

# The Female Hunting Instinct: Entrepreneurial Life in Germany



**Juliane Mueller**

**Abstract** The present case, FEMALE HUNTING INSTINCT, tells the true story of a German woman who founded a knowledge-intensive business service (in the German *GmbH* form, equivalent to the American LLC), after spending a few years in France. The case consists of an interview with the female founder which focuses on the establishment of her business and illustrates her occupational life. In addition, her diary account from past to present provides a closer look at the thoughts and attitudes of a *mompreneur*. Sabine Jotter, one of four founders of the business presented and a mother of two, wanted to push for big budgets for her company. After a few years of freelancing, her “hunting” instinct was aroused, causing her at times to feel like an uncaring mother. On most days however, she is satisfied with the flexibility, independence, and leadership role she enjoys as part of her work. Using the jigsaw approach, the teaching material below is divided into four “pieces” to help bring students and complementary data together. In doing so, different perspectives on entrepreneurial success are discussed, and light is shed on the role of the woman and mothers in France and Germany. Perceived motivational factors also play a key role.

## **Teaching Note—The Female Hunting Instinct**

### ***Target Group***

This case primarily addresses undergraduate and graduate students in the humanities and social sciences who are currently enrolled in gender or entrepreneurship/business courses. The case can additionally be used to introduce students from other fields to lessons about entrepreneurship and economics.

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J. Mueller (✉)

Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Halle (Saale), Germany

e-mail: [juliane.mueller@wiwi.uni-halle.de](mailto:juliane.mueller@wiwi.uni-halle.de)

### ***Background Information***

FEMALE HUNTING INSTINCT refers to an actual business in the knowledge-intensive sector in western Germany. The information about the business development and entrepreneurial life of the founder comes from a personal interview in the summer of 2017. Although some of the interview content has been changed for the sake of anonymity, the important facts are real. The translated answers in the interview are taken from a portrait of the businesswoman published in Josten and Laux (2007). The cited literature in the learning material and the details from the founder's diary are based on real life, although the diary entries have been altered for the sake of anonymity, as is the case with all of the names presented.

### ***Main Learning Objectives/Key Issues***

This text will help students develop an understanding of a gender perspective in entrepreneurship and business. The participants will recognize the lack of representation of female entrepreneurs in this field. By answering questions, students will be able to critically reflect upon different concepts of success, especially the individual perspectives of women business owners in Germany. After attending the class, students will have the knowledge and ability to consider diverse parameters when it comes to measuring business success. They will note that the motives for women to become entrepreneurs differ from those of men. Another goal of the case is to encourage students to think about their entrepreneurial careers. Practitioners and researchers will recognize female academics (in the humanities and social sciences) as potential founders as well as research subjects.

### ***How to Use the Case/Teaching Strategy***

This case is suited for the jigsaw technique (see Section II). In addition, blended learning is possible for case analysis. Work in pairs or small/large groups is also a possibility. The teaching plan is divided into three sections (class opening, jigsaw method, closing the class).

### **Section I: Class Opening**

The following task can be used to introduce the students to the subject:

- Do you know any successful entrepreneur from your own surroundings (circle of family, friends, acquaintances)? Otherwise, think of someone who is popularly known. Write a short, meaningful description that illustrates his or her success.

After working on the task, students form groups of 4 to 6 people and work on the following:

- Introduce your successful entrepreneur to your group, based on the description you prepared. Explain why *you* think he or she is a successful entrepreneur.

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Either one person from each working group or volunteers can present their example to the class. The instructor can ask how many of the students personally know at least one entrepreneur. As an added, interesting, and important detail, find out how many of the identified entrepreneurs are female.

The instructor can also ask the students to prepare the description before attending the class. Depending on the participants' previous knowledge, it may be necessary to give a short definition of the terms *entrepreneur* and *entrepreneurship*.

### **Section II: The Jigsaw**

A cooperative learning approach, the *jigsaw technique* is an effective approach for entrepreneurship instructors teaching heterogeneous classes (Holloway et al. 2008). The learning material is divided into "puzzle pieces," making each student's part essential for a full understanding of the given topic. In general, this learning strategy follows three steps:

- I. The lecturer arranges all learners into temporary groups (the so-called "expert" groups) where the learners are assigned to the same task (their "piece"). Participants are then given time to independently think about their own responses and discuss the main points of their piece within the expert group. All experts should prepare a brief presentation to explain their contribution to the overall jigsaw puzzle. The Female Hunting Instinct case material is divided into four pieces ("Success", "Performance Gap", "Motivation", "Roles in France & Germany"). So ideally, Step I will have four expert groups.
- II. The instructor then puts all the participants into new jigsaw groups that are composed of one participant from each of the expert groups. Make sure each student presents her or his piece to the group. The Female Hunting Instinct case has four expert groups, meaning each jigsaw group is composed of at least four different experts.
- III. At the end of the session, review and collect the results with the entire class. For example, each jigsaw group can summarize in one sentence what they have learned.

