘family’ and ‘private’ [...] [are a] woman’s responsibility.”⁴⁸

However, the available evidence indicates that there are strong reasons for conducting further research on two interrelated topics⁴⁹: the involvement of the spouse in the business, and the balance between family and business.

The individual’s move into self-employment will be attended by varying degrees of support from the spouse; likewise the assistance on offer afterwards (at home or in the business) will differ. Research on mixed sex couples indicates that

⁴⁸ This state of art resurrects Feldberg and Glenn’s (1979) call for research in sociology of work to consider the bias underlying the use of segregated analytical models, namely those of the “gender” and “job” models, in order to study women’s and men’s respective relationships to employment.

⁴⁹ For a discussion of the intrinsic analytical connection between paid and unpaid labour in this thesis, see the previous section.

having a self-employed husband increases a woman's odds of becoming self-employed (Anthias and Mehta, 2003; Greene et al., 2003), especially in cases of non-professional self-employment (Budig, 2006). Business success boosts a spouse's chance of joining the business (Muske and Fitzgerald, 2006), and men usually develop more profitable enterprises (See discussion above). There are also indications that men count on a higher level of involvement from their wives, in the first year of their business (Matzek, Gudmunson and Danes, 2010); and that a committed spouse, who is supportive and helps at home, has an incremental effect on an individual's ability to overcome the hurdles involved in a business start-up (van Auken and Werbel, 2006). In addition, qualitative research indicates that women depend more on their husbands' incentive and advice than men do upon women, as they regard their wives' initial support as a continuum, which ranges from those men seeing it as cursory to seeing it as decisive (Kirkwood, 2009b). There are, thus, indications that gender relations shape the ways in which women and men portray their spouses' contribution to business and family/household tasks.

The spouse's participation in an enterprise reaches its highest level in a "copreneurship"; that is, when both members of the couple work in the business and participate in the decision-making process, irrespective of the formal ownership of the enterprise (Fitzgerald and Muske, 2002). Several analyses underscore the empirical relevance of "copreneurs" and the scant attention that family businesses have received from research (Blenkinsopp and Ownes, 2010; Danes, 2006). Even so, there is evidence that gender relations shape the business relationship between spouses. Men usually play a predominant role in the enterprise, especially in terms of decision-making, whereas women are in charge of a set of "invisible", but decisive, undertakings, both at the business (usually secretarial work and routine management) and at home (Blenkinsopp and Ownes, 2010; Dumas, 1998; Guerreiro, 1996; Jimenez, 2009; Ponthieu and Caudill, 1993). This pattern has been observed in Portugal, as strategic issues generally fall in the husband's realm, even in cases where both spouses are highly qualified and things are much debated (Assunção, 2006). Together with the practice of wives receiving lower salaries (Rowe and Hong,

2000), this division of tasks is underpinned by and contributes to a symbolic devaluation of women's contribution to businesses⁵⁰.

Behind this dominant pattern, there are tensions between spouses. These tend to revolve around unfair workloads, lack of role clarity, and failure to resolve conflicts (Danes and Olson, 2003). Later research indicates that tensions between spouses stem mainly from the "justice conflict" (that is, perceived unfairness with regard to the compensation of family members for their contributions), and from the "work and family conflict", which is expressed through a sense of unbalanced workloads (Danes, 2006).

When the business is the husband's domain, there are indications that some wives undertake a third shift (in the business), in addition to their daily activities in employment and in the household (Lee, Rowe and Hong, 2006; Rowe and Hong, 2000). This is not without its consequences for family life, as these cases report high levels of household tension (Philbrick and Fitzgerald, 2007). Alternatively, when women lead businesses, they seem not to count on their husbands for the same kind of help (Greene et al., 2004). By way of illustration, qualitative research on the home-based hospitality sector, a traditional industry, pinpointed that female sole proprietors did not expect their husbands, who were employed outside the business, to help them (Domenico, 2008). However, men operated in the opposite way, "and did not attempt to shield their wives from the intrusive nature of their businesses" (Domenico, 2008: 327). Further research on this particular topic is needed, as studies tend to portray the overlaps between family and business in a more harmonious way (Anthias and Mehta, 2003).

With regard to the balance between family life and business activity, there is also evidence that women and men operate in different circumstances (Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2007; Jennings and McDougald, 2007; Shelton, 2006). Women continue to hold the main responsibility for family and domestic tasks in the household, whereas men usually benefit from the support of their spouses in this respect (Anthias and Mehta, 2003; Eddleston and Powell, 2012; Kirkwood and Tootell, 2008; Loscocco and Leicht, 1993). In Portugal the situation is acute, as comparative

⁵⁰ This devaluation is also observed among wealthier ranks (not necessarily in "copreneurships"), where women are often portrayed as "spenders", despite their key role in maintaining a set of social and family relationships, which are crucial for the preservation of the enterprise (Mulholland, 2003; Poza and Messer, 2001).

research shows that men report particularly low levels of time spent in caring for children in this country (Williams, 2004). Women tend to report higher levels of conflict between family and business roles (Eddleston and Powell, 2012; Kirkwood and Tootell, 2008; Myrie and Daly, 2009). Research suggests that women try to tackle this conflict through different strategies, from blurring the boundaries between the family and the household (by working from home, for instance), to outsourcing the domestic and caring activities to third parties (Kirkwood and Tootell, 2008; Myrie and Daly, 2009). These strategies depend on the family budget (economic capital), and reproduce the gendered division of work, as they do not question the inequality behind it, and usually mean the employing of a woman when household tasks are outsourced.

This present thesis builds upon this literature to focus on the ways in which women and men portray the contribution of their spouses to their businesses, and the tensions that they feel in this respect (See the focus of the last research question on the interactions between family and self-employment – Chapters 1, above, and 4 below). By considering that there is a fundamental connection between paid and unpaid labour (See previous section), this thesis explores spouses' contributions in two spheres: the business; and the household/family tasks. Interactions between gender and class are explored through the analysis of how the individual's family and work trajectories shape her/his forms and levels of capital and, by so doing, contribute to their paths into, and also their experiences of, self-employment. The design of the sample is in line with this analysis, in that it considers industry as a sample criterion, in order to select areas of self-employment associated with different levels of education: restaurants and trade, on the one hand, and high-end services, on the other. For an explanation of the sampling criteria, see Chapters 2, above, and 4 below.

3.3 Looking afresh into the push-pull theory

In previous sections, it was argued that becoming self-employed is a long process that can be better understood by considering entrepreneurship as a “field”, within which people position themselves in different ways. Moreover, it was argued that studying the ways in which gender relations shape women's and men's pathways

to and experiences of self-employment involves considering the interactions between family and occupational experiences.

This section expands on these insights, to discuss the literature on motivation towards self-employment, which is a central issue for this thesis, given its focus on the process of becoming self-employed. In particular, it develops a critique of the analytical rationale of the push-pull theory, and underscores the contribution that a gender perspective can give to the study of pathways into self-employment.

3.3.1 The general debate

The push-pull debate focuses on the extent to which the individual is pressed into and/or attracted by self-employment (Bögenhold, 2000; Bosma and Levie, 2010; Carr, 1998; Duchénaut and Orhan, 2000; Felstead and Leighton, 1992; Hessels, van Gelderen and Thurik, 2008; Hughes, 2005; Kreide, 2003; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Kirkwood, 2009a; Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan, 2010; Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007; Smeaton, 2003). “Pull” factors have been linked to a genuine will to set-up in business (Duchénaut and Orhan, 2000), individual choice (Hughes, 2005), opportunity (Kirkwood, 2009a), or as something long-desired (Smeaton, 2003). Alternatively, “push” factors have been associated with necessity and the lack of alternatives (Hessels, van Gelderen and Thurik, 2008; Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a; Reynolds, Camp, Bygrave, Autio and Hay, 2002; Smeaton, 2003).

With the proliferation of studies on the effects of these factors or, to use the influential Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) terminology, on “opportunity-driven” and “necessity-driven” entrepreneurship, two areas of concern arose, and are critical to this present thesis: the analysis of the “pull” and “push” forces; and the relationship between these two sets of factors.

“Classical” research has developed an uneven battery of indicators to analyze “push” and “pull” forces; and has neglected the effects of gender relations. In this type of study, “pull” factors can include the desire for: independence or autonomy; fulfillment through meaningful work; creating one’s own working environment; being enterprising; facing challenges; seeking a social mission; making a fortune; attaining a certain level of power and social status (Duchénaut and Orhan, 2000; Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Smeaton 2003). GEM’s

surveys combine the desire for independence, or increased income, with an opportunity, in order to measure “opportunity-driven” entrepreneurship. However, “push” factors correspond mainly to unemployment and redundancy (Meager and Bates, 2004), or no alternative to work, which is the only (and too general) criterion used by GEM to identify “necessity-driven” entrepreneurship (Bosma and Levie, 2010: 61).

This type of research has been criticised for having neglected the effects of the corrosion of working conditions, and constraints associated with balancing work and private/family commitments (Ahl, 2007; Baker, Howard, Aldrich and Liou, 1997; Brush, 1992; Dows and Laufer, 2005; Gosselin-Lee and Grisé, 1990; Greene, Hart, Gatewood, Brush and Carter, 2003; Hughes, 2005; Mirchandani, 1999; Stevenson, 1986). As a result, a number of authors have called for a revision of the push-pull theory, so that it can accommodate the recent transformations in the labour market, and overcome its gender bias⁵¹ (Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a). Several analyses have contributed to a more comprehensive view of “push” forces, by pinpointing the role of constraining circumstances, such as insufficient income, dissatisfaction with working conditions, lack of career prospects, perception of an increased uncertainty in employment, unsuccessful job searching, gender discrimination, and balancing work and family (Block and Sandner, 2010; Duchénaut and Orhan, 2000; Hughes, 2005; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Meager and Bates, 2004; Kirkwood, 2009a; Smeaton 2003).

With regard to the relationship between “pull” and “push” forces, several authors have highlighted the idea that the reasons for becoming self-employed cannot be adequately summarized by either the “pull” or the “push” model alone; as setting up a business and going self-employed is a complex process that can involve both types of forces (Bögenhold, 2000; Brush, 1992; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Smeaton, 2003).

In particular, qualitative research has pinpointed the role that constraining circumstances, such as dissatisfaction with a job, for instance, can have on the individual’s desire for independence, and her/his leap into self-employment (Fenwick, 2003; Hughes, 2005; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Portela (Coord.), 2008). A

⁵¹ The gender dimension of this critique is discussed at length in the next sub-section, given its importance to this thesis.

similar conclusion has been drawn in relation to the decision to leave employment, which does not necessarily result in setting up in business (Marshall, 1995). At the same time, a number of studies have focused on biographical experiences, and underlined the relevance of both resources and turning points, such as life changes and adversity, for individuals' entry into self-employment (Anthias and Mehta, 2003; Apitzsch, 2004; Kontos, 2004; Kupferberg, 1998). These studies suggest that going self-employed is not the result of an inherent entrepreneurial drive, but an occurrence made possible by a particular biographical route and resources (Kupferberg, 1998).

However, some of these studies have focused on specific groups – for instance, women (Fenwick, 2003; Hughes, 2005; Mallon and Cohen, 2001), women in management (Marshall, 1995) or people with a background in humanities (Kupferberg, 1998). In addition, some of these analyses have placed more attention on identifying different patterns, than on elaborating on the social processes that may pervade in a number of them. This research addresses this issue by elaborating on social processes, of a “middle-range”, that mediate between specific patterns of entry into self-employment, and the broad notion of a “turning point”, which is very much associated with the life course approach (Mortimer and Shanahan, 2004)

The insights provided by qualitative research have fostered a reflection on the way in which methods have influenced research results. It has been recognised that qualitative methods capture better the mixes of “push” and “pull” forces that channel people into self-employment, as they give respondents a greater degree of freedom to formulate their own multiple reasons (Fenwick, 2003; Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a; Kupferberg, 1998; Moore and Buttner, 1997). In contrast, the use of quantitative methods has put a strong emphasis on the main reasons behind the move into self-employment, thereby contributing to a persisting dichotomist analytical tone (Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a). As a consequence, studies relying on quantitative methods have displayed a picture dominated by the influence of the pulling factors (Bosma, Jones, Autio and Levie, 2008; Schjoedt and Shaver, 2007), whereas qualitative research has given more expression to the influence of pushing forces (Hughes, 2003; Kirkwood, 2009a; Kreide, 2003).

These differences have raised some concerns about the interpretation of the categories by respondents in research conducted with the use of surveys. For instance, Hughes (2005) suggests that choosing the category “desire for

independence” may be the result either of a self-motivated search, or of a previous constraining experience. Possibly, the dominant discourse on being entrepreneurial (See Chapter 2 above) also affects the choices made in survey research, when it relies on the main reason, or on a checklist of reasons, for setting up in business.

The literature reviewed above shows that, by and large, the push-pull debate has oscillated between the acknowledgment that setting up a business might result from both “push” and “pull” factors, and a tendency to produce dichotomised analyses, despite the insights provided by qualitative research (Duchénaut and Orhan, 2000; Hessels, van Gelderen and Thurik, 2008; Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan, 2010). The call for a revision of the original push-pull theory is symptomatic of this state of affairs (Bögenhold, 2000; Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a; Mallon and Cohen, 2001); and has gained additional relevance given GEM’s influential use of “necessity-driven” versus “opportunity-driven” entrepreneurship.

As Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan (2010: 71) have succinctly put it: “although the need for a nuanced typology is recognized, one is yet to emerge in the literature. Further research to develop and validate categories of motivations that would go beyond necessity and opportunity-driven entrepreneurship is needed.”

This thesis aims at developing an interpretative framework that contributes to fill this gap, as the focus of the research questions indicate. However, it makes no use of the terminology “push” and “pull”, as it contends that an alternative framework requires a new terminology, not least because there is a conflicting relationship between these two terms, which is analytically misleading (as argued above). In line with the rationale of this thesis, these forces are reinterpreted through an approach that focuses on how choices develop within structural possibilities when individuals are confronted with specific events.

In analytical terms, this thesis explores individuals’ entry into self-employment as a biographical endeavour, in the sense of being a process that involves different dimensions of people’s lives and goes far beyond the time of setting up the business. This is in line with the discussion of the literature on social background and trajectories, as well as of the heuristic potential of Bourdieu’s concepts of “field”, “capital” and “habitus” for the study of self-employment (See Section 3.1 above). Moreover, this thesis aims at providing further theoretical developments in terms of identifying specific patterns and developing “middle-

range” notions (in the sense used above), which build on the insights provided by the analysis of trajectories and transitions in the life-course approach (Anxo, Bosch and Rubery (eds.), 2010; Mortimer and Shanahan (eds.), 2006). With regard to the analysis of the “push” and “pull” forces, this thesis, despite not using these terms, considers a broad array of potential triggers, since it focuses on family, educational and occupational trajectories. Finally, following the discussion on the mixed relationship between “push” and “pull” factors, this thesis intends to further explore not only situations where “push” forces stand behind cases apparently determined by “pull” forces, but also the opposite.

As far as the research design is concerned, the need for new theoretical developments supports the adoption of a qualitative research strategy, given the richness of qualitative data and its potential to explore ambivalence and multiplicity in social patterns and processes. In addition, the assumption that becoming self-employed is a long process, which involves multiple aspects of life, has direct implications upon the interview guide, as explained in Chapter 4 below.

3.3.2 Gender and the push-pull debate

This review of the gender dimension of the push-pull debate includes a criticism of its initial bias and the question of whether or not these factors motivate women and men in a similar way.

Several studies have given increased visibility to motives related to work and family balance, gender segregation, “glass ceiling”, and involvement in family businesses (Carr, 1998; Dows and Laufer, 2005; Gosselin-Lee and Grisé, 1990; Greene, Hart, Gatewood, Brush and Carter, 2003; Hughes, 2005; Fenwick, 2003; Smeaton, 2003). By so doing, these authors have underscored the myopia of “classical” analyses, as well as the faults of atomistic approaches, which neglect the connections between entrepreneurship and family life (Allen and Truman, 1992; Ahl, 2007; Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Allen and Truman, 1992; Brush, 1992).

The comparisons between women’s and men’s reasons for becoming self-employed show different results. Some studies indicate that women and men share similar types of motivation, whereas others point to gender-specific drives (Brush, 2006; Marlow, 1997; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan,

2010). This diversity stems from theoretical insufficiencies and differences (in terms of concepts and research designs), making it difficult to identify common patterns (Ahl, 2006; Berg, 1997; Elam, 2008; Moore, 1990). The review below distinguishes between research results indicating similarities, differences, or mixed patterns.

On the side of the similarities, the desire for autonomy, independence, or being in charge of one's own work, usually stand as the top "pull" motivator for both women and men across countries; and, in some studies, aiming for professional fulfilment also ranks high (Alstete, 2002; Baines, Wheelock and Gelder, 2003; Berg, 1997; Cromie, 1987; Duchénaut and Orhan, 2000; Gosselin-Lee and Grisé, 1990; Greene et al., 2004; Moore and Buttner, 1997; Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a, Licht and Siegel, 2008; Rindova, Barry and Ketchen, 2009; Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan, 2010; Stevenson, 1986). As a result, several analyses have highlighted the wide-ranging importance of non-financial reasons as being the forces which are pulling people into business (Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009a; Licht and Siegel, 2008). In Portugal, there are indications that non-financial reasons play a key role in women's and men's transitions from dependent employment into self-employment (Galego, 2006). However, other studies found that aiming for a higher income, or aspiring to a better life, are hand in hand with the desire for autonomy and professional fulfillment (Freire, 1995; Mendes (Coord.), 1998).

The differences that research has found between women's and men's motivations concern three main areas: the extent to which women and men are "pushed" into self-employment; family responsibilities associated with child rearing; and the joining of a spouse's business.

Some researchers suggest that women are more influenced than men by "push" factors (Orhan and Scott, 2001; Kirkwood, 2009). GEM's report on women entrepreneurs corroborates this idea, by pinpointing that "opportunity-entrepreneurship" (v "necessity-entrepreneurship") is higher for men in almost every country under analysis⁵² (39 out of 41) (Allen, Elam, Langowitz and Dean, 2008: 20).

⁵² The countries analysed in this report are: Argentina, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Croatia, Denmark, The Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Norway, The Netherlands, Peru, Porto Rico, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Turkey, The United Kingdom, The United States, Uruguay, and Venezuela.

At the same time, a number of studies suggest that women with children refer more to child-rearing and flexibility in their time-management as motivations for entering self-employment (Baines, Wheelock and Gelder, 2003; Baker, Aldrich and Liou, 1997; Cromie, 1987; Kirkwood, 2009a; Marlow, 1997; Orhan and Scott, 2000). However, there are indications that women can report imbalances between work and family life, and do not refer to child rearing as their sole or even as their main reason for entering self-employment (Baines, Wheelock and Gelder, 2003; Kirkwood, 2009a; Mallon and Cohen, 2001). In addition, there is evidence that women and men portray the implications of their family responsibilities differently. Women refer to their responsibility for emotionally supporting their children, whereas men underline their responsibility as the family breadwinner (Baines, Wheelock and Gelder, 2003; Kirkwood, 2009a). Qualitative research in Portugal has found cases of women with a low level of education, a large number of children and an unstable work trajectory, who left their jobs (because of difficulties in juggling work and childcare), and ended up working as self-employed (Portela (Coord.), 2008).

Entering self-employment in order to join a spouse's business also seems to motivate more women than men (Kirkwood 2009b; Smeaton 2003). Despite this contrast, some studies do not consider this motivation, given its ambiguous nature in relation to the push-pull dichotomy (Smeaton 2003).

Mixed results are reported with regard to job dissatisfaction, labour market discrimination, and financial considerations. Despite the indications that job loss and job dissatisfaction motivate both women and men (Alstete, 2002; Baines, Wheelock and Gelder, 2003; Cromie, 1987; Hughes, 2005; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Stevenson, 1986), there is evidence which suggests that the latter - dissatisfaction - is referred to more often by men (Kirkwood, 2009a). In a similar way, a number of studies show that discrimination and "glass ceiling" experiences are behind some women's entry into self-employment (Cromie, 1986; Marlow, 1997; Moore and Buttner, 1998). However, other research notes the absence of the "glass ceiling" theme from women's accounts (Kirkwood, 2009a). Not finding this theme does not eliminate possible effects of gender discrimination, as women's occupational trajectories may involve a range of gendered experiences which stem from horizontal and vertical forms of segregation. For instance, research conducted in Portugal has shown that women are more likely to move from non-employment to self-

employment the longer they are absent from the labour market, or because they anticipate poor prospects of employment (Galego, 2006).

Finally, there are indications that men are more motivated by financial considerations (Carter, Gartner, Shaver and Gatewood, 2003; Cromie, 1987; Marlow, 1997). These findings are not echoed by studies which display the opposite pattern (Fischer, Reuber and Dyke, 1993), or detect similarities between women and men in this respect (Kirkwood, 2009a). In Portugal, research has concluded that the prospect of higher financial gain is relevant for women moving from no-employment into self-employment, but not for men in similar circumstances (Galego, 2006).

The evidence reviewed above contributes to the development of this present thesis in three ways. Firstly, it supports the focus of the research questions on the process of becoming an entrepreneur (as developed above). Secondly, it shows the analytical potential of studying women's and men's reasons for becoming self-employed from a gender perspective that considers the interactions between the occupational sphere and family life. Thirdly, the top position that independence and autonomy occupy in the reasons given by women and men for becoming self-employed, together with the indications of the complex nature of the relationship between "push" and "pull" forces (See Section 3.3.1), reinforce the pertinence of the approach of this thesis. In particular, of its understanding that becoming self-employed is a long process involving choice within structural possibilities, in the face of specific events/situations.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a diverse body of literature in order to facilitate a bridge between the study of self-employment, Bourdieu's theory of practice, as well as insights provided by both feminist debates and research on biographical experiences leading to entrepreneurship. This procedure was motivated by the long culture of "phenomenon-driven research" that characterises the study of entrepreneurship, according to Bruin, Brush and Welter (2007).

The analytical approach resulting from this synthesis is anchored in the following assumptions, as explained throughout the chapter:

Firstly, this present thesis considers that an individual's entry into self-employment as being a long process. It goes back to a person's earlier social insertions, and depends on the transferability of their different forms of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic, in Bourdieuan terms) into entrepreneurship, and the type of situations/events that they are confronted with. This view focuses on the process of becoming self-employed (as underlined in the title of this thesis), at the expense of the idea that individuals are (more or less) intrinsically entrepreneurial. As a consequence, there is a focus on trajectories (in particular, on individuals' social origins, and educational, occupational and family trajectories), which goes far beyond the stage of setting up in business, as the formulation of the research questions indicate (See Chapters 1 above, and 4 below). This approach is supported by some of the evidence reviewed above, and aims at contributing to the overcoming of the theoretical difficulties posed by the relationship between the "push" and "pull" factors, and their gender bias, as discussed above.

Secondly, this research explores the ways in which gender relations shape the pathways into, and also the experiences of, self-employment by considering gender as a structure of social relations, which is (re)produced through situated practices of interaction, and involves an unequal division of (paid and unpaid) labour between women and men. This analytical strategy is supported by the evidence discussed above and informs the formulation of the research questions (See their focus on the interaction between the family and the occupational sphere for both women and men – Chapters 1 above, and 4 below).

Using this approach to study self-employment in Portugal is innovative and relevant, given its original features, and the high levels of self-employment of both women and men in this country (See Chapter 2 above).

The analytical framework, summarized above, shapes the design of this research. As explained in the preceding sections, it justifies the development of a qualitative research strategy (given its potential to uncover complex patterns and build theory); the use of industry and gender as sampling criteria (to capture a relevant diversity with regard to interactions between gender and occupational class), and the selection of topics for the interview guide (covering the family background; the educational, occupational and family trajectories; as well as interactions between business and family life). These elements are further explained in the next chapter.

4 Research design

The two previous chapters reviewed the literature on self-employment, gender and entrepreneurship, and explored the characteristics of self-employment, with a particular focus on Portugal and southern Europe.

This chapter builds on this discussion, to support the aims and research questions of this present thesis, as well as its overall design. In particular, the following aspects will be considered in the next pages: (a) research aims and questions; (b) research strategy, design and method; (c) the time and the site of the research; (d) sampling strategy and access to research participants; (e) ethical procedures; (f) sample; (g) analysis and presentation of data; (h) reflexivity; and (i) the limitations of the research. This listing of the topics helps to give an organization and clarity to the chapter, but it does not equate with a linear understanding of the development of the research process.

The conclusion presents a brief summary of each of the elements considered in the chapter.

4.1 Research aims and questions

This present study aims to explore the ways in which self-employed women and men, who have set up a business in the service industries, perceive their pathways into self-employment, and the interaction between their business and family life. In addition, this thesis aims to contribute to the theoretical consolidation of the research on gender and entrepreneurship, by combining insights from research on gender and (self-)employment, studies using biographical methods, feminist theorising, as well as Bourdieu's theory of practice (See Chapter 3 above).

The following research questions were formulated to accomplish these aims.

1. How do self-employed women and men, who have set up a business in the service industries, describe their educational, occupational and family paths before entering self-employment?
2. How do they understand the moment when they became self-employed?
3. How do they make sense of the reasons that led them into self-employment?

4. How do they describe the interactions between self-employment and the family since they have become self-employed?

The formulation of these aims and research questions has evolved over time, as reviewing of literature and contact with research participants progressed and the angle of analysis of this research took shape.

4.2 Research strategy, design and method

This study has an interpretative thrust, as its aims and research questions anticipate. Several authors have underlined that qualitative research is an appropriate strategy when studies focus on exploring lived experiences, subjective meanings, and social processes (Bryman, 2004; Denzin and Lincoln, 2008; Kvale, 1996; Gubrium and Holstein, 1997; Mason, 2006; Smart, 2009). As Mason (2006: 1) summarises, qualitative research “has an unrivalled capacity to constitute compelling arguments about *how things work in particular contexts*” (emphasis in the original).

Analysing “how things work” is, thus, in line with the aim of exploring women’s and men’s processes of becoming self-employed, and the ways in which they perceive the interactions between self-employment and personal/family life. Moreover, a qualitative research strategy gives more visibility to a way of living that is under-researched, even in Portugal, despite its relevance for southern European countries (See Chapter 2 above).

The use of qualitative interviewing as a research method fits into the focus and approach behind this thesis. As several researchers have underlined, this method is suited to studies which aim at exploring the ways in which people experience different features of their lives (Kvale, 1996; Mason, 2006; Smart, 2009). Smart (2009: 295), in particular, highlights that “collecting in-depth interview data brings richness and complexity to understanding social life.”

The preparation of the interview guide has considered the research questions and the theoretical synthesis resulting from the literature review. After the introductory explanations, the guide includes an opening question. Subsequent

questions are organized in thematic groups. The sequence is as follows (See Appendix 1 – Interview Guide):

- Opening question (asks individuals to describe their trajectories up until the creation of their current business, starting with their social background and their parents' way of making a living);
- family background (which considers, among other features, possible contacts with self-employment in the family circle);
- educational trajectories (which looks at the development of the individual's education, and its implications on entering self-employment);
- occupational and family trajectories up until the business set up (which explores trajectories, transitions, and interactions between these two key areas of people's lives, possibly involving previous experiences of self-employment);
- entering self-employment, and interaction with family life (which focuses on the circumstances, processes and key factors behind this entry. Given the political commitment to foster entrepreneurship, this group of questions also explores whether interviewees have benefited from any policy, in setting up their business. Questions about the business are also included, for contextualising purposes);
- self-employment in the present and interaction with family (which focuses on the current activities and interactions with the family);
- self-employment in the future (explores individuals' expectations regarding the tasks they perform and the business future, in order to explore whether or not they aspire to a family succession).

The initial question (referred to above) has provided important insights regarding the context, events and processes involved in interviewees' pathways into self-employment. These have framed the development of the interview. As a result, the interview guide was used as an orientation, as a point of departure, and not as a rigid structure to be imposed on research participants. It has worked mainly as a mental structure, while every effort has been made to adapt it to interviewees' responses, by following their leads, while keeping in mind the purpose of the research.

The focus on trajectories and transitions in a cross-sectional study, such as this, is not immune to failures of memory, as some authors recognise (Bertaux, 2006; Dex, 1991). However, as several qualitative studies have shown (See discussion in Chapter 3 above), the richness of data provided by this type of research offers invaluable interpretative insights into the ways in which people experience self-employment.

Before designing the interview guide, a set of interviews was conducted with representatives of a number of organizations in Portugal, which are connected with different aspects of self-employment. Representatives of the following organizations were interviewed:

- the Portuguese Entrepreneurial Association;
- the Portuguese Association of Small and Medium Enterprises;
- the National Association of Young Entrepreneurs;
- the National Association for the Right to Credit;
- the Portuguese Confederation of Trade and Services;
- the National Federation of Business Angels Associations – Portugal;
- DNA Cascais: a local initiative aimed at promoting self-employment among the residents in Cascais. This town is within Lisbon Region, the area covered by this study;
- The IEF – Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional (Institute for Employment and Professional Training), which runs public programmes aimed at promoting self-employment amongst the unemployed.

These contacts were important in forming a richer picture of the issues and problems involved in promoting self-employment in Portugal, and have informed some of the remarks on policy-making that are presented in Chapter 8.

4.3 The study sample, time and site of the research

The definition of the temporal focus of this research has considered the interest of European and Portuguese policy-making in entrepreneurship, in the last decade (See Chapter 2 above); and the time of the setting up of the business. With regard to the latter, nascent business-owners, with less than a year in their present

role, were not included in the sample, as their experience would be at a very early stage, and possibly prior to the stabilization of organizational settings. The accessibility of the public records from 2005 onwards (See access to research participants, in Section 4.4 below), has also determined the period of business set-ups under analysis.

In this context, this research targets self-employed people, who have set up a business between 2005 and 2008. In four cases, however, the “new” business emerged as a development of a previous one, in the charge of the interviewees. These situations were reported by older interviewees; and were included in the sample, by analogy, with interviewees who had previous experience of self-employment, before setting up a new business between 2005 and 2008.

In geographical terms, this research focuses on the Lisbon Region, as defined by the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes (NUTS)⁵³. This region includes two main areas (Great Lisbon, and the Peninsula of Setúbal - See Figure 1 below); the capital of the country (Lisbon); and the Lisbon Metropolitan Area (which concentrates a high proportion of the resident population)⁵⁴.

