![DiVA logo](http://www.diva-portal.org)
Postprint

This is the accepted version of a chapter published in *Theoretical perspectives on family businesses*.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published chapter.

Permanent link to this version:
http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:hj:diva-34244

9. Organisational Culture and the Family Business

Rocky Adiguna

1. Introduction

If the history of the social world were drawn in a single continuous line, we would find ourselves living on only a fraction – at the very front. The trail is long, rooted as far back as the earliest time of human history, and it is, at the same time, always growing. Values, norms, behaviours, languages – all these are products of social interaction that we inherit, produce, and continuously reproduce, and social scientists ascribe all of them under a single umbrella term: culture.

To speak about culture is to acknowledge its pervasiveness. In fact, it is very difficult to associate culture exclusively with one thing or another. Culture can be understood as conceptual (shared beliefs, values, and norms) and also practical (patterns of behaviour) (Geertz, 1973). Culture can be regarded as an objective reality (objectified in forms such as institutions or artefacts) but also a subjective one (the meanings are perceived differently by individuals) (Dyer, 1988). Culture can also be seen as something that an organisation has (a variable) or something that an organisation is (a metaphor) (Smircich, 1983). However, putting the variety of definitions aside for a moment, what they bring to light is that culture lies in the process of social interaction. Linstead and Mullarkey (2003) once remarked that culture 'arises as much from the shared interaction and practice of bodies as from the shared symbols of minds' (emphasis added). In other words, everything that occurs during an interaction between individuals can be seen as culture, be it the language people speak, the way they speak the language, the way they behave, and organisation itself. If culture is a process that appears in every interaction, then when discussing organisation – either as an institution or an action – one cannot avoid touching upon culture.

Among the many forms of organisation, family businesses have been receiving increasing awareness and legitimacy as a field of study during the last 20 years (Sirmon, 2014). Sharma, Melin and Nordqvist (2014) position the overarching aim of family business studies as 'to build knowledge on one specific type of organisation – the family business.' Two major points are stressed in this statement: the knowledge building process and the family business as a context. In terms of the attempt to build knowledge, Berger and Luckmann (1967, p. 79), in their book about the sociology of knowledge, emphasise that "only with the appearance of a new generation can one properly speak of a social world". In other words, the social world is incomplete without the presence of the new generation. Of course, in reality it is impossible to isolate the social world from the new generations. However, when speaking about the social world, the fact that we incorporate intergenerational interaction marks its totality. The various interactions between and within children, parents, and grandparents make the social world complex and more complete. Consequently, if the purpose of family business studies is to build knowledge on the family business, we are actually not only in the process of understanding family business per se; we are also to some degree in the process of understanding the (wider) social world.

How do all these concerns pertain to culture? There are two links. First, family business contains intergenerational interaction in which parents and their descendants are continuously in the process of culture (re)production. To recall from earlier that culture is a process that appears in every interaction, the presence of both horizontal and vertical generational interaction in the family business may enrich and complicate the culture of this type of organisation. Second, a family business is a form of economic institution that operates under its own raison d'être, which adds another layer of cultural complexity. Thus, a family business can be regarded as a holistic micro-environment of the wider social world in which social, economic, and political factors are intertwined. Further, from organisational culture studies,

there are extensive examples showing that cultural analysis holds the power to cut through these social, economic, and political issues (Clement, 1994; Hallett, 2003; Riad, 2005). Fruitful potential lies ahead through the application of cultural theories to family business, and both family business and organisational culture studies should benefit.

Throughout its development, family business as a field of study has been successful in importing theories from adjacent fields such as organisation theories, strategic management, and entrepreneurship (Sirmon, 2014). However, the contribution exported by the family business domain to other fields remains very limited. Against this background, this chapter serves to answer why it is increasingly important – and inevitable – that the cultural approach be adopted to address family business settings, as a way both to advance our understanding of family business and to contribute to the larger field of social science. This chapter is organised in three sections that cover the past, present, and (possible) future of organisational culture in family business. The first section presents the historical overview of organisational culture in general. In this section, the different streams of research are outlined to cover the proliferation of perspectives in understanding organisational culture. In the second section, we bracket the cultural discussion within the family business setting to obtain a narrower but deeper look at how culture has been used and exploited in family business research. We try to determine how understanding family business contributes to understanding organisational culture and how culture helps to understand family business better. To close, the third section reflects upon the future challenges and possibilities for the cultural approach in family business research.