The teacher's role is to lead students through the tasks, give support if/where needed, and provide feedback. The teacher should also encourage students to help each other. This teaching plan is recommended for a class size of about 16 students. For larger classes, there could be more than one expert group for each piece (and, of course, more than one expert for each piece in the jigsaw group) to ensure a productive working atmosphere.

### **Female Hunting Instinct**

After opening the class, all students receive the Female Hunting Instinct case. This consists of the interview and the diary account of the female founder

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(The Diary Part I). Every participant reads the case on their own while also doing the following:

- I. Outline the business development.
- II. Summarize the key points from the diary extract (Part I). While doing this, also try to create a timeline of Sabine's occupational life.

**Step I: Expert Questions**

The experts can answer the following questions after receiving their jigsaw pieces (Success, Performance Gap, Motivation, or Roles in France & Germany). The questions depend on the material given to the expert group the students belong to.

Piece "Success" (The Diary Part II)

- I. What parameters are considered when measuring entrepreneurial success?
- II. The case discloses different reasons that drove Sabine to choose entrepreneurship. Identify them and try to arrange them in a logical order.

Piece "Performance Gap" (The Diary Part III)

- I. How is successful entrepreneurship defined in research?
- II. Do you agree with Lewis's statement? Think of the ideas you had in the beginning of the class when you talked about entrepreneurs you personally know.

Piece "Motivation" (The Diary Part IV)

- I. What advantages of entrepreneurship does Sabine see?
- II. Summarize typical motives for choosing entrepreneurship and discuss the motives that drove Sabine to entrepreneurship. Do you think the motives for women to become entrepreneurs differ compared to men?

Pieces "Roles in France & Germany" (The Diary Part V)

- I. Have a look at the diary entry about social roles and summarize the key points.
- II. Entrepreneurial intention is influenced by different determinants. What entrepreneurial motives can you identify in your piece?

The lecturer is welcome to provide additional instructions if the class is not familiar with the jigsaw learning technique. The following questions can help students to prepare the first stage of the teaching process:

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- I. How can you clearly explain the key message of your “piece” to your fellow students?
- II. Will diagrams or examples help you?
- III. What questions will you ask to make sure your jigsaw group understands what you’re presenting?

### **Step II: Jigsaw Questions**

After becoming experts in Step I, the students combine what they have learned. The following questions can be helpful after presenting and arguing their pieces in their jigsaw group. The level of discussion within the groups will vary, so the lecturer has to decide when additional impulses or advice are necessary (e.g. a question or information that directs the discussion).

- I. Do you think Sabine is a successful entrepreneur? Why or why not? Think of your answers in Step I and discuss.
- II. What would Sabine’s answer to Lewis’s statement be?
- III. After considering Sabine’s individual goals, would you answer question I. differently?
- IV. After considering the first three questions, how would you now define entrepreneurial success to the person sitting next to you?

### **Step III: Evaluation**

After finishing Step II, the teacher then evaluates the jigsaw groups. Shuffle the students again to compare and contrast their results. A final class discussion is recommended at this point to allow participants to learn from the other groups and clarify crucial issues. To start the discussion, each group can e.g. provide their key findings.

### **Section III: Closing the Class**

Once the lecturer has evaluated the jigsaw method, take a few final minutes for reflection. The following questions could help guide a closing conversation:

- What do you know about the vocational intention of the founder Sabine when she was younger?
- If you were Sabine, what would you have done differently (in respect to her entrepreneurial career)? Which decisions were good?
- Do you have a clear idea of your career path?
- Have you ever thought about choosing entrepreneurship? Are there any conditions under which entrepreneurship would be an option for you?