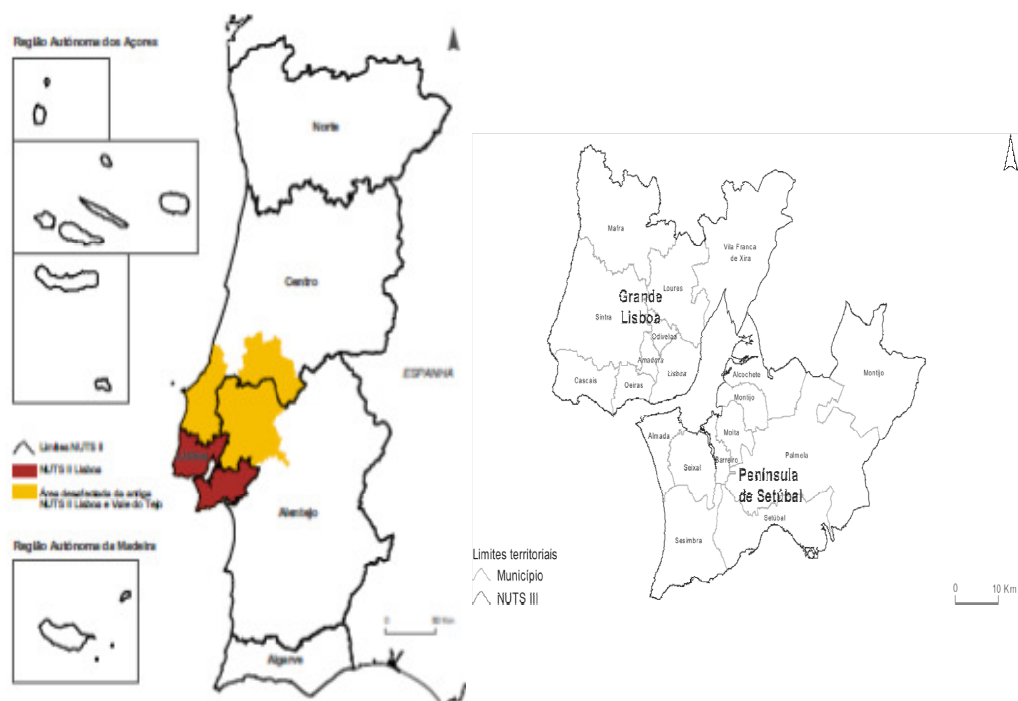
The Lisbon Region reports the highest density of enterprises in the country (108.3 enterprises per km² – see Table 6 below); and the highest birth rate on the continent (16.88%) and in the service industries (17.66%) (See Table 7 below). It is also the region with the lowest survival rate in the country (44.96%). Finally, as in other regions, business start-ups in this area involve a limited number of employed persons (See Table 7 below).

The concentration of enterprises in the Lisbon Region and the high incidence of new businesses in the service industries make this region a relevant site for developing this research.

⁵³ This classification was produced by the Portuguese Institution, which is responsible for the official statistics – the *Instituto Nacional de Estatística* (National Institute of Statistics). Portugal is divided into seven regions at this level (II) of disaggregation: North, Centre, Lisbon, Alentejo, Algarve, the Autonomous Region of Madeira and the Autonomous Region of Azores

⁵⁴ There is a bipolarization of the distribution of the population across the territory around the Lisbon Metropolitan area and the Oporto Metropolitan area.

Figure 1. Map of Portugal (Lisbon Region coloured in dark orange) and detail of the Lisbon region (NUTS II - on the right)



Source: INE (2010), *The Territory: 2008. Lisbon Region*. Lisboa: INE, p. 2.

Table 6. Density of enterprises by NUTS II in Portugal, in 2009

<i>NUTS II</i>	<i>No./km²</i>
<i>Portugal Total</i>	11.5
<i>Continent</i>	11.4
<i>North</i>	16.1
<i>Centre</i>	8.1
<i>Lisbon</i>	108.3
<i>Alentejo</i>	2.1
<i>Algarve</i>	11.6
<i>A.R. Azores</i>	8.5
<i>A.R. Madeira</i>	27.3

Source: Adapted from INE (2010), *Statistical Yearbook of Portugal 2009*. Lisboa: INE, p. 329.

Table 7. Business demographic indicators by NUTS II in Portugal, in 2009

<i>NUTS II</i>	<i>Birth rate</i> %	<i>Birth rate in services</i> %	<i>Survival rate</i> (two years) %	<i>Average number of</i> <i>persons employed in</i> <i>enterprise births</i> <i>No.</i>
<i>Portugal</i>	15.09	16.33	49.36	1.28
<i>Continent</i>	14.99	16.24	49.35	1.28
<i>North</i>	14.04	15.51	52.65	1.36
<i>Centre</i>	13.50	15.14	52.48	1.26
<i>Lisbon</i>	16.88	17.62	44.96	1.24
<i>Alentejo</i>	14.95	16.07	49.52	1.22
<i>Algarve</i>	15.92	16.50	47.60	1.29
<i>A.R. Azores</i>	19.04	19.72	46.06	1.23
<i>A.R. Madeira</i>	16.30	17.47	53.01	1.28

Source: Adapted from INE (2010), *Statistical Yearbook of Portugal 2009*. Lisboa: INE, p. 331.

4.4 The sample strategy and the access to research participants

Sampling strategically, or purposefully, is in line with the intention of developing an in-depth understanding of the process of becoming self-employed, and of the interaction between the business sphere and family life. In this context, this thesis has used theoretical sampling, in its general formulation, which Mason (2006: 124) defines as follows: “In its more general form, theoretical sampling means selecting groups or categories to study on the basis of their relevance to your research questions, your theoretical position and analytical framework, your analytical practice, and most importantly the argument or explanation that you are developing.”

The construction of the sample is based on two criteria: gender, and the industry in which the self-employed people operate. The former was chosen to come in line with the research questions, and the understanding that gender relations involve a special relationship with bodies, and an unequal division of paid and unpaid labour (See Chapter 3 above). The second criterion is of significance, as different industries are associated with different profiles of self-employment (See Chapters 2 and 3 above). Accordingly, the selection of a particular set of industries was aimed at covering a (relevant) diversity, and collecting data from self-employed women and men operating in the same areas of economic activity. In particular, this procedure was aimed at incorporating industries associated with different levels of

education, tradition/innovation, and incidence in Portugal, which may be associated to diverse configurations of gender relations (See Chapters 2 and 3 above). With this rationale in mind, the following areas were selected: restaurants, trade, and high-end services (which include professional, scientific and technical activities, as well as computer programming, consultancy, and related activities – see Chapter 2 above).

As a result, the sample targets self-employed women and men who: (1) have set up their businesses (alone or in association with others) in restaurants, trade, or high-end services; and (2) participate in the operational tasks of their enterprise. As family workers do not own the business in which they work, they are not part of this study. However, this research considers the ways in which relevant others may contribute to individuals' activities as self-employed people, as explained above.

In terms of dimension, a provisional sample of 48 research participants was initially defined, including the following quotas⁵⁵:

- At least 8 women operating in restaurants;
- At least 8 men operating in restaurants;
- At least 8 women operating in trade;
- At least 8 men operating in trade;
- At least 8 women operating in high-end services;
- At least 8 men operating in high-end services.

These sample quotas were a starting point, as definite decisions in this respect would consider the development of the research process; in particular, whether the data was enough to answer the research questions in an adequate manner, given the time and the money available for this research. Several authors refer to a saturation point as being the right moment to stop recruiting new research participants; that is, the point at which the recruiting of new people adds no new information to the knowledge of the researcher (Mason, 2006; Bertaux, 2006). To facilitate this decision, Mason (2006) advises researchers to consider the level of understanding that they obtain from the data, as the fieldwork progresses.

In this research, these considerations justified the decision to stop the recruitment of research participants after the initial target: forty-eight interviewees

⁵⁵ Here, Mason's (2006: 140) scheme is followed for presenting the quota target list.

(See Section 4.6 below for their distribution by the sampling criteria). By this time, it became apparent that a level of saturation had been achieved, which contributed to an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study, and what is more that extending the recruitment might compromise the development of this research, given the time and financial resources available to conduct it.

The access to potential research participants was mainly through the records that are made available via the site of the Portuguese Ministry of Justice, on the internet⁵⁶. These records contain the details of the registration of incorporated businesses⁵⁷ in Portugal since 2005, under the programme “On the Spot Firm”⁵⁸. As this register contains the name of the enterprise, its activity, legal form, address, initial capital, and the name of its owners, it enables the selection of potential research participants, according to the sampling criteria.

Other possibilities had been considered and explored before devising this strategy. However, these had involved being confronted with the layers of bureaucracy involved in the negotiation of access to wider records; the dispersion of the self-employed population by different public services (See Footnote 45 below); and the limitations involved in accessing individuals through the intermediation of various associations.

In contacts with different organizations (See the list in Section 4.2 above), the possibility of intermediation was discussed. However, the obligation of these set-ups to protect the personal data of their affiliates/users, together with their limited resources, compromised this type of solution in some cases. In addition, in certain instances, it was suggested that a couple of individuals, who had been previously selected by third parties, could be interviewed. The risks of following this procedure would have been high, as it was clear that this selection would have tended to focus on successful cases.

These difficulties, and the access to the records produced from the programme “On the Spot Firm”, supported the choice of the plan adopted with

⁵⁶ The link for accessing these records is: <http://publicacoes.mj.pt/Pesquisa.aspx>

⁵⁷ These records are centralised by the National Registration of Collective Persons (Registo Nacional de Pessoas Colectivas - RNPC), and do not include unincorporated businesses. Since the 1990s, unincorporated self-employed people do not need to register in this service. They just have to register the beginning of their activity, for tax purposes, at the Ministry of Finance.

⁵⁸ This programme has simplified substantially the bureaucratic procedures for creating a business in Portugal (see Chapter 2 above).

regard to accessing potential research participants. In operational terms, the strategy for contacting potential research participants was developed gradually, in three waves, each one with the following five phases:

1. Collecting contacts from on-line records. This task involved some pragmatic decisions, given the massive quantity of records available and the limitations of the on-line search tools. Besides the registration of enterprises, these records include a myriad of bureaucratic procedures that enterprises must comply with, such as the submission of their annual accounts. As most of the enterprises submit these accounts during March, June and July⁵⁹, these months were excluded from the search. Initially, the collection selected the first two registrations appearing in the rather lengthy daily listings. Then, as the interviews were being undertaken, more contacts were found by using keywords (for the name of the business in the search field), such as “trade” and “restaurant”, in order to more efficiently identify potential research participants in these industries . Through this method, it was possible to collect 1386 records, which were then filtered according to the sampling criteria, and reduced to a total of 550 potential research participants.
2. Sending the invitation letter. This phase involved searching for a telephone contact to follow up the invitation letter. This search used both the internet and services targeted at selling this kind information. However, it did not produce the anticipated results for the majority of potential research participants. The content of the invitation letter was therefore adapted, in order to cover cases irrespective of the availability of a telephone number⁶⁰. All the invitation letters were sent out between November 2009 and March 2010. (See Section 4.5 below, for ethical procedures concerning the invitation letter.)
3. Following up the invitation letter and arranging the interviews. As the invitation letter contained the email and telephone contact numbers of the author of this thesis, several people took the initiative of contacting, and did not wait for the follow-up call to accept the invitation. Several individuals

⁵⁹ This information was received during an interview with one of the people responsible for this area.

⁶⁰ Two different letters were prepared. When there was a telephone associated with the business, the person was informed that the liberty would be taken, of contacting her or him by telephone within a week; in the remaining cases, the person was asked to contact the sender, if they wished to participate in the study.

received the letter, but, as was explained to them, did not come within the conditions of the research; so they could not be included. This happened, either because they had a business but their participation in its operations was very limited; or because their business was no longer working, or was about to be closed down. In other cases, there was a telephone number, but it did not work. During the contacts with potential research participants, the information contained in the invitation letter was reiterated, emphasising the aims of research, its independence and ethical procedures, as well as the openness to answer any questions concerning the study. The interviews were arranged according to research participants' diaries and commitments. (See Section 4.8 below for further considerations on the reactions to the invitation letter).

4. Undertaking the interviews. Most of the interviews have taken place at the business sites, to allow for some observation, and make the surroundings of the interviews more comfortable for the interviewees. In some cases this was not possible, because interviewees themselves preferred to be interviewed in another place; for instance, in a coffee shop. (See Sections 4.5 and 4.8 below for ethical procedures and a reflection on the context of the interviews, respectively.)
5. Following the interviews. Collating of notes on their context and substance, which were used for the analysis and considerations on reflexivity.

4.5 Ethical procedures

The guidelines produced by the British and the Portuguese Sociological Associations attest to their concern regarding the ethical conducting of research. As several authors have underscored, ethical considerations shape the research process in several ways, and do not leave the researcher on completion of a piece of work (Kvale, 2007; Mason, 2006).

This research, in particular, involved the concerns and ethical procedures described below.

To start with, the definition of its purpose has taken into account the relative scarcity of studies on “petty” businesses, and the gender bias behind most of the

research on entrepreneurship (See Chapter 3 above). Despite the political and media discourse, which praises the initiative of those who start up a business, research has not yet provided an in-depth picture of the complex (and gendered) processes involved in individuals' pathways into, and also the experiences of, self-employment.

The ethical considerations regarding the preparation of the interviews are reflected in three documents: the letter inviting people to participate in the study; the information sheet; and the informed consent form (See Appendix 2).

The invitation letter was sent out on headed paper, with the logo of both the University of Manchester/School of Social Sciences and the Technical University of Lisbon/Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences⁶¹. It covers the following topics: the identification of the researcher; the institutional context of the study, and its aims; the source of individuals' contacts; the areas covered by the interview (should they accept the invitation), its arrangement and estimated length; the procedures regarding the protection of anonymity and confidentiality; the organization of subsequent contacts; and the contact details of the researcher (telephone number, postal and e-mail addresses).

The information sheet was also printed on headed paper⁶². It is organized in a sequence of questions/responses, in order to facilitate its reading, and the understanding of its content. It covers the following aspects: an invitation to participate in the study; the willingness of the researcher to answer questions/queries concerning the study; the institutions, and the team involved (with contacts); a simplified provisional title of the research and its general aim; an explanation of why the person was contacted, and what is expected from research participants; the request of authorisation to make an audio recording of the interview; the possible disadvantages/advantages of participating in the study; the voluntary nature of this participation; and the use of data.

As far as the use of data is concerned, the information sheet explains the procedures aimed at protecting the confidentiality of data, and the anonymity of the research participants. The confidentiality has relied on the storing of the recordings in a safe place; ensuring that the transcription is the sole responsibility of the author

⁶¹ Both Universities are involved in a split-site arrangement, as the writer works at the Technical University of Lisbon/Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences, in Portugal.

⁶² Only with the logo of the University of Manchester/School of Social Sciences, which is the institution awarding the PhD.

of this thesis; limiting the access to transcriptions to the team involved in the PhD; and destroying the recordings ten years after the last publication using this data. The protection of anonymity is ensured, by including only excerpts of the transcriptions in the thesis, and in future publications; and by the use of pseudonyms from the outset of the transcription stage. The voluntary nature of the participation has implied that individuals could refuse to participate, or withdraw from the study at any moment, without being required to give any justification. In the case of withdrawing from the process (which was not observed), there is the guarantee that data will not be used and that recordings will be destroyed.

The informed consent form (also printed on headed paper) asks people to confirm that they have fully understood the content of the information sheet: the voluntary nature of the participation, the complete freedom to withdraw at any time; and the protection of interviewees' anonymity and data confidentiality.

Once the invitation letter was sent out, the ethical concerns turned towards the contact with potential research participants. During the phone calls that were made to, or received from, the interviewees, the main contents of the invitation letter were recapitulated.

These elements were reiterated once again before each interview, in a "briefing" (Kvale, 1996). The research was briefly described, the interviewee given the information sheet, and the informed consent form; sufficient time being allowed for a thorough reading of the material, and for the asking of questions. Once the individual agreed to proceed, permission was requested to use the audio recorder. During the interviews, there have been moments where further probing would be likely to collide with an interviewee's privacy. These situations have involved a complex process of verbal and non-verbal communication; and have been handled in such a way as to respect the interviewee's lead, despite the tension between the desire to know, and the ethical obligation to stop.

The interviews ended with a "debriefing" (Kvale, 1996), to avoid an abrupt finale, which could leave the interviewee with an uncomfortable feeling, given the nature of the areas covered by the in-depth interview. Interviewees were told that the interview had ended and asked if they wished to add any comment or question about the interview. Afterwards, each interview was assigned a number, to avoid its identification with the name of the interviewee.

Finally, the presentation of the verbatim quotations has involved several procedures commonly employed by researchers (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006): interviewees' names were substituted by pseudonyms (See Appendix 3); a similar procedure was adopted with regard to the people they refer to; and quotations were associated with interviewees by their pseudonyms, industry, age group, and levels of education, to avoid detail. In addition, ellipsis points, or explanations, in square brackets, were used to omit "identifying tags"; expressions denoting hesitation, such as "um", were filtered, unless they were of analytical significance to avoid stigmatization (Kvale, 1996); and the selection of quotations has tried to cover different voices.

4.6 The achieved sample

As Table 8 (below) shows, forty-eight individuals were interviewed for this research. The length of the interviews varied from about one to three hours, but most of the interviews lasted between two- and two and a half hours. This variation is principally due to the varied experience reported and also to the manner in which different interviewees approached the interview situation: some were very detailed and vivid in relating their experiences, feelings and thoughts, whereas others were more succinct. All the interviews were undertaken between November 2009 and April 2010.

The distribution of research participants by the sampling criteria is almost even (See Table 8 below). However, the restaurant industry is represented by slightly fewer interviewees, of both women and men. The analysis of the trajectories has indicated that a considerable number of interviewees (20) had entered into self-employment before 2005. For this reason, the characterization presented in this section considers the time when interviewees had their first experience of self-employment.

Table 8. Interviewees by sampling criteria; and interviewees with previous experiences of self-employment by sampling criteria

<i>Industry</i>	<i>All sample</i>			<i>Interviewees with previous experiences of SE</i>		
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>High-end services</i>	8	9	17	3	1	4
<i>Restaurant</i>	7	6	13	3	3	6
<i>Trade</i>	8	10	18	5	5	10
<i>Total</i>	23	25	48	11	9	20

A considerable number of interviewees (20) entered self-employment in their thirties (See Table 9 below), after other professional experiences. This pattern is more frequent for women, as men are almost evenly distributed by the three age groups. There are also variations by industry: half of the interviewees in the trade industry entered self-employment in their twenties, or earlier, whereas in the remaining industries, most individuals did so when they were in their thirties (restaurant - 10); or between their thirties/forties (high-end services - 12).

Table 9. Interviewees' age group at the entry into self-employment by sampling criteria

<i>Industry</i>	<i>18-29 years old</i>			<i>30-39 years old</i>			<i>40-49 years old</i>			<i>TOTAL</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	
<i>High-end services</i>	1	4	5	4	2	6	3	3	6	17
<i>Restaurant</i>	1	0	1	5	5	10	1	1	2	13
<i>Trade</i>	5	4	9	3	1	4	0	5	5	18
<i>Total</i>	7	8	15	12	8	20	4	9	13	48

In a similar way, the interviewees' level of education varies by industry. In restaurants, there is a higher incidence of cases of lower secondary education (at the most), but in trade and high-end services, the most frequent levels are upper secondary and tertiary education, respectively (See Table 10 below). These patterns reinforce the selection of these areas of economic activity, in order to explore the ways in which pathways into, and also experiences of, self-employment are shaped by gender and previous occupational class.

Table 10. Interviewees' highest level of education at the entry into self-employment by sampling criteria

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Lower secondary education or less</i>			<i>Upper secondary education</i>			<i>First and second stage of tertiary education</i>			<i>TOTAL</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	
<i>High-end services</i>	1	1	2	1	2	3	6	6	12	17
<i>Restaurant</i>	2	3	5	2	3	5	3	0	3	13
<i>Trade</i>	1	2	3	3	5	8	4	3	7	18
<i>Total</i>	4	6	10	6	10	16	13	9	22	48

The great majority of the interviewees were married or cohabiting (in mixed-sex relationships) when they entered self-employment (See Table 11 below). However, in high-end services, more women reported being single, than men. This is an interesting empirical basis from which to explore the ways in which interactions between gender and previous occupational class shape work and family trajectories, and contribute to pathways into self-employment.

Table 11. Interviewees' marital status at the entry into self-employment by sampling criteria

<i>Industry</i>	<i>Single</i>			<i>Married/cohabited</i>			<i>Divorced</i>			<i>TOTAL</i>
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	
<i>High-end services</i>	4	1	5	2	8	10	2	0	2	17
<i>Restaurant</i>	0	0	0	6	6	12	1	0	1	13
<i>Trade</i>	1	0	1	7	8	15	0	2	2	18
<i>Total</i>	5	1	6	15	22	37	3	2	5	48

At the same time, there is a high incidence of offspring among interviewees (See Table 12 below). In particular, there are several cases of individuals having at least one child of less than six years of age, by the time they entered self-employment. Moreover, a higher incidence of a lack of offspring is found among interviewees operating in the high-end services. This pattern supports the selection of these three industries as the empirical basis for exploring the research questions of this present thesis.

Table 12. Interviewees with offspring and with at least one child of less than 6 years old at the entry into self-employment; and total sample by sampling criteria

<i>Industry</i>	<i>With offspring</i>			<i>With at least one child under 6 years old</i>			<i>Total sample</i>		
	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>High-end services</i>	3	4	7	2	3	5	8	9	17
<i>Restaurant</i>	6	5	11	4	3	7	7	6	13
<i>Trade</i>	6	7	13	5	4	9	8	10	18
<i>Total</i>	15	16	31	11	10	21	23	25	48

Finally, Table 13 (below) indicates that the type of businesses that most interviewees (41) have set up is closely related to the skills that they have developed throughout their educational and occupational trajectories.

Table 13. Interviewees' with educational/occupational experience transferable into self-employment by sampling criteria

	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>High-end services</i>	8	9	17
<i>Restaurant</i>	4	4	8
<i>Trade</i>	6	10	16
<i>Total</i>	18	23	41

The characterization above indicates, thus, that the achieved sample covers a relevant range of empirical diversity, in the light of the research questions of this thesis.

4.7 Analysis and presentation of data

The analysis of the interviews has involved considerations regarding the transcription, interpretation and translation of the data, since interviews were transcribed and analyzed in their original language: Portuguese; and only the quotations inserted in the thesis were translated into English.

With regard to transcription, all interviews were transcribed excluding the parts that were irrelevant to the research questions and the analytical approach developed for this thesis (See Chapters 2 and 3 above). The careful listing of the interviews involved in this work has allowed a further immersion into the

interviewees' elaborations, and has supported the first analytical insights. For instance, the relevance of traumatic experiences in understanding some pathways into self-employment (See Chapters 5 and 6 below) started to become apparent through reflection on the material, in the act of transcribing it.

After the transcription, the analysis moved on to the preparation of a brief chronology of major events for each interviewee, which has supported the characterization of the sample. The interpretation of interviews was based on a thematic analysis.

The cross-sectional indexing categories were developed through a comparison of transcriptions. At a preliminary stage, the indexing of the interviews involved the use of coloured pens. Then, the excerpts were copied into two documents (one for women and one for men), and organized by category. During this process, each copied/pasted excerpt was associated with a code that identifies its author according to sampling criteria (gender and industry) and the number of her/his interview. The analysis also involved the construction of tables which summarize individuals' elaborations on their trajectories, transitions and experiences in key areas of this research.

The possibility of using software was considered. However, as the analysis is a mental process that depends on researchers' hunches as they become immersed in the data (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006; Mason, 2006), such use would be restricted to the management of information. It is true that several authors recognise the potential of the available software packages in this respect (Silverman, 2005; Mason, 2002). However, as Mason highlights with regard to one of these packages:

"Whether or not you use the technology, there is a great deal of detailed and time-consuming work in creating and applying the indexing categories, and although CAQDAS potentially enhances and expedites the retrieval process, it can also mean that indexing takes on a more prominent role than it might in the way you organize your data because so much more seems to be possible than with manual systems. This may or may not be a good thing for your particular project and you will need to make a careful assessment of that." (2002: 152)

In this context, the decision to develop the procedure described above was due to time constraints and the candidate's previous experience (from her Master's thesis).

Interviewing in one language and reporting in another is a topic that deserves further attention from researchers (Riessman, 2008), as it may involve loss of meaning, and thereby affecting the analysis of the qualitative material. As stated above, all the interviews have been analysed in their original Portuguese language. This decision was aimed at preserving the linguistic system (Sausurre 1995[1916]), in which interviewees' thoughts were originally formulated. The translation of the verbatim quotations has tried to balance their readability in English and their voice in Portuguese.

The presentation of the quotations involved some editing (Corden and Sainsbury, 2005), in addition to the ethical procedures described in Section 4.5. In particular, words emphasised by interviewees were underlined; parts of the excerpts that were not relevant to the analysis were substituted by ellipsis dots in square brackets; and some punctuation was added to enhance readability. Finally, to provide some information on the context in which the excerpt was produced, the presentation of the verbatim quotations includes the question that precedes the interviewee's reply.

4.8 Reflexivity

Social “markers” shape the reactions of potential research participants to research and the processes of reciprocal interpretation when they interact with the researcher (Phoenix, 1994). This section considers several aspects of the interactions with interviewees in two different moments of the research process: the recruitment of research participants, and the direct interaction with interviewees.

During the recruitment stage (See Section 4.4 above), several individuals referred to their willingness to help the researcher as a justification for accepting the invitation. The desire to help is a common justification in research (Phoenix, 1994), and in this case it may have been reinforced by the circumstance that I was studying abroad. In addition, a number of interviewees justified their participation as being due to their interest in the study. In general, the people who took the initiative of contacting me (and did not wait for a follow-up call) display higher levels of education. This circumstance may have nurtured an increased ease at the idea of participating in this type of research.

Some of those who refused to participate spontaneously justified their decision. Common justifications were that they had no time for the interview; or that they were undergoing strong economic difficulties and did not wish to portray themselves as unsuccessful self-employed people. The lack of time was a salient reason for people working in restaurants. Contextual circumstances, other than the economic crisis, may have contributed to this reaction. In 2009, the media in Portugal reported several cases of business close-downs in this industry due to the action of a public Institution – known as the ASAE (the Authority for Food and Economic Security). At that time, there was public discussion on the action and regulations supporting the work of this Institution. The main criticism was that the ASAE's approach was too rigid and was closing down traditional or “petty” restaurants, by demanding partial rebuilding of sites⁶³, which the business owners could not afford to do.

As the interviews were taking place, it became clear that for some people, participating in this research was a way of being heard, of showing discontent with the absence of policies aimed at addressing the particular needs of smaller businesses, and of criticising the ways in which banks treat “petty” businesses (in comparison to big investors).

By and large, the encounters with the interviewees developed in an atmosphere of mutual enjoyment, which is customarily associated with in-depth interviews (Olson and Shopes, 1991; Phoenix, 1994). However, at certain moments, it was also evident that my relationship with the interviewee was being influenced by the social coordinates that each of us was bringing into the interview context.

There will now be a consideration of several aspects of the interaction with the interviewees and its implications for the research process: in particular, an exploration of the relationship between motherhood and gender; as well as the ways in which gender intersects with occupational class, age, and ethnicity. Feminist research has made an invaluable contribution to this type of reflection, by highlighting the implications that intersections between gender, class and ethnicity

⁶³ As an illustration of the kind of changes targeted by these criticisms, there were instructions for restaurants to close their open space kitchens; or to have three toilets available (one for men, one for women and one for the staff).

have on the researcher/research participant relationship (Olson and Shopes, 1991; Phoenix, 1994).

The close connection between gender and motherhood emerged whilst interviewing women with children, and approaching the topic of family trajectories. A number of interviewees asked me if I had children. The response was “no”, followed by the sharing with the interviewee of my wish to be a mother in the future. By raising this question before approaching some of their own experiences, these women seem to be trying to adjust their elaborations to their particular type of female audience.

By the same token, some men displayed a reaction of discomfort when asked about the division of work in their household; and they described an imbalanced arrangement. Such discomfort was conveyed in different ways: in bodily expressions, like smiling; by adopting a jocular tone; and/or by developing justifications which underscored their occupational commitments. This kind of reaction may be the result of the interview context where interviewees were invited to reflect upon their unequal divisions of work by the interviewer, who is a woman herself and a researcher.

Socioeconomic and occupational distinctions emerged in different interviews. For instance, a woman underlined how lucky she was because she has been able to afford to employ domestic workers since an early stage of her marriage. This interviewee seems to convey an awareness of being a privileged person, in comparison to most women, and possibly me. On the other hand, when asked to describe their work in the enterprise, several interviewees portrayed their multiple tasks in a vivid way, as if they were seeing me as an intermediary between them and a wider audience and trying to make me aware of how it is to be a self-employed person in Portugal nowadays.

In addition, age distinctions came out when women in their fifties were interviewed, and asked about the division of work between them and their husbands. By underscoring how things were/are different for older generations, these women were bringing to the surface likely differences between their and my own experience.

Some interviewees tried to portray themselves in a positive way at points in their interview. This was particularly salient when they were operating in industries

which they did not feel they could identify with, given their level and type of education. They usually pointed out that their businesses had nothing to do with their area of expertise. Others seemed to be trying to distinguish themselves from unsuccessful cases of self-employment, by stating that they regretted the fact that some people set up businesses that are doomed to failure. Moreover, some interviewees touched on the idea of being entrepreneurial, as a way of presenting themselves positively, at an initial stage of the interview.

None of the considerations presented above concern ethnicity because it has impinged on the research process in a different way: all interviewees are white; as is the researcher. Accordingly, non-white experiences of self-employment are not covered by this research, and this circumstance should be taken into account by its readers. This is not to deny the interest of this research; rather it is a way of underscoring that an in-depth understanding of any piece of research implies that both the said and the unsaid (or “the implicit”) should be considered.

During the analysis, the effects of the context on the interviews were filtered, in part, as the comparison of the transcriptions evolved and common themes emerged. Even so, the effects of the interaction that took place during the interviews remain deeply entrenched in the transcriptions and are a reminder of the active role that research participants have in social research.

4.9 Limitations of the research

Every study has its limitations, as some pragmatic decisions have to be made during the research process. In the case of this research, two main issues are considered in this section: the access to potential research participants, and the involvement of spouses in the study.

As described above, the access to interviewees involved the decision of using the public records of business start-ups available on-line, using the programme “On the Spot Firm”. These were chosen for their broad scope and high accessibility, in comparison with other sources of contact (See Section 4.4 above). Then, a preliminary contact was established by letter and, whenever possible, there was a follow-up by telephone.

