Integrating Succession and Gender Issues from the Perspective of the Daughter of Family Enterprise across the U.S. and EU

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Paper aim and contribution

- **Family daughter’s viewpoint**
  - Perceptions and intentions as she considers her career options, including leadership in her family’s enterprise

- **Changing role of women in society**
  - Increasing role and acceptance of women in leadership
  - Engagement of daughters in the family business management process, key stakeholder status

- **Gender analysis**
  - A complicated set of issues faced by daughters
  - Gender as a socially constructed phenomenon

- **Toward an international understanding**
  - Two exploratory empirical research projects (U.S. - EU)
Presentation outline

- Conceptual grounding
  - Influence of gender dynamics on the family business
  - Career aspirations of family business daughters
- Results of exploratory empirical research
  - Qualitative interviews in the EU
  - Survey process in the US
- Discussion on gender and the daughters’ position
- A research agenda
- Conclusion
  - Implications for public and private initiatives
Influence of gender dynamics on the family enterprise

- Daughters’ role in light of a socially constructed environment
  - ‘The family does gender’, expectations about the daughter’s role, not always appropriate / attractive
    - Psychological barriers to the participation of daughters in leadership
    - Daughters as ‘invisible’, ‘default’ successors
    - Access to resources, including training and mentoring
- Ease and success in assuming the leadership role
  - Daughters’ own perception as potential leaders
- Challenges in management, lack of legitimacy toward stakeholders
Career aspirations of family business daughters

- Motivations in relation to their environment, their perceptions and their family’s attitudes and wishes
- Shifts in women’s opportunities in business
  - New career paradigm
  - Independence, social networks, self confidence
- Socially constructed environment that challenges daughters’ participation to leadership in family firm

Posture and position of young daughters considering career development, in the context of family enterprise and in a gendered environment
  - Motivation to engage in family business, vision of family firm and of their role in leadership
Qualitative interviews in the EU

- Daughters’ perceptions of the gendered environment during the succession process
- In-depth interviews with 11 daughters of family firms
  - Diversified cases on the basis of individual and organizational characteristics
- Audio taping and transcription of the interviews
- Vertical and horizontal thematic analysis
  - by two researchers in parallel and independently
  - Hand analysis and qualitative analysis software ‘Cassandre’¹, reproducible test

¹ created by C. Lejeune, http://sourceforge.net/projects/cassandre-qda
The daughters’ succession process and aspirations

- Gendered family dynamics and power relations
  - Presence of a brother, identified as the successor
    - No pressure regarding the firm management
    - Free to develop their own choices or pressured to play a supporting role, ‘filling in’ for the sons
    - Less access to resources, less well prepared
  - When no brother, the daughter is the natural successor from the beginning
    - Initiation with this perspective, study / career choices
    - Integration for on-the-job training, parents’ support
    - Joint management to gain experience as a leader
    - Succession planned for a long time, well prepared
Challenges in management and relationships with stakeholders

- Lack of legitimacy due to sex, in higher measure when young and in male-dominated sectors
- Succession after the son’s departure
  - Difficulties with personnel management, and in relation with customers and suppliers
- Increased lack of legitimacy if *push* motivations
  - Family hierarchy, father-daughter relationship
  - Skepticism toward “the boss’ daughter”
  - Increased lack of self confidence
- Scenario of planned succession
  - Good long-lasting relations, staff support, mentoring
  - Reflected respect due to their father’s support
  - Resource persons in the firm, networks
Survey process in the U.S.

- Career intentions of undergraduate college women daughters of family business, in relation to their family entrepreneurial opportunities
  - Context where entrepreneurial behavior is valued and business training for women is common
- Online-administered survey
  - 8 questions about entrepreneurial intentions, within or outside the family business, and demographics
  - 8 questions about experience and perceptions of building a career in the family business
- Sample
  - Response rate 26%: 541 students (out of 2072)
  - N=138 daughters of family enterprise (26%)
Entrepreneurial intentions

- A regression analysis revealed that daughters of family business were more interested than the others in being an entrepreneur (84% compared with 60%)

But **NOT** in the family business

- Only 12% were sure that they wanted to build their careers in the family business
- While 87% stated their intention to launch their own business separate from the family firm
Challenges to working in the family business, identified by daughters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Family firm identified as a male-oriented industry, lack of interest or welcome</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reluctance to work with the family</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job security in the family business</td>
<td>21%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge and/or skills to do the job</td>
<td>19%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work-Life balance concern</td>
<td>16%</td>
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Gender and the daughter’s position (I)
Conceptual lens of gender

- Challenges in considering career opportunities
- Gendered dynamics in the family, in the organization and in the society: separation and hierarchy
  - Characteristics perceived as more masculine may align with entrepreneurs’ characteristics
  - Daughters’ position based on the parents’ wishes and the son’s choices, prioritized
  - Impact on the expected role of daughters, “invisible” successor candidates
  - Lower access to resources, less well prepared, lack of legitimacy with employees and stakeholders
  - Less welcomed and less interested in industries that are « male-oriented » and « unfriendly »
Gender and the daughter’s position (II) 
Advantages to engage in family enterprise

- Care about their family's business, emotional attachment: 36%
- Good learning environment and place where they can gain experience: 36%
- Enjoy working with their families: 30%
- Opportunity for growth potential and career advancement: 27%

Specific actions on the part of the family may impact the daughter’s succession process. Degree to which women’s intentions to lead counteract gender dynamics that position them at a disadvantage.
A research agenda

- Intersection of generational issues, gender dynamics and women’s entrepreneurship
  - Increasing opportunities through more gender egalitarian social attitudes
  - Career aspirations of today’s 20-30 years olds, strong response to entrepreneurship generally
    - New vision of women emerging in the family firm milieu
- Extending research to other regions
- Investigating the sequencing of daughters’ engagement with the family enterprise
  - Role of college or professional training programs
- Additional factors
  - Age, ethnicity, nationality, birth order, social status...
Conclusion

- Implications for public/private initiatives
  - Education and training programs for daughters, their families and interested stakeholders
  - Addressing the institutionalized gender assumptions for daughters, to move a family to a successful succession process
  - Helping daughters to realize their business opportunities in the family firm
  - To increase their professional options
  - But also to enhance the family business’ leadership resource pool
Thank you for your attention!