



Individual and Organizational Career Attitudes: Cases of Entrepreneur and Intrapreneur Careers¹

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This study aims to analyse Lithuanians' career preferences measured by the attitude towards the individual and organizational career, pointing out entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship as professional career examples stimulating economic growth, job creation, innovation, and competitiveness on the national and international levels. The concept of individual and organizational career provides the possible dimensions for the empirical Global Entrepreneurship Monitor data analysis in terms of attitudes towards the mentioned career choices.

Key words: career, individual and organizational career concepts, entrepreneurship, intrapreneurship

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Introduction

Since changes in social, economic, demographic, technological, and organizational contexts over the last two decades have facilitated the birth of the individual career concept, a discussion about the old (or organizational, objective, hierarchical) and the new (or individual, subjective, modern) concepts of career in academic circles has developed. Some authors claim that the old concept of career is no longer relevant in the modern context and must be replaced by a new concept of career, along with the new forms of career that this concept would entail: *new career* (Arnold, Jackson, 1997), *post-corporate career* (Peiperl, Baruch, 1997), *smart career* (Arthur et al., 1995), *protean career* (Hall, 1976), and *boundaryless career* (Arthur, Rousseau, 1996).

Another group of authors (Collin, Young, 2000; Cohen, Duberley, Mallon, 2004) think that the traditional old career approach is still prevalent in today's world. The penetration and adequacy of the new (individual) concept of career in the modern context is criticised in the following aspects (Gunz, Evans, Jalland, 2000; Osterman, 1996; Gunz, Evans, Jalland, 2000; Moynagh, Worsley, 2005; McDonald, Brown, Bradley, 2005; Baruch, 2006): the irrevocable replacement of the organisational concept of career by the individual one; the limitations of the situational context regarding the individuals' autonomy to independently develop their career; the universality of the concept of the individual career and its application to all professions and economic sectors; the tentative originality of the concept of the individual career; the waning of organisational influence in developing personal careers; the marginalization of objective indicators of a career success; the advantages of a life-time employment to both individuals and employers; the dynamic nature of labour markets.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to analyze Lithuanians' attitudes towards traditional and contemporary approaches to career development. As an illustration, for this analysis, the entrepreneur and intrapreneur career examples will be used, because new business creation or entrepreneurial development of the existing one are undoubtedly among the most relevant aspects for the economic growth, social development and competitiveness of countries. In this paper, the following questions will be answered: what are the dominant social norms as regards the organizational and individual career development; which career development viewpoint – traditional or modern – is more encouraged in society; who should be responsible for one's career; whether entrepreneurs and/or intrapreneurs are respected; is the entrepreneur and/or intrapreneur career choice considered as a desirable career choice?

Individual and organizational career concepts

In the 1950s, with the start of the development of stable, bureaucratic organizations with a clear hierarchical pyramid in industrialized Western societies, the developed careers were accordingly defined as organizational. *Organizational career* is described by the security of a job position, professional stability, linear hierarchical career progression, loyalty to one organization, various mechanisms of reward, occupation in accordance with the acquired specialty, etc. In other words, the responsibility of career development falls rather on the organization than on the individual himself / herself.

Organizational careers are based on the hierarchy where people compete for limited opportunities of promotion, whereas the vertical career progression from the bottom up is understood as the most important factor of career

success. A typical definition of organizational career states that these careers have a clear direction of one dimension or linear career progression, i.e. promotion (Lips-Wiersma, Hall, 2007). Organizational hierarchy means the ladder for the career progression, and people seeking a successful career shall follow such practice. This is the manifestation of the procedure-based structure having a clear and linear career direction.

The modern-day career theoreticians, researchers, and practitioners unambiguously allege that the career is achieved not in the vacuum. Its concept and characteristics are directly influenced by economic and social factors (Herr, Cramers, Niles, 2004). Transition from the industrial to knowledge economy, globalization of markets, demographical changes, and a fast spread of new technologies have increased the speed of change and unpredictability and also initiated changes in the nature of work organization in modern society. Reacting to these changes, organizations have refused inflexible hierarchies in order to react to the new demands of the environment more properly. Due to the changed context in which the individuals pursue a career, the new or individual concept of career is recorded. The traditional theories of career, fitted to organizational careers, no longer met the context of careers pursued in industrialized Western societies in the 1970s and 1980s. The order vs. chaos is one of the most frequently applied metaphors to describe the transition from the organizational to the individual concept of career (Lips-Wiersma, Hall, 2007; Baruch, 2006). M. B. Arthur, K. Inkson, J. K. Pringle (2003) state that organizational career theories have been created for the world which is increasingly less existing. The concept of *individual career* is based on considerable changes in the society and organizations. The restructuring wave, which started in capitalist world in 1980, also

conditioned the transformation of the stable career to a more dynamic, flexible and unstable one. The careers turned from being linear to being multi-directional (Lips-Wiersma, Hall, 2007).