This strategy was devised in line with the analytical approach of this thesis, and has considered the definition of relevant sampling criteria. However, it involves some risks too, as it may appeal mainly to more accessible individuals: in particular, to people who are more familiar with this kind of study; who are more willing to talk about their experiences; who wish to express their dissatisfaction with the institutional environment; who have success in business; or who have more time available. The follow-up procedure was devised to make sure that the sample of this research would not depend only on the spontaneous replies to the letter. Still, as stated in Section 4.4 (above), it was not possible to follow up every contact.

With regard to the involvement of spouses in the research, it would be interesting to compare the views of the interviewees with that of their spouses with regard to the interaction between business and family life, as further areas of ambivalence could emerge. Despite the interest in this approach, it was not undertaken, as it would have had implications in terms of the resources available for this study.

4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the main decisions involved in the design of this study. It started by underscoring the connections between Chapters 2 and 3 (above), on the one hand, and the formulation of the aims and research questions, on the other. The development of a qualitative research strategy and the use of the in-depth interview, as a method, were justified in the light of these. The site (Lisbon Region) and the temporal focus (business set-ups between 2005 and 2008) were also explained, by underlining the connections with previous chapters.

The use of the theoretical sample was justified according to the research questions; and the definition of the sampling criteria considered the analyses of Chapters 2 and 3 (above). The strategy for accessing research participants was explained and justified; and the ethical procedures to secure informed consent, to protect confidentiality and anonymity, and to avoid the harming of the research participants, were also detailed.

Moreover, this chapter has provided a preliminary characterisation of the achieved sample; explained the organization of the analysis; and described the

procedures concerning the presentation of the verbatim quotations. The influence of the context in the research process was, then, discussed, and the limitations of the research were considered.

5 Self-employment: a primary way of working or an alternative plan? Circumstances and trigger experiences

As discussed in Chapter 3 (above), a widely-used framework for interpreting self-employment considers whether the reasons for entering self-employment were primarily due to “push” or “pull” factors. In this chapter, there is an analysis of the individual’s account of her/his pathway into self-employment, drawing the conclusion that the simple focus on “push” or “pull” is inadequate for describing the process of becoming self-employed. Instead, it is argued that a socially-embedded perspective provides a valuable insight into the multiple social dimensions that shape individuals’ moves into business ownership. Because these dimensions are not static, rather evolve throughout their lives, we also explore the analytical gains resulting from a focus on life courses, and the ways in which these are shaped by social background, education, occupational class, marriage, and gender relations.

In this context, we focus on the interviewee’s orientation towards self-employment as a “life course plan” (Kontos, 2004). Following Bourdieu’s framework, the development of this life plan is shaped by individuals’ “habitus”, and the ways in which their different forms of capital position them with regard to the “field” of self-employment as they experience different events in their lives. It was detected that interviewees can view self-employment either as a *primary way of working*, or as an *alternative plan*, and that these orientations are deeply embedded in individuals’ work, family and social trajectories. As a consequence, whereas the push-pull theory highlights personal aspiration in explaining why people enter self-employment, the analysis here emphasizes the socially embedded nature of trajectories into self-employment. The following sections substantiate this analysis, while the conclusion summarizes the thread of the argument presented in this chapter.

5.1 Introducing the argument through interviewees’ words: the role of “circumstances”

As shown in Chapter 3 (above), the prevailing framework for analysing individuals’ entry into self-employment is the push-pull theory. However, this was

found to be inadequate in relation to the accounts recorded in the interviews in this study.

A number of interviewees describe their moves into self-employment as being a constrained choice, in that they refer to the influence of “circumstances” over their own decisions, or, more generally, over those of well-known successful entrepreneurs in Portugal. This acknowledgment “first hand”, even if partial, is a preliminary illustration of the fact that pathways into business ownership are shaped by the array of options that are available to individuals, given the situations that they experience and the social circumstances in which they live. As Jessica highlights (below), her experiences as a dependent worker played a decisive role in channeling her into self-employment, even though she had previously thought about it (as had many of her peers).

Interviewer: So, how did the idea of working on your own account come to you? You told me that you had it already, but then, when did it start to grow stronger?

Interviewee: I think that that idea has always been with me [...] and then, OK, I think the circumstances have channeled me there and that it has grown stronger over time, as I realized that maybe I no longer had a place, I think, in the organization [...].

Jessica, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

This analysis echoes the criticism of several biographical studies that challenge the idea of an intrinsic entrepreneurial tendency (Apitzch, 2004; Kontos, 2004; Kupferberg, 1998). Together with these studies, this present research is thus contributing to redress the lack of “embeddedness and context” that Bruin, Brush and Welter (2007: 331) have detected in their review of the literature on entrepreneurship.

In the following sections, interviewees’ *orientations towards self-employment* are explored, together with the ways in which these relate to their social background and occupation, to the patterns of gender relations in which they operate, and to the epiphanies that they faced in their lives. As a result, two different orientations are identified in this present study: seeing self-employment as one’s *primary way of working*, or as one’s *alternative plan*. In the former case, interviewees consider self-employment as their way of working from an early stage of their lives, given the conditions in which they are brought-up, marry and enter the labour market. In the

latter, self-employment becomes a realistic option only after some trigger experience that occurs in the interviewees' work and/or family spheres.

Table 14 (below) shows that most of the 48 interviewees in this study (40 to be precise) turned to self-employment as *an alternative plan*, while self-employment as *a primary way of working* applied for the remaining eight. This pattern is observed both among female and male interviewees in this study, as well as in each one of the three industries under analysis. The distribution of the interviewees between these two forms of orientation towards self-employment contextualizes the development of this qualitative research, but the proportions observed in this sample might differ to those observed in larger survey samples.

Table 14. Orientation towards self-employment (SE) among interviewees (women and men), by industry

Orientation towards SE	Women				Men				TOTAL
	HES	T	R	Total	HES	T	R	Total	
SE as a primary way of working	2	1	0	3	1	2	2	5	8
SE as an alternative plan	6	7	7	20	8	8	4	20	40
Total	8	8	7	23	9	10	6	25	48

HES: High-end services; T: Trade; R: Restaurant.

5.2 Self-employment as a primary way of working

Seeing self-employment as one's *primary way of working* means that this is the professional status that interviewees identify with when they think of themselves as workers. The accounts of the interviewees in this study indicate that this view can be associated with different trajectories (See Table 15 below): entering an occupation that is organized as an independent profession; being married to a self-employed husband; or having a family business background and seeing self-employment as one's most likely destiny. Social background and gender relations play a pivotal role here, by shaping interviewees' aspirations and expectations in terms of educational investment, marriage and future occupation.

Table 15. Pathways into self-employment as a *primary way of working* among interviewees (women and men), by industry

Pathway into SE	Women				Men				TOTAL
	HES	T	R	Total	HES	T	R	Total	
<i>Seeing self-employment as part and parcel of a profession...</i>	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
<i>Seeing self-employment as part and parcel of marrying with a self-employed husband...</i>	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
<i>Reproducing self-employment as a way of working...</i>	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	5	5
Total	2	1	0	3	1	2	2	5	8

HES: High-end services; T: Trade; R: Restaurant

Seeing self-employment as part and parcel of a profession...

The accounts of two of the female interviewees in this study reveal that self-employment can be seen as the natural path to follow when people undertake a profession in which independent work is a common practice. In Portugal, self-employed people can work as unincorporated independent workers or under the formal umbrella of an enterprise. For these interviewees, setting up an enterprise equates to a certain formal status, instead of representing a “choice” between self-employment and dependent employment. Fiona underlined this aspect when invited to further elaborate on the fact that not all her peers organize their activities in the form of an enterprise.

Interviewer: So, not everyone takes that option, it is not a natural option...

Interviewee: No. To be [a/an] [occupation] and to be a worker on “green receipts”⁶⁴ is part and parcel, is the same thing, you cannot be [a/an] [occupation] without being that way unless... this would imply many things that would pervert the nature of the profession. And 95% of [occupation] work that way. We are a big minority, who has created a structure.

Fiona, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

The creation of this structure was prompted by her clients’ (enterprises) preference for subcontracting services to a sole intermediary. Stephanie, the other interviewee included in this pattern, also formed an enterprise due to changes in her business environment, namely in terms of fiscal benefits.

⁶⁴ In Portugal, working on green receipts is the expression that is used to name situations of independent work, which are not associated to the formal constitution of an enterprise.

Interviewer: So, you also took that step because of that...

***Interviewee:** Yes, it was because of that. As I said a while ago, I lost several quotes because I wasn't an entity, a sole intermediary [...], yes, it was for that, because it helped me to sell. [...]*

Fiona, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Interviewer: Exactly, and then you created the enterprise...

***Interviewee:** Yes.*

Interviewer: That's what I wanted to understand, why did you...?

***Interviewee:** Ah, because it became more advantageous financially; it was more advantageous financially to create the enterprise than to be an unincorporated independent worker.*

Stephanie, high-end services, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

In this context, cultural capital, in the form of formal qualifications, and its effects on an individual's occupational class are central to understand this path.

Gendered educational investments and decisions as to which occupation to enter can also influence this avenue into self-employment. As research continues to show, investments in education are heavily gendered (and classed) (Schoon, 2010) and Portugal is not an exception to the bigger picture (Costa, Machado e Almeida, 2007; Lopes and Perista, 2010). Stephanie's elaborations (see below) on how she was forced to "choose" an initial female educational route (leading her to a job as a secretary) illustrate how gendered educational investments and occupations may place women in a situation of comparative disadvantage, with regard to the development of capitals that are valuable to set up in business. She vividly recalls her revolt at being in this situation (she is in her fifties). This indicates the state of distress that some women may have gone through in such a case as this.

Interviewer: A while ago you told me that you could have chosen a more vocational or a more generalist education and that you decided to go to the commercial school [vocational]...

***Interviewee:** In that respect, erm... my story is a bit... is a bit complicated, because when my father passed away I was in the middle of things, you see, so it wasn't me who decided to go on the commercial course [...] because their [her godmother and her uncle] idea was that girls were secretaries or erm... still that old idea, and the commercial course was rather imposed on me because I loved art [...], but those courses are not for making a living, are courses for men according to that mentality [...].*

[...]

Interviewer: You felt that it was being imposed on you...

Interviewee: Yes, of course. I was really, I was upset because it was a course which was imposed on me and as I enjoyed studying, knowledge, I ended up adapting myself, and I knew that there was no other way, I either accepted that, you see, or, if I didn't, I'd end up getting, because at that time, after primary school, you could stop studying because it was not compulsory; and I remember that I either did it or did nothing else; [...] you either do this or you're going to work, you see, and that factory with which my uncle was always threatening me [...], I was terrified by that, [he] take[s] me from school and put[s] me inside a factory for cookies or pastries [...].

Stephanie, high-end services, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

As she said at a different point in the interview, had she not met someone who initiated her into her current profession (an older male acquaintance from work), she would have remained in her occupation as a secretary, and would not have undertaken the studies she needed to make the leap. The key impact that Stephanie's acquaintance had on her pathway into self-employment illustrates how the development of an individual's social capital throughout her/his life may boost the development of forms of capital, cultural capital for example, which are highly valuable to the "field" of self-employment.

The connection between profession and self-employment as a *primary way of working*, which is portrayed by these interviewees, together with the association between higher levels of education and professional self-employment, which is detected by other research (Budig, 2006), indicate that this trajectory might be more common among high-end service industries.

Seeing self-employment as part and parcel of marrying with a self-employed husband...

Ellen's trajectory illustrates how marriage can become an avenue into self-employment when women are educated to hold a traditional perspective of gender roles. During her interview, she explained that her life was focused on getting married from the moment she left school, and that self-employment became part and parcel of marrying a self-employed person. Her account reveals that she grew up in a context where traditional gender role attitudes prevailed. This socialization, combined with a straight passage from school to marriage (without any work

experience in between), reduced the choice of occupation to being of secondary concern, in comparison with marriage.

Interviewer: And then, what has... you stopped [studying], at that time, and then? What was your plan?

Interviewee: er... my plan... my plan was my husband that appeared. So, at that time, at that age it's very complicated and, then, you know that... it's a bit different because if I had had my parents on my back saying: no, no; there's a time to date and there's a time to study. But no, [...] and we, at that, at that age, [...] we... erm... think that only one thing is important, it's that and nothing else and that's the way to go [...]. As no one had shown me any other way, I thought that the best thing to do was to quit [school] and marry and it's over. That was what I did. It's obvious that today, for instance, my daughter's... she's taking [university course] [...], she also has her sweetheart but she already tells me the opposite, already tells me: n, no! I'm going to finish my degree first and then we shall see! Because I've educated them in a different way, fortunately I've educated them in a different way, you know... And also: in my time we weren't as independent as that, we wanted to be, but we weren't as independent as they are today, attitudes were a bit different.

Ellen, trade, 40-49 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

Traditionalist forms of gender relations are thus a key mechanism to understanding the way in which a number of women come to see self-employment as an extension of their marriage. This finding is supported by other analyses, which have highlighted the contribution of wives as partners, confidantes and key contributors to the daily life of family businesses in different countries (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Assunção, 2007; Budig, 2006; Jimenez, 2009; Smeaton, 2003). The distinction between professional and non-professional self-employment may be relevant here. Ellen entered self-employment through a non-professional avenue, which was embedded in a close layer of her social capital – her spouse. This is in line with research which indicates that there is an association between having a self-employed husband and moving into non-professional self-employment (Budig, 2006).

Ellen's words suggest that this traditionalist pattern (focused on marriage) can occur alongside a desire for emancipation, even if it is referred to in hindsight. This desire, and the way in which Ellen compares her past (associated to a traditionalist education, a focus on marriage and the absence of previous work experiences), with her present (illustrated by the education she is giving to her offspring and by her daughter's behaviour), show how changes in an individual's practices may lag

behind changes in their aspirations, and involve generational changes in gender relations.

... and reformulating the family-business project

As the analysis above shows, marrying a man who had the “business bug” (an attribute that Ellen does not recognise in herself) moulded her relationship with self-employment. It also motivated the success of their first partnership. This success – which translated into having more than fifty employees, a heavy sense of responsibility for their workers’ family budgets, and, in her opinion, an excessive focus on business – ended up having a boomerang effect on their family life.

During the interview, Ellen explained that both she and her husband became aware of this, given the strong communication existing between the two. However, she seems to have taken the lead in this process, which ended up in a considerable change of focus concerning their family-business project. Namely, she felt compelled to control the effects of that “business bug”, after realising that it was putting her relationship with her children at risk, and betraying her notion of good motherhood. This sense of discomfort is in line with the pattern of gender relations that fashioned her direct transition from school to marriage, and shows the extent to which motherhood is the central arena for the construction and reproduction of gender roles. Other research has shown the way in which women’s subjective norms, in terms of what is good motherhood, influence the pattern by which they evaluate their arrangements, in terms of work-family balance (Fagan et al., 2008).

Interviewer: You’ve told me that, at that time, a person is no longer herself... could you please give me some examples of that?

Interviewee: Yes, I can. When I wasn’t in Paris, I was in London; when I wasn’t in London, I was in Germany; the time to arrive home was the early hours; the weekends went by, one after the other, and we didn’t see them; holidays never existed... and it was very complicated... and I have two children; erm... and there’s something that... I’m very protective of... of my family and...there’re times in life when we have to choose. Yes, continuing the business [...] continuing with this [business] bug, but slower, there’s no need for so much, we... to be happy, to have a good life, we don’t need so much.

[...]

Interviewer: At that time, when you were often absent, as you’ve said, what did you do with them [children]?

Interviewee: *I had someone at home to take care of them. They were in a [private school], the van picked them up and took them; afterwards, when they arrived home, I had an employee there, she took care of them and when I began to realiz... suddenly I began to realize that she was more their mother than me and that hurt me, that hurt, I'm telling you, that hurt me a lot. I think that that was what woke me up a bit.*

Ellen, trade, 40-49 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

The couple systematically prepared their exit from this enterprise and restructured their family-business project, which is now aimed at maintaining their standard of living without compromising their family life. Ellen's leading role in this process, and her intervention in defining the strategy of the business, indicate that a more active participation by women in a family business can modify the terms by which the family and the business sphere usually interact.

Reproducing self-employment as a way of working...

The reports of five male interviewees in this study show how lines of business succession in the family can nurture an orientation towards self-employment as a *primary way of working*. This process is not gender neutral. As is discussed here, more traditional patterns of gender relations – wherein the business is the father's domain, while the family is the mother's – can divert female descendants from both succession and self-employment as a *primary way of working*.

Succession has inscribed self-employment in the interviewees' array of occupational possibilities in different ways: through the expectations of their father or other male relatives⁶⁵; and via informal and formal processes of learning, that allow them to acquire skills (cultural capital) that are relevant to the family business. Other practices, such as accompanying the father in informal meetings with other businessmen, can further boost their sense that self-employment is their most likely future, and, very importantly, provide them with a good network of contacts (social capital) in business.

With regard to the former – the father's expectations – having a successful businessman as a parent, who expects his offspring to get involved in the family

⁶⁵ In one case, it was not the father, but an uncle (who brought-up the interviewee and had the business). No cases of businesses led by interviewees' mothers were found in this pattern.

business (and acts accordingly), can impact on an individual's life, as the account by Edwin reveals. When asked about his transition into a specific job, he explained that it was a job in the family business. He, who is the younger of two siblings, embarked on a reflection on the weight of his father's expectations that he would join his elder brother in one of the family businesses. The prospect did not please him because he had his own business ideas, as he recounted at another point in the interview. He explicitly denies the scenario that his father anticipated for him, but he does not reject self-employment as a *primary way of working*, as this was a dominant element of his upbringing.

Interviewer: How did you get that job?

Interviewee: It was in my [sibling]'s business [...], it was my [sibling]'s and my father's business. [...] it was supposed to be a business for the both of us, there has been always a bit that, always, but I've never, never, I've always been, always been a bit apart. [...]

Edwin, restaurant, 40-49 years old, unfinished tertiary education

A hands-on education in how to run the family business can nurture the sense that self-employment will be one's most likely future, thereby inculcating self-employment into an individual's "subjective hopes", to use Bourdieu's terminology. Dale, whose father operated in the trade industry, illustrates this connection, and the implications that it can have on an individual's educational path. At the beginning of the interview, when asked to outline his pathway, he presented an intricate picture of educational and business experiences that made him realize that his own future would be in the family business. The way he characterizes his time at school (as being worthless) and his early departure from it (he did not complete compulsory education), show that an early involvement in a family business can compete with educational investments, and further reinforce self-employment as one's *primary way of working*. As other studies indicate, being involved so intensively in the family business can turn the prospect of succession into a very likely future, in one's eyes (Schröder, Schmidt-Rodermund and Arnaud, 2011).

Interviewer: Could you talk me through your pathway, from the family where you born up until the time that you set up your business?

Interviewee: [...] me and school, we never got along very well, so later I started to work, this was probably when I was 12, 13 years old; the school didn't go very well, partly because of me, as I didn't like it, to start with, maybe also because I had already started to put my hands in [the business]; I started to work there [...], to do

some things, and the bottom line was that I started to help [...]. Later on, maybe when I was 18/19, I even went back to school at night, I even did a year and that even went well and I passed; and then, later, in the following year I've got half-way through; [...].

[...] I've got half-way through the year, and saw that [...], that it wouldn't give me, [...] I mean, deep down I had already an idea of what I wanted to follow and knew that I was going to follow [...], help my father managing his things [...] I got unmotivated and [...] thought that it was worthless to be there just wasting time, I left [...].

Dale, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

In other cases, a family business background did not compete with studies (up to tertiary education). Its constraining effects operated, instead, at the level of interviewees' educational "choices", as the quote by Justin indicates. Decisions in this respect can be thought of as a means of accumulating a cultural capital that is useful to the family business. This practice may be more common when businesses operate in high-end services (which require more qualified work) or when they involve a more professionalized management (given their dimensions).

Interviewer: Why did you choose that degree?

Interviewee: *[...] also because I already knew that I'd probably give some help in this [family business], so it was something that would give me the foundation and grounding to be able to have some effect and instill some development.*

Justin, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

Gender relations enter this picture by shaping the organization of authority in the businesses when there are both male and female direct descendants, and where gender relations have a traditionalist guise, whereby men focus on business and women focus on domestic and reproductive work. In this setting, where businesses are led by the father, or a very close male relative, male direct descendants get closer to business life and succession. As a result, their legitimacy (symbolic capital) with regard to the field of self-employment is nurtured at the expense of female descendants. The description by one of the interviewees in this study – Justin – illustrates this point well. He said that only the boys helped in the business, and that this was highly valued by his father. The boys' closer relation with the business world was also nurtured through other practices, such as accompanying the father in leisure activities involving other businessmen.

Interviewer: Did you [all siblings] collaborate in your father's businesses?

Interviewee: We, in the summer, me and my brother basically, they [sisters] did not. [...].

[...]

Interviewer: Did he like the fact that you participated, that you contributed in some way?

Interviewee: Yes, well, also a bit to demonstrate that we also had... we could even turn up and do nothing, you know... [...] I'm going to be honest with you, I could arrive there and have nothing special to do, but, well, being there instead of being at play, being there, doing something useful and that for him had some value because nothing had fallen from the sky for him, [...]. He had to work hard [...] so I think that he enjoyed the fact that we were able to recognize [...].

Justin, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

Gendered lines of involvement in family businesses can also be reinforced by education. According to Justin's elaborations in another part of the interview, male descendants can improve their chances of getting involved in the family business by doing less well in school, or by doing equally well, but in areas that are more directly transposable into it. Conversely, when both male and female descendants undertake similar educational routes, experiments in succession may be more open (especially when female descendants are older). Even so, entrenched traditional gender relations can re-emerge, with succession ending up in the hands of a younger male descendant.

Trevor's portrayal of the time when he left his dependent employment and accepted his father's invitation to work in the family business illustrates this possibility, as it conveys the father's expectation that his son would commit himself more to the business (he would "be there more time"), than one of his daughters. At a different stage of the interview, Trevor explained that his female siblings had positioned themselves towards the family business as a source of additional income (whenever needed), or as dependent employees, while he entered the business with the aim of managing and developing it. This situation, where an elder sister leaves the family business while the younger brother undertakes its control, resonates in part with cases reported by other studies, where traditional patterns of gender relations and the absence of direct male descendants turn female descendants into "temporary" successors, who will pass the business into the hands of a male descendant in the subsequent generation (Jimenez, 2009; Lima, 2003).

Interviewer: And so, you've told me that by that time you were also "backed up" because your father made you a proposal?

Interviewee: Yes, exactly, my father invited me [...], by that time we [his sister Jasmine⁶⁶ and he] had both finished the diploma, my sister Jasmine had also been in the enterprise [...], but moved to another job and... well, my father needed some help [...], he probably needed someone who would be there more time and said: "look, why don't you come... if you aren't happy come, come here [...]"

Trevor, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Patriarchal forms of organization and transmission of authority in family businesses, such as the "primogeniture criterion" (Jimenez, 2009), are a silent obstacle to the participation of women in business ownership. This overall picture may change with younger cohorts as traditional forms of gender relations are challenged, and as a growing number of women set-up their own businesses and take a more prominent role in running them (Jimenez, 2009).

... and setting-up a new business

The analysis presented above was an exploration of the ways in which gender relations and social background contribute to a gendered reproduction of self-employment, by nurturing a "habitus" in which self-employment is seen as being one's *primary way of working*. The analysis presented below focuses on the processes involved in the interviewees' leaps into creating their own business, or in other words, into independence as business owners.

Contrary to what might be expected from a conventional approach to the "push" and "pull" factors (discussed in Chapter 3 above), these leaps are not simply the result of a desire for autonomy or independence, which has developed in a social vacuum. Instead, the interviewees in this present study associate their entry into self-employment with the tensions that disrupt their relationships with significant others (relatives and spouses) and, in some cases, with the demands of their life courses. The tensions reported by interviewees in this study concern their fathers/uncles, siblings and spouses, and revolve around three main themes: *constrained autonomy*, *ambivalence*, and *constrained economic independence*.

⁶⁶ This name is a pseudonym.

The first of these – *constrained autonomy* – refers to a sense of not being able to decide and act the way one wants, due to disagreement with the head of a business, or with the partners of an existing enterprise. Dale's account underlines precisely how increasing divergence from his father made it impossible for him to continue in the family business, after roughly three years of trying to juggle it with his own nascent enterprise (which he developed in close connection with his father's).

Interviewer: But do you think that your father felt himself a bit abandoned?

Interviewee: Probably yes, at that time [...]. It's kind of the way people see things. At that time, I tried very hard to change some situations which he wouldn't change [...] there was a time when I realized that issues regarding management were difficult. [...] I mean, I was trying to control stocks, to make things simple, trying to move things forward, [...] then, by that time, we started not to get along very well. Ok, this isn't for me... [...] We have different ways of seeing things, you see?

Dale, Trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

Competition for leadership between husband and wife can also encourage new start ups, as the account by Trevor indicates. The tension resulting from their inability to share power is illustrated by what he says, and by his hesitation whilst replying. As a result, the couple avoids working directly together on a daily basis (his wife is now at the helm of what was once his family business), to keep the tension at manageable levels and preserve their affective involvement.

Interviewer: Could you please talk me through that experience together?

Interviewee: Erm today... in terms of leadership, it was complicated because I had... it's like this: when we met and when we came together, [...] she has more education, she has a four-year diploma, I had more experience and had already gone through a lot; [...] I had already bashed my head against some brick walls [...] And so it's a bit difficult for [Angelina]⁶⁷ to listen to me because she [...] she... well, she wants to be the leader, she wants some position of leadership, but I, well... it's like in the military, I've been here for longer and the idea was already mine [...]; it's this way: it's not that we clashed a lot but... we didn't listen to each other enough to be able to share power.

Trevor, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

In this study, the theme *ambivalence* is associated with the hesitation and sense of dilemma that interviewees report when they reflect upon their move into a

⁶⁷ This name is a pseudonym.

new business. In Howard's case, the extent of his gratitude and sense of obligation towards his uncle (who brought him up) was such that he recognizes that he would never have left him, had his uncle not taken the initiative of helping him to do so.

Interviewer: Tell me one thing: before that, did you ever think about having your own business?

Interviewee: You know, well, I had thought... although I couldn't leave my uncle.

Interviewer: Couldn't you?

Interviewee: No, no, no, no. He was the one who brought me up. If someone came to me and said to me: "come on, I'm going to set up a restaurant there" and, me, leaving my uncle; I wouldn't do that, I'd never do that.

Howard, restaurant, 40-49 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

The interviewees tended to approach the theme of constrained economic independence in connection with their life courses. Getting older, and being at the stage of starting or already having their own family, nurtured their desire to work on something of their own; instead of contributing to a "cake" that they would share with their family of origin. This "cake" metaphor is actually used by Justin, when asked to compare his current independent situation with his previous involvement in the family business.

Interviewer: So, if you had to compare your current situation with your previous, how would you compare them?

Interviewee: I prefer the present, because in professional terms... [...], because I was making a cake, which wasn't even for me; of course, I had my salary, I was stable, all these things. [...]

Justin, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

In this context, having kids can further boost the individual's desire to move into business independence, as a strategy to protect their financial security. This strategy deals with the fact that family businesses involving different generations do not benefit future descendants in a uniform way, given the distinction between succession and inheritance. Justin put this concern into words when he was reflecting upon the context in which he came to realize that he had to move forward alone.

Interviewee: It's a question of trying to make things, I don't know, to leave as well, isn't it, I mean, once we [siblings] disappear that [his father's business] ends up dying, isn't it? [...] it always ends up dying, so I think that one of my concerns is also to leave... I don't know whether they [his children] want to continue, or not, but

at least I leave them something that they can also continue with, if they so wish, or sell to others.

Justin, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

In addition to this focus on tension, the interviewees in this study recognize that being able to rely on the economic, cultural, social, and symbolic forms of capital associated with their family business background, facilitated their decision to start up their own business. They pinpoint particularly the economic capital, which helped them to finance their new concerns, and functioned as a safety net that smoothed their sense of risk. Some also emphasize the role of their cultural capital in the form of incorporated knowledge of “what to do” and “what not to do” as a business owner, and the strategic nature of their social capital. The latter includes both access to relevant networks of contacts (through which strategic information and business opportunities circulate), and conjugal relationships, where the prevailing division of work facilitates the involvement of one of the members of the couple in other business initiatives. The relevance of symbolic capital, in the form of family business reputation or family name, is also alluded to by some interviewees in this study.

The accounts presented above lend weight to the argument that further research is needed to fully understand the interactions between family and business (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Zachary, 2011), including the role that family income and marriage can play in facilitating business start-ups (Hundley, 2006; Rodriguez, Tuggle and Hackett, 2009). Showing that business start-ups can coexist with an education for succession complements research on the influence of a business social background on the occupational projects of the younger generation. This insight is significant in that some research on the career choice intentions of youngsters with this social background portrays the creation of a business, or succession to the family business, as mutually exclusive pathways (Schröder, Schmitt-Rodermund, Arnaud, 2011; Zellweger, Sieger and Halter, 2011). Some of these themes are further developed later in this thesis, in Chapter 7, which focuses on the interaction between family and business life.

5.3 Self-employment as an alternative plan

As shown in Table 15 (above), most interviewees in this study (40) turned to *self-employment as an alternative plan*. Their accounts indicate that the leap into business ownership was triggered by a turning point, which they describe as an experience that introduced self-employment into their lives or turned it into a feasible option.

As discussed in Chapter 3 (above), several studies have highlighted the importance of life-changing events in steering people into self-employment (Apitzsch, 2004; Kontos, 2004; Kupferberg, 1998). Others have noted the decisive role of triggers or turning points for the individual's move into entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Corden and Eardley, 1999; Kreide, 2003; Mallon and Coehen, 2001; Marshall 1995, Moore and Buttner, 1997). The expression "turning point" itself is very much associated with the life course and its focus on the explanatory insights provided by the analysis of transitions (Anxo, Bosch and Rubery, 2010; Mortimer and Shanahan, 2006).

The idea of self-employment as "an alternative biographical plan" was previously used and substantiated by Kontos (2004: 62), in a study of migrant self-employment, to interpret the individual's search for recognition in the face of adversity. In a study of "humanist entrepreneur" (that is, graduates in humanities or social sciences), Kupferberg (1998), explored the way in which encounters can lead to self-employment when focusing on the process of becoming an entrepreneur; in opposition to an overemphasis either on personal preferences or on the reproduction of social origins.