2. The origin and progression

The discourse on organisational culture has enjoyed rapid momentum since the 1980s, which coincides with the rising success of Japanese corporations and the West's interest – more specifically, US interest – in reinvigorating their corporate performance (Alvesson, 2013).

While business administration academia has been studying organisational culture since the 1940s (Alvesson & Berg, 1992), popular management books such as those by Ouchi (1981) and Peters and Waterman (1982) have helped to proliferate the interest on cultural research in business settings. Along with these, the concept of organisational culture has also been widely defined. Schein (1983, p. 14), for example, defines culture as 'the pattern of basic assumption that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration.' This pattern of assumption, he further adds, is passed through new members as a way to frame and understand problems. Schein emphasises culture as a tool for coping with reality, echoing Pettigrew (1979, p. 574), who argues that culture is a system of collectively accepted meanings that allow "people to function within any given setting". In a similar vein, Pettigrew stresses the contextual dependence in which culture ensures the functioning of a group of individuals in their respective context. Other scholars itemise culture into several constituent parts. Dyer (1988), for example, views culture as being comprised of artefacts, perspectives, values, and assumptions. In addition, Shrivastava (1985) categorises cultural products (or artefacts) into myths and sagas, language systems and metaphors, symbolism, ceremony and rituals, and value systems and behavioural norms. Encompassing all of these, a simpler definition is offered by Alvesson and Berg (1992), in which culture can be understood as 'a collection of shared norms, beliefs and value structures' or, more succinctly, as 'shared values' and 'joint conceptual frameworks.' These definitions appear to converge to the point where culture is (1) contextually bound and (2) coupled with some degree of sharing among the members. In summary, then, it is appropriate to concur to consider organisational culture as a lens that is produced, used and shared by organisation members to interpret the reality around them. While the definitions of organisational culture may achieve a certain degree of convergence, they differ most fundamentally in their metaphorical assumptions about organisations.

Smircich (1983) proposes that culture can be understood either as a variable or as a root metaphor for conceptualising the organisation. Culture as a variable assumes that organisations are analogous to organisms or machines and that culture is among the components that ensure their operability. Here, culture is either an independent or dependent, external or internal organisational variable: it is something an organisation has. Conversely, culture as a root metaphor goes beyond the organismic metaphor and views organisations as expressive forms or manifestations of human consciousness (Smircich, 1983). In other words, culture is something that an organisation is.

Starting from that point, other parts of organisational culture research are divergent and difficult to reconcile. Ontological differences among scholars in this field result in studies that are generally stretched in three different directions: technical (positive), practical (interpretive), and emancipatory (critical) (Alvesson, 2013). Positive-oriented scholars operationalise culture as a variable in organisations and measure it against performative ends. That is, they assess whether certain types of culture lead to better or worse organisational performance – mostly in financial terms. In this orientation, culture is assumed to be singular, is frequently labelled as strong or weak (Gordon & DiTomaso, 1992; Denison, Lief & Ward, 2004), and includes the notion that an unhealthy culture can be replaced with a healthy one to pursue better performance and efficiency (Meek, 1988). Here, culture is a property that an organisation has. Interpretive-oriented scholars, on the other hand, are more concerned about the role that culture plays in the understanding of organisation members. 'Meaning-making' is the central keyword for the interpretivists, and scholars are interested in the process by which culture is construed to be meaningful (or meaningless) within organisational life. Different from the positivists that tend to reduce culture to be singular, interpretivist scholars often assume that an organisation is culture and that several overlapping cultures may coexist in an organisation (we will return to this idea later).