The essence of organizational and individual careers is revealed thorough their comparison.

Organizational vs. individual career. Various career theories supporting the new career allege that an individual (no longer an organization) can, and shall, assume a personal responsibility for career solutions. To be responsible means to achieve the goals that are personally meaningful to the individual himself / herself rather than to his / her parents, contemporaries, organization or society. In the time of changes, organizations can no longer provide the employees with guarantees of hierarchical career progression inside the organization, lifetime employment in accordance with Japanese organization traditions, or a significant system of reward for long-term loyalty (Maranda, Comeau, 2000; Arthur et al., 2003). Individuals become the sculptors of their own careers, and the career of each person is unique. There are no two identical persons with the same careers, as the basis of a career consists of an individual history, situation, priorities, and the perception of the concept of life. The assumption of personal responsibility is closely linked with career competencies as a person shall predict himself / herself when and what to learn, when to retrain, etc.

Employment vs. psychological contract. The *employment contract* is opposite to the *employer-employee contract*, also frequently referred to as the *psychological contract* or *social contract* (Collin, Young, 2000, Reardon et al., 2000). An employment contract defines the obligation of an individual towards the employer to perform definite work for a definite reward. The employer remunerates for loyalty

by providing economic security, whereas the new psychological or social contract is based on the possibilities of employees to improve by developing their own competences (skills, abilities, and knowledge) that are valued in the labour market. Thus, loyalty is expressed by the increase of one's own value in the labour market, the upbringing of one's own competences in the development of the portfolio and employability rather than for an organization, employer, and a secured job position.

Objective vs. subjective criteria used for the evaluation of career success. In the concept of traditional career, success is established by objective criteria (for example, profession status, position, received income, work experience), whereas the majority of representatives of individual career define the success of a career by subjective criteria – the sense of meaningful life, realization of the inner potential, self-actualization, satisfaction with the performed activities, etc. (Collin, Young, 2000). Therefore, even the best objective criteria of career success not always reveal whether the career of an individual is actually successful, as everyone defines the meaning of career success by himself / herself rather individually.

Professional career vs. career. The concept of individual career includes a much wider scope of activity than work. The coordination or work, learning, family and everyday activities is emphasized; therefore, the career becomes inseparable from the rest of social life (Collin, Young, 2000). The modern-day labour market offers opportunities to develop one's own career and not necessarily by having a paid job position in an organization. For example, voluntary work can significantly contribute to the success of an individual career. Based on the concept of individual career, the career is not necessarily associated with professional activity.

Commitment vs. flexibility in labour market. Commitment to one organization, even profession or a 40-hour labour week becomes

irrelevant. Career can be pursued not necessarily within the framework of one profession (specialists of several subjects, etc.), not necessarily in one organization (by moving from one organization to another or working for several organizations at the same time) and not necessarily working 40 hours per week (by applying flexible forms of work in terms of time and place) (Arthur et al., 2003). An individual career is characterized by flexibility in pursuing personal realization.

So, the *organizational career* is described by the security of job position, professional stability, linear hierarchical career progression, loyalty to one organization, various mechanisms of reward, occupation in accordance with the acquired speciality, etc. The *individual career* is described by the dynamics, flexibility, instability, multi-tendency, responsibility for personal career solutions, whereas the career criteria in this case include the sense of meaningful life, realization of the inner potential, self-actualization, satisfaction with performed activities, etc.

Entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial career choice

Entrepreneurship is a multifaceted phenomenon with many different meanings and definitions. Nevertheless, almost all concepts of entrepreneurship in academic discourse are described as a kind of behaviour which includes: (1) initiative taking, (2) organizing and reorganizing social and economic mechanisms to turn resources and situations into practical account, (3) the acceptance of risk or failure (Sarasvathy, 2006).

Since statistical data in this paper are taken from the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM), the definition of entrepreneurship is absorbed from GEM as well. GEM defines entrepreneurship as “any attempt at new business or new venture creation, such as self-em-

ployment, a new business organization, or the expansion of an existing business, by an individual, a team of individuals, or an established business” (Bosma et al., 2012, 20).