In this present thesis, the category *self-employment as an alternative plan* has specific features. It is used in a broad sense to include both traumatic and non-traumatic experiences, and it is developed from a diverse empirical base, in terms of industry, formal education and gender. It is built as an umbrella notion that encapsulates different patterns of entry into self-employment; as the analysis presented in the next chapter shows.

The people who entered self-employment as an *alternative plan* included those with and without a family business background. As the analysis evolved, it became apparent that distinguishing between these two sorts of background would

contribute to a better understanding of the way in which people come to see self-employment as an *alternative plan*. So the following sub-sections analyse each of these two social backgrounds. By so doing, and consistent with the approach taken in the previous section, they explore the multiple ways in which having a family business background relates to interviewees' pathways into self-employment, thereby moving beyond the idea of a simple reproduction of family origins, that Kupferberg (1998), has rightly criticized.

Having a background in self-employment but seeing it as an alternative rather than primary way of working...

In most of these cases (11 out of 15 interviewees with a business background), aspirations were not shaped by the expectation of an involvement in the family business. The following processes contribute to this situation: strategies of upward social mobility and social reproduction; and the gendered organization of business succession.

The “pettiness” of many family businesses, and the expansion of the Portuguese educational system in the last century⁶⁸, can propel the individual away from the track of self-employment and family business. This is so even in instances where interviewees helped their parents when they were younger.

The close relationship between a family's investment in higher education and its strategy of upward social mobility (Devine, 2004) sheds light on the process by which the interviewees with a background in self-employment are prepared by their families to climb the social hierarchy, and in so doing are diverted from becoming the successor for the “petty” family business.

Rachel identifies a connection between entering university and opening up her occupational perspective. By engaging in a comparison with the local friends she had as a teenager, she explained that going to university and moving into a city was a way of opening up her occupational and personal perspectives. Her mother's strict attitude towards her progression into tertiary education illustrates the social relevance attached to education as an enhancer of an individual's life chances. This attitude

⁶⁸ For a detailed description of the evolution of compulsory education in Portugal, see section 3.1, footnote 43.

nurtured Rachel's aspiration not to limit her "life goal" to the job opportunities available in the local labour market: which amounted to working as a rank and file employee in the town hall, or as a collaborator in her mother's business (her mother kept this business alongside her teaching profession).

Interviewer: Why did you want to live in [the city]?

Interviewee: [...] my mother, well, she's very rigid in some respects [...], never thinking of stopping the studies, that was out of question; leaving [the family home], being at the centre of everything was an asset. [...], there's a real freedom living on your own. Of my friends, I don't remember any, [...] I didn't see myself working in [local government], which was the future that they had after finishing upper secondary school. [the place of family home] is very limited [...] in terms of employment [...]; look, I had excellent support, I didn't need to study more because I could stay in [family business] and I already had my job, but no... I couldn't see myself in that. [...] staying at [place of family home] would be to limit my life goal, you know? I really had to leave, to meet other people and continue to study; that, yes, it really was a must.

Rachel, trade, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

For some interviewees, having a strong sense of vocation further boosted their aspirations to enter tertiary education as a way of getting a "good job". In Georgina's case, a mix of strategies of upward social mobility and gender relations (she aspired to be a primary teacher – an occupation that is well-known for its gendered composition) contributed to the exclusion of self-employment as an aspiration.

Interviewer: And Georgina, how were your studies?

Interviewee: [...] my dream was to be a teacher, [it was] craziness!

Interviewer: Did you feel that vocation?

Interviewee: Very much; I enjoyed it very much but now it's gone.

Georgina, trade, 50-59 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

Getting a good job (in terms of earnings, interest of tasks, and/or future prospects) also diverted some interviewees from considering following their family into self-employment. Cindy's aspirations (below), by the time she finished upper secondary education, were far from having any involvement in self-employment, which she does not refer to at all. Instead, she emphasizes the features that made her job appealing to her; the prestige of her employer (indicated by the competitive

process of selection and recruitment that she has gone through) and its performance in the area that she wanted to study at the university.

Interviewer: At that time, what were your expectations? After finishing the 12th year, what was on your mind in terms of future projects?

Interviewee: At that time I wanted to follow [area] er... and even did the exams [to enter the university], which went well, but, in the meantime, [...] a friend of mine said to me: why don't you take the tests to enter [organization]? You may manage to juggle the studies and [organization]. OK, fine, I did the tests. There were so, so, so many of us and I thought: well, let's see what's going to come out of this, but the truth is that I passed to the next phase, to the next phase [...]. The [organization] is very good at [area she likes] [...], and that also interested me because that was what I wanted to follow, I'm really in the right place because they really [...] were fantastic [...].

Cindy, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

In a similar way, Brian's words show that there was no possible competition between his aspirations (nurtured by his tertiary studies), the career he came to develop, and his mother's "petty" trade.

Interviewer: And then that collaboration gave place to that official job, as you've said...

Interviewee: [...] I knew clearly that that was not the life that I wanted, but I was obliged to work, you know? To have peace at home, I had to work. That was, was the rule.

Interviewer: And that collaboration continued until when?

Interviewee: [...] my father died [...], and [...] they had to close down the business because my father was the one who gave support [...]; and in the meantime my [siblings] were already... and I was already in my professional life, in a career [...], and I had no longer time for that [...].

Brian, trade, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

For some of these interviewees, it is clear that the younger generation can benefit from a wider array of occupational possibilities (or broader "subjective hopes" in Bourdieuan terms) by obtaining a higher level of education than their predecessors. In addition, the cases analyzed above are related to a specific kind of family business, which includes farmers, shopkeepers and restaurant owners and represent a more traditional (and probably less appealing) way of being self-employed.

Other interviewees in this study had a business background related to a “non-petty” enterprise, yet still did not see self-employment as their *primary way of working*. In these cases, the business background is through a grandfather, and is considerably distant from these interviewees’ lives. Their aspirations are shaped by a strategy of social reproduction, in which high educational investment (up to tertiary education) is the privileged way of securing a career as an employee in a “good” job. For these interviewees, the relationship with the business background is based upon the patrimonial assets (economic capital) and/or the family business reputation (symbolic capital), when they look at *self-employment as an alternative plan*.

The way in which Russell describes his relationship with his grandfather’s enterprise and the pressure that he felt when he started to think about setting up a business (after a break in his career) illustrates this point. He underlines the assets he was left (which he describes as “nice assets” at a different stage of the interview) and the heavy career expectations that were placed upon him (in close association with his father’s successful career). Such expectations led him to postpone his decision to set up a business.

Interviewer: Did you have any contact with him [grandfather]? Did you have that...

Interviewee: *...some, because I was very young, I was very young [...] he died maybe when I was about 15... well, then his assets remained, which were shared and at some point... me and [my sibling] [...] got a [business] [...].*

Interviewer: Yes, yes...

Interviewee: *I was there [abroad] [...] and: “we must set-up a [business]”, “I’m going to set-up [a business]” [...], but I never moved on it because there was always that idea: “come on, you must follow a career”, “you must follow a career”, “you must follow a career”.*

Interviewer: So you felt that you were being pushed into...

Interviewee: *Yes, and then, you know, that social pressure of “no, you must follow a career”, “you must follow a career”, that social pressure does not help much either... [...]*

Russell, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

The gendered organization of business succession, which was described previously in this chapter, also illuminates the way in which a background in family business can co-exist with a view of self-employment as an *alternative plan*. Rebecca’s description of her and her mother’s relationship with the business led by

her maternal grandfather illustrate this possibility. Her mother focused on family life as soon as she started to have children, while her father and her uncle got involved in the enterprise. As a result, the founder's son and son-in-law were better positioned than the daughter to work in the business, and the son, in particular, was more likely to succeed as the business owner. As observed in another study on Portugal, traditional practices of family business succession rely on a gendered distinction between the direct descendants who have access to succession, and those who are expected only to inherit family patrimonial assets, and not to get involved in the male line of business succession (Lima, 2003).

Interviewer: Sure, and your mother, what did she do....

Interviewee: My mother was, worked, er... was at home.

Interviewer: Worked...

Interviewee: No, from time to time she helped out [...], but then, when the children were born she remained as the so-called housewife.

Rebecca, trade, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Granddaughters (represented by Rebecca, who was born in the 1950s), descending from a female line are vetoed from access to business succession and to an orientation towards self-employment *as primary way of working*⁶⁹. Rebecca's dream of staying at home for some time after marriage indicates the strength of the traditional pattern of gender relations in which she was brought up. However, her description of her dream also reveals the seeds of generational change, when she explains that she intended to stay at home only for a finite period of time, and characterizes domestic work as "little things".

Interviewer: Um... um... and then, how did things proceed? Finishing your studies, getting married, how did it all work? ...was the marriage before or after...

Interviewee: [...] I finished the course in July, got married in September and 15 days later I got a job. [...]. I didn't want to find a job immediately because I had some savings, from some little jobs that we did, [...] and I just wanted to start work in January.

Interviewer: Why didn't you want to start working?

Interviewee: [...] I found it funny to stay at home, to cook the lunch, whatever, to do these, little, things. My husband [...] was already working, also we didn't have

⁶⁹ However, some studies have noted that more traditional patterns of gender relations can coexist with women's access to succession. As was already referred to earlier in this chapter, such a breaking of the "rule" seems to occur when there are no male potential successors among the younger generation and as strategy to pass it on to a male descendant afterwards (Lima, 2003).

children so we didn't need much money and I found it funny to stay at home and... those things, those dreams. [...]

Rebecca, trade, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

In line with these seeds of change, Rebecca emphasizes the importance of working outside the home for her own sense of identity, by anticipating that she would continue to work even if she got the euro millions. However, seeds of change can get halted or delayed in their effects when women are looking after their children (which Rebecca's words portray as a legitimate reason for women not to work outside the home). Her elaborations in this respect show how the notion of motherhood and the monopoly over childrearing contribute to the reproduction of gender relations, even when these are subject to some change.

Interviewer: ...and tell me one thing, a while ago you told me that you don't see yourself as a stay-at-home person, why?

Interviewee: Because I think that a person has also to contribute to... to the family budget, though whoever stays at home also contributes a lot, they can have no help and spend no money [...]. But I think that it's good for the mind to speak with other people, because at home a person gets very much... when children grow up, gets a bit stupid, so I think that it's always good [...]. Sometimes I even joke at home: if I won the euro millions I would continue to work. No, I'm not the kind who stays at home waiting for time to pass by. I think that a person must have an activity, not only physical, but mental, mental activity is very important.

Rebecca, trade, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Rebecca's characterization of both her mother's and her own experiences illustrates the historical trajectory of gender relations in Portugal; from the time of the *God, Fatherland, Family, Authority and Work* axioms, five decennia ago, to the current valuation of work outside the home as an integral feature of married women's identity (Torres, 2002). Her testimony also highlights the role of the interactions between gender, a social background in self-employment and age (as a proxy for generation) and its implications for the woman's relationship with the family business. Accordingly, older women with tertiary education, who do not access male lines of business succession, and live in a pattern of gender relations where their respective husbands have absorbing careers (while they themselves occupy comparatively minor jobs); are diverted from succession and self-employment *as a primary way of working* altogether.

Having no background in self-employment and seeing it as an alternative...

Most of the interviewees who see self-employment *as an alternative plan* (25 out of a total of 40) do not have a family business background. In addition, they generally report that they did not envisage the possibility of setting-up in business before experiencing a turning point in their lives. Those who did envisage this possibility thought of it as one of many things that they might like to do in their lives, rather than as something to be done in the near future.

Samantha's reflections illustrate the connection between not having had a previous intention of setting up in business and turning to self-employment as *an alternative plan*. Probably things would have been different had she had the chance to choose the course of events.

Interviewer: Had you never thought about working on your own account?

Interviewee: *I'd never thought about working on my own account.*

[...]

I wouldn't have chosen, no, honestly. I've never been greatly seduced by work... it was never a dream of mine; it was never, really.

Interviewer: When you thought in professional terms, before, what were the dreams that you had?

Interviewee: *When, when I was a child? When I was a child, I loved ballet very much, I guess that it was my... what I would really have enjoyed doing. Then, look, then I started to work; then, I stopped having dreams... I also got married when I was 16, I had my [first child] when I was 17 and my [second child] when I was 17; I started to see that life was not... really was not made of dreams.*

Samantha, restaurant, 40-49 years old, primary education

Barry's words illustrate the way in which a scenario of self-employment can be imagined during periods when work becomes too intense, without it being considered a realistic option. His tentativeness in assuming that he would like to be an entrepreneur, and the way in which he describes his "dreams" about owning his ex-employer's organization, indicate that he considered this possibility only when the levels of stress and pressure associated with his last job became intolerable. Self-employment was therefore thought of as a means of escape from his job, rather than a goal to be achieved.

Interviewer: So, how did the idea of setting up your business emerge?

Interviewee: [...] I think that many, such as me, [...] have that frustrated dream of not being really the managers of the enterprise, erm.... somehow, I also would like that, [I]’d like... well, [I]’d like to be an entrepreneur, ‘[I]’d like to have this⁷⁰ on my own’; and it’s like this: you wake up in the morning, after going to bed at 1am, after a business dinner, [...] wake-up at 6am to go I don’t know where [...]. The weekend comes, [you’re] exhausted, have to do emails, reports. These things are annoying, to earn a bit more by the end of the month; ‘pal... the satisfaction of having your own business would be much greater!’ A person imagines that. [...]

Barry, trade, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

Regardless of whether or not they had a family background in self-employment, interviewees who see self-employment as an *alternative plan* share a common feature; at some stage in their lives they had a *turning point* that triggered their leap into self-employment. For this reason, the way in which they relate to self-employment may be more unstable, in comparison with the interviewees that see self-employment as their *primary way of working*. The next chapter explores the multiple triggers and pathways into self-employment that led interviewees to envisage self-employment as an *alternative plan*.

5.4 Conclusion

By exploring interviewees’ *orientations towards self-employment*, this chapter uncovered two general pathways into entrepreneurship: seeing self-employment as a *primary way of working* or as an *alternative plan*. As stated above, this conceptualization considers the existing research that has developed the idea that self-employment is a life plan. The analysis presented in this chapter contributes towards a better understanding of the social processes behind more specific patterns in terms of pathways into self-employment.

As the analysis has shown, the specific patterns associated to self-employment as a *primary way of working* are diverse and may result from undertaking a profession (which requires a specific formal education), from marriage with a self-employed husband, or from having a background in self-employment and being brought up with it as one’s most probable future.

⁷⁰ Here Barry is referring to his ex-employer organization.

It is very important to note that the analysis has also highlighted the fact that when the interviewees with a family background in entrepreneurship later moved into a business independent from their family's concern, their initiatives were not motivated by an abstract desire for autonomy and/or economic independence. Instead, this transition into independence was described as being the result of constraining experiences, namely tensions with relevant others, and the ways in which these interacted with the life course of the interviewees. Additionally, in setting up their own business, these interviewees relied on types of capital, in Bourdieu's sense, which placed them in an advantageous position when it came to self-employment. These forms of capital had been cultivated throughout their lives. Consequently, even when individuals seem to be less constrained in setting up their business, the entry into self-employment is embedded in their social conditions or, in other words, in their social background, education and work history, as well as in the demands of their life courses.

Gender relations enter this big picture in two ways: by shaping the educational choices and access to business succession; or by equating being married to a self-employed man with a view of self-employment as one's *primary way of working* (here, the interviewee's life-plan is focused on marriage and involves a straight passage from school to matrimony). The analysis also suggests that the reproduction of traditional patterns of gender relations may be more associated with the more traditional forms of self-employment (in trade and restaurant industries) than with professional forms of self-employment (in high-end services).

With regard to the interviewees who came to see self-employment as an *alternative plan* for making a living, the analysis has uncovered some of the ways in which gender relations and aspirations of social reproduction or upwards mobility can exclude self-employment from the anticipated or desired life-plans of individuals at the initial stage of their occupational lives.

This chapter has, thus, made a case for a socially-embedded analysis of the entry into self-employment that focuses on the process of becoming self-employed, as a life course journey, through the notion of *orientation towards self-employment*. This journey starts with the individuals' earliest social experience in their family, develops throughout their lives, and makes use of their multiple forms and amounts of capital towards the field of self-employment. By distinguishing between self-

employment as a *primary way of working* and as an *alternative plan*, this thesis provides a general framework for interpreting different pathways into self-employment through an emphasis on circumstances. The next chapter will develop this analysis by further exploring the multiple experiences and processes leading interviewees to turn to self-employment as an *alternative plan*.

6 Self-employment as an alternative plan: trigger experiences and beyond

This chapter builds upon the analysis presented in Chapter 5 (above) in that it focuses on the pathways into self-employment as an *alternative plan*. In addition, it further explores the potentialities of the life course approach, by examining the ways in which the *trigger experiences* interact with family and work trajectories, to shape a person's move into self-employment. As gender and socioeconomic conditions play a key role in this leap, the chapter also explores some of the interpretative possibilities that are opened up by the notion of gender relations and by Bourdieu's theory of practice, as discussed in Chapter 3 (above).

In line with the life course approach, undergoing a *trigger experience* in family, work, or in the circle of relevant others (for instance, friends), is a key feature in understanding an interviewee's transition into self-employment as an *alternative plan*. The analysis identified two main sorts of *trigger experiences* among the interviewees in this study: *crises* (*disruptive* and *corrosive*) and *encounters*. The former are understood by interviewees as being negative experiences, which affect their labour market position, while the latter are seen as positive, as a meeting of wills that prompted the idea that setting up a business was an interesting or feasible possibility. These notions are developed in this present thesis with the aim of contributing to an in-depth understanding of the social processes behind different patterns of entry into self-employment *as an alternative plan*.

A *Trigger experience* is an intense event for the individual. Social background, gender relations and life courses create diversity in the kind of episodes that lead to self-employment as an *alternative plan*. To cover this heterogeneity different types of pathways into self-employment are identified. Table 16 (below) presents the distribution of interviewees by these patterns, and indicates that those who entered into self-employment as an alternative plan for making a living did it, in most of the cases, after undergoing a *corrosive* (22) or a *disruptive crisis* (13)⁷¹. In addition, it shows that four of the seven pathways into self-employment presented here include only female interviewees, and correspond to forms of gendered access to this way of making a living, as the following sections illustrate.

⁷¹ Some interviewees experienced more than one type of crisis, or both of them, in their lives.

By conceptualizing *trigger experiences* through a two-dimensional approach, which considers both *crises* and *encounters*, and the ways in which these relate to an individual's social circumstances, this chapter offers a broad framework for interpreting a wide variety of pathways into self-employment; without falling into the reductionist explanation provided by the push-pull theory. The analysis presented here contributes, therefore, to the debate on the ways in which it is possible to progress beyond that theory. As discussed in Chapter 3 (above), this theory does not provide an adequate understanding of the entry into self-employment involving both “pull” and “push” forces.

Table 16. Types of pathways into self-employment as an *alternative plan* among interviewees (women and men), by industry

			Women				Men				TOTAL
		Pathway into SE	HES	T	R	Total	HES	T	R	Total	
Trigger Crises	Disruptive Crisis	Not finding an acceptable job	4	2	1	7	1	3	0	4	11
		Re-entering the labour market after a family divide	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2
		Total	4	2	3	9	1	3	0	4	13
	Corrosive Crisis	Mismatch between expectations and organizational settings	0	3	3	6	7	4	3	14	20
		Organizational practices adverse to childcare	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
		Total	1	4	3	8	7	4	3	14	22
Trigger encounters		Seizing a business opportunity through others	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	2	3
		Seizing a chance for a flexible balance between paid and unpaid labour	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
		Helping the husband	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
		Total	1	1	1	3	0	1	1	2	5
TOTAL			6	7	7	20	8	8	4	20	40

HES: High-end services; T: Trade; R: Restaurant

The next two sections focus on the ways in which the interviewees undergo a *trigger experience*. The notions of *trigger crisis* (*disruptive* and *corrosive*) and *trigger encounter* are presented and substantiated, as well as the multiple patterns that interviewees report with regard to these experiences. The final section summarises the main arguments and findings presented throughout the chapter.

6.1 Trigger crises and the leap into self-employment

A *Trigger crisis* activates a process of self-analysis in which interviewees consider (in a more or less conscious way) their constraints and forms of capital, as they put into practice strategies for moving on with their lives. Experiencing this crisis *per se* would not be sufficient for them to set up a business. However, without it, they would probably have continued immersed in their daily routines as employees or otherwise, as some explicitly stated.

This analysis is in line with studies that have noted the pivotal role of a life crisis in an individual's move into self-employment (Anthias and Metha, 2003; Apitzsch, 2004). However, it goes further in the conceptualisation of the forms that such crises can take, by distinguishing between *disruptive* and *corrosive* forms. It does so, based upon a sample that includes self-employed men and women, operating in a range of industries associated with different levels of skill (See Chapter 4 above).

A *disruptive crisis* refers to an event that prevents the relationship with the labour market from continuing as usual; while a *corrosive* crisis refers to a gradual deterioration of the relationship with a specific job, or with dependent employment in general. These apply to both the men and the women in this study, and provide evidence that facing some sort of constriction is a key element in providing a comprehensive explanation of the move into self-employment as an *alternative plan*. Such an explanation goes beyond a reductionist interpretation, in terms of “push” or “pull” factors. It does so in that it considers the constraints and forms of capital, which are behind the ways in which individuals react to specific forms of adversity, or encounter, by taking the decision to turn to self-employment as an *alternative plan*.

6.1.1 Experiencing a disruptive crisis

Events occurring in the family or in employment, associated with a sense of rupture, are termed in this present thesis as a *disruptive crisis*. This form of crisis is experienced by the interviewees with particular intensity and has a strong impact on an individual's life irrespective of gender relations. Gender relations affect, instead, the patterns that link disruption and business start-up, as the next section will show.

The type of *disruptive* events that the interviewees had experienced include: redundancy (as a result of organizational restructuring), dismissal, a contract not being renewed, and divorce. Many studies have underlined the link between unemployment and self-employment (Hughes, 2005; Kirkwood, 2009; Kreide, 2003; Meager, 1997; Müller and Arum, 2004). Others, though not as many, noted the connection between problems in personal relationships and (mainly women's) moves into business ownership (Anthias and Metha, 2003). However, research on self-employment lacks empirical detail with regard to the way in which people undergo this kind of crisis. These empirical elements are important, as the intensity of these experiences gives a richer insight into the ways in which *disruption* damages individuals' previous plans for making a living.

Three main thematic areas emerged in interviewees' descriptions of the ways in which they experienced this *trigger crisis*: the *characteristics* of disruptive events, the *feelings* triggered by them, and the *mitigation* of the disruptive crisis.

Disruptive events are described as unexpected, unfair and traumatic.

There is a close association between unexpectedness and shock, which is very clear in Audrey's quote. Through a mix of verbal and non-verbal communication, Audrey, who lost her first and only job due to organizational restructuring, conveys a picture of an intensely experienced shock.

Interviewer: Um...

Interviewee: *[expression of emotion], I left [ex-employer] in the meantime. It was a shock for me, I didn't expect it, I mean, it's not that I didn't expect it, everyone was expecting a restructuring and so forth, but we didn't expect to be axed. When they say; look, your job is over. Then [small pause indicating having received a shock], what am I going to do with my life now? You know [...].*

Audrey, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

The unexpectedness of *disruptive* events is also conveyed by Jodie, in her reflections about her divorce from her husband. She "never thought" that it could ever happen given her belief that she had a solid marriage (due to its longevity and there being offspring) and a comfortable standard of living. Working outside the home, and in particular, setting up a restaurant, was therefore very far removed from the future that she had projected for herself before the divorce.

Interviewer: At that time, had you ever thought about having your own business?

Interviewee: *Never. It never crossed my mind to have a restaurant; never, never really; [...] because I never thought that I would divorce, you know, from my ex-husband, never thought, well... married for 22 years, with offspring and everything, [...] I thought that my life would continue with him and... [...] my ex-husband, in terms of money and things, I always had total freedom, you know? [...].*

Jodie, restaurant, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Disruptive events are also portrayed as being unfair in that many of the interviewees considered that they did not deserve to be exposed to the episodes that they had to cope with. Barry's words are illustrative of this kind of view. As he puts it, instead of being appreciated for his work (as he had expected), he ended up being forced to leave his job.

Interviewer: *Were there any other buts?*

Interviewee: *[...], it's annoying, there's no... basically recognition, you know, and that's something that... erm... that [...] can't be paid [...] it's something that you [smiles], you either like to use the Ferrari's or the Porsche's t-shirt of the good old times, or, you use it, but you think... well, there were some good old times, but... they're no longer there, I mean, they were, were deleted, in part, because there was no recognition for my last times [in the enterprise].*

Barry, trade, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

In some revealing points, interviewees describe *disruptive* episodes as being deeply traumatic, through expressions such as “nervous break-down”, the “worst thing that could ever happen”, “a time to forget”, or a decisive step towards what is seen as a very “frustrating”, or undervaluing experience (for instance, an anticipated unsuccessful search for an acceptable job). Melissa's description of the way in which she experienced unemployment shows the traumatic and life-changing effects that it had on her. As she underlined, a scenario of unemployment was at odds with everything she had envisaged for herself.

Interviewer: *So... you're describing your pathway... [...]*

Interviewer: *[...] well, to summarize and conclude, I left [...] and I confess that... erm... [...] in my mind, becoming unemployed was the worst thing that could ever happen to me, but it really was. I had never envisaged that, I've never thought... because I thought that I was hard-working... I've always invested strongly in training... so it never crossed my... when I was confronted with this situation ... it was a shock, it was a shock... and... launched a series of things. [...]*

Melissa, high-end services, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

The potential of a *disruptive crisis* to trigger a leap into self-employment is further supported by the emotional reaction that the interviewees associate with their experience, and by the way in which it affected their feelings towards their immediate future. With regard to the latter, interviewees recall a sense of extreme uncertainty and concern, in that they did not know what the future held for them. A recurrent expression: “what about my life?”; is used by Samantha, in her description of the turmoil she went through between leaving her job after an argument with her brother, and receiving the call that led her to self-employment. Jodie, whose interview was quoted above, experienced a similar feeling when she got divorced.

Interviewer: Um...

Interviewee: *...in the meantime, what about my life? What am I going to do now? What am I going to do now? Erm... then the mobile phone rings: “Samantha, [...], come here because...” [...].*

Samantha, restaurant, 40-49 years old, primary education

The *feelings* reported by interviewees include sadness, distress and a sense of betrayal. Sadness emerges in different forms; interviewees allude to it directly or by portraying a picture of hurt, depression and commotion. Luke’s words show the way in which a sense of unfairness can trap a person in a cycle of distress and make it difficult for them to move on with their life.

Interviewer: A while ago you told me that that period was a bit depressing [...]; depressing in which sense?

Interviewee: *Depressing because I was convinced [...] that I had done everything right and, so, [...] it’s an extremely cruel injustice to be used as a scapegoat; [...] I went to bed and, after an hour, I woke up looking at the ceiling and things going through my brain; [...] that was correct, that is, three times two is six; that was correct, [...] so why on earth did they sack me? [...]. And this sense of unfairness caused me to spend night after night without any sleep.*

Luke, high-end services, 40-49 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

The feeling of betrayal, which is also present in Luke’s quote (above), is usually conveyed through expressions of anger, such as Nicole’s thoughts (below):

Interviewer: So, then, when you lost your job, you realized that it was difficult for you to keep your standard of living...

Interviewee: [...] on the day that I was fired, on that same day I spoke with [Melanie⁷²]; [...] it was on that same day, on the day that I came down the stairs; I looked back and I said: “I’ll never come back here again! I’m going to open my own business!”

Nicole, high-end services, 30-39 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

Several interviewees engage themselves in a process of *mitigation* when they revisit their episodes of *disruption*. They try to minimize the negative side of these experiences according to the domains of their lives in which these occur. When *disruption* took place in the employment sphere, interviewees tended to underline the financial gain that came their way (redundancy payment), the unhappy fate of those who fired them or forced them to leave, or even their good actions in the past. When *disruption* occurred in the family domain, interviewees tended to emphasise the help that their relatives gave them in the past, or to blame the way in which their marriage ended up being affected by career commitments. This *mitigation* is important for interviewees in this study, in order to assuage the distress caused by a disruptive crisis. When it does not occur, it can be very difficult for a person to move on with her/his life, as Luke’s quote (above) indicates. Some of the themes included in this *mitigation* resonate with the “sense of revenge”, the feeling of “doing better” in self-employment, that Kirkwood (2009a) found in a qualitative study which included both male and female interviewees.

As the analysis above shows, the *disruptive crises* are intensely felt by the interviewees, even when they are mitigated in hindsight. They are thus decisive experiences which help in understanding the process by which people turn to self-employment as an *alternative plan*.

6.1.2 Disruptive crises and the leap into self-employment

Interviewees in this study report two pathways of entry into self-employment that are deeply affected by a *disruptive crisis*: *not finding an acceptable job* and *re-entering the labour market after a family divide*. Eleven interviewees (seven women and four men), reported the former, while the latter was observed among two women.

⁷² This name is a pseudonym for her initial business partner.

Not finding an acceptable job...

Eleven interviewees (seven women and four men) entered self-employment following a *disruptive crisis* in employment, such as getting fired, being forced to leave an organization, being made redundant, or not having a contract renewed.

These *disruptive* events and subsequent experiences, when searching for a new job, triggered a feeling that they could no longer secure the type of labour market position that they wanted. This awareness develops gradually as interviewees realize that jobs on offer to them fall far behind the working conditions, job content and standard of living that they were used to. The emphasis that they put on these minimum requisites in their job search indicates that what would be seen as a predominantly “push” factor for entering self-employment involves some degree of “choice”. This “choice” is bounded by people’s forms and levels of capital, and nurtured by the aspirations that they developed according to their social background and previous occupational experience.

In many cases, self-employment is thus a strategy to avoid a downgrading career move, as Arum and Müller (2004) suggested. This strategy is sometimes associated with a desire for independence, which research usually defines as a “pull” factor for self-employment. However, this desire is as much a defensive “push” reaction from interviewees who report a feeling of suspicion regarding the scenario of working for others and not being able to control the destiny of their jobs. This indicates how intricate the so-called “push” and “pull” forces are, and that treating the entry into self-employment as either predominately “pushed” or predominately “pulled” can produce a reductionist way of interpreting people’s motivation for setting up their own business.

The quote by Audrey illustrates the way in which self-employment can be seen as a strategy for avoiding labour market downgrading following unemployment. Right from the beginning of the interview, she established a direct association between unemployment (as a result of being made redundant), not finding a job that fitted her expectations (in terms of salary and job content) and setting up a business (an outcome that she would not have aspired to otherwise).