Nevertheless, both the positivists and the interpretivists share a similar assumption that legitimates management as an institution that domineers its members. The triumph of scientific management following the industrial revolution marked its superiority by achieving high performance through its division of labour and class segregation (Alvesson, Bridgman & Willmot, 2009). Within this change lies a taken-for-granted assumption that the capital owners may rightfully exploit the labourers. While this assumption has been proven to be effective and efficient in our times of ever-increasing consumption, it has been argued that the culture of modern management impoverishes and discriminates against human lives (Willmot, 1993). As a response to this argument, critical-oriented scholars try to counter-balance the repressive side of modern management. Criticalists argue that culture formation privileges some parties while discriminating against others in the process, and thus the disadvantaged need to be liberated from unnecessary constraints. In this stance, critical-oriented scholars seek to explore and reveal the unnecessary social suffering that emerges through the organisation's culture (Alvesson, 2013).

Another area in organisational culture research that displays significant differences (even disputes) is the epistemological level, that is, the theoretical frameworks and methodologies used to inquire about culture (Martin, 1992; Martin, Frost & O'Neill, 2006; Prasad & Prasad, 2009). Martin (1992) argues that researchers subjectively see culture in three different perspectives; these are labelled the integration, differentiation and fragmentation perspectives. The integration perspective, she explains, assumes that culture is characterised by unity, convergence and agreements that are shared among organisation members. Organisation-wide consensus is sought in this perspective, whereas ambiguity is excluded. The differentiation perspective, to the contrary, assumes that consensus only appears at the level of sub-cultures. The organisation as a whole is seen as being composed of cultural differences, and this perspective channels ambiguity as something outside of subcultures Finally, the fragmentation

perspective assumes that complex, multiple views are prevalent and cannot be easily distinguished as consistent or inconsistent. There is no organisation-wide consensus and, instead, the organisation is filled with ambiguities.

During their progression, these three perspectives have been struggling to claim superiority over one another. It must be maintained, however, that Martin's (1992) initial purpose in delineating these three perspectives was not to reify and pigeonhole the research field into this or that perspective. The boundaries, she argues, are permeable and some cultural research extends across perspectives (for example, see Meyerson & Martin, 1987). Multiple cultures may exist in an organisation, and it is not always easy to fit a certain culture exclusively within integration, differentiation, or fragmentation. Without going too much further into the differences in the schools of thought, acknowledgment and appreciation are needed for scholars to establish common ground and start a constructive conversation, rather than attempting to dethrone whichever school is deemed to be 'the winner' (Martin et al., 2006). Organisational culture studies are rich with divergent research streams. While academia has been debating whether one perspective is more appropriate than another, the field itself has tremendously benefited from the conversation among these varying points of view. For example, in general business settings, culture has been applied to understand organisational identity, strategy and marketing, leadership, and organisational change (Alvesson, 2013). That is good news; more and more areas within the social world are being unravelled. These areas include – more importantly – the field of family business. With the presence of multiple generations as a hallmark of the social world's totality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), a family business is a strategic context in which plenty about the social world can be learned through cultural studies. It is timely, then, to now focus the discussion by taking a closer look at how culture-related studies have been performed in family business settings.

3. Organisational culture in family business studies

Fletcher, Melin and Gimeno (2012) in their review of family business culture highlight that studies in this area have revolved around the conceptualisation of culture in a family business context, the role of culture in a family business, and the factors that affect culture together with the effects caused by cultural processes. While these explorations have been useful in providing an exposé of the scope of cultural inquiries in family business settings, it did not touch upon the subtle but important assumptions underlying the research that might span across these three aspects. Assumption-level analysis that makes the implicit explicit is important because it may open up research areas that were previously obscured and unquestioned (Alvesson & Sandberg, 2013). Hence, to augment Fletcher et al. (2012) and by borrowing from the theoretical frameworks by Smircich (1983) and Martin (1992), I intend to dissect the current state of research in family business culture at roughly two levels: first, the level of underlying metaphor as to whether culture is viewed as either a manageable variable or as a root metaphor in family firms; and second, the level of perspective implied in the studies as to whether culture is understood through a integration, differentiation or fragmentation perspective. These two levels are selected to elucidate the extent to which scholars are (re)producing the basic assumptions about family business culture, to identify the areas that are still left in the dark, and consequently to reveal the potential for further inquiry.