# 1 The Case: The Female Hunting Instinct<sup>1</sup>

## 1.1 *The Female Hunting Instinct: Entrepreneurial Life in Germany*

*Interview with Sabine Jotter, founder of a German knowledge-intensive business service*

In the Name of Science: A Knowledge-intensive Business Service

*My blog introduces a successful businesswoman every month. Today I talked with Sabine Jotter, the managing partner and one of four founders of a knowledge-intensive business service in western Germany.*

Since 1999, Sabine and her team have faced the challenge of making scientific content accessible to whoever is interested in the wider public. They publish and communicate in the name of science. Their customers are mainly research institutions such as universities and foundations or publishers. Their business now includes corporate publishing, campaign building and launching, consulting, media trainings, and work in public relations.

**Interviewer (I): Thanks for your time Sabine. In 2004, you established the limited liability company (GmbH) ‘In the name of science’. I read in an article that you originally had the dream of being a lecturer or professor.**

Sabine (S): That’s right. When I was a child, I was regarded as ‘cheeky’ at school. That sounds negative, but in reality, it was great fun for me to communicate and take responsibility. My personality was also positively influenced by my grandfather. In my childhood, we visited the traditional weekly markets because he was a market trader: He was loud and lively. That inspired me early on. The responsibilities I had within my family were also formative. When I imagined my future back then, I had a clear vision of myself in an independent, leading role.

After school, I graduated with a degree in history from the University of Hamburg, where I later also received my doctorate. On completion of my master’s degree, I decided to go to France with my future spouse. There, I worked at the Paris-Sorbonne as a lecturer for the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) and taught German language, literature, and cultural studies. I also advised on Germany as a study and research destination. I had a great time!

**I: So why did you leave France? Had you ever thought about staying there as a lecturer?**

S: Yes and no. I loved the idea of working as a permanent lecturer in France, but it was not an option for our family, unfortunately. Unlimited job contracts were assigned centrally in France, and I hadn’t received my doctorate at the time. Instead, we decided to return to Germany, where my husband was the first to secure a permanent job. I got a 2-year grant for finalizing my doctorate in Berlin. At that time, the arrival of our second child was close, and I continued freelancing.

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<sup>1</sup>By Juliane Mueller

**I: Can you tell us about the daily life and circumstances in France compared to German living? What is your experience?**

S: I want to focus on one big difference: There [in France], no one would ever think to criticize me as a mother for my decision to continue working. It is completely normal and natural to balance the two [a job and a family]. Here [in Germany] however, I struggled with the usual ‘bad mother’ reproaches. To leave children in the care of others outside the home in Germany isn’t always met with the best reaction.

**I: Let’s talk about your entrepreneurial life. How did you meet your cofounders?**

S: After our return to Germany, I temporarily worked as an exhibition assistant at the House of History in Bonn and subsequently took over the editing of the DAAD magazine *Letter*. It was through my work for the DAAD that I first met the Germanist and accomplished journalist, Christin. A little later, I met Charlotte, who had studied history, politics, and English at the universities of Bonn, Vienna, and Cologne. We all worked for many years as freelancers, which is why we had well-established networks. While meeting up and speaking about our current freelance projects, we developed a desire for independent and self-reliant publishing work. This led us to the idea of founding our own company in 1999.

In 2004, another entrepreneur, the daily newspaper editor and interim chief editor of a research service agency for scientific information joined the company. Today, our business is managed by four women with proven science-oriented profiles.

**I: Did you see any other reasons to become self-employed?**

S: You bet. On the one hand, we knew the field in which we wanted to establish ourselves. I was seized by a real hunting instinct to make more out of my initial freelance work for publishers and to push for bigger projects for my own company. On the other hand, I was in my mid-thirties and wanted to combine my ever-present desire for an independent and leading role and my abilities and interests with a career and a family. As it turned out, a foundation of my own was the best route for *me*.

**I: Sabine, why don’t you tell our readers about the important decisions in respect to the growth of your business.**

S: In the beginning, we ran the company from home and had no real entrepreneurial strategy. Over time, we realized that all of us (as mothers) needed structured separation between our private lives and work. I want to be able to get lost in my thoughts if I work on demanding projects. We found nice rooms in a female business park—an office building that had been developed as a private investment place by women, for women—in a big city in western Germany. This decision was advantageous because our synergies with female consultants and other business-oriented services in the building were easy to achieve and intensively used. In my mind, a strong female network is important for our success.

In 2004, we decided to establish a limited liability company (the German GmbH), which could also be relevant to our liability by including printing technology. Especially in regard to public vendors, it is much better to compete with a GmbH. However, we can use the GbR (private partnership) form for journalistic tasks. Back

then, we sometimes heard people questioning whether the ‘lady trio’ could push for big budgets. I doubt men are asked that question.