Interviewer: [...]; could you please outline your pathway up until the creation of the business?

Interviewee: [...] I became unemployed and the chance of creating this business, which I have now, came up with unemployment. And why did the chance come up to me? Because I couldn't find a job with the conditions that I had before. [...] And so I thought over and over: what could I do with my life?! And I chose to open a business. It was very difficult, erm... in bureaucratic terms... in all sorts of ways; it was very complicated er... I thought of quitting lots of times, honestly, and also... also because [...] it's the first time for me, in this industry, it's the first time in everything and, so, I thought of quitting many times, but there was no longer the chance of going back, erm... and this is it.

Audrey, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

Other male and female interviewees (both male and female) portray a similar picture. In addition to this common ground, some female interviewees report discriminatory practices at work, which contribute to their *disruptive* experiences, while a number of male interviewees underline the implications of disruption for the standard of living of their family.

Discrimination can exist in an explicit or implicit form. In Chloe's case, the *disruptive crisis* was the corollary of her conflicts with her employer, which included, among other elements, her disagreement over the atmosphere of explicit discrimination against women existing in her job. She became more aware of the prevailing gender inequality after becoming divorced from her first husband and changing her "mentality". The implications of this attitudinal shift illustrate one of the ways in which changes in the private side of gender relations can contribute to changes in employment⁷³.

Interviewer: So, as you told me a while ago, at some stage you started to feel some dissatisfaction...

Interviewee: I started to feel dissatisfaction because I saw people, who had arrived after me, and [they were] getting the benefits, namely in terms of salary, that I hadn't, for instance, erm... [I started] to feel that men really had a role that was undoubtedly more important than ours, women, erm... [...] and then it's one of those things that, as we get older, life changes and our mentality changes as well [...].

[...]

Interviewer: You were telling me about the discrimination that you felt...

Interviewee: Yes, with... the male element, the male colleague always had schedules, always arrived later; [as to] leaving, always left earlier. We, women, it's like this: if you worked with a male colleague, you'd never see him grabbing a mop,

⁷³ McNay's (2000) interpretation of Bourdieu's approach underscores precisely the importance that emotional obligations, which are cultivated within the family field, can have on the dissimulation of gendered power relations in the family and in other fields.

and we were obliged, obliged, and logically we did it because we worked there, right? Cleaning the floor every day, clearing the dust...

Chloe, trade, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

Practices of implicit discrimination in working routines, which stem from the stereotype of a heterosexual male worker, make it difficult for some women to balance work and family/private life. With no offspring, Jessica's criticism focused on this implicit side of discrimination. In particular, she underlined the way in which a culture of unlimited working hours affected her quality of life, making it impossible for her to live with peace of mind, and to be with her friends and family. She also reports discriminatory practices towards motherhood by recounting the episode of a female co-worker, who was discriminated against after having a child, and her perception (right from the time of the job interview) that pregnancy and family life were not tolerated by her employers.

Interviewer: So, it's thankless, sometimes ...

Interviewee: [...] *this is a very thankless area, there are no schedules, they don't even want schedules to exist, don't want us to have our own life, a family life, nothing, actually in the interview they asked me straight away if I was married, if I had children, because that was a reason not to be selected, it's complicated.*

[...]

Interviewer: And what about that sense that you'd not go far?

Interviewee: [...] *as soon as I started to be less fast than they wanted, it'd mean that they'd put someone else in my place, someone younger, with more availability in terms of schedule, and there was, I saw that very often there; a colleague of mine got pregnant, stopped being available as she had been, they put lots of pressure on her to leave. [...].*

Jessica, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

The family situation (having at least one child aged under five) is referred to by male interviewees when they reflect upon their reactions to past *disruptive* events. However, their narratives focus on the implications for their family budgets (to which they were the main contributors). Self-employment is, therefore, understood by these interviewees as an attempt to maintain their standard of living in the absence of a financially attractive job opportunity. Luke's words (below) illustrate this point.

Interviewer: So, to get back to the point that we were talking about a while ago, when you set up the business, started to work on your own, what did you expect from that?

Interviewee: Ok. [...] I expected mainly to reach the levels [financial], we're talking... so, I already had the two kids, I'm no longer thinking about me, I was never a person with high personal ambitions, car and all that stuff, just thinking about the kids, about the family obviously, and I was thinking about something that would please me. [...]

Luke, high-end services, 40-49 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

Interactions between family and business start-ups can thus take configurations specific to women and men. Women's accounts centre upon time, whereas men's focus more on money as a result of their higher contribution to the family budget. These elements resonate with findings of other studies (Kirkwood, 2009a) and echo the dominant societal version of gender roles.

Re-entering the labour market after a family divide...

While this trajectory into self-employment was only observed for two female interviewees in this study, their narratives exhibited substantive gendered features, suggesting that this constitutes a specific form of entry into self-employment.

Both women work in the restaurant industry and share a common experience: at one point in their lives, the *disruption* of a close family relationship (marriage or kin) meant they had to find a new way of making a living.

When they look back, they express a sense of having sacrificed their own individual interest in order to accommodate family considerations, which include supporting the economic projects of family members. This sense of sacrifice is highly gendered and connected with the "traditional gender ideology" portrayed by Hochschild (2003a). There, women's sacrifice equates to virtue (in terms of "attitude to work") and "emotional pathways" rely on the "suppression" of women's projects (Hochschild, 2003a: 136).

Jodie, who is in her mid-fifties, considers that she lived more for the family than for herself. Socioeconomic conditions and gender relations are central here. She justifies her fifteen-year absence from the labour market on the basis that her husband's salary provided a good standard of living for them and their three children. By describing her "option" as something that she had to do she uncovers the

ambivalence involved in this kind of decision and shows how “choices” in this respect are constrained by gender roles.

Interviewer: And then, [...] you no longer searched for a job, is that right?

Interviewee: [...] it wasn't possible for me to work because it was a decision, it was a decision having to accompany him [her husband]

[...]

Interviewer: ... you [said that you] couldn't have a job as you had to have a life of...

Interviewee: ... I think a life more focused on his function than on my life, you know; I was where the family was [...], I was also more with the children.

Jodie, restaurant, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

In a similar way, Samantha (in her late forties) highlights that she did not think of herself when she felt obliged to leave a job she valued, and accepted a job in her brother's nascent business. Her sibling's offer was not attractive to her, but she accepted it as a gesture of gratitude for his help with her children in the absence of her husband:

Interviewer: Could you please explain a bit more... why did you make that transition? What were your thoughts?

Interviewee: Erm... I really just thought about my brother, who was going to buy a [business], which he knew nothing about.

[...]

I didn't think of me, no, I really thought about him [smiles], completely, no, because I was very well.

Interviewer: You 'were very well'?

Interviewee: Me? I was [smile], I was, I enjoyed what I did, I enjoyed the place, I enjoyed the clients, everything.

Samantha, restaurant, 40-49 years old, primary education

Thus both women's narratives reveal how family considerations impacted negatively on their careers. When the bond nurturing these family considerations was disrupted, they faced the challenge of going back to work or finding a job outside the family sphere. Jodie's elaborations illustrate this point:

Interviewer: You'd never thought of a business... even in the restaurant sector?

Interviewee: Never, never really [...]. I was going back to [place]; I didn't even know what I was going to do [...] I had to try to restart and I didn't know from

where; but not with a restaurant, no... no really, it wasn't my idea, no I never had [smile].

Jodie, restaurant, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Self-employment emerges as an alternative precisely when they face this challenge of how to find a new or different way of making a living. They are steered towards self-employment through their social capital, in Bourdieuan terms. Jodie joined her boyfriend's self-employed project (see below).

Interviewer: By that time, had you ever thought about having your own business?

Interviewee: Never. It had never crossed my mind to open a restaurant. Never [...], never really [...] because I never thought that I would get divorced [...] he [her new boyfriend] was the one who wanted it [to open a business] very much, [he] wanted it very much.

Jodie, restaurant, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

For Samantha, it was the persistent encouragement of an acquaintance that gave her the confidence to set up her own business, an option that she had not considered before. Together with her eldest son, this acquaintance and his team were the anchors of Samantha's self-employment. Her words illustrate this quite explicitly, along with the way in which she came to follow an idea, which was not hers in the first place.

Interviewer: How did they⁷⁴ help?

Interviewee: How did they help me? First, they encouraged me, they told me: "You don't need to work for anyone; you've the capacity to work on your own". They wanted to lend me money; I said "no..." I said "no, thanks". They gave me all the work and paid me there and then; I finished the work and brought money home.

[...]

Interviewer: So, they were very important...

Interviewee: They were very important. Had they not done what they did then today I'd be probably working [as an employee] [...].

Samantha, restaurant, 40-49 years old, primary education

The process by which these women turned to self-employment was also gendered in that they both followed the projects or the insistent encouragement of others. However, they relied on different layers of their social capital and this fact

⁷⁴ Refers to the team involved in her acquaintance's business.

had implications for their first experience as business owners. Jodie counted on a strong social tie (her boyfriend) and accepted the role that he envisaged for her in the business. This role is very similar to women's decisive, but less visible, contribution in traditional businesses (Assunção, 2006; Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, 1981). Samantha counted on the help of close relatives, but it was through an old acquaintance (a weak social tie) that she came to be introduced to self-employment. Weak social ties, which tend to be "less homophilous" (Bottero, 2007), can thus facilitate an emancipating move into self-employment, at least to some degree, for women whose lives have been structured around more traditional versions of gender roles.

6.1.3 Experiencing a corrosive crisis

A *corrosive crisis* damages an interviewee's relationship with a specific job or with dependent employment in general. It is associated mainly with a sense of subjective incompatibility with supervision, organizational change, discriminatory practices, colleagues, levels of stress, work history and/or place of residence. Just as with *disruption*, gender relations, social background, education and occupational class are relevant in understanding the ways in which corrosion links with self-employment, but these do not affect the overall intensity with which both male and female interviewees in this study undergo a *corrosive crisis*.

Their experiences in this respect revolve around two themes: the *characterization* of corrosive events, and the *feelings* that they associated with them.

With regard to the former, interviewees describe their corrosive experiences through the idea of process, of a series of episodes that gradually generated a sense of it no longer being possible to continue to work as usual. This notion of corrosion as a process comes out of Russell's words, when he explained that he realized that it was no longer worthwhile to insist on finding a job abroad.

Interviewer: So, you already wanted to come to Portugal...

Interviewee: [...] there's a time... when there's no end, no light at the end of the tunnel... but what on earth am I doing here?! I have a better life in Portugal.

Russell, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

In some cases, corrosion results from an incident that in the interviewees' eyes affects their relationship with their employer. Megan noted that her chances of promotion were compromised when she refused an offer to develop an international career.

Interviewer: [...] So, could you please talk me through your pathway up until the creation of the current business?

Interviewee: [...] In that place, when someone said no to a move forward such as this one, it was bad for any other sort of progression. [...].

Megan, high-end services, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

The gradual nature of corrosive experiences, in general, explains the feeling of exhaustion reported by interviewees in this study. Exhaustion can take on various guises. Many interviewees refer to it as being fed up or having reached a dead end (sometimes in association with a feeling of injustice); while others report episodes of depression or a nervous breakdown. The perception of having reached a dead end is conveyed by expressions such as Russell's: "no light at the end of the tunnel" (above). In the same vein, Scott explains that he decided to leave his employer when, after many attempts to put the enterprise on the right track, he realized that there was no point in insisting on something that had no future. In their study of self-employed women who had left their (previous) employer organizations, Mallon and Cohen (2001) found similar expressions of subjective exhaustion.

Interviewer: So, why did you decide to go out for a pack of cigarettes?

Interviewee: Because there was no future there, so I really had to leave, I made several attempts to push the enterprises along a different track because there were clients, there was everything, everything [...] but people were interested in other things [...] and so I grabbed one or two clients and I left [...].

Scott, high-end services, 40-49 years old, upper secondary education

The sense of breaking down is illustrated by Ernest and Zoe's quotes. Ernest realized that he could no longer cope with a change in the management philosophy of his employer, which put his most cherished professional principles into question.

Interviewer: That part, when you fell apart, in which sense did you...

Interviewee: It was very tiresome because in the enterprise where I was, the people who were at the top changed a lot [...] and a series of misunderstandings

started to emerge and that was very wearing because, speaking for myself had nothing else to justify given the past spoke for itself [...].

Ernest, trade, 40-49 years old, upper secondary education

As to Zoe, she almost went into a depression. Earlier in the interview she had explained in more detail that her nervous system was completely shot by the high level of social control that she felt when she lived in a very small village, and by the hostile social atmosphere that she found in the only job that she could manage to find at that time.

Interviewer: And it was...

Interviewee: I couldn't, that's it, I really started to... I think that I almost went into a depression at that time, but... here it's quite different [...].

Zoe, restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

In this context, undergoing a *corrosive crisis* is a process of slow burning⁷⁵ that eventually leads to organizational exit. Self-employment emerges then, as a possible way-out, as an *alternative plan*. These findings are supported by other studies that capture a connection between different instances of this state of slow burning and an individual's leap into self-employment (Fenwick, 2003; Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Portela, 2008).

6.1.4 Corrosive crises and the leap into self-employment

The analysis reveals two different types of pathway in which there is a connection between *corrosive crises* and self-employment as *an alternative plan: a mismatch between expectations and organizational setting and organizational practices that are adverse towards childcare*. The former is built upon the experiences of 20 interviewees, mostly male (14, to be precise), while the latter accommodates two female interviewees.

⁷⁵ I would like to thank Colette Fagan, for this accurate and inspiring image.

Mismatch between expectations and organizational settings...

For the 20 interviewees who followed this route into self-employment, *corrosive* experiences revolved mainly around subjective feelings of incompatibility with supervisors and top managers. Supervisors play a crucial role in shaping the individual's relationship with their employing organization, creating discomfort and influencing the decision to turn to self-employment.

Many of the interviewees pointed out that their supervisors and top managers had a negative effect on the way in which they experienced their employment, by failing to recognize the contribution made to the organization, or by lacking the competence to adequately supervise. Ethan's words illustrate the way in which an unfulfilled promise can generate an enduring sense of not being recognised. In his case, it concerned a pay rise, but other unfulfilled pledges were reported, including a future business partnership.

Interviewer: ...so your initial idea was to set up a business with your [parent], but could you talk me through the moment when you decided to leave your job?

Interviewee: [...] I was already fed-up of talking with the boss, of asking for a pay rise... erm... the answer I got for years and years and years, "yes, it's true, [...] we[ll] give you a reward [...]"; year after year [...], erm... "next year I'll give it to you, next year I'll give it to you, next year I'll give it to you" [...].

Interviewer: So, you had that expectation of a pay rise...

Interviewee: Yes and why? Because sometimes I thought that I had done more, that I had reached more goals. [...] so, it was [...] my boss, who didn't value me.

Ethan, restaurant, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

Steve, on the other hand, identifies the main problems that subordinates might come across when they do not consider their supervisor to be competent:

Interviewer: You told me that you had some experiences in terms of...

Interviewee: Ah, in terms of supervision, yes, of being badly supervised. When I say badly supervised, it's in two ways: in terms of direction, of providing guidelines, which doesn't exist or when they exist... it's a complete stain, and in terms of showing off by taking advantage of the subordinates. [...]

Steve, high-end services, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Major changes in managerial practices and values, which are perceived negatively, can also have a detrimental effect on individuals' workplace experiences, as some interviewees in this study noted. Others identified rising stress and

dissatisfaction with their career development and place of residence as triggers which prompted their leaps into self-employment. These connections are in line with other research (Mallon and Cohen, 2001; Portela, 2008).

The constraining experiences reported above nurtured an explicitly stated desire for autonomy among many of the interviewees in this study. This finding, which is highlighted through the notion of corrosion and a focus on pathways into business ownership, indicates that the common association between the desire for autonomy and entrepreneurship can be shaped by previous experiences that have created a sense of constrained autonomy in the individual. Self-employment is thus more a way of breaking the strain of what is perceived as an insupportable constraint, than the result of a search for autonomy in itself. This finding is, thus, a clear indication of the reductionism associated with the push-pull theory (Hughes, 2005; Mallon and Cohen, 2001). In addition, it highlights the importance of context, when interpreting the results of many studies which portray autonomy and independence as key pull motivators of people's moves into self-employment for both men and women (Brush, 2006; Kirkwood, 2009a; Licht and Siegel, 2008).

Moreover, for the process of slow burning to come to an end, the interviewees considered not only the way in which their corrosive experience evolved, but also the way in which it interacted with different dimensions of their lives. These included their position in the labour market (with implications upon their economic, cultural, social and symbolic forms of capital); their family situation (for example, being divorced and having children); whether their spouses were self-employed or not (social capital); the economic, cultural, social and symbolic capital associated with their family business background; and their networks of peers/friends (social capital). Interviewees' perceptions that it was the right time for them to put an end to a *corrosive crisis* were shaped by the feeling that the necessary conditions were in place for them to turn to self-employment. An in-depth understanding of the way in which this awareness develops is therefore essential, in order to analyse their pathways into self-employment.

In particular, some interviewees turned to self-employment in order to escape a *corrosive experience* and counter a scenario where it would be difficult to find an alternative job at a similar level with an alternative employer. This is very clear in

Leo's description of the way in which he came to realize that he had to set up his own business to keep up his career aspirations.

Interviewer: Yes, yes...

Interviewee: ...when I was there in [my last employment] I reached the top. It was a top rank [...] house. [...] it wouldn't be easy [for me] to find another identical place; I either accepted to be [an operative] in whatever place, [...] or I tumbled backwards, you see.

[...] So, there's only one solution: it's to stop being an employee to become an entrepreneur and that was what I did.

Leo, restaurant, 60-69 years old, primary education

For some interviewees, reaching the peak of their careers also gave them the feeling that in self-employment they could capitalise on their social networks (social capital) and increased professional legitimacy, or symbolic capital. This is illustrated by Scott's thoughts at the time he left his last employer to set up his own business.

Interviewer: And what were you thinking of doing at that time?

Interviewee: [...] as I've told you, there was capital; it had clients who knew me well because I was the director; there was work to do; there were lots of interesting things. [...]

Scott, high-end services, 40-49 years old, upper secondary education

In line with a gendered division of paid and unpaid work, some male interviewees associate self-employment with family life by referring to their role as providers. Some emphasized that the arrival of children increased their financial responsibilities, and contributed to their sensing that it was the right time to put an end to an experience which they perceived as going nowhere near their aspirations in terms of professional development. Warren's expression "I have to do something with my life" illustrates this kind of situation. Alternatively, in some cases, having children was considered to be the beginning of a long period of increasing expenses, which would have negative implications in terms of the willingness to take risks. Gary portrayed this rationale very clearly, when he verbalised his thoughts at the time of leaving his last job:

Interviewer: Um, um...

Interviewee: [...] I don't see myself, between 35 and 40... which is the central period of my life, because after the 40 everything gets more difficult [...], one starts

losing... [one] slow downs, the children are growing, taking risks is already “hey, hold on”, there’s already a lot to consider, you see? [...]

Gary, high-end services, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

Along these lines, getting divorced can contribute to a sense of increased financial freedom among some men, when it equates to a decrease in family expenses. Glen spontaneously expressed this insight when he was elaborating on the time of leaving his job and turning to self-employment. In spite of the recent developments in fatherhood in Portugal (Wall, Aboim and Cunha, 2010), motherhood remains a central arena for the construction of genders (as discussed in Chapter 3). Thus, there are grounds for considering this sense of freedom as being a gendered experience.

Interviewer: Sure, sure, but could you talk me through that “kick-off” a bit more?

Interviewee: [...] there’s another detail, which has not as much to do with the professional area that also weighed in the dish of the balance; it was my family situation. By that tim[e]... [...] I was divorced [...]. Maybe I’ve never thought of a situation such as this with the expenses that I had [...]; I had the home [mortgage], [and] even though my wife worked, my income was much more regular than hers [...]; this family situation gave me the chance of not having so many responsibilities and, if something happened to me, I wouldn’t put my offspring at risk because they’re with the mother and somehow the problem would be sorted out. [...]

Glen, trade, 50-59 years old, upper secondary education

Family relationships and social networks (social capital) also contributed to interviewees’ transitions into self-employment by facilitating their access to business opportunities and/or important resources. Relatives and spouses played a pivotal role when interviewees set up business in the traditional industries included in the sample (namely restaurant and trade). Alternatively, networks of friends were crucial for those who came to operate in the high-end services and, in some cases, in the trade industry. Launching a business in more traditional industries may therefore activate latent family business resources to a greater extent, as some of the businesses in high-end services are associated with new opportunities that have arisen through the development of services.

In particular, self-employed spouses and relatives can facilitate the move of the interviewees into business ownership, by providing a number of things: access to business opportunities, a temporary place from which to operate whilst devising a

plan, experience, material resources (money and premises) and symbolic (business reputation) resources.

Cindy's reflections on her decision to leave her job and explore the site of an old family business illustrates one of the ways in which a *corrosive* experience can interact with a family business background, and end up leading to self-employment.

Interviewer: How was that process? You were in [employment], but then... how did that idea come up?

Interviewee: [...] there was already this "little friction" [ironic tone] with my [intermediate management], [...]. In [year], [...] they [people renting the place of an old family business] started to say that they really wanted to leave [...] they started to say this to my mother and my mother started to tell me: "you know that they want to leave [...] and that I'm no longer able to keep it. We have to find someone to keep it because having it close would be altogether a shame." As I was already a bit disappointed, [...] I told my mother jokingly: "Hey, that might be a good idea! Who knows?! Getting back to the family business!" [...]

Cindy, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

For Ethan, it was very clear that being able to capitalise on his family business reputation among banks (symbolic capital) was key for him to access the considerable amount of credit that he needed as seed capital.

Interviewer: And so when you decided to launch, you're telling me that you thought immediately of your [parent] as a business partner...

Interviewee: As we have the [family business] it was much easier to get the loans, to get... otherwise it'd have been very difficult. [...]

Interviewer: So, the partnership with your [parent] was very important...

Interviewee: Without [his parent] I've never got, at least without using the name of the family to get the loans.

Ethan, restaurant, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

In Amy's case, her parents' patrimonial assets (economic) and expert advice (cultural capital) gave her the security of a safety net that made it possible for her to leave her job and find an *alternative* way of making a living.

Interviewer: So, you decide to leave the enterprise [...] and, then, what happened?

Interviewee: [...] I wanted to leave [...] and my parents: "that's fine, we do the initial investment, we support [...]" and we started developing the idea, looking for a place and developing things more in practical terms. [...]

Amy, restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

University colleagues, co-workers and friends constitute a significant social pool (social capital) from which several interviewees recruited their future partners, with whom they shared a project and the risks associated with swapping a regular salary for the uncertain gains of self-employment. Glen's words illustrate precisely the way in which the association with peers can boost people's confidence and diminish their sense of risk, especially when they have scarce patrimonial resources (economic capital) to finance a start-up.

Interviewer: Sure, sure, but could you talk me through that "kick-off" a bit more?

Interviewee: [...] as I've told you, the brands that we worked with, we were going to lose them [...], and this was one of the things that made me think: so [...] this goes to others, to the competition? [...] to an enterprise and to someone who will come up? But why not me...? Why can't I grow and make it? This was one of the things that really made me think, of course, I was also backed by the other [...] partners, who told me: "hey pal, move on, we'll give you the initial support" and that was also, there's no doubt, reassuring, because one of the biggest... one of the biggest things... how shall I say... situation that a person fears is not having a salary... because usually one doesn't save money to provide for oneself for a year or two [...].

Glen, trade, 50-59 years old, upper secondary education

The opportunities associated with social capital (family, friends and acquaintances) together with the aspirations that interviewees develop throughout their lives are, therefore, essential for developing an understanding of the ways in which they experience a *corrosive crisis*, and "choose" self-employment as an *alternative plan*. These results provide new insights into the ways in which the multiplier effects of social capital, in Bourdieuan terms, might influence the leap into self-employment, as discussed in Chapter 3 (above).

Organizational practices adverse to childcare...

This pattern is built upon the cases of two female interviewees: Megan (who operates in high-end services) and Brenda (who works in the trade industry). It illustrates how organisational careers and procedures can be deeply rooted in male-gendered stereotypes, which presume that workers are free from child-rearing. As a consequence, organizations can be hostile environments for those who have childcare responsibilities, either by penalising them or by turning the work-life balance into a very tricky problem. Such difficulties corroded the relationship of the interviewees

with dependent employment on a more or less permanent basis, especially when they considered their last employer as being the leading organization in its market.

Schein's (2006) "think manager – think male", which still prevails among managers and male management students, accounts for the kind of experience that Megan had in her job (below). As she was explicitly told by one of her directors as soon as she was recruited, the norm there was to behave like a man; that is, to put the job before the family, no matter what. During her first few years, before she became a mother, she conformed to the dominant male culture, and ended up being perceived as a "man" by her male peers. Her sadness at her "achievement" further illustrates the gendered symbolic violence (in Bourdieuan terms) that she was subjected to at that time.

Interviewer: [...] so, could you please talk me through your pathway up until you set up you own business?

Interviewee: [...] I was recruited and, at that time, the director [...] made the point of talking with me, erm... and actually he made it clear to me, that erm... that erm... that "women must behave like men. So, what about family...?" I told him that "I don't have any", that 'I'm married and I hope to have children. [...]' and this was how I got into that enterprise and [...] I got on very well, [...] I progressed rapidly [...] and three, four years later, I felt that my colleagues looked at me as if I was a man. This is sad, but it's true. [...]

Megan, high-end services, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

This feeling resonates with the notion of "incongruity" used by Marshall (1995) to account for the sense of uneasiness that various women managers report, when they talk about the mismatch existing between the way in which they behave in male-dominated organizational environments, in order to achieve the status of a legitimate peer; and the way they commonly behave outside of work. In Megan's case, this mismatch is also illustrated by her view that the weekend was a time of freedom, a time for her to wear whatever she wanted, and to escape the weekday routine of a highly-controlled presentation of her "femininity". Similar strategies of controlled presentation have been reported by studies about women managers (Wajcman, 1998) or the ways in which gender operates in managerial ranks (Pesonen, Tienari and Vanhala, 2009).

Later on, Megan tried to capitalize on her tokenism, to get some prerogative as a mother. Her behaviour was hardly tolerated, and the feeling arose of being under

a glass ceiling: she felt that she was being penalized in the evaluations she received, in comparison to those of her male peers. Eventually, her prospects of progression were completely compromised, when she refused an international career, due to her commitments as a mother with a child aged under five. This denial meant that it was time for her to think about moving, and so she did. Once more, her actions revolved around her commitments as a mother, as she planned to leave as soon as her child completed primary school; a milestone that would mean more autonomy for her.

Interviewee: [...] *I was a mother when I was [in my 30s] and, at that time, I also dictated my own rules there, which were: now, I must [...] leave earlier, there is new technology, so get me a laptop so that I can work from home. [...] I must, I want to work, but I have a child. [...]. As a woman I also realized that I could explore, because men were not allowed to say that they must go to the doctor, that their child was in hospital, or that their child was sick. [...] Men could be thought of as making waves, me, as a woman, I didn't create any disturbance, because I explored the side of, ok, I'm a woman, I have to, I have this, I have these commitments in life, even though I was always, sometimes, a few times, penalized, but er... not enough as to make me think twice. Erm... then I had an invitation to [work abroad], erm... I said no, because er... because it's a life choice that one makes, [...] I wanted a career, but I didn't want an international career. [...] I wasn't able to do it, with the responsibilities [...], and so I said no. [...]. In that place [organization], when people said no to a progressive such as this one, it was bad for any progression. So, I had only one solution: by the time my child finished primary school, I'd have more autonomy and would move into something else.*

Megan, high-end services, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

Megan's experience illustrates what other studies, which have focused on the transition from dependent employment to self-employment, have named the "glass ceiling" effect (Fenwick, 2003); a gendered form of organizational constraint that leads many female managers to leap into business ownership. It is also a vivid illustration of the specific difficulties that women managers face when it comes to balancing paid work and family (Wajcman and Martin, 2002).

Brenda, who had a more operational job as a sales assistant, does not describe her situation as an example of the glass ceiling phenomenon. In her case, it was the rigidity of her working schedule that was problematic. Other research has found a similar connection between rigid working schedules and problems regarding work-life balance (Fagan et al., 2008). However, in a similar vein to Megan's account, Brenda suggests that the sense of incompatibility between her views on being a good mother, child-rearing and organizational procedures (in particular the working

schedule) corroded her relationship with dependent employment, and underpinned her move into self-employment.

When asked to describe her work history, Brenda made a connection between different stages of her private life and her transitions between jobs. After becoming a mother, time became a central criterion for her in evaluating a job opportunity. Initially, Brenda searched for a “normal” working schedule, and stopped doing shift work. However, since a “normal” job implied finishing work at 7 pm, this made her life as the mother of a child aged under five years, and as the parent who was in charge of most of the domestic and child-rearing tasks, very difficult. Self-employment emerged precisely as an alternative means of avoiding the problems of juggling caring and domestic labour with dependent employment in her family unit.

Interviewer: Could you please talk me through that [transitions between jobs until self-employment]?

Interviewee: In the meantime, a new stage in life, I met my husband, we started to make different projects. It was no longer just for me [earnings], you know... [...], I search for something better paid [...]. Then, [...] I left [...] because I searched for a better schedule [...] [because] I already had a child; so [...] let us search for one that gives us more or less the same that we're used to, in financial terms, but with a better schedule. [...] and afterwards, what does one search for? One's own business, because it's something of ours, erm... we can be near to home, or not, you know... But, in this case, near to children, if something happens, and we have more flexibility in terms of a schedule, even though we have to comply with it [schedule], for sure, but if something happens, or if our child's sick, or... erm... we have more elasticity in this respect.

Brenda, trade, 20-29 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

In this type of pathway, *corrosive* experiences revolve around the themes of time and motherhood and the ways in which these affect the working experiences of women with children. Women's understanding of what constitutes good motherhood is crucial here, as it shapes their notion of what the appropriate balance is between work and family (Fagan et al., 2008). This finding contributes to an in-depth understanding of the higher statistical likelihood of self-employment among women due to family factors/children, in comparison with men; as discussed in Chapter 3 (Boden, 1999; Carr, 1996; Taniguchi, 2002). Moreover, it lends support to the criticism that more conventional ways of measuring the “push” and “pull” forces tend to neglect motivational patterns associated with the gender role of women

(Hughes, 2005), which is inculcated, reproduced and changed through situated practices.

