

**14/11/2016 long version**

**Call for papers**

**EDHEC Family Business Centre Conference**

**Family firms in the long run :**

**The interplay between emotions and history**

***Organized by:***

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Family owned and managed businesses play a very central role in the world economy and, as such, have intrigued historians and management scholars alike.

On one hand, business historians consider family businesses as a fascinating subject of study, which can benefit from longitudinal and comparative perspectives to understand the prevailing attitudes and values displayed by owners/managers (Colli, 2011). On the other hand, organizational studies scholars recognize family businesses as a natural and special empirical ground to investigate the role of history in organizational life (Hjorth & Dawson, 2016).

In family businesses are unique organizational forms as the family history is inseparable from the business history. This feature turns family businesses into a unique context for genealogic inquiries.

Several business historians, notably in the United Kingdom, have shown early on an interest in the development of family businesses. This interest was certainly not disconnected from the traditional economic history view of family business as inefficient forms of organization. Pioneers such as Mary Rose (1979) challenged the dominant Chandlerian focus. Two special issues of the leading European business history journal demonstrate the importance of the topic until today (Colli, Howorth, & Rose, 2013; Jones & Rose, 1993).

Looking inside the black box of family controlled organization, researchers have studied resilience (Perez, 2013) and longevity (Napolitano, Marino, & Ojala, 2015) of family businesses. Their focus dealt mainly with topics such as succession, knowledge transmission, and culture. One central family concept, however, has received scant attention from a business history perspective: emotions.

Different from non-family businesses, members in family businesses may not merely share the same organization but also the same family. This makes emotions flow from the family system to the business system and vice versa, while affecting both the family and the business. For over two decades, there has been a growing research interest in the role of emotions in organizational studies. However, research on emotions in family businesses is still scarce mainly because of the complexity of analysing two systems and the deep roots of family business history and emotions (Labaki, 2013).

As a historical object, emotions have raised a strong interest amongst cultural historians since the call by Lucien Febvre (1973) and the Annales school to study the role of affects in history. From psychohistory in the 1970s to current research into art and political history, emotions are now a legitimate object for general history (Bourke, 2006; Deluermoz, Fureix, & Mazurel, 2014; Frevert, 2011; Stearns & Stearns, 1985). Several research centres emphasize the pre-modern period and the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Very little research is focused on family businesses in the current historiography of emotions. There are, however, notable exceptions starting with the works of Andrew Popp and Robin Holt (Holt & Popp, 2013; Popp & Holt, 2013). Initiatives from other business historians have dealt with emotional issues in business such as nostalgia with a recent ESRC funded seminar organized by Stephanie Decker at Aston Business School in May 2016. Nonetheless the specificities of emotions in the family business and its importance in decision making and strategizing are left for further research. This is the objective of the present call for paper.

This conference stands as a promising crossroad and meeting point between business historians, family business scholars and practitioners. In line with recent calls for more cooperation between historians and management scholars to inform the family business field (e.g., Colli, 2011), this conference aims at strengthening and stimulating the historian's analytical efforts by integrating theories and insights from family business management studies. It also responds to calls from family business scholars to aspire for more nuanced and longitudinally oriented research methodologies including studies of archives (Martinez et al., 2011) and private accounts (Cramton, 1993), to appreciate the inherently complex nature of the family and the business on the performance and entrepreneurship levels (Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2006; Litz, Pearson, & Litchfield, 2012) as they connect with emotional dimensions (Michael-Tsabari, Labaki, & Zachary, 2014). It therefore intends to help family businesses gain a deeper understanding of their emotional dynamics and processes as they perpetuate over time.