3.1. Family business culture as a manageable variable vs. a root metaphor

Until recently, the majority of the research in family business culture stems from the positivistic approach to managerial interests. This trend is shown by the growing number of studies within the last fifteen years that placed more emphasis on the importance of culture in understanding family business performance. From the resource-based view perspective, culture is claimed to be a 'goldmine' for family firms' competitive advantage (Habbershon & Williams, 1999; Zahra, Hayton & Salvato, 2004; Zahra, 2005). It is regarded as 'an important

strategic resource that family firms can use to achieve a competitive advantage by promoting entrepreneurship and enhance the distinctiveness of these firms' products, goods, and services' (Zahra et al., 2004). Specifically, a family firm culture that values commitment to the business is found to be positively associated with strategic flexibility – described as the ability to pursue new opportunities and respond to threats in the competitive environment – and the effect is amplified when coupled with a stewardship-oriented organisational culture (Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum, Dibrell & Craig, 2008). This association, in turn, is proven to translate to bottom-line performance when the family business culture is stronger and to promote better financial performance than the cultures found in non-family businesses (Denison et al., 2004).

Family business culture is also considered to be a critical factor in areas other than financial performance. In the context of intergenerational interaction, organisational culture plays an important role in the success or failure of family firm successions (Handler & Kram, 1988; Miller, Steier & Le Breton-Miller, 2003). In addition, Salvato and Melin (2008) suggest that nurturing a culture of individual commitment to the family business across generations generates long-term strategic outcomes even in families with limited access to resources. A similar account is also voiced in a study from a Spanish context, which finds that family firm values, such as commitment, long-term orientation and harmony, provide a value-based cultural model that reduces or even eliminates the high risk of firm mortality in every generational transition (Vallejo, 2008). Through a comparative study, Vallejo (2008) found that family firms possess greater levels of commitment and harmony as well as a stronger long-term orientation compared to non-family firms. This finding is further affirmed by Duh, Belak and Milfelner (2010), who found a significant cultural difference between family and non-family firms, i.e., family firms have stronger clan culture characteristics, including a more personal and family-like work environment with high level of mutual trust.

Other studies suggest that family business culture is best understood in collaboration with leadership. Based on Dyer's (1986) cultural framework, the success of intergenerational transitions in family business settings is found to involve a collaborative style of leadership and a participative business culture (Stavrou, Kleanthous & Anastasiou, 2005), that is, a leadership style characterised by extroversion (as opposed to introversion), logical thinking (as opposed to emotional), sensibleness and decisiveness. A study by Sorenson (2000) that is also based on Dyer's (1986) work points to the similar notion in which participative leadership is related to both family and business outcomes as well as to employee satisfaction and commitment. Finally, a leadership study by Eddleston (2008) extends the work by Zahra et al. (2008) and argues that family firm culture intervenes in the effect of transformational leadership on strategic flexibility.

The aforementioned studies represent a category in which culture is treated as a manageable variable. More specifically, culture is seen as a variable with two meanings: a variable that is significantly different from its non-family businesses counterpart and a variable that ultimately has significant influence on the family firms' performance. Research that assumes culture to be a variable is signalled by its technical interest in the family firms' (financial) performance, and most are written with normative overtones. This research implies that the manipulation of culture is expected to improve family firms' performance, which then concludes that family business culture should be leveraged to achieve better performance and longevity.

However, interpretive studies are required to unravel the nuanced complexity of the apparently straightforward mechanism between culture and performance. Further, when an interpretive orientation is introduced, culture is seen not merely as a component of family firms but, beyond that, as a metaphor that indicates the processual nature for organisation and

signifies its temporal and spatial embeddedness. Linstead and Mullarkey (2003) eloquently express this notion:

> Embedded in durée, or experienced duration, it [culture] must be constantly in process and change, affected by and in a movement of tension and relaxation with and between individuals, and characterised by the working out of creative evolution, or cultural innovation, within the wider unfolding of time. (p. 4)

Here, Linstead and Mullarkey (2003) highlight that culture is a process that engenders negotiation, evolution, and innovation with contextual dependence. Metaphorically, culture as a process stresses organisation not for its instrumental ends, but to signify the organisation as a social (inter)action.