At the same time, it shows that gender as the structuring axe of inequality is not reducible to occupational class, as was argued in Chapter 3 (above), in that these two women share a similar gendered pattern of entry into self-employment, in spite of their different occupations as employees. Nonetheless, their narratives depict important interactions between gender and occupational class. In particular, Megan, whose activity was at the professional level, was the only one who “outsourced” (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007) domestic tasks for a time. This type of practice contributes to a partial change in pattern of gendered division of work, in that domestic tasks are undertaken by female workers, rather than being shared between the members of a couple.

Finally, just as in the previous pathway, for a *corrosive crisis* to come to an end, interviewees develop a sense that it is the right time for them to move on. This process involves considering the level of earnings (economic capital), the family situation, and the network of contacts (social capital). It is in the context of these circumstances that interviewees realize that adequate conditions are in place for them to turn to self-employment. It took Brenda a year to move into self-employment, with the support of her husband (the main earner of the couple). Megan, who got divorced when her child was still very young, postponed her exit from the organization for several years, even though it was at the cost of being stalled under a glass ceiling. Eventually she entered self-employment by developing a business that was closely associated with her sibling’s area of expertise. These cases show that links between motherhood, *corrosion*, leaving organizational employment and becoming self-employed, are not necessarily coincident. Rather, they involve a sense that it is the right time to turn to self-employment given the resources made available by close layers of social capital. Other research has noted a similar lack of chronological coincidence (Kirkwood, 2009).

6.2 Trigger encounters and the leap into self-employment

Contrary to a *trigger crisis*, a *trigger encounter* is not experienced with a sense of trauma or exhaustion. Rather, interviewees in this study perceived them

positively, as a chance to set up a business either by joining others or by benefiting from other people's offers. By including this type of trigger experience, the encounter, the analytical proposal presented in this chapter also accommodates the implications that social capital can have on an individual's life chances in terms of self-employment, as discussed in Chapter 3.

Three different forms of connection between *trigger encounters* and leaps into self-employment were identified in this study: *seizing a business opportunity through others*, *seizing a chance for a flexible balance between paid and unpaid labour*, and *helping the husband*. The first two of these were observed only among female interviewees (and are associated with more conventional versions of gender relations), while the third involved both male and female interviewees. There follows in some detail the analysis of each of these pathways into self-employment.

Seizing a business opportunity through others...

This pathway into self-employment is associated with the business opportunities that three interviewees came to seize, through their networks of friendship or professional contacts; and is aimed at obtaining financial gain. Simon, who started up a firm with two of his friends, equates his business with an opportunity to invest. He kept his previous job and makes a daily intervention in the business, despite his initial intention of not doing so.

Interviewer: But did you want to have a business?

Interviewee: *I wanted to have a business but not to work for it, but as a business, as an investment opportunity.*

Simon, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

In a similar way, Heather sees self-employment as a business investment, as her attitude during the development of the business plan, and her current wish of reducing her daily intervention in the enterprise, indicates. However, she capitalised on her pool of professional contacts and prestige (social and symbolic capital), to invite important institutional agencies to be her partners. For that to be possible, she had already reached a mature stage in her career (with implications on her types of capital), something that she explicitly noted in the interview.

Interviewer: Um... that [business opportunity] came to you in that job... and how did the idea of having your own business develop in your mind?

Interviewee: Erm... there are people that: "I've always thought about having my business!" No; not in my case; no. It happened because I really thought that it was an opportunity [...] and with the support of [a relevant partner], I mean, I really had to move forward. And I can tell you, I confess that when I was working on the business plan, when I was working on the idea and so on, it was very much; let me see what comes up from this. It was very much in that, in that way; of course with a lot of enjoyment [...], but always in that way.

Heather, high –end services, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

With no social background in self-employment and with a view of it as being an investment opportunity, these interviewees rely on their social capital to recruit partners, with whom they share their sense of risk, and improve their chances of success. Choosing partners involves a feeling of trust or institutional credibility, as Simon's words show. For him, setting up the business was only possible in conjunction with his long-standing and reliable friends:

Interviewer: So, has that always emerged in association with them?

Interviewee: Yes, I didn't see myself opening a business such as this one with no one else or without joining a partnership...

Interviewer: Why with them?

Interviewee: Because we've known each other for several years, I have confidence in them... in case things don't succeed.

Simon, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

Access to friends, co-workers and institutional agencies willing to share the risk is, thus, pivotal in this pathway into self-employment.

Seizing the chance of a flexible balance between paid and unpaid labour...

This pathway into self-employment emerged from the experience of Rebecca, who set up a business in the trade industry. Rebecca is in her mid-50s, and launched her first business in the 1980s⁷⁶, after having received a pecuniary gift from her grandfather (social capital), that gave her the material resource (economic capital) to allow her to think about giving self-employment a try. Her aim was to gain greater

⁷⁶ She continues to operate in the same industry, but recently created an enterprise (in formal terms) due to changes in the property of her initial business.

flexibility in her time management, so that she could spend more time with her children. Her experience is a clear illustration of the way in which a gendered search for time flexibility can make self-employment an attractive option for some women with children (Anthias and Metha, 2003).

From the outset of the interview, Rebecca established a connection between “inheriting” a substantial amount of economic capital (made possible by her social background – social capital) and turning to self-employment. It was this offer that triggered the idea of setting up a business for the first time, through the lessening of her (and her husband’s⁷⁷) sense of risk taking. This finding complements the results from other research that have found that pecuniary gifts have a positive effect on the move into self-employment by men (Hundley, 2006). Being “young” further lessened the couple’s fears in terms of risk, as Rebecca would have time to put a “plan B” into practice: that of going back to dependent employment.

Interviewer: [...] so, could you please tell me about your pathway up until you launched your own business?

Interviewee: [...] this opportunity came up, my grandfather was already oldish [...] [he] decided to give some money to each one [of his granddaughters/sons] and I decided, [...] I had already one, two, of my children [...] and, as he gave me some money, I decided to open a small enterprise, of course the money was not much, but it was enough to open a small enterprise. [...], it allowed me [...] to take the kids to [private] school, to do some shopping, to take care of home and then come here in the peak, at lunch-time and at the end of the afternoon. Then, as the children grew up, I used to go home, at the end of the afternoon, to see if the homework and those things and so, that’s what motivated me, that money that fell from the sky, er... with no loans and so, it was given, you know, so if it went wrong, [...], it was as if I had never seen it [the money], you know, and... I’d go back [to employment]; at that time I was young too [...].

Rebecca, trade, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Rebecca’s case indicates the way in which socio-economic conditions can introduce variations in the gendered division of unpaid and paid labour (Torres, 2005; Wall and Guerreiro, 2005). Her standard of living, given her social background and her husband’s earnings⁷⁸, allowed her to alleviate her “double shift” (Hochschild, 2003), by outsourcing part of the domestic tasks (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007) and

⁷⁷ Rebecca’s husband has a demanding career, and his involvement here concerns mainly the couple’s reflections on the ways in which setting up a business could affect the family budget and standard of living.

⁷⁸ Her husband’s earnings were the major contribution to the family budget.

hiring an employee to help her in the business. When she was asked about the way in which she and her husband used to organize themselves in relation to the domestic tasks, Rebecca showed an immense gratitude that both of them were “lucky” enough to be able to hire someone to help her. Her emphasis on the both of them being very lucky indicates that their relationship was relieved of the tension that it would have been under otherwise. Her case illustrates the importance of analyzing the way in which “outsourcing” domestic tasks updates more traditional patterns of gender relations, which no longer fit easily with women’s current levels of participation in the labour market (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007).

Interviewer: Sure, and how did you organize, or, how have you been organizing yourselves in terms of your domestic tasks?

***Interviewee:** Ah, don’t ask me about it, we, as I’ve told you, we’ve always been very lucky; we’ve always had a housekeeper. The tasks are as in the old times. My husband, with the kids, when they were little, helped, but today he does nothing. It’s a.... erm... [he] sits down reading the paper; he has the table set, the dinner made; in short, we’re very lucky, very lucky. [He] opens the drawer and there are his shirts, opens the wardrobe and there are his trousers, listen, [he]’s very, very lucky. Everything’s ironed, everything’s whatever, [he] has the housekeeper, [...], we’ve had a full-time housekeeper, since ever, we’ve even had her sleeping in. We’ve always been very lucky, we can’t complain at all.*

Rebecca, trade, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

Rebecca positive attitude towards work outside home⁷⁹ – as “something good for the mind”, which she would continue to do even if she did not need to – further supports the importance that “outsourcing” can have for some women (the ones who can afford it), in that it lightens the burden of their double shifts, and avoids conflict with their spouses. However, it also perpetuates gender inequity under a modified guise (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007): the gendered division of paid and unpaid labour remains undisputed, in that it is not by chance that Rebecca hired a female housekeeper. It is, thus, a case in which interactions between gender, social background and socio-economic conditions, decode the way in which self-employment fits into a gendered division of paid and unpaid labour among spouses.

⁷⁹ This feature was explored in Chapter 5, Section 5.1.2

Helping the husband...

Being married to someone who aspires to setting up in business can channel some women into the role of helper. Here, the conventional division of paid and unpaid labour among the couple supports a conjugal partnership that is aimed at improving the standard of living of the family, given the low level of education and earnings of the couple in dependent employment.

Denise, whose experiences illustrate this pathway into self-employment, now operates in the restaurant industry as a formal business partner of her husband. However, her first experience as an unpaid family worker took place in the 1970s. At that time, the couple had a child under five years old, and she split her time between housework, child rearing and the business - she was the one who was in charge of the “double shift” (Hochschild, 2003). Her testimony gives a rich insight into some of the processes that explain the way in which having a self-employed husband can increase women’s propensity for non-professional self-employment (Taniguchi, 2002).

Interviewer: And what did you expect from... [setting up the business]?

Interviewee: *I’ve never expected very much, I’ve always dreamed low... slowly. So my dream was to buy a house... [...] and to work for ourselves and have no one hassling us [...]. And so it was. [...]. In the morning, I stayed with... took care of the kids and whatever and [then] I went to the restaurant. In the meantime, the eldest was already in school. I took the others with me; cooked the food, my husband arrived and we served at table. [...].*

Denise, restaurant, 50-59 years old, primary education

Their social background and standard of living forced them to borrow the bulk of their seed capital from a third party. In cases such as these, social capital has a pivotal multiplier effect (as Bourdieu would say). Without it, self-employment would hardly be a feasible option for Denise and her husband.

Interviewer: So you left...

Interviewee: *I left [...]. In the meantime [...] almost in front of – we lived next to it – and, almost in front, there was an [establishment] [...]. My sister-in-law had a godmother [...] [who] loaned us [amount], at that time... [...]; we had [amount⁸⁰], that we managed to get [...], and we took that establishment. [...].*

Denise, restaurant, 50-59 years old, primary education

⁸⁰ They borrowed roughly 80% of their seed capital.

In a time where there were neither the current policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, nor the credit banking facilities of recent times, people lacking economic capital could use this kind of social strategy to get the financial start-up that they needed to try to climb the social ladder. Previous research on the “petite bourgeoisie” also revealed the way in which a complex network of solidarity (and dependency) allowed a young French couple to obtain the business of a couple of bakers who were retiring (Bertaux and Bertaux-Wiame, 1981).

In addition, the lack of educational qualifications ended up trapping the couple in self-employment. As Denise emphasized, they tried to quit from their intense work routine in the restaurant, after reaching a certain standard of living and savings. However, as time went by, they realized that they had to go back if they wanted to maintain their family budget.

Interviewer: Um, um...

Interviewee: *We were in that restaurant for 16 years and by then I was already very tired of the kitchen and I thought that I wouldn't go to any other restaurant. [...].*

[...]

Interviewer: What did you feel, at that time, which lead you to get back to work?

Interviewee: *Ah, we felt that the kids were still young and that our income was not enough for us to live on. We'd spend the money and nothing would be left; and we were still young. [...] even if he found something for him, I wouldn't have stood it staying at home all day because in the meantime the children would be grown up and I did not see myself at home, with nothing to do. What would I do? Something else...? I didn't know; I only know cooking, look...*

Denise, restaurant, 50-59 years old, primary education

Nowadays, Denise is a formal owner of the business, so that she can undertake the routine administrative tasks that her husband no longer wants to do. It was because of this recent formal change that she became part of the potential sample for this study. Her history in self-employment is dominated by social mobility, a traditional pattern of gender relations, and lack of visibility. It is part of a wider historical, cultural and institutional context, and illustrates some of the limited changes that have occurred in the history of gender relations over the last few decades in Portugal, as observed in Section 5.3 (in Chapter 5, above).

6.3 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter provides a framework for interpreting a variety of pathways into self-employment as an *alternative plan*, by using Bourdieu's theory, feminist theorizing, and insights provided by the life course approach. These elements are the point of departure of a work of conceptualization that focuses on "middle-range" social processes. As noted above, these are common to more particular patterns of access to self-employment and contribute to better understanding of these very patterns. In this context, this chapter conceptualizes different forms of turning points through the notions of *trigger crises* and *encounters*, and by distinguishing between *disruption* and *corrosion* as two types of crisis. Moreover, the in-depth analysis of the ways in which interviewees experience these *crises* suggest their key role in the cases in which entering self-employment is seen as being an *alternative plan*. In addition, the concept of *trigger encounter* highlights the importance that people's social capital can have on their leaps into self-employment, as discussed in Chapter 3. The influence of social context is also analyzed by considering the ways in which gender relations, social background, marriage and occupational class shape the different forms and levels of capital that interviewees counted on, when they thought about leaping into self-employment. Accordingly, this chapter provides an in-depth and original understanding of the ways in which people experience their pathways into self-employment.

In addition, this chapter contributes to the debate on how to move beyond the reductionism and the lack of context that affect the push-pull theory in three ways.

Firstly, it accounts for the complex interplay between self-employment, the lack of other suitable labour market opportunities, strategies to avoid subjective social downgrading, aspirations for independence, and previous exposure to a *trigger crisis* (of a *disruptive* and/or *corrosive* type). In particular, such pathways as *not finding an acceptable job*, and *mismatch between expectations and organizational settings*, show the inadequacy of interpreting the former as being "pushed" and the latter as being a "pulled" way of entering self-employment. Such interpretation would not take account of important social processes. For instance, it would ignore the fact that self-employment can be a strategy to avoid a subjective sense of social downgrading, rather than a last resort to finding a job, irrespective of its characteristics. Alternatively, the desire for independence associated with a *mismatch*

between expectations and organizational settings does not take shape in a social vacuum. Instead, it is the result of constraining experiences, in most of the cases in a specific job. It would therefore be inaccurate to consider this pathway as a “pulled” one. A similar problem was already exposed in Chapter 5 (above), with regard to the interviewees who set up a new business due to tensions with significant others, while expressing a desire for independence.

Secondly, by emphasizing the role of social context, this chapter offers an alternative sociological interpretation for the leap into self-employment. The motivational dimension of interviewees’ pathways is considered, by an approach that also takes into account the implications of events that people experience throughout their lives, and the different forms and levels of capital, in the Bourdieuan sense, that they can rely upon to overcome such events.

Thirdly, following this emphasis on social context, the chapter also shows that traditional indicators used by the push-pull theory do not cover the array of gendered motivational patterns associated with women’s entry into self-employment, and the ways in which these interact with their disparate forms and levels of capital. In particular, four gendered pathways into self-employment as an *alternative plan* were identified in this chapter: *re-entering the labour market after a family divide*; *organizational practices adverse to childcare*; *seizing a change for a flexible balance between paid and unpaid labour*; and *helping the husband*.

7 Family and business life: multiple connections and tensions

The previous empirical chapters (5 and 6) focused on interviewees' pathways into self-employment and proposed an alternative interpretative framework to the push-pull theory. This chapter addresses the fourth research question of this thesis and the problems resulting from the tendency to portray entrepreneurship as an activity which is disconnected from family life (See discussion in Chapter 3 above).

In particular, this chapter contributes to current debates in two ways.

Firstly, it explores the connections between family and enterprise for both cases of “copreneurship” and “non-copreneurship” (See discussion in Chapter 3 above). The notion “copreneurial couple”, or “copreneurs”, is used to give visibility to cases where both spouses work and participate in the decision-making, irrespective of the formal property ownership of the business (Fitzgerald and Muske, 2002). In “non-copreneurial” cases of self-employment, the business involves only one member of the couple and there is no apparent participation of the spouse in it. Secondly, it contributes to a more comprehensive view of “copreneurships”, which tend to be portrayed by research as inherently harmonious endeavours (See discussion in Chapter 3 above). It does so by considering not only the multiple ways in which the interviewees' spouses contribute to the business, but also the tensions that emerge within the couple, and the coping strategies that are put into place⁸¹.

Table 17 (below) presents the distribution of these two types of settings in the sample under analysis. Most of these interviewees report situations of “non-copreneurship” (26). The high incidence of “non-copreneurships” among male interviewees is explained by the fact that five female interviewees were not included in this analysis because they did not meet the basic criterion (See footnote 71 below). The “copreneurships” are almost evenly distributed between the female and male interviewees included in this analysis.

⁸¹ Accordingly, the analysis presented in this chapter covers the following cases: interviewees who were married, or cohabiting with a partner, when they set-up their current or past businesses; forty-three of the forty-eight individuals included in the sample were in such situations.

Table 17. Relationship between the couple and the business among interviewees (women and men), by industry

	Women				Men				TOTAL
	HES	T	R	Total	HES	T	R	Total	
<i>Copreneurs</i>	1	3	5	9	3	2	3	8	17
<i>Non-copreneurs</i>	2	5	2	9	6	8	3	17	26
Total	3	8	7	18	9	10	6	25	43

HES: High-end services; T: Trade; R: Restaurant

The following sections present an in-depth analysis of each one of these relationships. Initially, the analysis focuses on “copreneurial relationships”. It explores the connections between family and business, as well as the forms of cooperation, tension and coping strategies involved in this particular setting. Then, the analysis looks at “non-copreneurships” in order to examine the multiple (and gendered) ways in which spouses contribute to this form of self-employment. The final section summarizes the main findings of this chapter.

7.1 “Copreneurial” relationships: ambivalence against a persisting gendered background

Interviewees’ opinions about their “copreneurships” with their spouses can be encapsulated in one word: ambivalence. This situation had been anticipated during the literature review (See Chapter 3 above), and grew in strength when interviewees were elaborating on the positives and negatives of working with their spouses. In particular, the argument that “copreneurships” are not inherently harmonious relationships, and that these involve both collaboration and tension, are exemplified in excerpts such as the one featuring Samantha (below).

Interviewer: How do you feel about working with your partner?

Interviewee: Sometimes it wearies me, very honestly, sometimes yes. I think it is very... how I shall say; it’s very... it’s different.

Interviewer: Different in what way?

Interviewee: Probably we argue a bit more; now the TV volume is high again, isn’t it? [smiles] If he wasn’t here, it wouldn’t be like that [smiles].

Interviewer: What would you prefer?

Interviewee: [...] if he could find another job, which paid well, it would be better for him, very honestly, [...] for us not to be so dependent upon each other, because

we're a bit... but for him to be in a bad situation, as I have already said: for him to be in a bad situation... [It is better that he works with her].

Interviewer: So, if you could choose...

Interviewee: *No. That's the way it is, on the other hand, I also know that when I leave [...] that everything is straight, the cash register is balanced... if I had a worker, it might be or it might not. [...] in this respect, it puts my mind at rest, honestly.*

Samantha, restaurant, 40-49 years old, primary education

The following sections explore the collaboration and tension that interviewees associate with their business/conjugal relationships, as well as the strategies that they devise in order to deal with such tension.

7.1.1 Cooperation and the gendered side of *copreneurships*

This section examines the division of work between spouses in the business and at home, by focusing on the forms of cooperation reported by interviewees and the ways in which these are shaped by gender relations. Following other research (Wiesmann et al., 2008), this analysis explores how a focus on the negotiation of household, care and professional commitments contributes to an in-depth understanding of how paid and unpaid work is divided in “copreneurial” relationships.

The theme *cooperation* is referred to by most of the interviewees involved in a “copreneurial” relationship. They associate it with the ideas of functional complementarity, solidarity, patrimonial cooperation, and a feeling of mutual trust between spouses. Family relationships include, therefore, an array of emotional investments, reciprocal obligations and patrimonial strategies that justify and support these partnerships between spouses.

These characteristics are illustrated in Leo's reflections upon the participation of his wife in business.

Interviewer: Why?[In relation to the scenario of a copreneurship]

Interviewee: *Because... it's this way: why pay someone from the outside, when I have someone at home in whom I trust, and who can share the load with me, and work for the pile [of money]? I've always thought that way. I've even said on many occasions: if my wife didn't work with me, I wouldn't work in the catering trade.*

Leo, restaurant, 60-69 years old, primary education

In a similar vein, Ellen reflected upon the trust and family side of her business, when she was asked about the couple's refusal to join third parties in a partnership.

Interviewer: Why do you usually answer in such a way? [Refused partnership proposals]

Interviewee: [...] look, I'm very suspicious about going into partnerships [...]. As long as my husband is my partner, things run perfectly [...]. I take a decision or he takes a decision without consulting me; and I know from the outset that that's a good decision; we're [together] for better and for worse. If it worked; it worked; if it went wrong; we take it. [...] and I'm always sure of one thing: if I forget to balance the cash register, [...] or if this week I'm not so, so, so dedicated [...] I know that things are straight; and if there was a person from the outside there would always be suspicion... .

Ellen, trade, 40-49 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

Most interviewees in a "copreneurship" report a gendered specialization among spouses, which involves the business and the family/domestic environment.

With regard to the business area, men tend to assume a leading role, in financial and strategic decisions, and to take on the heavier tasks; whereas wives focus on routine management, secretarial work, decoration, and/or operational duties, such as cooking. Many interviewees, both male and female, refer to the leading role of men in the decision-making, by saying that they usually "take the first step". Zoe's words illustrate this specialization. She mentions that her husband "has more time to think", that he usually "takes the first step" and, then, they "do things together".

This type of arrangement emerges in businesses that operate within the husband's area of expertise, and/or are very much his project. When both spouses have skills directly connected to the core activity of the business, responsibility for the strategic decision-making may be more shared. However, husbands continue to adopt a dominant position in this respect, especially when they see themselves as being more experienced than their wives. This is illustrated by Trevor's thoughts on the tension and complementarity that characterize his "copreneurship".

Interviewer: Um, um...

Interviewee: [...] it was somehow difficult for her to accept my suggestions and probably vice-versa too; but I have more experience, don't I? [...] She is 3 or 6 months behind me. She recognises it. But she's very organized [...] with the money; and in this respect she's excellent ... ; in other words, I'm good at conceiving things;

... I have the concept, I'm good at launching things; then, in sticking to them erm... I'm not so good; [...] I think that we have to be aware of our abilities; I'm not good at following routines and she's excellent at it.

Trevor, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

The division of household and care tasks tends to fit into the overall logic described above. Wives usually carry out the household tasks alone, with the help of their daughters, or outsource them to female domestic workers. They also tend to be in charge of child care to a greater extent and, in some cases, rely on the help of their children's grandparents. This gendered division of work is usually based on implicit norms and contributes to the continuation of gendered arrangements in the business.

As Nigel's remarks (below) suggest, when the division of household tasks is defined by implicit norms, it tends to reproduce traditional gender roles, and the inequality that underpins them. Despite recognizing that he is the one who does the least at home, he justifies this arrangement as being due to his workload and, very importantly, with the implicit and established nature of these routines, and their alignment with "housewives' tasks". This is consistent with the findings of other research (Wiesmann et al, 2008).

Interviewer: Yes, and what are the tasks that you and your wife carry out?

***Interviewee:** My wife does, does the tasks that housewives do, but with the help of my daughter; so, both of them do; [the] ironing, [the] cooking, [the] cleaning. As I'm the one who leaves home earlier [...]; I'm the one who does the least. We can't do everything [smiles]. But it isn't... it isn't, how shall I say?... it isn't because I'm trying to dodge something; no; it isn't, it isn't possible, it isn't possible to do everything. [...] when it's necessary to do some repairs I'm the one who does it, but my wife then also helps [smiles].*

Interviewer: How do you feel about the way in which things are organized?

***Interviewee:** I think that it works smoothly. It's become such a routine that now no one says anything. They do say if something is left off the routine [smiles]. If things aren't on the routine, there might be a complaint; otherwise no.*

Nigel, trade, 40-49 years old, tertiary education

The mere externalization of domestic tasks to workers, without any explicit negotiation of their being divided, also contributes to continuing gender inequality. These implications are illustrated by Zoe's account. Like other married women (Wiesmann et al., 2008), she justifies her concern over domestic chores because of her demanding standards, in terms of cleanliness and organization.

Interviewer: How do you organize yourselves at home in terms of tasks?

Interviewee: [...] In terms of tasks, I have a lady that cleans my home every day because I can't [...]; there it is, it's an organization thing. I can't leave home knowing that my home is chaotic, that the beds are not made, erm... so I have a lady [...] I don't have to worry about that [...] I just have to worry about the washing [...].

Zoe, restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Having children of a dependent age can reinforce gendered patterns in relation to the division of work, especially when women's earnings are lower than their spouses'. Dale's explanation of the way in which his wife, who was previously self-employed, ended-up joining his business reflects this type of situation.

Interviewer: So, your wife helped you in some way from very early on, could you please tell me how that evolved?

Interviewee: [...] we had already considered working together on several occasions. One year ago, we realized that this would be difficult to manage because our youngest went to school and, then, caring for the child at night, for instance, if she was still working self-employed, it would be very complicated. [...] I told her: look, instead of making things more complicated, why don't you come to work in the business as well: you earn... you have your salary and we let that person go [...].

Dale, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

When the core business is related to wife's skills, or she has previously been self-employed, interviewees report a greater nuance of gendered patterns in relation to division of labour, both at home and in the business. Rachel's account illustrates this point. Her "copreneurship" is directly connected to her former experience in self-employment, via her mother, and her tertiary studies. In the business, the couple share contact with customers and discuss actively what is going on, and what should be done next. In addition, the woman undertakes secretarial tasks, financial management and draws up quotes for clients, given her ease at dealing with money. Rachel's close contact with potential clients, through providing quotes, gives her a notion of market needs, and this information feeds the couple's "brainstorming" sessions at the end of the day. Her husband is also in charge of the creative work involved in a new service, which is closely related to one of his talents. This more egalitarian arrangement preserves some of the traits of a gendered division of work particularly in the separation between creativity and (the routine of) secretarial work.

Their division of both domestic and care tasks, fits into the picture described above. She is very “grateful” (Hochschild, 2003) for his contribution, in terms of cooking and shopping, and describes him as a role-model in comparison with men, in general; and those in her family, in particular.

Interviewer: And what about child care? How do you organize that?

Interviewee: *When [Amber]⁸² was little, [Kyle]⁸³ was in charge of the soups, vegetables, if it was chicken or whatever. We went to[Rachel’s home town] and my family said: “Look!” my cousins said to their husbands: “Look, he’s one who cooks the soup! Learn something!” So, [Kyle] has always been an example of the type of man that should do that, that’s as it should be, as it should be, and I took care of the other part, I took care of [Amber], I stayed with her, of course... [Amber] was breast-fed until she was six months old and [Ben]⁸⁴ up to even later, so there’s no... this part, [...] there’s no way a woman can pretend: saying “no, now you stay with him”, no, [...] it was me, of course, because I was the one who was able to do that. But when it was necessary to wake up, at night, and that... [Kyle] was the first to get up, I never needed to prod him hard. [...] I think that it’s necessary to talk about things, to talk about things; we spoke; it wasn’t necessary to speak very often, I mean, it wasn’t necessary to say: “you never get up” or “you never cook the soup”; no, I mean, it’s obvious that a mother or a woman who works is done in; I mean... this isn’t... super-women. It can’t be so. [...] We are either good friends, or it isn’t possible, it isn’t possible. So, this mutual help really had to exist, it wasn’t, it wasn’t, it wasn’t... taking on the man’s role that we’re used to see in men, was it? For me, it was absolutely out of question.*

Rachel, trade, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Organizing was not spontaneously established, as Rachel mentions in the quote presented above. The couple discussed the topic explicitly and she took the lead in devising an arrangement that would be more interesting for him. For instance, she explained that she was not bothered about doing the cleaning herself, and leaving the cooking and shopping to her husband. She also taught him to cook the soups for the children and developed his collaboration by emphasizing his talent.

Interviewer: How did you organize yourselves at home?

Interviewee: *[...] at home, there’s always been a division, there’s no... [Kyle] cooks and cleans the kitchen and does the shopping. There is a division but that was not exactly forced, it’s like this: let’s see what do you do better? Well, if I, it’s not that I dust better, but I don’t mind tidying up the home, and he does the kitchen part [...].*

Rachel, trade, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

⁸² This name is a pseudonym for her first child.

⁸³ This name is a pseudonym for her husband.

⁸⁴ This name is a pseudonym for her second child.

Her comments show the relevance that explicit decision-making has for spouses in developing a less traditional division of household and care tasks, when the business is strongly linked to the wife's skills and experience of being self-employed. However, her thoughts also indicate that gender roles are entrenched in daily life and that, despite negotiations between spouses, wives usually get the most boring tasks (such as tidying up the home). This is in line with the gendered rationale that tends to pervade in the division of household and caring tasks between spouses (Warren, 2011).

7.1.2 Tensions and coping strategies in *copreneurships*

This section focuses on the tensions and coping strategies that interviewees mention with regard to their business partnerships, and the ways in which these partnerships are shaped by gender relations. In general, interviewees associate these tensions with the detrimental effects of "copreneurships" in two domains: family life and the conjugal relationship.

Several interviewees, who have at least one child under the age of six, or slightly older, express their concern about the tension between their business and their family life. This theme - *family life being taken over by the business* - involves a dilemma between fulfilling the demands of the business and providing an adequate level of childcare. Zoe's words (below) illustrate this feeling and indicate how it is particularly felt by women, when they report a more active involvement in child care, in comparison to their husbands.

Interviewer: So, you [the couple] feel that it is harming your family...

Interviewee: *Exactly, we would like to spend more time with our children, because they are little, they also need to be with us, don't they? So, we think that... so, my eldest is at primary school and needs my help to do his homework, because if I don't help him... and then it gets awful, because when I'm there, next to him, he says: "it's ugly, you must rub it out and do it again"... and it's always at night because during the day I'm working, and he's already tired because he has spent all day playing at his grandmother's, I mean... erm... I would prefer to... [I'm] trying to see if I can manage, except at those peak times, to see if I can manage to stay with my kids every weekend. That was my main aim, so... [I'm] trying as best as I can to get the optimal conditions to get there.*

Zoe, Restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Some female interviewees with older children also touched upon this theme, by remembering how difficult it was for them to avoid a sense of feeling guilty for not adequately fulfilling their social role as mothers.