Among relevant research questions, we suggest the following but this list is not at all exhaustive:

- **The process of historical narratives and emotions:** Given that historical narratives are “verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much invented as found” (White, 1978):
  - How are these narratives being constructed in the family business context, which parts of reality are left or re-invented and which parts are created?
  - How do emotions shape the history of family businesses?
  - What is the relationship between historical narratives and socio-emotional wealth?
  - How does history shape the emotions of the family business generations over time?
  - How do emotions influence historians in the construction of their narrative process?
  - How do family businesses narrate their history across generations and how does it matter to understand, trigger, prevent or heal emotional dynamics?
- **The strategic use of family business history:** History allows us to gain a multidimensional perspective of what happens in a family business across the life cycle stages of the family, ownership and business systems.
  - How is history intentionally used by family business managers to inform and/or direct strategic decisions? Which parts are intended to be understood and forgotten in turning points of the family business?
  - To what extent are the family and business myths based on history and how are they transferred over time to forge the family business culture? Which parts of the myths are kept and re-interpreted when the founding families leave the business and other families take over and how do they serve the continuity of the family business?
  - For which purpose are the past and present historical narratives developed by the business family, what are their origins in place and time, who were their instigators, and what was driving the process?
  - What are the most influential stakeholders over history, how is the family business’ rhetoric history perceived and/or co-created by them, and how did it affect their emotional displays?
  - What are the outcomes of historical storytelling on the levels of engagement, identification, psychological ownership, pride of the family business stakeholders, and on the business reputation, performance, culture, and evidence of success and reliability?
- **Family business emotions through history:** The family is a multigenerational emotional unit (Bowen, 1978) that is driven by a transgenerational heritage and legacy that are intended (Böszörményi-Nagy & Spark, 1984), consciously or unconsciously, to be passed on as a burden or as a blessing. The emotions of the past and current generation may be interlinked with those of the next generation in the family and the business.
  - Nostalgia and Memory. To what extent is nostalgia used as a vehicle of legitimization in the family business? What are the origins of nostalgia, nostophobia and postalgia and how can they be studied historically to understand business decision making?
  - Trauma, Grief, Mourning: How are these emotions perpetuated and dealt with across generations and how do they affect family business, especially in succession issues?

- How to integrate the notions of cohesion and integrity and how they are affected in splits and branching off which are common trajectories of family businesses across generations.
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- Empathy, Compassion, Fear, Anger, Anxiety, Hate: What are these emotions' historical sources and how do they impact family business behaviour?
- Love, Desire, Jealousy, Envy: How do these emotions drive the family business in crisis situations?
- What are the differences between family and non-family organizations in terms of historical analysis of the emotions' triggers and outcomes?

Although the issue of history in the family business seems to be more accurately available in the literary-narrative language (Hjorth & Dawson, 2016), this conference invites all **methodological approaches** to inform the family business emotional behaviour as well as approaches from other fields of inquiry to inform historians on how to handle emotions as a unit of study in the family business.

To conclude, we welcome work on conceptual and theoretical approaches, methodological discussions, and empirical studies for analyzing family businesses, particularly relative to their history and with inclusion of the emotional dimension.

While research on emotions in organizations is flourishing, no journal has included special issues about family business history from the perspective of emotions. The Conference is pleased to support the leading French business history journal, *Entreprises et Histoire*, which is dedicating a special issue on the topic. This issue to be published in French and English is intended as a comprehensive and up-to-date review about the latest conceptual and empirical research on the relation between family business history and emotions.

Clarifying e-mail messages may be sent to the Guest Editors Ludovic Cailluet at : [Ludovic.cailluet@edhec.edu](mailto:Ludovic.cailluet@edhec.edu), Rania Labaki at: [rania.labaki@edhec.edu](mailto:rania.labaki@edhec.edu) and Fabian Bernhard at: [fabian.bernhard@edhec.edu](mailto:fabian.bernhard@edhec.edu). The submitted papers will undergo a double blind review process and, *if successful*, will be published in the *Entreprises et Histoire* as a **Special Issue**. Authors will be notified by July 2017 about the outcome of the review process. The Special Issue is intended to be published in Spring 2018.

### **Guidelines for submission and Deadlines**

Proposals are expected with a 3 page limit, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, including the following sections : 250 word abstract; the justification or need for the Study; the research objectives; a brief literature review; the methodology (if applicable); Findings and Discussion, Future research directions.

Submission of Proposals: December 16, 2016

Notification of acceptance: January 16, 2017

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