So far, our growth has been organic and without major financial risks. Financing the company has also not posed a problem so far, and because the investments were very manageable, no critical banking discussions or meetings were required.

**I: In your opinion, what can women learn from men, and vice versa?**

S: In general, women have to negotiate tougher when it comes to money and their demands until they are respected. In this area, we can learn from men how to ‘perform’; that is, how to stay tough and not let ourselves be duped. Order calculations, such as those for our business in which research, moderation, and knowledge have to be included, are rich in soft factors and are therefore more difficult to quantify than the purely material calculations. It’s extremely important for women to learn what our work is really worth, to raise higher fees, and to refrain from self-exploitation. On the other hand, I’m convinced that women have many benefits due to their female features in the business world: We can actively listen, we’re more sensitive to the other person, we’re more communicative, and we are queens of smart diplomacy in negotiations.

**I: How about business plans for the future?**

S: In the near future, another permanent employee with experience in the free economy and with clear PR skills will complete our team. We also need to think strategically in the long term. A new colleague should not only complement our competencies but be a bit younger. In any case, a lot will be done in the areas of control and business management to make us stronger.

Overall, it’s too risky to rely only on one or a few contractors. The more support [we have], the lower the risk, so it’s worth competing in the market.

**I: What was your attitude towards entrepreneurship when you were younger?**

S: Honestly, I had no idea about the entrepreneurial life. I first became aware of entrepreneurial independence as a possible way of life during my studies through the parents of a friend. Soon after that, thanks to the rather random and sudden takeover of the position of chief editor and publisher at a German-speaking women’s press service, I experienced entrepreneurial responsibility for myself. Despite the enormous pressure I experienced at the time, my memory of this phase is positive. This is completely in contrast with my work with national newspapers, where I was put off by the dominant hierarchical conditions.

In my mind, at least on the subject of entrepreneurship, it’s important to be able to fall back on role models who successfully and harmoniously live this lifestyle and to even become this kind of role model yourself. I believe that many qualified young women would be encouraged if they had personal contact with these kinds of people. They have to be able to see for themselves that it can be done and how to do it. The image of women entrepreneurs in the public is defined only by exceptions. Mostly, the men in suits are in charge.

**I: What can we do to change this picture in the public’s eyes?**

S: My team members are doing their bit for early education by organizing for example Girls’ Days to introduce girls to careers in science. What I would like to say



to young women in particular is that they shouldn't just study their favorite subjects but seek a healthy mixture of topics. This way, they can both play out their preferences and maintain a realistic view of the future of their careers. I studied history without a reliable sense of perspective, and if I had known then what I know today, I would have definitely chosen a combination of subjects that apply to the business economy.

**I: What do you want to tell our readers about entrepreneurship?**

S: It's worth it, because it's good to be able to make new, independent decisions every day about what to put your life energy into. There's no spoon-feeding and no alienation—for me, that's the most important thing about this way of living.

## ***1.2 The Diary Part I***

Sabine's diary entries

### **Hamburg, 05/1985**

Yesterday at the family party, a friend of my mother asked me my favorite question again: "And how do you want to earn a living after your studies?" Argh... Of course, I was as quick as ever and didn't let my feelings show. But this topic still bothers me even though after a lot of deliberation I decided against changing the subject. Good thing I didn't tell anyone important about my thoughts on changing my major to become a history teacher! I'm now curious to see if this university event on career perspectives this coming Thursday helps.

### **Paris, 06/1996**

Our time here is coming to an end. Herbert had an interview in Berlin which went well. It seems we really will be moving back to Germany. What's in store for me? In the meantime, I've spent so many years in academia, and I like working in it, especially the flexibility and the fact that I'm doing what I'm interested in. All too vivid are my memories from my time in Hamburg. Those days I wrote for various newspapers but could never choose a subject! Other journalists may be happy, but the established procedures, old-fashioned structures, and irrefutable pecking order—not for me! I would never consider this kind of a position again. At most as a stop-gap thing to get by. Because of the kids, I need maximum free time. I really am grateful to "Professor Go-for-it" that he gave me the courage to do my doctorate. So I could discover how much I liked the sweet smell of research, of freedom.

But if I'm honest, I don't see a real career option in science. Even if I had already finished my doctoral thesis, I've been away from German universities for too long. Wasn't "Professor Oddball" in fact quite right when he impressed upon me, my stomach as round as a ball, the saying that "motherhood and science don't mix"?!