When men are strongly involved in care, as Russell is, they may also experience similar feelings. His involvement is illustrated by his response to his mother's suggestion of leaving his daughter to be cared for by the cleaner: "no, because [Gwen]⁸⁵ is my child, she is not the cleaner's child". In this context, he reports a similar sense of guilt when he talks about realizing that his daughter "spent the weekend watching TV", because he and his wife were constantly absorbed in the business.

Explicit negotiation of the division of work may raise men's awareness of the risks involved in this tension. Dale's interview is explicit in this respect. His conversations with his wife involved a compromise aimed at limiting the detrimental effects of the business upon family life. One of his statements, "I've already understood" is an indicator of his concession, and of his wife's leading role in this process. However, he says that it is difficult to separate his mind from the business, at a time of fierce competition, especially during opening times.

Interviewer: So, you feel that sometimes the time... that you're too busy?

Interviewee: Yes, despite saying... and, then, one can't do it; but the fault is not... the market itself is very demanding, isn't it? And sometimes, even though we wish, it's hard; we can't really disconnect, you see, it's very complicated. [...]

Dale, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

Interviewees' concerns about the negative effects of "copreneurships" on their conjugal relationship focus on two major themes: *exhaustion* and *domination*.

The former – *exhaustion* – concerns the belief that working with a spouse may put the marriage at risk. This broader theme includes several categories: *a 24/7 relationship; frequent disagreements; no longer having a personal life; and jealousy*.

By way of illustration, several interviewees underlined that a *24/7 relationship* with a spouse can be "tiresome". One woman, Denise, has even described this situation as something that has "doubled" the number of years in her marriage. Like many others, she does not recommend couples working together and illustrates her advice with cases of couples who have ended up divorced.

⁸⁵ This name is a pseudonym for his child.

Disagreements with spouses can involve different issues: from allocation of patrimonial/financial resources, especially during harder times, to business strategy. Dissentions reach their highest levels in most extreme cases of tension, when people get divorced. Claire is one of the women who report this type of breakdown. During the interview, she explained that the arguments with her ex-husband were so frequent that her “copreneurship” became unbearable. During a later stage of our meeting, she revealed that the couple’s schedules, and her engagement in the business, had damaged their *personal life*.

Interviewer: How did you organize yourselves in the business, in terms of tasks?

Interviewee: [...] *that was one of the things that I wasn’t able to manage because when I dedicated myself to it [the business], I forgot my husband completely.*

Interviewer: Did you?

Interviewee: Yes, *I did; I also know when I had failed, because at that time I completely forgot my h... that I had a husband! We almost never met at home; that’s how it was. Because when I arrived home it was about time for him to wake up [...].*

Claire, trade, 30-39 years old, lower secondary education

Other interviewees show a similar concern regarding the risk of *no longer having a personal life*. However, they do not report a similar disintegration in their marital and business relationship. Dale, for instance, mentioned that his wife made him realize that they needed to spend more time together, as their lives were being taken up by business commitments and by the demands of two dependent children. Because of Dale’s wife’s leading role in developing his awareness, it is interesting to note that this category is referred to mainly by female interviewees. This pattern indicates one of the ways in which gender roles may shape people’s considerations about the implications of paid work upon private life.

For some interviewees, *jealousy* represents an additional level of marital tension. This category emerges when they talk about their spouses’ difficulties in seeing them as co-workers. This kind of rationale is clearly exemplified by Adam, when he explains why working with his wife has been difficult, despite certain improvements.

Interviewer: Why? [It has been difficult to work with his wife]

Interviewee: *Because she wasn’t enjoying that much watching me work. She had never seen me handling the clients, had she? For instance, if she saw me talking to you; today, it would be the first time. If you came here tomorrow, we would start to*

develop trust, but within the rules [of respect]. For her, that would be a problem. Thankfully, she's better, she already understands; it's difficult, but she's better.

Adam, restaurant, 40-49 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

The theme *domination* highlights spouses' attempts to reproduce, or challenge, a traditional principle of gender relations, according to which it is not acceptable for a woman to have authority over a man (Bourdieu, 2001[1998]) (See discussion in Chapter 3 above). This theme includes several categories: *authoritarianism*, *forced involvement*, *competition for dominant position*, and *financial risks*.

The former two are reported by interviewees, whose businesses operate within their husbands' areas of expertise, and are controlled by them. They appear, thus, in the context of more traditional "copreneurships", in terms of gender relations.

Authoritarianism concerns the husbands' tendency to blame their wives whenever something is going wrong in the business. The women who were interviewed resent this behavior and, not surprisingly, emphasize that they would prefer to work without their husbands, or that they do not recommend spouses to work together. As Zoe says, "I prefer to work alone because there's always something that is not right for him, and I'm always the one who is blamed". Denise holds a similar view when she talks about her reasons for not recommending couples to work together.

Interviewer: What makes you not recommend...

Interviewee: *Because... to start with, if something is wrong the woman is always the one who gets the blame. An employee does not clean the floor, the employee does not clean the windows or whatever; he always calls me.*

Denise, restaurant, 50-59 years old, primary education

The category *forced involvement* is associated with situations in which wives leave their jobs in order to join their husbands' businesses; as illustrated by Leo's thoughts about the pressure he put on his wife to leave her job.

Interviewer: Um...

Interviewee: *[...] and I told her: leave the job - she already had a permanent contract [...] My whole family told her not to leave the job, not to leave the job. I told her: [...] I have a load of signed cheques, which must be paid. Now, you choose:*

either to continue in your little stable job [...], and let the business fall apart, or to leave your stable little position and come to take care of what's yours and mine; I signed the cheques, but you also signed them. Now you choose. And she made the right choice...

Leo, restaurant, 60-69 years old, primary education

Despite their wives' acquiescence, this forced involvement breeds a state of latent tension between spouses. Leo mentions his wife's inherent belief that wife and husband should not work together; and Adam mentions that his wife "doesn't like this", that she does not identify herself with the cooking⁸⁶, and that she is "pessimistic" about his views about the business.

The categories *competition for dominant position*, and *financial risks*, are developed by interviewees whose "copreneurships" do not fall so clearly within the domain of their husbands. This is so because women have a particular connection with the core structure of the business, report a social background in self-employment, or because both spouses have the same type of skills. In this context, the role of each partner is not as clear as in the previous type of cases. As a result, some husbands feel uncomfortable with their wives' aspirations for leadership or increased visibility in the business. Trevor's view that his wife wants to lead illustrates this point, and led to his involvement in a second business.

Interviewer: Could you please talk me through that experience together?

Interviewee: *Erm today... in terms of leadership, it was complicated because I had... it's like this: when we met and when we came together, [...] she had a better education, she had a four-year diploma, I had more experience and had already gone through a lot; [...] I had already been bashing my head against brick walls [...] And so it's a bit difficult for [Angelina]⁸⁷ to listen to me because she [...], she... well, she wants to be the leader, she wants a position of leadership, but I, well... it's like in the military, I've been here for longer [...]; it's not that we clashed a lot but ... we didn't listen to each other enough to be able to share power.*

Trevor, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

In Jodie's case, the tension resulting from this competition became so intense that it destroyed a relationship that, according to her, had everything to work for, if her partner had not resented her greater visibility. This happened despite her efforts to assure him that she had not wished to question his authority.

⁸⁶ She had previously worked as a shop assistant and left her job, on Adam's advice, when her employer was experiencing hard times.

⁸⁷ This name is a pseudonym for his wife.

Interviewer: Um...

Interviewee: *It [the “copreneurship”] had everything to work for [...] , because I’ve always had very strong commercial skills, I’ve always been very practical and he isn’t. [...] he was very obsessed with paperwork, very precise [...], and he started to step into my area, wanting to know more than me [...]. When he saw me in the room speaking to people or whatever, this to him... had an effect on him... he wanted to know more than me. [...] and I used to tell him: “look, don’t bother, because I don’t want... I’m doing this for us” [...].*

Jodie, restaurant, 50-59 years old, tertiary education

In a more assertive tone, Claire explained that she is very independent and that men, in general, find it difficult to accept that she got “used to deciding, to take decisions... actually to command!” throughout her whole life.

The category *financial risks* involves anticipating financial problems in the case of divorce, by allocating a higher share of the business ownership to one of the spouses. The female interviewees who touch on this theme substantiate their point, by referring to cases of marital break-ups. This demonstrates that they are aware of the pressure exerted by “copreneurships” on conjugal relationships, and of the implications that some marital rifts may have for women. These interviewees have a strong position in their “copreneurships” because of their previous experience as self-employed persons and also due to the fact that their “copreneurial” business operates within their area of expertise.

Several interviewees have devised strategies with the sole purpose of limiting the detrimental effects of the tensions identified above. The following schemes were identified: *containing the business*; *using flexibility in child care*; *bringing children to the business*; *relying on parents for additional child care*; and *clarifying positions*. The former addresses issues concerning both the family and the conjugal relationship, whereas the second, the third and the fourth focus on child care/family life, and the fifth targets tensions affecting the conjugal relationship.

In many cases, interviewees try to preserve their family and marital life, by reducing the impact of the business upon their private life. Their strategies to *contain the business* may incorporate two types of procedure: *establishing a boundary between the business and the family*, and *controlling the demands made by the business*.

Interviewees attempt to *establish a division* between these two spheres, by avoiding both taking work home and speaking about the business in the household. This strategy is often mentioned by interviewees, particularly when they have dependent children. Despite their intentions and efforts, they say that this is a far from easy task, as pre-empted by Dale's comments at the beginning of this section. For instance, Rachel mentions that, the day before the interview, she "was told to shut up [smiles]" by one of her children, while the family was having dinner, and she persisted in talking about the business.

Measures aimed at *controlling the business* can involve limiting its growth, even if temporarily, or devising organizational schemes that allow interviewees to spend less time in the business. Rachel emphasizes that she and her husband "are not the kind to... have lots of money and not see the family"; whereas Dale refused a good business proposal, in order to achieve his conjugal aim of spending more leisure time with his wife.

Interviewer: So, you're trying to organize yourselves in this way so that your wife can give more support to your children...

Interviewee: Yes, [...] we also want to have more time for us; [...] this year I had a business proposal [...] but I thought that... I felt very tempted, because it was a big business but I thought 'no', I thought that it was better not to accept because I've not managed to organize this [the current business] yet [...]. I said: "no, no, let's stop, let's stop; first I want to organize this so that we can also start having time [as a couple]"; otherwise it's complicated.

Dale, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished lower secondary education

The way in which interviewees portray the use of *flexibility in child care* is strongly gendered. Despite being mentioned by both male and female interviewees, the wives are the ones who usually plan their own schedules in order to cope with the daily demands of child care, such as going to the doctor, or taking/picking up the children to and from school. By way of illustration, Trevor underlines his "relief" because his family business gives his wife the opportunity of having an office timetable, and being available for their child, whenever necessary. Cindy explains how becoming self-employed has made it easier for her to manage child care, since she has the autonomy to set her own schedule and to leave the business for some time.

Interviewer: Um... and with the kids? How did you organize yourselves?

Interviewee: [...] then, with the business, I picked them up from school, brought them here [to the business], for a while, and then we went home; with the [business], I was able to manage my time better, because when I was in my last job I used to leave them at school at 7 am and picked them up at almost 8 pm, because our work schedule was very long. Here, no. I started taking them to school at 9 am and picking them up at 5 pm. [...]; so, I was able to organize myself better in this respect.

Cindy, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

As Cindy words' also suggest, *bringing children to the business* is an additional scheme that some female interviewees employ to juggle self-employment with child care. The children's grandparents can also be an invaluable source of help with caring, by looking after the children during the day and picking them up at school. This is an important feature, bearing in mind the "familialistic" tradition of southern European countries. Zoe's testimony (below) also points out that *relying on parents for additional child care* can be decisive during demanding periods, such as setting up the business, when self-employed women cannot make use of their potential flexibility, in terms of their schedules. This is so despite the persistent feeling of guilt, which is illustrated by Zoe's need to justify her behaviour in relation to the demands of her job.

Interviewer: Um...

Interviewee: [...] In one particular month, [...] there was a sea of people [...]; my children were looked after by my parents [...] and we came here. In that same month I almost never saw my children; it was working from morning till night... people have to adjust themselves to the place in which they work, don't they? I have a team but it takes a while to build a team and so... in that month I almost never saw my children [...].

Zoe, restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Concerns about preserving the marital relationship from the onset of exhaustion led some interviewees to highlight the importance of *clarifying different positions* in the business. By so doing, interviewees try to avoid a scenario where spouses arrive home and have nothing to say to each other. Trevor's comments on this matter illustrate this point. His thoughts arose spontaneously while he underlined the support that his wife gave him, at the beginning of their "copreneurship". At this stage of the interview, he attempts to underestimate the problems of competition for leadership, which he later came to develop upon as the interview further explored the

couple's relationship in the business. This contradiction indicates how these issues are somewhat delicate for interviewees, as they involve ambivalent feelings.

[Interruption of the interview to answer a telephone call]

Interviewer: So you're telling me that it was difficult for you to deal with [a problem in the enterprise]...

Interviewee: Yes, exactly, it was very difficult for me to take the first step to sort it out. My wife [...] she works with me, there was a period in which we both worked in the same area of the business; then we split things; this was not because we get along very badly at work, I think that we work very well together, but, I mean, it is much more interesting to take other problems home and not share everything. But she helped me a lot and she's much stronger than me with these things, she's much more pragmatic and helped me a lot in coping with it and sorting it out. [...]

Trevor, high-end services, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Finally, two female interviewees expressed their preference for differentiating the position of each spouse with regard to the ownership of the business. Rachel devised a slightly unequal partition of the capital between her and her husband: 51% and 49% (respectively). Nicole, who cohabits with her partner, kept the official property for herself. These women have a longer history of self-employment than their spouses and their businesses are directly connected to their skills or professional experience. These conditions may explain the particular arrangements that they have developed, and the relevance that this strategy, and the tension associated with it, has for them.

7.2 Non-copreneurial relationships: making the less obvious visible

Previous sections focused on cases of spouses who run a business together. They highlight the complex connections between self-employment and family, by exploring the forms of collaboration, tension, and coping strategies that emerge in this type of arrangement. This section builds on the same type of analytical approach to examine the contributions of spouses in cases of "non-copreneurships", who might appear to be more independent from the family sphere.

Interviewees' reflections on this matter revolve around two major themes: *income and resources*; and *support and help*. These involve some gendered experiences, as the text below explains.

Income and resources concerns a patrimonial solidarity within the couple, which is decisive for financing and supporting the self-employment of one of the partners. This theme includes *using couples' patrimony*, such as savings or properties to arrange a mortgage; *sharing resources* when both spouses are self-employed; and *income solidarity*.

These categories are reported by both men and women. However, *income solidarity* includes certain arrangements, in terms of gender relations, which are not so often reported by research on self-employment. Several male and female interviewees, and not only the latter, refer to the importance of their spouse's contributions for their family budgets. When they touch on this subject, they usually underline the regularity of their spouses' income, in opposition to the variability or inadequacy of their own earnings, as self-employed workers. This type of rationale is illustrated by Barry's feelings about his wife's salary: it "doesn't pay the bills, but at least it's something that comes in". A more difficult situation is reported by Clive, who depends on his partner to make ends meet.

Interviewer: Do you have any sort of help?

Interviewee: *The help that I've got is this: if I didn't live with someone who helps me at home, it'd be very complicated. I'd either sleep here, in the office... because the money isn't enough, you see? [...] I also contribute, obviously, but without this big help from her, I couldn't make it.*

Clive, trade, 50-59 years old, unfinished tertiary education

In addition, Georgina's words illustrate the entire difference, according to several interviewees, that one regular salary makes to a family budget.

Interviewer: Could you please develop these two ideas [in relation to maintaining her husband as a working employee being a matter of coherence and responsibility]?

Interviewee: *Because he has a secure job, because today that's how it is: today everything is very uncertain; [...] there's a great uncertainty, great because of the current economic situation in the country. We have a client today, but not tomorrow, because there is huge competition. As [a/an occupation]: he knew that his job was secure and that the salary was there, at the end of the month; this wouldn't happen if he was self-employed. Now, imagine a household, a family living with such uncertainty [...].*

Georgina, trade, 50-59 years old, unfinished upper secondary education

In line with this rationale, several interviewees declare that they prefer their spouses to have their own jobs. This is illustrated by Audrey's reflections (below). However, in some cases, this preference is also justified by anticipating possible

marital exhaustion, which was identified as a source of tension among “copreneurs” (See Section 7.1.2 above).

Interviewer: Um...

Interviewee: *And, on the other hand, in financial terms I couldn't afford it; it wasn't possible to have two people from the same family working in here, it's very difficult.*

Audrey, restaurant, 30-39 years old, upper secondary education

More traditional gender relations, in terms of income solidarity, are reported by a small number of female interviewees, who mention their husbands' leading role as breadwinners. By way of illustration, Brenda explained that her move into self-employment was supported by her feeling that “[...] financially, I was much more relaxed, because he had a secure job and his salary covered the expenses”.

The theme *support and help* includes three categories: *support*, *help with business operations*, and *help at home*. These indicate the multiple ways in which spouses' may personally assist interviewees' work as self-employed people.

Support corresponds to a positive reaction from spouses, when interviewees considered the possibility of moving into self-employment. Most interviewees, both male and female, report this type of support. However, the way in which they articulate their experiences indicates that, for several male interviewees, this is perceived more as an additional layer of support, than as a necessary condition to become self-employed. This is illustrated when they describe their wives' support by using expressions, such as she “understood”, “didn't oppose”, “approved”, or “always supported me [...] in my decisions”. Alternatively, female interviewees tend to characterize their husbands' support as decisive. They describe them as a key source of “moral support”, as someone who “always encourages” them, who “also got a bit excited with the idea”; or consider that “I probably couldn't make it without him”. In Brenda's case, her husband was the mentor behind her leap into self-employment, by suggesting it as a remedy to her dissatisfaction with the detrimental effect her schedule was having on her ability to care for their children.

This pattern indicates that, in a number of cases, women and men consider their spouses' *support* according to traditional gender roles. Accordingly, men's decisions vis-à-vis paid labour depend less upon their wives' positive attitude, than

the contrary. A similar finding is reported by a research on entrepreneurship, in a different country: New Zealand (Kirkwood, 2009b). This circumstance may indicate that this is a wider gendered pattern. However, further research is needed since this finding is an emergent one. A specific thing to bear in mind in future studies is the context from which this pattern comes. According to the conceptual framework developed in previous empirical chapters, this pattern emerges mostly in cases where interviewees turn to self-employment *as an alternative plan* (See Chapters 5 and 6). Moreover, the male interviewees included in this pattern usually share their involvement in self-employment with partners that they are not married to.

A number of interviewees report that their spouses *help them in business activities* in different ways. This *help* can undertake the form of advice at home, or mean carrying out particular tasks in the business. With regard to the latter, the spouses' contribution can be directly related to their area of professional expertise, or be of a non-specific nature. Moreover, their assistance can be targeted at either complementing or substituting the interviewees' activities.

When the spouses' help relies upon their areas of expertise, or is aimed at helping with particular tasks, some gender patterns surface. For instance, a number of husbands' *help* female interviewees with mechanical repairs, construction work and physically demanding tasks; whereas a number of wives assist male interviewees with public relations/marketing operations, decoration, cashier tasks, and bureaucratic procedures, such as preparing documents for accountants or undertaking secretarial tasks. In some cases, this type of support is more intensive when the business is being set up.

Two interviewees rely on their spouses in moments of extreme tiredness. Both of them work in restaurants in the catering industry, which is described by most interviewees as being a problematic economic sector, wherein self-employed people work as "slaves". Howard stresses that his wife "comes two or three times a week, at night, so that I can rest a bit". Likewise, Audrey says that her husband helps her balance the cash register, at the end of the day. As she underlines "sometimes, by the end of the day, I can't even give change; I even use to say: oh my God, what am I like! [smiles]". This is an interesting finding, since this form of help, which has not been reported by research, and upcoming studies can explore whether there is any connection between this type of solidarity and certain industries.

Interviewees' experiences with regard to the theme *help at home* are strongly shaped by gender, and indicate that men count upon a type of support that women usually do not. Some female interviewees say that they carry out most of the domestic chores alone. The inequality that underpins this type of arrangement gives rise to periodic outbursts of discontent, during which interviewees "shout at" or "scold" their husbands. In these circumstances, changes are only apparent, since things tend to take their conventional course with time, as some interviewees note.

Other interviewees, both female and male, express their relief at having domestic (female) workers, who undertake the lion's share of the household tasks, and dissipate this source of conjugal tension. This is illustrated by Amy's belief that having domestic worker is essential for keeping her marriage together. In her case, this decision was taken when her first child was born.

Interviewer: So you have a...

Interviewee: *Yes, otherwise it would result in divorce, for sure, because I'm disorganized and I hate ironing and all those things, and he doesn't either; so we decided that probably it was better for our marriage to have someone three times a week, and they [the tasks] get done.*

Amy, restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Barry's views on his household arrangement convey a symptomatic feeling of relief: "we have a fantastic thing; we have a maid who lives with us". Sean displays similar feelings when he remembered that his "valuable mother-in-law", who resided nearby, was in charge of the domestic chores when he lived with his ex-partner. This type of arrangement also contributes to the reinvention of gendered patterns at work.

A number of male interviewees take on some of the domestic chores. Some of whom considered it to be a consequence of their spouses' recurrent dissatisfaction with domestic workers, or a waste of time, and had expressed a desire to recruit a domestic worker in order to spend their time doing "useful things". This type of rationale indicates the entrenched belief that domestic activities are socially undervalued (Bourdieu, (2001[1998]); Warren, 2011).

The overall inequality described above is not surprising, bearing in mind the discussion presented in Chapter 3. However, an in-depth analysis of the way in which male interviewees perceive their minor role in household tasks provides a

richer insight into the rationale that, in their eyes, justifies the need to maintain traditional patterns. When asked about their involvement in household and care tasks, several men have recognized that there is an imbalance in this respect, in comparison to their wives. Nonetheless, instead of considering this situation as unfair, even when they concede that their wives are “sacrificed”, they tend to justify it in a way that echoes the male breadwinner model. They stress the idea that they do what they can, considering their work commitments, and note the benefits that these bring to their family’s standard of living.

Scott’s remarks on this matter are insightful. They indicate the strength of gender stereotypes, which serve as (taken for granted) justifications for maintaining unequal arrangements, and also justify men’s reluctance with regard to alternative forms of organization. The uneasiness and concessions that pervade Scott’s answer indicate how taken for granted rationales are not always easy to justify, in explicit terms, especially in front of a female researcher.

Interviewer: What do you think of the way in which you organize yourselves?

Interviewee: *I think that... I think that it’s... I think that it’s adequate. I think so, I think that it is... because it’s so: my professional involvement is much greater than hers, and she erm... she knows that, erm... it’s sort of taken for granted that erm... we both couldn’t do what I do; and as she is also not very much inclined to do so; so, pal... she sacrifices herself a lot too, I mean, I know that she sacrifices herself a lot; but there aren’t many alternatives. To do more at home, I’d have to stop doing something outside home, I mean, you can’t do everything, can you? And so erm... to maintain the income it’s probably better to leave it that way. So, it’s basically this, I mean, I think that there isn’t, that’s what I think, that there’s isn’t a significant degree of dissatisfaction on any of our parts.*

Scott, high-end services, 40-49 years old, upper secondary education

A similar tone of unwillingness resounds when Justin refers to “convenience”. It arose from his thoughts on the division of household and care tasks, when he was asked whether he would like to change it. His allusion to an occasional “desire of spending more time” refers to his children; and indicates that changes in dominant patterns of gender relationships may involve different levels of willingness to negotiate care and household tasks.

Interviewer: Would you like it to be different?

Interviewee: *For convenience, I think that it's alright... sometimes I'd like to have more time, but well we do have the weekends, but during the week I'd like to have more time for them [the children], I'd like that.*

Justin, trade, 30-39 years old, unfinished tertiary education

For some female interviewees, this type of pattern exceeds the boundaries of the household and interferes with self-employed work activities. As Amy's words clearly indicate, this type of situation is more acute when there are children of a dependent age (under six). Amy's case is particularly important, since her husband is also self-employed.

Interviewer: *Could you explain that [her "crazy" efforts to juggle her child and her work in the business]?*

Interviewee: *Because in order to get a few minutes of concentration, when I'm alone with him, to get 5 minutes to concentrate on what I'm doing, I have to work with this hand and I have to invent something else to do with this one, to play with him or tickle him, or something else; or I have to work in a very little window with the panda channel on⁸⁸, or whatever, and I must constantly invent something to keep him occupied. [...] , and I think that it's very complicated, a child who we only spend a few hours a day with, who is our child, telling him 'no' to certain things. I think that they don't deserve it and... when I'm, when I'm working, sometimes I try to get him to play alone, but very often he asks me to hold him in my arms, or asks me to go to him, or whatever, and I have to do both things; be a mother and a worker at the same time. So, now am I a mother? Or am I a worker? Both things at the same time... it's complicated.*

Amy, restaurant, 30-39 years old, tertiary education

Altogether, the features explored in this section indicate that even in cases of "non-copreneurship", spouses make important and diverse contributions to the activities of self-employed interviewees. Some of these contributions are particularly shaped by more traditional patterns of gender relations.

7.3 Conclusion

The analysis presented in this chapter lends further support to the "family embeddedness perspective" on entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003), or to the focus on business-family interface (Jennings and McDougald, 2007) (See Chapter 3). This is particularly so, since it has highlighted the analytical usefulness of such a

⁸⁸ This is a television channel designed for young children.

perspective for understanding the conditions which women and men experience situations of “copreneurship” and “non-copreneurship”. Therefore, the focus on both of these forms of self-employment reinforces the relevance of the findings of this research.

With regard to “copreneurships”, this chapter has underlined that forms of cooperation between spouses exist hand in hand with persisting focus tensions and coping strategies. As the analysis has shown, these multiple tendencies are shaped by persisting gender relations, which are paradigmatically illustrated by the theme *domination*, and tend to fit into the couple’s domestic organization. An interesting finding is that more traditional contexts, in terms of gender relations, also involve tensions which challenge the inequality that underpins more traditional gender roles.

The analysis has also emphasized that gender relations appear to be less traditional when women have a direct relationship with the core activities of the business, or to the self-employment “field”, in Bourdieuan terms (See Chapters 3 and 5 above). As a result, this chapter contributes to a better understanding of the contexts which may be associated with less traditional forms of gender relations. In line with other research, the analysis has also highlighted the importance of explicit processes of negotiation for changing entrenched patterns of the division of work between spouses, since these strongly shape individuals’ practices by functioning as taken for granted assumptions.

With regard to “non-copreneurial” forms of self-employment, this chapter has pinpointed the diversified array of inputs that interviewees receive from their spouses. These are captured by an original attempt to synthesise them into two main themes (*income/resources* and *support/help*), and to explore the ways in which these are pervaded by gender relations.

Finally, the richness of the empirical material explored in this chapter provides a complex picture of the connections between business and family. In this context, its findings may also inform future studies on self-employment and family life using similar or different research designs.

8 Conclusion

This final chapter summarises the main findings of this present thesis by taking into account its aims, research questions, and analytical approach. By so doing, it underlines the contribution of this research to existing knowledge and identifies relevant areas for future research. Given the political emphasis on entrepreneurship, this chapter also includes a final section on current policy-making, which considers some of the interviewees' concerns in this respect.

8.1 Main aims and findings

As stated in the introduction, and further developed in Chapter 4, this research has two main aims. On the one hand, it intends to contribute to an in-depth understanding of the ways in which women and men perceive their pathways into self-employment in service industries, and their experiences with regard to interaction between their business and family life. On the other hand, it aims at adding to the theoretical consolidation of research on gender and entrepreneurship. The relevance of these aims is supported by the review of both the literature and policy making on self-employment and entrepreneurship, which has been developed in Chapters 2 and 3.

The focus on self-employed workers who set up a business in the service sector stems from the development of service industries in western economies, which have brought new opportunities for self-employment. The high levels of self-employment in Portugal, and their relevance in characterizing the southern European pattern of employment, show the importance of studying self-employment in this country. Finally, the forces behind European and Portuguese policy-making have given a renewed visibility to entrepreneurship as being not only a pathway into economic activity but also a means of fostering gender equality.

As the literature was being reviewed it became clear that the research needed to address the complex social processes involved when people enter self-employment. The study of this topic has been dominated by the push-pull theory, which focuses on the motivations underpinning people's reasons for entering self-employment. Existing research seems to have reached a dead end in this respect,

since several authors continue to use this theory despite acknowledging the analytical problems that it raises. These revolve around a tendency to produce dualistic interpretations, which ultimately characterize an individual becoming self-employed because she/he was “pushed” or “pulled”. There are, however, indications that such a move to self-employment involves “nuanced” (Robichaud, LeBrasseur and Nagarajan, 2010) arrangements of both “push” and “pull” forces. The influential *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor* version of the “push” and “pull” factors – “necessity-driven” and “opportunity-driven” entrepreneurship – illustrates the importance of addressing this problem.

In addition, the push-pull theory has been affected by an initial gendered myopia. As a result, more traditional analyses tend to neglect factors concerning the different ways in which the division of care and domestic work between genders shapes both women’s and men’s roles as self-employed people. Some analyses have highlighted this problem and contributed to bridging this gap. However, a number of studies continue to demonstrate this type of myopia, since both entrepreneurship and the entrepreneur are entrenched male concepts (Ahl, 2006).

This type of bias has caused the connections between business and family life to remain hidden; and has justified calls for research to uncover these interactions (Aldrich and Cliff, 2003; Ahl, 2006; Brush, Bruin and Welter, 2007; Jennings and McDougald, 2007). Studies have moved forward in this respect, namely in the analysis of “copreneurships” (Fitzgerald and Muske, 2002). However, further developments are needed with regard to the tensions that spouses deal with in their “copreneurships”, and also in relation to how spouses contribute to cases of “non-copreneurship” (Anthias and Mehta, 2003).

Finally, a “phenomenon-driven” research tradition (Bruin, Brush and Welter, 2007) has driven the second major aim of this thesis: to contribute to the theoretical consolidation of the research on self-employment and gender. Actually, as the analytical proposal of this thesis was taking shape, it became clear that it stands as an example of the type of contribution that sociology can offer to debates on entrepreneurship, which have been dominated by economy and management studies.

The analytical framework of this thesis relies mainly on a synthesis between Bourdieu’s theory of practice and feminist research on gender, employment, and self-employment.