Entrepreneurship researchers look beyond entrepreneurship as an entrepreneurial occupation and consider entrepreneurial employee’s activity (or intrapreneurship, corporate entrepreneurship) also to be part of entrepreneurship (Entrepreneurs and Entrepreneurial, 2011). In other words, when entrepreneurship is describing activities within a firm or a large organization, it is referred to as intrapreneur activities. Insofar as intrapreneurs initiate ambitious ventures, this view is in full accordance with the entrepreneurship perspective. The key difference between an entrepreneur and an intrapreneur is that intrapreneurship takes place within, and thereby benefits, an existing organisation, whereas entrepreneurship involves creating new entities beyond the current structures. Intrapreneurial abilities include gaining personal reward from seeing an idea, thought, spotting opportunities, having the confidence to lead or initiate change processes, taking risks and being resilient – all within an organisation.

Entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship are career choices. The majority engage in entrepreneurial or intrapreneurial careers after a period of employment in an established organization (Nanda, Sorensen, 2010). The decision to start business or to benefit an existing company where one is employed can be the result of unemployment or the threat of losing one’s job in the future (Beeka, Rimmington, 2011). But this career choice can be a lifetime goal rather than only a decision to create a new business venture. Thus, entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship are not always the case of displaced individuals looking to get out of a bad situation, but rather a socioeconomic choice. There is still too little research on how a person’s identification with the workplace affects entre-

preneurial and intrapreneurial career choices (Obschonka et al., 2012; Falck et al., 2012). However, the general notion is that men venture into entrepreneurship or intrapreneurship for independent work, control, self-realization, a higher status and for a higher earning.

Research method

The empirical data analysis in this paper is based on two surveys – the Adult Population Survey (APS) and the National Expert Survey (NES). These surveys have been done in the frame of the GEM which is an international non-profit academic research project. The GEM explores the role of entrepreneurship in national economic growth, unveiling detailed national features and characteristics associated with entrepreneurial activity. The collected data are ‘harmonized’ by a central team of experts, guaranteeing its quality and facilitating cross-national comparisons. The GEM is considered to be the largest and most authoritative single study on entrepreneurial activity in the world.

The GEM Lithuania surveys have been conducted by a scientist team of the International Business School at Vilnius University in September 2011; they are the authors of this paper.

The GEM APS survey sample ($n = 2003$) represents all the Lithuanian population (representative sample approach) with diverse socio-demographic characteristics. For this quantitative survey, a standardized questionnaire homogeneous for all GEM countries was used.

Experts ($n = 36$) from finance, government, education, research, business and other fields have participated in the GEM NES survey. These experts had been selected on the basis of reputation, experience as well as a substantial range of background and knowledge (a convenience sample approach). For this survey, a

standardized interview method homogeneous for all GEM countries was used.

Organizational and individual career attitudes in Lithuania: empirical aspects

This section analyzes the attitudes of individual and organizational career development.

Pursuant to the data of the GEM APS survey, job security is important or very important to more than a half (58%) of Lithuanians, and only 17% say that it is not important to them (Fig. 1). Job security and lasting ensure professional stability. However, from the career development perspective, it is a feature of the organizational career development, whereas the realization of the inner potential, self-actualization, satisfaction with performed activities are considered to be characteristics of an individual career. Therefore, it can be stated that, during the period of economic instability, Lithuanians prefer the model of organizational career – job security rather than self-realization.

However, 37% of Lithuanians require constant changes, even if they cause a higher un-

certainty in their career. Conversely, it is not necessary to 30% of Lithuanians (Fig. 1). The dynamics, flexibility, and instability in career development meet the concept of the individual career. Thus, Lithuanians are more likely to have a higher instability and feel constant changes in their career rather than to feel predictability, security, and “order”.

Nearly the same number of Lithuanians (36%) agree and disagree (31%) with the statement “I think I can understand everything better when others supervise or consult me” (refer to Fig. 1). 33% of respondents selected a neutral position of assessment and neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. Considering that the proactiveness, assumption of responsibility, creativity are the features of individual career, it can be stated that those who did not choose the neutral position placed themselves into two equal positions – one accepting the concept of individual career and the other not accepting.

