Call for Papers
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“Expanding the Temporal Dimensions of Family Enterprise Research”

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One of the distinctive features of family enterprise – both as an empirical and as a scholarly field – is time. The key role played by a continuum of events which succeed one another from past through present to future is an often implicit assumption of family business decisions and investigations. It seems that the presence of family and succeeding generations automatically expands the temporal frame that family business managers and researchers alike assume in their choices and analyses. The temporal dimension is foreshadowed in family enterprise research on either positive—e.g., culture, tradition and reputation—or, more often, negative path-dependent phenomena—e.g., the founder’s shadow, inertia and commitment entrapment. Yet time is not a highly debated issue in organization studies. Besides the often criticized prevalence of cross-sectional analyses, even longitudinal studies and conceptual models seldom place time at center stage as a driving force capable of explaining and predicting family business phenomena.

The main objective of this special issue is hence to feature articles that explicitly point to the role of time as a crucial organizing principle in family enterprises and entrepreneurial families, and of their entrepreneurial choices. Attention is focused on why and how time, and the way it is interpreted by entrepreneurs and scholars, directs key family business processes and outcomes, or is an outcome itself.

This underlying theme can be investigated with different lenses, either jointly or in isolation. Placing time at center stage in family enterprise research first has methodological implications. While calls for longitudinal studies are a norm, rarely are such studies done. What novel insights on old topics may emerge from studies based on time-sensitive methodologies? Therefore, this special issue welcomes studies that explicitly incorporate time as a key variable, both through qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Other important implications of the centrality of time refer to choice of units and levels of analysis. A common assumption is that long tenures of key individuals will result in a long-lasting impact of the family on the firm’s longevity, typically within the boundaries of the founder’s business. But what if the temporal evolution of these units—key individuals, family, enterprise, industry—follow different paths? This special issue prompts studies addressing the complex interweaving of different time patterns at different levels of analysis, by investigating the mutual influence of the life courses of individuals, families, business entities, industries and societies.

A further implication of expanding the temporal boundaries of family enterprise research refers to the outcomes influenced by the time variable. Family business scholars often assume that longevity is a desirable outcome for the family enterprise. But what if continuous family control leads to stagnation of the business entity, or if a permanently failing organization negatively affects the well being of the
controlling family? The special issue aims at encouraging studies that creatively question the often held assumption that longevity and continuity are always good, by thoroughly investigating the underlying value assumptions and their boundary conditions.

Topics of interest which explicitly incorporate an expansion of the temporal boundaries of family enterprise research, include but are not restricted to the following broad ones:

- The unique contribution offered by longitudinal and historical methods in understanding different family enterprise topics.
- The unique contribution offered by process research in understanding the multiplicity of time-dependent phenomena unfolding in and around family enterprises.
- The unique features of the role played by the time variable in family vs. non-family enterprise.
- The role played by time and longevity in their different possible roles of independent, outcome, mediating or moderating variables.
- The long-lasting impact of past events, values and people across generations of the entrepreneurial family and the family enterprise.
- The impact of conflicting interpretations of time and longevity held by key family and business actors.
- The ways in which entrepreneurial families may “construct” or “enact” time so as to facilitate different entrepreneurial outcomes.
- The differential impact that time has on parallel phenomena such as family culture, entrepreneurial orientations and behaviors, family and firm identities, financial and nonfinancial outcomes.
- The mutual influence of generational entrepreneurial families and the industries and national cultures in which they are active over generations.
- The evolution of entrepreneurial family and family enterprise identities over long time spans.
- The past and present efforts of entrepreneurial efforts to anticipate and traverse the future, and their entrepreneurial, organizational and ethical implications towards next generations.
- The antecedents, processes and outcomes of trans-generational entrepreneurship.
- The efforts of family enterprises at balancing change and stability within their industry environments that are inescapably wedded to innovation and progress.
- The endurance of some ‘dark’ or underground organizations that questions the positive role of family continuity and longevity as a contributor to destructive entrepreneurship.

Submission Process: Manuscripts should be submitted through the central Family Business Review web site (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/fbr) indicating “Special Issue” as the manuscript type. Papers will undergo double-blind, developmental reviews by a special review board tailored to this Special Issue. Final acceptance of approved papers will be contingent on incorporating reviewers’ feedback to the satisfaction of the editors.

FBR Submission Guidelines: FBR is open to many different formats and styles of presentation. Manuscripts should not be more than 35 typed double spaced pages, all inclusive, using 12-point Times New Roman font and one inch margins. All documents submitted should be Microsoft Word files. Please remember to use APA guidelines.

Deadline: Manuscripts must be submitted by 1 October 2012. The Special Issue will be published in March 2014.