**Paris, 07/1996**

Today was a good day. I bought some children's clothes at a flea market. The little one is growing faster than I can keep up with. And the attic is filling up with clothes which he's grown out of. Actually, I wanted to leave the children's clothing till after our move. But apart from currently working on the doctoral thesis, there's also a reorientation on my to-do list. I'll address it at the latest when I've completed my dissertation. I want domestic help. As soon as the budget allows it?

**Bonn, 04/1999**

Today I felt it again, the evil two words in illuminated letters on my forehead: BAD MOTHER. I had a busy day. As usual, I had to sprint after work to pick up Frederik from kindergarten. (it's really time I quit!). Anyway, the sun was shining, so I decided to take the little one to the playground. There I would also be able to edit a text that is due tomorrow. In any case, Frederik played the whole time with the sand toys of the other children, whose supermoms were of course prepared and had brought toys with them. Unlike me. Basically, I'm on the other side. And yet it eats me up emotionally. I miss the time in France so much. There the society had so much more understanding for working mothers. Having said that, I have to take better care of my balance between work and free time in the future.

**Bonn, 09/2001**

We did it! We just signed! From now on, we can work in our own office every day and no longer have to move meetings with our clients to the cafe. Much more professional. But what exactly does our business do?? Oh, at least I love this independence, this flexibility!

**Bonn, 2002**

Today I know how unobtrusively I approached the university career back then. Looking back in hindsight, it's really naive. But how could I have known? I was only young. And none of my family had a college degree. That might even make me an educational pioneer. At least I can give my children a lot. I'm really curious to see which path they take later on.

**Bonn, 03/2002**

I am so happy with my decision to be self-employed! The order situation at our publishing house is growing slowly but steadily. Yesterday I ran into an old friend from school. We hadn't seen each other for a long time, so we quickly exchanged the most important questions: "Are you married?" "How many kids have you got?" "What do you do for a living?" These are moments in which I notice again and again that the decision for self-employment was the right one. I can divide my time the way I want, can go to the doctor in the morning, and at the same time deal with the daily business topics that I enjoy.

**Bonn, 2003**

A hard week is now behind me. I had suspected as much. I was in Hamburg with a customer at the beginning of the week and presented our concept (fortunately, they liked it!). I also had to stick to two deadlines. There was a lot going on at home as well—my eldest was having his birthday and wanted to celebrate it with his friends at our home with games and sleep-overs. So yesterday was the family party with all the preparations, and I also watched the little ones with their karate group in the morning. Ugh... There was so much else. I got a tip from the Millers about my search for a cleaning lady.

**Bonn, 09/2011**

A dark day for our business. I'm having real concerns about the continuation of our company. Our biggest customer has jumped ship. I never expected that. What's next? What could possible strategies look like? Ugh, what a blow. Now we have to make active acquisitions for the first time. We can't avoid it. I'm trying to see this development as an opportunity. But what if we don't find a solution—or have to become employees again? No, none of that. In any case, I can expand my work as a moderator of university events and panel discussions. I'm sure everything will be ok.

**Bonn, 2014**

Our company is celebrating its ten-year anniversary! This week we celebrated with a small party. Later that evening, I sat with Charlotte and Christine and reminisced about the early days of 'In the Name of Science'. How fitting that I had just been interviewed for a journal about our founding story. Some memories came back to life. Charlotte and Christine said they felt the same way I did, and that they too had at first seen the benefits of time flexibility in their self-employment. Both also perceived increases in flexibility and greater ability to balance the rewards and demands of career and family.

The conditions for potential founders have, in my opinion, improved. This is especially true for university members. As I learned in an interview, many universities now offer various start-up grants for students and scholars. Back in my day, we received integration support at the Women Business Park. Beyond that, apart from legal and tax advice on the arrangement of the company, we didn't really get any other external support. In retrospect, we could have put someone who could tell us about a business plan or business model canvas to good use. That may have spared us some hard lessons.

**Bonn, 07/2017**

We organized a Women Science Slam. What a success! Yesterday, seven scientists stood on the stage who were very keen about their research. That could have been me back then. Well, maybe I'll go to a Fempreneur Slam. I would have a lot to tell. Although I'm not sure where to fit that in my calendar. . . Business and family are enough. I wanted to see my girls again. It's now urgently time to plan the annual

women's holiday. And to focus more on life and less on work again. So that I remain efficient ☺

### **Bonn, 07/2017**

What an evening! I have to let it sink in first. . . Today was our class reunion. Lanky Lewis from the parallel class was also there. He works in the financial sector and looks just like I remember him from the 10-year reunion. Back then, we were really nice to one another. In any case, today he whined about start-ups and the importance of business plans. What he finally concluded about women's entrepreneurship and success was something like this: "It's clear that men are the better entrepreneurs. So why all the programs to foster women? Female entrepreneurs are less successful because their businesses are often smaller. It's no wonder that women's business ventures are often short-lived."