Pursuant to data of the GEM NES survey, the majority of experts think that the national Lithuanian culture does not stimulate the start of risky business activities by assuming the full

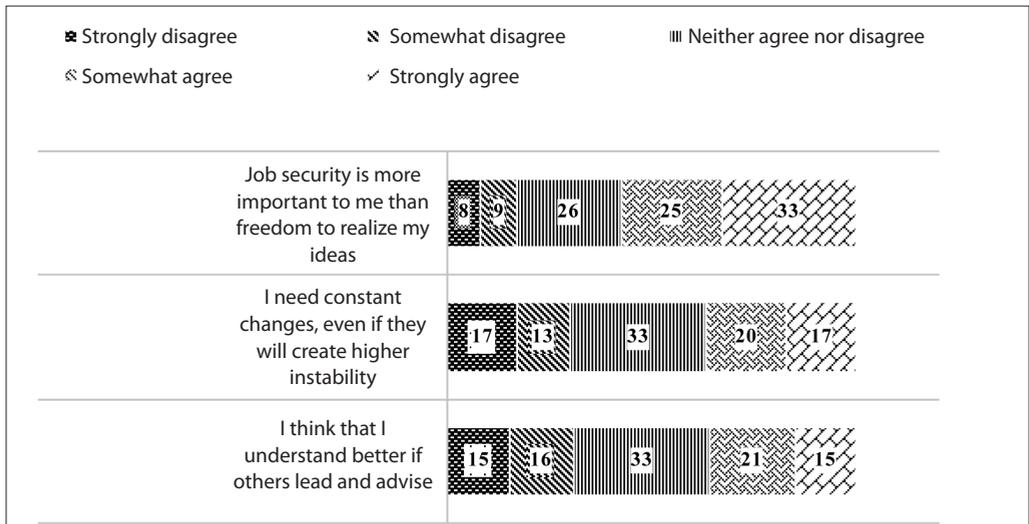


FIG 1. Attitudes towards individual and organizational career (n = 2003)

personal responsibility for career solutions. Over a half of experts think that non-stimulation, creativity and innovativeness are required in order to develop the work activity meeting the concept of individual career. More experts disagree than agree with the statement that an individual responsibility is accentuated more than a collective responsibility in the management of one's own life in Lithuania. The surveyed experts of various areas also expressed their opinion on the highlighted individuality, autonomy, and proactiveness in Lithuania. According to them, the success of an individual due to his/her personal efforts is not supported here. Thus, according to the experts who participated in the survey, the social standards existing in Lithuania are not favourable for the development of an individual career.

Entrepreneur and intrapreneur careers in Lithuania

Over the last few decades, researchers have invested a great deal of time and effort trying

to draw a clear picture of an entrepreneurial and intrapreneurial personality. Although they have identified several characteristics entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs tend to exhibit, none of them has indicated a set of traits typical of a successful entrepreneur or intrapreneur. Nevertheless, entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs are usually characterized as open-minded, opinionated, persuasive, goal-oriented, innovative, self-confident, enthusiastic, energetic, flexible, tolerant, creative, realistic, independent, and committed persons (Bygrave, Zacharakis, 2007; Hisrich, Peters, Shepherd, 2008). Most of the aforementioned traits correspond to the traits of persons who develop an individual career. An ambitious entrepreneur or intrapreneur serves as a catalyst for economic growth, job creation, and competitiveness on the national and international levels.

Despite the prevalence of the negative attitudes of Lithuanians regarding the development of individual career (refer to section "Organizational and individual career attitudes in Lithuania: empirical aspect"), pursuant to