Bourdieu's (1980, 1986) concepts of "habitus", "capital" and "field" offer a solid conceptual structure, which can be used to develop a comprehensive understanding of the ways in which individuals perceive their entry into self-employment. This is because self-employment can be viewed as a "field", in which individuals place themselves according to their "economic", "cultural", "social" and "symbolic" forms of "capital" with regard to that very "field". In addition, as an individual's "habitus", forms and levels of "capital" develop throughout a person's life, they can be activated when an individual faces a particular situation. In this context, understanding why an individual becomes self-employed becomes a question of considering how her/his previous experiences have influenced the path towards and into self-employment. The analysis of this thesis focuses, therefore, on the long process of becoming a self-employed person, instead of limiting its attention to the more immediate circumstances that surround an individual's move to self-employment. To develop this approach this present thesis has also built upon the insights of biographical research on pathways into self-employment, which consider entrepreneurship to be a long "life course plan" (Kontos, 2004).

In addition, feminist debates on gender and employment underpin the view that gender is a structure of social relationships, which involves a particular relationship with bodies, presumes division and hierarchy between genders, as well as situated practices of (re)production (Connell, 2002). These situated practices are looked at, in particular, by considering the interactions between social background, marriage, occupational class before self-employment and gender relations. In this present thesis, the study of both the pathways into, and the experiences of, self-employment also builds upon feminist efforts which aim to uncover the interactions between family and work spheres (See Chapter 3, above).

In this context, Chapters 5 and 6, which address the initial three research questions of this thesis, explore the ways in which gender relations interact with class, and shape the long processes by which women and men become self-employed workers. This involved considering how social background, level of education, occupational class, marriage and gender relations shape the forms of capital that individuals associate with entering the field of self-employment. This analytical approach has provided the social context behind individuals' motivations for becoming self-employed and has contributed to a more nuanced understanding of the

ways in which both “push” and “pull” forces are socially embedded. Moreover, it has highlighted how “push” factors might involve some degree of choice within certain social constraints; and how “pull” forces might be associated with restricting experiences in the labour market and the family environment.

As a result, the focus on becoming a self-employed worker has emphasized that this is a long process, which stretches far beyond the time of setting up the business and involves different aspects of an individual’s life. Previous studies have used this understanding and have identified different patterns of becoming self-employed. However, this present thesis moves forward by focusing on the conceptualization of the social processes that lie beneath different patterns of entry into entrepreneurship. By way of illustration, it explores how different patterns of entry into self-employment depend on experiencing a *corrosive crisis* and on the transferability of individuals’ different capitals into self-employment.

In this context, Chapter 5 proposes the concept *orientation towards self-employment*, which concerns the way in which individuals come to consider self-employment as being their mode of working. Two different *orientations* were explored: seeing self-employment as a *primary way of working* or as an *alternative plan to work*. In the former, interviewees associate self-employment with an early stage of their lives because of the conditions in which they were brought-up; married; or because of their studies and related experiences in the labour market. In the latter case, self-employment becomes a realistic alternative when individuals’ undergo a *trigger experience* in the family or at work, at some stage of their lives.

By considering the implications of gender relations, marriage, social background, occupational class before self-employment, the analysis has pinpointed three different patterns by which interviewees come to view self-employment as being their *primary way of working*. These are: entering an occupation that is organized as an independent profession; marrying a self-employed husband in the context of a traditional pattern of gender relations; and having some social background in self-employment and being brought up with the notion that this way of working is likely to be one’s future. In Chapter 5, these patterns are named, respectively: *seeing self-employment as part and parcel of a profession*; *seeing self-employment as part and parcel of marrying a self-employed husband*; and *reproducing self-employment as a way of working*.

The first of these patterns depends largely on the transferability of interviewees' cultural capital into self-employment (Bourdieu, 1986). Gender relations may shape this process, as has been suggested, by their influence on women's and men's educational and occupational pathways. The second pattern is associated with a traditional configuration of gender relations, according to which women prioritize marriage over an occupational career and see self-employment as being a consequence of marrying a self-employed person. Interviewees associate the third pattern to some form of social background or family history in self-employment and to a feeling of being encouraged, by their fathers, to follow a life in business. Through this process, which is closely related to their social capital, these interviewees develop and benefit from cultural, economic, social and symbolic (for instance, their parents' reputation in business) forms of capital, which are highly valuable to the field of self-employment. Gender relations shape this process by fostering lines of succession, which benefit male descendants, at the expense of women.

One could hardly describe any one of these patterns as being "pushed" or "pulled", since all of them involve decisions made under particular social circumstances; that is, within a set of possibilities and constraints. As noted in Chapter 5, interviewees' decisions to set-up their own business, instead of following in family businesses, result from tensions with relevant others, from a feeling of *constrained* autonomy, as well as from developments in family life (namely: marriage and children).

Chapter 6 develops this analytical approach further, by focusing on interviewees who come to see self-employment as an *alternative plan*. It builds upon the idea of a *trigger*, which has been used in other qualitative research, to develop the conceptualization of the experiences which have led many interviewees into self-employment. The analysis defines the *trigger experience* as being a decisive episode where individuals considered self-employment as a viable alternative for themselves. Two main types of *trigger experiences* have been identified: *crises* and *encounters*. *Trigger crises* are felt by interviewees as intense negative experiences, which affect their position in, or with regard to, the labour market, whereas *trigger encounters* are described as being a meeting of wills, in which self-employment becomes a feasible

alternative. It is, thus, a type of *trigger* that depends largely on the multiplier effects of an individual's social capital.

The way in which individuals describe their *trigger crises* enables two types of experiences to be identified in this respect: *disruptive* and *corrosive crises*. *Disruptive crises* refer to events occurring in the family or professionally that prevent an individual from maintaining their current position in, or with regard to, the labour market; whereas *corrosive crises* refer to a gradual deterioration of an individual's relationship with a specific job or with dependent employment in general. The intensity with which interviewees describe their *disruptive* and *corrosive crises* has been explored in Chapter 6. The wealth of the empirical material analysed in this present thesis highlights the potential of these subjective experiences to generate life-changing transitions with regard to an individual's way of working.

Disruptive crises are linked to two distinct patterns of entering self-employment: *not finding an acceptable job*; and *re-entering the labour market after a family divide*.

In the former, interviewees lost, or were forced to leave, their jobs; and it was the experience of unsuccessfully searching for an equivalent post that led them to consider self-employment as a strategy to avoid feeling undervalued. This finding is relevant in that it shows that cases which would normally be characterised as examples of a “pushed” entry into self-employment involve some degree of “choice” within constraints. These constraints are shaped, among other features, by the socioeconomic conditions which individuals had experienced before losing their jobs. Gender relations also shape the experiences of some female interviewees, who associate their *disruptive experiences* with practices of gender discrimination by their employers.

The second pattern is strongly shaped by gendered features. The women who reported this share a similar feeling of having *sacrificed* their personal interests because of family relationships. It was the disruption of these same relationships that presented them with the challenge of having to find a job. As noted in Chapter 6, their social capital was decisive for them to make the leap into self-employment, since they either joined the new partner's project, or gained the necessary confidence to go self-employed at the insistence of an acquaintance.

In both of these patterns, interviewees consider the transferability of their cultural capital, in the Bourdieuan sense of incorporated knowledge (Bourdieu, 1986), into the field of self-employment.

Corrosive crises are described by interviewees as being a process of slow burning. The features that they associate with their experiences serve to identify two different patterns: *mismatch between expectations and organizational settings*; and *organizational practices adverse to childcare*.

In the former, interviewees paint a picture of extreme dissatisfaction with regard to their previous employer's organization. This feeling usually ensues from disagreements over supervision or changes in the management philosophy, and is associated with a feeling of *constrained autonomy*. For these interviewees, self-employment emerges as a strategy for overcoming this type of constraining experience, and for recovering a sense of well-being at work. This finding is particularly relevant, as underlined in Chapter 6, in that it shows how a major "pull" factor, such as the desire for autonomy, may be embedded in a restricting experience at work, rather than resulting from a search for autonomy itself.

A similar feeling of dissatisfaction pervades in the second pattern reported above. However, because of the distinct gendered circumstances its inclusion as a specific pattern is justifiable. The testimonies of the two female interviewees, that this pattern is developed from, indicate how organizational practices, which presume that workers have no child care responsibilities, might *corrode* some women's relationships with their jobs. A feeling of unjustified, constrained motherhood prevails in this pattern. Locations in social space shape the way in which these interviewees devise self-employment as an *alternative plan*. For instance, the feeling of risk that one interviewee associated with her leap into self-employment was minimized by her husband's level of earnings, which provided for all the family needs.

To put an end to their *corrosive crises*, interviewees consider the transferability of their forms of capital into the self-employment "field". This analysis has highlighted the way in which having a social background in self-employment is relevant. This is because it includes several potential resources, such as a former business site (economic capital) that can be re-used, and which can be set in motion by interviewees when they undergo this type of experience.

As noted above, social capital has a key role in cases where entry into self-employment is connected to a *trigger encounter*. In this research, this type of experience is associated with the three pathways into self-employment: *seizing a business opportunity through others*; *seizing a chance for a flexible balance between work and family*; and *helping the husband*. These highlight the way in which different layers of an individual's social capital might contribute to her/his entering self-employment.

In the former of these patterns, friends and professional contacts constitute a key pool of social connections through whom interviewees can gain access to, or develop, business opportunities, and with who they can share the risk of launching a business.

Interactions between gender and locations in social space are crucial to understanding the other two patterns. In *seizing a chance for a flexible balance between work and family*, a pecuniary inheritance (economic capital) resulting from a successful family business background (social capital), a marriage with a highly qualified spouse (who is the main breadwinner), and a traditional division of care tasks between spouses contribute to a view of self-employment as being a way of gaining greater flexibility with child care without risking the family budget. In *helping the husband*, the situation is different. Instead of setting-up her own business, the female interviewee who reports this pattern, and who was personally in charge of care and household tasks, joined her husband's venture into self-employment, which was aimed at improving the family standard of living, given the couple's low level of formal education and poor working conditions as employees.

Chapter 7 has explored the findings prompted by the last research question, and its focus on the interaction between self-employment and family life. Given the gaps identified in the literature review in this respect, and alluded to at the beginning of this chapter, the analysis aims at contributing to an in-depth understanding of the ways in which family and self-employment interact in both "copreneurships" and "non-copreneurships". This involved a focus on forms of cooperation and tensions that interviewees report in cases of "copreneurship", as well as on the strategies that they develop to cope with these tensions. The analysis of "non-copreneurships" has highlighted the multiple ways in which spouses contribute to interviewees' self-employed work activities.

The analysis of interviewees' comments about their "copreneurial" relationships provides a rich, and innovative, insight into the ambivalence with which they live this type of experience.

On the one hand, it highlights the importance that interviewees give to the cooperation of their spouses in the business. Their views about this *cooperation* revolve around the ideas of *functional complementarity*, *solidarity*, *patrimonial cooperation* and *trust*. In line with available evidence, this research suggests that gender roles tend to pervade in the division of business work between spouses. However, the analysis presented in Chapter 7, contributes to a further understanding of the gender aspect of this division, by exploring the ways in which it might vary with interviewees' background in self-employment, and their position with regard to the core business of the enterprise, in comparison with their spouses. This contribution has been extended by an exploratory analysis of the parallels between the divisions of tasks in the business and at home, which consider the implications of processes of explicit negotiation between spouses.

On the other hand, this thesis underlines the tensions that interviewees pinpoint with regard to the detrimental effects of self-employment on their private life. Concerns regarding family life – identified as *family life being taken over by business* - focus upon not having time for the children, and are particularly salient when interviewees, mainly female, undertake care tasks of dependent children. Interviewees' concerns about the effects of "copreneurships" on their conjugal relationship centre upon two themes: *exhaustion* and *domination*. Identifying the latter is a significant finding since it uncovers the way in which traditional versions of gender roles pervade some "copreneurships", and affect women in a very particular way.

The strategies that interviewees develop in order to cope with these tensions adds to existing knowledge by pinpointing their efforts to *contain the business* and to *clarify positions* in the business, in addition to *bringing children to the business* and the *use of flexibility in child care*, which has also been reported in other research. As noted during the analysis, interviewees' reflections on this topic are shaped by the pattern of gender relations that they (re)produce in their daily lives, which encapsulate their position in the business and in the "field" of self-employment, in comparison to their spouses.

As far as the analysis of “non-copreneurial” relationships is concerned, it also builds upon existing knowledge, by highlighting the multiple ways in which spouses can participate in interviewees’ activities as self-employed workers. It explores the gendered aspect of the two major themes developed by interviewees: *income and resources*; and *support and help*. Furthermore, the analysis presented in Chapter 7 provides a rich insight into how implicit arrangements regarding the division of domestic and care tasks between spouses contribute to the ongoing reproduction of traditional patterns, which tend to benefit married male interviewees, at the expense of their female counterparts.

The findings reported above contribute to a sociologically inspired consolidation of studies on gender and self-employment. Moreover, the contribution of this thesis to present knowledge on gender and self-employment is enhanced by the inclusion of both women and men, who operate in different industries; whereas other qualitative studies have focused on less diverse samples.

In addition to these findings, this study supports a number of suggestions for future research.

The interpretative framework developed in the previous chapters opens up certain avenues for studying pathways into self-employment. For instance, survey research could test the *orientations towards self-employment* and the *trigger experiences* put forward by this thesis through broader samples. Qualitative research with a focus on different national contexts and/or industries could add empirical diversity to these conceptual developments. As stressed in previous chapters, this thesis has developed these notions with the aim of contributing to theory building, despite their Portuguese empirical foundations.

In a similar vein, the themes identified with regard to interviewees’ thoughts on the interactions between business and family life could be further developed by qualitative studies, or tested and improved by survey research. Interest in this development is reinforced by the fact that this present research takes into consideration both cases of “copreneurship” and “non-copreneurship”.

Finally, current knowledge on the interaction between self-employment and private life would benefit from in-depth insights into the ways in which this interaction evolves when self-employed workers are single. By so doing, research

would uncover patterns of support and tension involving different relevant others, as well as specific coping strategies. Another interesting path for future studies would be to develop an in-depth understanding of how both spouses understand the interaction between the business and family life, in cases of “copreneurship”.

8.2 A final remark on the policy-making on entrepreneurship

Interviewees’ comments about their experiences with regard to the policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in Portugal, suggest a complex picture of strengths and weaknesses.

On the one hand, a number of interviewees have emphasized the benefits of being able to create a business in one place due to the programme “On the Spot Firm”, without wasting time and energy with paperwork and journeying back and forth between different public institutions. On the other hand, some interviewees emphasize their struggle with the rigidity and opacity of the procedures involved in creating one’s own job as recipients of unemployment benefit (See Chapter 2); and their resentment at the disregard of micro-businesses’ specifics by the State.

With regard to the former, there is a recurrent feeling that there is no sufficient technical support for people when they decide to apply to this type of programme. Another re-occurring idea is that setting up in business often involves the need to seize emerging opportunities, which clash with application deadlines and approval for this benefit. As for the latter – the disregard for micro-enterprises by the State – several interviewees report that they find it difficult to cope with the fiscal burden on their businesses, namely with the “pagamento especial por conta”. This is a tax upon the annual turnover of businesses, which was devised to avoid tax evasion. However, since it is paid in advance, and calculated upon the turnover of the preceding year, it might be problematic for smaller businesses, with low reserves and waiting for outstanding payments. Some also regret being treated as if they were big businesses, with no recognition of their specific needs. This type of feeling is particularly acute among interviewees who rely on lower amounts of economic and social forms of capital, in Bourdieuan terms, to make the transition to self-employment.

The difficulties reported above suggest that an individuals' ability to cope with the challenges involved in becoming a self-employed worker varies with the transferability of their types and amounts of capital into the field of self-employment. By highlighting the implications of this transferability, studies produce key knowledge for public policies aimed at fostering the creation of one's own job among unemployed people. In particular, they suggest that effective technical support at the application and setting-up stages, as well as during the early years of the business, might be crucial for these type of policies to succeed in a sustainable manner.

This observation is pertinent since there has been an emphasis on the connection between entrepreneurial businesses, economic growth, employment and innovation, and public policies aimed at promoting entrepreneurship (Block and Sandner, 2009; Hessels, van Gelderen and Thurik, 2008). However, businesses with more modest aspirations, in terms of growth, might make a whole economic and non-economic difference at an individual level. This difference tends to lose visibility when too much emphasis is placed upon economic growth and innovation, and when they are seen as the requisite outcomes of policies on entrepreneurship. As Ahl (2006) has noted, a predominant discursive focus on economic growth channels the attention towards certain issues, while neglecting others.

In this context, the comparative "modesty" of some business set-ups should be read, not as a disincentive to the development of policies aimed at promoting self-employment among unemployed persons, but as an indicator that specific mechanisms of support might be necessary in order to boost their business initiatives (Niefert, 2000). This type of effort is, actually, in line with the idea of inclusiveness found in the 2020 Europe growth strategy.

Appendix 1 – Interview Guide

Translated into English

Interview Guide

Opening question: In this first part of the interview, I would like to hear from you about your pathway from your family of origin until when you entered self-employment. Could you please describe it in general terms?

Theme 1. Family of origin.

Q. Could you describe your family background?

- Where you were born? When?
- Do you have any brothers or sisters?
- *How many? Older or younger?*
- Could you tell me a little about your father: what is the level of education that he has completed?
- *What type of employment/job did/does he have? Is/was he self-employed?*
- *Do you remember helping with the business in any way?*
- What about your mother?
- *What is the level of education that she has completed?*
- *What type of employment/job did/does she have? Is/was she self-employed?*
- *Was she employed when you (and your siblings) were young?*
- *Do you remember helping with the business in any way?*
- How did your father and mother organise the domestic tasks and child-rearing?
- *Could you give me some examples of how your father and your mother occupied their time when they were at home?*

Theme 2. School.

Now, I would like to hear from you about your experiences in school.

Q. At what age did you leave school? What qualifications did you obtain?

- How did you feel when you left school?
- *What were your plans at that time?*
- *What happened after school?*

Theme 3. Occupational and family developments until business start-up the (BSU); interaction between occupation and family life until the BSU.

Now, I would like to ask you about your occupational experiences until you created this business.

Q. Could you outline the professional experiences you had before you started your business?

- *How do you feel about each one of these experiences?*

- Of the several experiences you had, is there one in particular that you consider more relevant?
- *Could you tell me why that experience(s) is relevant for you?*
- Was there any moment when you were not working?
- *How did you occupy your time during that period?*
- *And how did you feel?*
- How do you see/evaluate the (various) professional experiences you had before you started this business?
- *What did work represent for you during that period?*

Now, if you agree, I would like to hear from you about the developments in your family life from the time you left school until you started this business.

Q. Thinking about your family life after you left school; could you tell me how your personal/family life developed from the time you left school until you started this business?

- *Did you get married? Did you moved in with a partner?*
- *Do you have any children? How many? What age(s)?*
- [Aspects to explore for each relation of marriage/cohabitation reported]
- During that time, did your partner work outside the home?
- *Could you describe the occupational activity of your partner?*
- *Could you tell me when your partner started to work?*
- Was there any moment when your partner was not working?
- *How did your partner occupy his/her time during that period?*
- How did you and your partner organise the domestic tasks and child-rearing?
- *Could you give me some examples of how you and your partner occupied your time when you were at home?*
- *And how did you occupy the time you spent with your children?*
- *How did you feel in relation to that organisation?*

Theme 4. Business start-up and interaction with family life.

Now, I would like to ask you about the creation of this business and its first year of operation.

Q. Could you tell me how the idea of working for yourself first came about?

- What were your expectations at that time?
- [Aspects to explore for each business, in cases of creating more than one business]
- Could you describe how you set-up the business?
- Did it involve any partners?
- *Who? A relative/family member/friend?*

- *Could you describe the kind of collaboration you got from your business partner(s)?*
- *Could you describe how the core business of the enterprise was defined?*
- *Was this the kind of business that you wished to develop?*
- *Could you tell me how the business start up was financed?*
- *How did you feel when you launched the business?*
- *Did you feel any kind of difficulty?*
- *In which areas?*
- *Have you benefited from any kind of help aimed at promoting businesses start-ups?*
- *Could you describe the help you got?*
- *Was it important for you?*
- *How would you describe your partner's reaction to the creation of this business?*
- *Did your partner get involved with it in any way?*
- *Could you tell me how?*
- *How did you feel about your partner's involvement?*
- *How did your offspring view the creation of this business?*
- *And your parents?*
- *And your closest acquaintances?*
- *Could you tell me how did you feel about these reactions?*
- *When you launched the business, did you know anyone who was working for themselves?*
- *Could you describe the kind of relation you had with that person/s?*

Q. How would you describe the first year of the business?

- *Where was it located? What were its services and clients at that time?*
- *How would you describe your involvement in the enterprise during that first year?*
- *[In the case of a business partner] how would you describe the involvement of your business partner?*
- *Could you tell me how you felt about that intervention/organization of tasks between you?*
- *Was there anyone working with you in that first year?*
- *Who? A relative/family member/friend?*
- *How did you recruit that person(s)?*
- *What tasks did that person(s) undertake?*

Theme 5. Self-employment in the present; interaction with family life.

Now, I would like to ask you about your present work and family situation.

Q. How would you describe the development of the business in the meantime?

- *Have there been any changes in the location, services provided and clients?*

- *Did you recruit any person/relative?*
- *What are the tasks that those people undertake?*
- *How would you describe your current involvement in the business?*
- *Could you describe your typical day, from the time you wake up until you go to bed?*
- *What does working for yourself mean to you?*
- *And this business, what does it mean to you?*
- *Would you prefer to work in a different way?*
- *Would you prefer to work for someone else?*
- *When people ask you what you do in terms of work, how do you usually answer them?*
- *Do you think that working for yourself has implications upon your health?*
- *Could you be specific?*
- *Could you tell me if the business has allowed you to remunerate yourself?*
- *How?*
- *Have you ever had to suspend your remuneration? Why?*

- *How would you describe the development of you personal/family life since the business start-up?*
- *Have there been any transformations?*
- *Could you describe them?*
- *Could you describe the current occupational life of your partner?*
- *Could you tell me if it has changed in any way because of the business?*
- *How do you and your partner now organise the domestic tasks and child-rearing?*
- *How do you feel about that organization?*
- *What does the family mean to you?*

Theme 6: Self-employment in the future.

Finally, I would like to ask you about some aspects concerning the future.

Q. How do you see your future?

- *Do you see yourself continuing to work for yourself?*
- *And do you see yourself undertaking the same tasks that you perform now?*
- *What do you think will happen in this respect?*
- *How do you see the future of the business?*
- *What do you think will happen to it once you stop working in it?*
- *Do you envisage a family succession?*
- *Do you think that it will happen?*

Q. Do you think that there is something that we have not talked about, but that you consider important to tell me?

**Appendix 2 – Invitation letter, information sheet, informed
consent form**

Translated into English



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Instituto Superior
de Ciências Sociais e Políticas
Universidade Técnica de Lisboa

Rua Almerindo Lessa
1300-663 Lisboa

Name of business
Name of owner(s)
Address

Date.

Subject: Study of self-employment in Portugal.

Dear Madam⁸⁹,

I am contacting you because I hope you will be able to assist me with my research on self-employment. I teach at the Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences –Technical University of Lisbon (ISCSP-UTL) and I am undertaking this research for my PhD studies at the University of Manchester, United Kingdom. This study is being financed by a scholarship from the Foundation for Science and Innovation – Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

The purpose of the research is to learn more about the reasons why people become self-employed and about their experiences of setting up and developing a business.

To achieve this aim, I wish to interview men and women who have set up their own business in Portugal in the last few years. I am contacting people through the public records contained in the National Registration of Collective Persons and I hope that you will agree to be one of the self-employed who are interviewed for this study. The interview would be arranged at a time and in a place which is convenient for you, it may last an hour, and the topics I would ask you about would cover your education and past employment, your family circumstances, and the creation and current arrangement of your business. The information provided in the interview will be treated as **confidential** and only used for research purposes and the identity of the self-employed and their businesses will remain **anonymous** in the text of the thesis.

I would very much appreciate if I could count on your participation in this study. You can contact me to tell me about your availability or to ask me any questions, via the phone number or e-mails shown below. In any case, I will take the liberty of contacting you next week, by phone.

Thank you for your attention and consideration regarding my request for your participation in a study that I hope will contribute to the formulation of public policies more in tune with reality and the needs of those who have initiated their own business in Portugal.

Kind regards,

(Signature)

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⁸⁹ Or Sir, or in the plural form, according to the specifics of each case.

**Information sheet for the participants in the research:
Self-employment and businesses set-up in Portugal (2 pages)****The invitation**

You have been invited to participate in a study of self-employment in Portugal. Before you decide whether you wish to participate or not, it is important that you understand the aims of this study and what is expected from those asked to participate in the research. Please, read the information below carefully and feel free to ask any question that you consider necessary if you think that there are any points which are not clear enough and/or if you would like any additional information. Take as much as necessary before deciding whether, or not, to participate in this study.

Who will conduct the study?

This study will be undertaken by Fátima Assunção, a PhD student in Sociology at the School of Social Sciences/University of Manchester (United Kingdom), and is supervised by Professor Colette Fagan (main supervisor), by Professor Jill Rubery (second supervisor at the University of Manchester) and by Professor João Bilhim, from the Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences, Technical University of Lisbon (ISCSP-UTL). Fátima Assunção, who also teaches at the ISCSP-UTL, is undertaking this study towards her PhD scholarship from the Foundation for Science and Technology – Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education.

What is the title of the research?

Self-employment and businesses set-up in Portugal (simplified provisional title).

What is the aim of the research?

To learn more about people's reasons for becoming self-employed in Portugal and their experiences of setting up and developing a business.

Why was I selected to participate in the research?

Because this study is aimed at interviewing men and women who have created their own jobs in the last few years. People are being contacted through the public records contained in the National Registration of Collective Persons or through other people with close contact in this field.

What will be expected from me if I accept to participate in the research?

This study relies on in-depth interviews that cover the following aspects: your education and past employment, your family circumstances, and the creation and current arrangement of your business. You will be asked for authorization for the interview to be audio recorded, so that it can be analyzed afterwards. Because of the set of subjects that the interview covers it may last for one hour or slightly longer, depending on the detail of your report. If the interview runs over, a second date will be offered you to conclude the interview.

What are the possible disadvantages of participating in the research?

As the interview covers several aspects of the interviewee's lives, people may revisit unpleasant moments. If that happens during your interview, you will be completely free to suspend the interview and/or the recording either temporarily or permanently.

What are the possible advantages of participating in the research?

To participate in a study that might contribute to a deeper understanding of the motivations, expectations and experiences of those who create their own jobs in Portugal. This kind of knowledge is only possible through the participation of people who have created their own jobs in Portugal, as in your case.

What happens to the data collated during the interviews?

The recordings of the interviews will be faithfully transcribed and analyzed by the PhD student, Fátima Assunção. The transcriptions of the interviews will be analyzed in Portuguese and only the excerpts included in the text of the thesis will be translated into English. The data collated during the interviews will be used for research purpose only and for promoting the available knowledge on self-employment in Portugal.

How is the confidentiality and the anonymity of the interviews guaranteed?

The recordings will be stored in a safe place and because the transcriptions will be accessible only to the PhD student, Fátima Assunção, and to the team of supervisors of her PhD. The recordings will be destroyed within 10 years of the final publication that issues the results of the study. The transcriptions will not be disseminated in full, and only parts of these will be included in the text of the thesis and in future publications (see penultimate point). During the transcription of the interviews, the names of the interviewees will be substituted with pseudonyms and the names of their enterprises will be eliminated, in order to protect the anonymity of the interviewees in the transcription, in the writing-up of the thesis and in future publications.

What happens if I do not wish to participate in the study or if I change my mind during or after the interview?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you will keep this information sheet and you will be asked to sign a consent form accepting the invitation to participate in this study. After accepting you still have complete freedom to cancel your participation in this study at any time, without having to give any justification and without prejudice. If you decide to cancel your participation, all the information given by you will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

Will the results of this research be published?

The results of this study will be presented in the discussion of the PhD thesis. These results will be also disseminated at conferences and in publications (books and papers in scientific journals) so that they can contribute to the development of the knowledge on self-employment in Portugal.

Contacts for further information:

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**Consent form accepting the invitation to participate in the research
Self-employment and businesses set-up in Portugal
(simplified provisional title)**

1. I, _____
(please, fill in with your name), agree to participate in the PhD research of Mrs. Fátima Assunção on Self-employment and businesses set-up in Portugal. I have read the entire information sheet (2 pages), have understood its content and the PhD student, Fátima Assunção, has fully explained the nature and aims of the research that she is conducting to me, thereby clarifying all my doubts. My acceptance of the invitation to participate in the study is totally voluntary.

2. I understand that, by accepting this invitation, I will participate in an in-depth interview that will cover the following aspects: my education and past employment, my family circumstances, and the creation and current arrangement of my business. I consent the audio recording of this interview, understand that the said recording will be stored in a safe place and will be destroyed within 10 years of the final publication that disseminates the results of the study, and that it will be accessible only to the PhD student, Fátima Assunção, and to the supervisors of her PhD thesis.

3. I understand that during the transcription of the interviews, my name will be substituted with a pseudonym and that the name of my enterprise will be eliminated, in order to protect my anonymity in the transcription, in the writing-up of the thesis and in future publications (books and papers in scientific journals), as these will include excerpts of the interviews. I also understand that the PhD student, Fátima Assunção, and the supervisors of her thesis will have access to the transcription of the interview.

4. I understand that I can cancel my participation in this study at any time, without having to give any justification and without prejudice. If I decide to cancel my participation, all the information given by me will be destroyed and will not be used in the study.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 3 – Interviewees’ pseudonyms

List Pseudonyms, by sampling criteria:

<i>Sampling criteria</i>	<i>Pseudonym</i>
<i>Women operating in high-end services</i>	Fiona Heather Jessica Lisa Megan Melissa Nicole Stephanie
<i>Women operating in trade</i>	Brenda Chloe Claire Ellen Georgina Rachel Rebecca Ruth
<i>Women operating in restaurants</i>	Amy Audrey Cindy Denise Jodie Samantha Zoe
<i>Men operating in high-end services</i>	Frank Gary Ian Luke Ralph Russell Scott Steve Trevor
<i>Men operating in trade</i>	Barry Brian Clive Dale Ernest Glen Justin Nigel Sean
<i>Men operating in restaurants</i>	Adam Edwin Ethan Howard Leo Simon

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