I couldn't give any real response to this. I was actually speechless for a moment. I'd never had to have a conversation like this before.

### **Bonn, 07/2017**

So, now I've picked out some numbers from our business. I can't get the conversation from yesterday out of my head. I cannot and will not agree with Lewis on this point so easily. Maybe I will find some insights in research, someone has certainly already dealt with this topic. But now I have to ask myself—What about my venture? Are we or am I successful? I've looked at the turnover development of the GmbH to date. Primarily due to the loss of our biggest customer, sales declined by 27% compared to 2011.

In terms of employee development, we have in fact steadily increased. We started with the three of us. In the middle of 2011, we took on the first trainee, and since then every two years a new one after the other. We currently have an online editor (working as part of an unlimited contract), and two volunteers (one focusing on print, the other on events). But I'm not sure if I'm successful based on this data. So far, we've secured the survival of the business, and we've always been able to make payroll. And this year on Mother's Day we even joined in a new initiative at the employment agency here in Bonn to support female job seekers. That counts, doesn't it?

## **2 Teaching Material**

### **2.1 *The Diary Part II***

#### **August 2017**

I found an interesting article about a qualitative study on women entrepreneurs and success in Germany. Ettl and Welter (2012, p. 85) report: "[...] in relation to success, motivations appear to resemble the strategic, long-term orientation of the

entrepreneur, while goals reflect the operative background for entrepreneurial actions and behaviour. Success, on the other hand, has a pronounced link to personal life issues: ‘satisfaction’, ‘work-life balance’, and ‘reconciling employment and family’ are the key concepts used by our respondents to describe success.”

That’s exactly how I see it! The authors also give a nice literature overview that I think is really useful. I wrote down some quotations: “In this perspective, we assume that making one’s living could be one of the goals of an entrepreneurial person” (Ettl and Welter 2012, p. 75). And “To sum up, we propose that entrepreneurial success has to be understood from a perspective, which includes economic, societal and individual aspects” (Ettl and Welter 2012, p. 75).

Rosa et al. (1996) reports that gender is a significant determinant of small business performance, and women are seen as less successful compared to their male colleagues. Hemer et al. (2006) summarizes common indicators of success, including the survival of the company, profit level and growth, the period to reach the break-even point, employment growth, sales growth, market share, equity ratio, sales productivity, labor productivity, cash flow and cash flow growth, shareholder value and return on equity, return on investment (ROI) and Internal Rate of Return (IRR).

What I’ve learned from my quick and dirty research is that (1) relevant instruments being used in entrepreneurship research were developed and tested on male entrepreneurs (Greene et al. 2003), hence male businesses and attitudes are taken as the norm for both sexes; and (2) studies about entrepreneurial success “usually use a few or even a single of these indicators. They ignore that the assessment of the success of such a complex and multidimensional entity as a (new) business can hardly be based on just a few dimensions” (Ettl and Welter 2012, p. 74). “With regard to objectives, several studies have drawn attention to the fact that women entrepreneurs aim at combining both business and family responsibilities, reflecting a more intrinsic goal setting, while men tend to concentrate more on economic objectives” (e.g. Rosa et al. 1996; Ettl and Welter 2012, p. 76).

### August 2017

In addition to the facts mentioned above, I identified some quotes from interviews with businesswomen in Germany (Ettl 2010, p. IX). I really like these statements. Some of them express my opinion to a T!

“A successful female entrepreneur . . .”

“ . . . must also be a happy entrepreneur!”

“ . . . keeps her feet on the ground!”

“ . . . needs courage, self-confidence and a family that stands behind her!”

“ . . . has a company that runs well and is recommended by word of mouth!”

“ . . . is well and happy”

“ . . . has to prove herself every day!”

“ . . . am I. If I did not believe it, it would not work. Something inside me knows that what I do is right!”

“ . . . is happy and satisfied with her life!”

“ . . . has a self-confident appearance, with which she is quite recognized by men!”

“... has perseverance and is ready for continuous learning!”

“... is fully committed to what she is doing!”