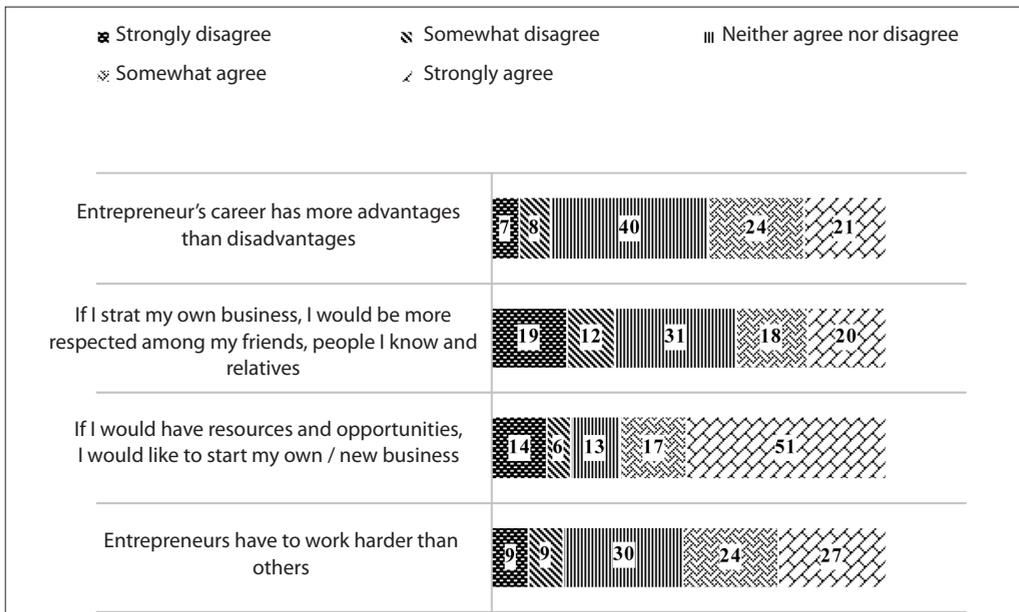


FIG. 2. Image of entrepreneur (n = 2003)

data of the GEM APS survey, the majority of Lithuanians consider the entrepreneur career as a good career choice; 45% of Lithuanians think that the entrepreneur's career has more advantages than disadvantages, and in case of available resources and opportunities, 68% of Lithuanians would want to start their own new business (Fig. 2); 38% of respondents think that if they start their own business, they would be more respected by their friends, people they know, and relatives; 51% of Lithuanians think that entrepreneurs have to work harder than others.

According to the majority of experts participating in the GEM NES survey, most people consider the career of an entrepreneur to be an attractive career choice. They think that successful entrepreneurs are respected, have a high social status, are competent and in charge of considerable resources. Thus, according to the experts and Lithuanian residents who have participated in the survey, the image of an entrepreneur is positive in Lithuania.

In addition, the experts that participated in the survey expressed their opinion regarding the opportunities of intrapreneurs' career in Lithuania. The absolute majority thinks that large, medium and small-scale companies are mostly dominated by top-down rather than bottom-up decision-making strategies that limit entrepreneurial activities in organizations. About half of experts that participated in the survey think that employers actually support the employees that suggest new ideas.

Pursuant to the data of the survey, the political, institutional, and social context (social norms, attitudes, evaluations) is considered to be one of the actions that mostly limit intrapreneurship in Lithuania.

Conclusions

The analysis of individual and organizational career attitudes of Lithuanians has revealed that, during the period of economic instability, Lithuanians prefer the model of organizational career – work security rather than self-realization, although they are likely to seek for a higher instability and constant changes in their careers.

However, the majority of Lithuanians and experts who have participated in the surveys assess an entrepreneur and intrapreneur career positively, and if they had sufficient resources and opportunities, they would want to have their own businesses. Entrepreneurship is considered a good and desired career choice.

Companies of all size are mostly dominated by top-down rather than bottom-up decision-making strategies which limit intrapreneurial activities in an organization, although some employers support employees who suggest new ideas. The political, institutional, and social context is considered to be one of the actions mostly limiting intrapreneurship in Lithuania.

Thus, an obvious contradiction of the attitudes of Lithuanians has been noticed – in case of opportunities they would want to have their own businesses, would feel more respected among their friends and relatives, and consider entrepreneurship as a career choice with more advantages than disadvantages. However, they are likely to prefer job security and understand everything better when supervised by others. This attitude may be related to a simplified perception of the features necessary for the entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship career development.

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Požiūris į individualią ir organizacinę karjerą: verslių darbuotojų ir verslininko karjerų atvejis

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Santrauka

Šiame straipsnyje analizuojamos lietuvių gyventojų ir tyrime dalyvavusių ekspertų individualios ir organizacinės karjeros nuostatos. Verslių darbuotojų (angl. *intrapreneur*) ir verslininkų (angl. *entrepreneur*) karjeros analizė naudojama kaip profesinės karjeros pavyzdys, iliustracija. Pasirinkta individualios ir organizacinės karjeros koncepcija pateikia galimus empirinių duomenų analizės aspektus: straipsnyje vertinamos nau-

jos ir biurokratinės karjeros vystymo nuostatos, analizuojamas verslininkų ir verslių darbuotojų įvaizdis Lietuvoje. Šiai analizei atlikti naudojami Globalaus verslumo monitoringo (angl. *Global Entrepreneurish Monitor*) dviejų apklausų 2011 metų duomenys.

Pagrindiniai žodžiai: karjera, organizacinės ir individualios karjeros koncepcija, verslininkai, verslūs darbuotojai.

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