“... is still less noticed than a successful entrepreneur!”

“... is a happy entrepreneur!”

“... is pure with herself!”

“... must be in high gear and flexible. Nothing can be created out of nothing. Without flexibility nothing works!”

“... leads a company exactly like a man, only with feminine social competence and intuition!”

“... gets on with all her roles as a woman, as a mother, as a manager and as a human being. And she can remain authentic and true to herself!”

“... believes in herself and knows what she wants!”

“... listens to her heart!”

“... that’s what I will be! But you need courage!”

“... will not be so easy!”

“... has personality!”

“... must be like my girlfriend and me. Independent, dedicated, purposeful, enjoy life, be satisfied, have fun at work and laugh!”

“... should be authentic!”

“... is totally herself!”

“... has a househusband at home!”

## 2.2 *The Diary Part III*

### **August 2017**

After the talk with Lewis, I did a quick and dirty analysis and identified some articles about entrepreneurial success. The existing literature found that female-owned firms underperform when comparing performance indicators on an aggregate level. Here are some insights from an empirical study that focused on the gender gap in business success: Gottschalk and Niefert (2011) tracked the performance of approximately 4700 German start-up firms using data from the German KfW/ZEW Start-Up Panel. The authors report that female-founded firms perform worse for all considered performance indicators (sales, two measures of employment growth, and return on sales). In addition, the data indicates that female entrepreneurs, compared to their male counterparts, have a lower level of formal education, less professional experience, are part of smaller start-up teams, are more often driven by necessity, and are overrepresented in the retail and service industries, and in lower-tech industries in general. The authors state that these differences can explain parts of female entrepreneurial underperformance, although their contribution to the performance gap depends largely on the performance indicator considered. Data analysis shows that gender differences in founders’ resources (human capital, business partners) partly explain the performance gaps in growth and sales. Furthermore, although the investigation does not confirm gender

differences in profit orientation, female entrepreneurs are in fact affirmed as less growth-oriented.

Furthermore, I found the following information in the literature: “Growth of the firm has been an extremely important issue in the study of entrepreneurship, yet the relationship between gender and growth has rarely been studied in the field” (Greene et al. 2003, p. 13). Du Rietz and Henrekson (2000) provide support for several previous studies that female entrepreneurs tend to underperform relative to their male counterparts on the aggregate level. “Existing literature has established that most firms do not grow at all and that average growth in employment in firms is driven by a few firms growing very rapidly” (Minniti and Naudé 2010, p. 283). Robb and Wolken (2002, p. 15) found that “female owned firms were smaller, younger, more concentrated in retail sales and services, and more likely to be organized as proprietorships than were male-owned firms”. In addition, women’s ventures tend to be less profitable than those of men.

“The exit rate of new firms (or rate of firm turnover) is high in all countries” (Minniti and Naudé 2010, p. 283), whereas the survival rates of female-owned micro and small enterprises were lower compared to their male-owned counterparts (Mead and Liedholm 1998). “Females are more likely than males to voluntarily leave their firms” (Justo and deTienne 2008, p. 14). Justo and deTienne (2008, p. 13) found that “marriage is [...] an important predictor of voluntary exit, and this effect was reinforced in the presence of children”.

## 2.3 *The Diary Part IV*

### **Summer 2017**

An old friend told me that the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) 2016/17 report was published recently, so I scanned it for the first time. Among other things, I read about the Total Early-stage Entrepreneurial Act (TEA), the central indicator of GEM. In fact, “Germany [...] and France report the lowest female TEA rates in the GEM sample, with around 3% of the adult female population engaged in entrepreneurial activity” (GEM Consortium 2017, p. 28).

The low activity rate grabbed my attention. So I searched for some more information about women’s entrepreneurship and found this interesting paper: Lawton Smith et al. (2015, p. 2) point out that women “comprise very few academic entrepreneurs” and commercialize their research less frequently than their male colleagues. Because female academics have high levels of human capital, Ahl (2006) indicates that women often lack the knowledge and skills necessary to commercialize their research and start a business.

### **August 2017**

What a rainy week! Yesterday I spent some time researching entrepreneurial motives. Here are some of my results:

Kirkwood (2009) analyzed 75 semi-structured interviews with 28 female and 47 male entrepreneurs. The findings suggest that both women and men appeared similarly motivated by a combination of push and pull factors. Three gender differences were found in the motivations: women were more influenced by a desire for independence; women considered their children as motivators more than men; and men were influenced more by job dissatisfaction than women (Kirkwood 2009).

Existing literature found gender differences in reasons for starting a new business venture. “Men stressed the desire to be their own bosses and women reported being concerned with personal challenge and satisfaction” (Scott 1986, in Greene et al. 2003, p. 7).

Rey-Martí et al. (2015) investigated female entrepreneurs’ motivation (their propensity for risk, their desire to find a work-life balance and develop business skills, their need to seek self-employment, and their desire to earn more than in paid employment) to achieve business survival. A crisp set qualitative comparative analysis shows that female entrepreneurs whose motive is to pursue a better work-life balance are less likely to succeed, whereas women with a propensity for risk are more likely to succeed.

## 2.4 *The Diary Part V*

### **August 2013**

Today I learned a new term: mompreneur—the neologism of ‘mom’ and ‘entrepreneur’. I’m not sure if I want to be labelled a ‘mompreneur’. I think motherhood doesn’t define me in my career nor predict the success of my venture—my vision and courage do.

Although I am very sure that there are more similarities than differences between male and female entrepreneurs, I see one main difference: the need to balance two major social roles.

### **March 2016**

During breakfast, I heard an interesting report about a new trend on the book market. It started with Pamela Druckerman’s *French Children Don’t Throw Food* (Druckerman, 2012) and has continued with the recently published book *Vive la Famille* by Annika Joeres (2015). In recent years, parenting books telling us why French kids are superior and what we could learn from French families (e.g. how to avoid tantrums) have become popular.

My kids are now grown, but I still often have debates with friends about the differences between motherhood in Germany and France. Last time the starting point was the German metaphor *Rabenmutter*, which means “bad mother” or literally a “raven mother.” Most Germans don’t know that there is no French equivalent of this pejorative. *Duden* (the quintessential German dictionary) explains the word’s origin: It’s a popular German misconception that parents don’t care very well for their



young “ravens” and might even “kick them out of the nest.” In reality, the young birds leave the parental nest on their own even though they are not yet able to fly, and therefore look helpless. But after this happens, the bird is still protected and fed by his or her parents for a number of weeks. So in spite of these preconceived notions, these parents do in fact bring up their babies with an acceptable level of care.

Consistent with this notion, I read in Wiegel (2016) that in France, the notion of an uncaring mother is unknown, and the term *mère-poule* (to be a mother hen) is considered negative. Wiegel writes that French parents are more selfish, and their focus, unlike that in Germany, is to a lesser extent on the child. She mentions that German women want to be perfect mothers, whereas French mothers see themselves primarily as women with their own needs who focus on “femaleness.” The population researcher Norbert Schneider (2013) explained that there is in fact an exaggerated ideal regarding parents in Germany.

As far as I can see, the main differences lie in the culture. I’ve always observed that French moms *believe* they are doing everything right, whereas German moms *want* to do everything right.

## April 2016

I read an interesting article on the Internet today. Once again, it’s about the role of the mother in France. In an interview, the journalist Annika Joeres talks about much lower expectations and demands of mothers in French society, so that they would never have to adapt to a guilty conscience or feelings. In this way, French women have more time for themselves, while in Germany, babies are showered with attention and young mothers are neglected. I was not aware that French women breast feed less than the global average. Joeres believes that this attitude is linked, inter alia, to French family policy which makes sure that mothers return to the labor market as quickly as possible. She says (polemically) “When German mothers sign up for Pkip courses [baby development activity classes], many French women are already back to work and are starting to optimize their bodies again.”

Come to think of it, raising children in France is also a state matter. Since schools are all-day schools there, mothers with school-age children can more easily work full-time than in Germany. It goes without saying that the children are also taken care of in French schools when the lessons are cancelled (which isn’t always the case in Germany).

As I read a while back in Wiegel (2016), in France, the working mother is seen as a “normal case,” where French women stay on the job while caring for their first and second children. This is what I later became aware of: whoever takes a longer break, contrary to the French mainstream model, garners a lot of ridicule. A colleague in Paris at that time (who had put her daughters in day care after a year and had breastfed for the first six months) had to listen to critical comments like, “What do you do all day long? Don’t you get bored with your children?”

In any case, in the course of this article I came across another recent article by Calla (2016). I agree when she writes that maternity is not automatically linked to a career break or a turnaround in France. According to her research, women work there

full-time more often than in the rest of Europe. And yet (or perhaps because of this), France leads in birth rates, with an average of two children per woman, compared to 1.4 children per woman in Germany in 2014.

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