In the family business context, culture as a root metaphor elucidates not the eventual results (i.e., financial performance) but other processes (e.g., entrepreneurship and change). Chirico and Nordqvist (2010) propose that family business culture fosters dynamic capabilities (and, implicitly, entrepreneurship) that are defined as processes designed to acquire, exchange, transform and shed internal and external resources. However, Hall, Melin and Nordqvist (2001) argue that particular cultural patterns within family businesses promote an entrepreneurial process while other patterns tend to preserve the traditional way of doing business. In addition, they add that family business culture is not static but is always in process and dynamic in nature. To understand these dynamics, organisational culture in family businesses needs to be viewed in three-dimensional categories that acknowledge the degree of explicitness, number of family member(s) influencing the culture and the degree of cultural openness (Hall et al., 2001).

Moving a little away from the business performance side, a study by Danes and Morgan (2004) focuses on the relational tensions of work-family life between husbands and wives in family business-owning couples. Psychologically, they analyse the tensions between husbands and wives in five areas: justice conflict, role conflict, work/family conflict, identity conflict and succession conflict. The study embraces the complexities that arise from these tensions and finds that disruptions in attachment are at the roots of these difficulties. Danes and Morgan's (2004) study suggests that business-owning couples who are in moderate or great distress would benefit most by seeking assistance from couples therapists with knowledge of both family business dynamics and emotionally focused therapy. López (2012) takes the issue of work-family balance in business families simultaneously with gender, transnationalism and ethnicity. Through intensive fieldwork on Chinese women in Spain, she reveals a type of transnational motherhood that situates the mothers primarily in their productive dimensions of work-family balance strategy. The conciliation strategies between the productive and reproductive work are found to depend on the different phases of the family business path, which are comprised of the start-up phase, the consolidation phase and the expansion phase (López, 2012).

After exploring and analysing the extant cultural studies in family business through the dichotomous lens of culture as a variable/root metaphor, we will now shift to the second level of analysis and see how the studies in family business culture have taken the integration, differentiation or fragmentation perspective.

3.2. The integration, differentiation and fragmentation perspectives in family business culture

When superimposing Smircich's (1983) cultural metaphors with Martin's (1992) cultural perspectives, there is an implicit tendency to see culture as a variable that goes hand in hand with the integration perspective of culture. For research to be able to say something about

culture as a variable, culture needs to be summarised in a coherent and unitary way. This summary is neatly facilitated by the integration perspective, which seeks unity, convergence and agreement (Martin, 1992). Hence, the voices of the founders, family members, CEOs, and/or top management are assumed to be sufficient to represent the culture of the entire organisation. As seen in Table 9.1, all of the 'culture as a variable' studies are taking an integrationist perspective.

While the integration perspective is abundant, research in family business culture that undertakes the differentiation and fragmentation perspective remain scarce. Among the limited number of research studies using these perspectives, a study by Ainsworth and Cox (2003) steps away from the mainstream managerial interest and adopts a critical interpretive approach to explore how forms of control and resistance need to be understood in relation to their local contexts. Here, by focusing on the employees' perspective, cultural division, not unity, is the interest – difference, not similarity. Another study by Fletcher (2002) assumes a social constructionist paradigm to understand how individuals attribute value and meaning to their interactions with co-workers in the workplace. In her rather 'dark' picture of organisational culture in family business, she reveals that an organisation has a system of cultural organising as an unseen – but real – force that can expel its members if they do not fit in. So strong was this force, that the top-down organisational change attempts from the top management ended up putting its initiators on an 'electric chair' (Fletcher, 2002).

By utilising the power of narrative analysis, Wigren (2003) and Hamilton (2013) are able to capture the ambiguities in cultural formation. Despite their contextual difference (between Gnosjö, Sweden and North England, respectively), their works bring to light how meanings are continuously negotiated and always open for re-interpretation. Following Martin (1992), these studies value the presence of multiple views, and it is difficult to strictly classify the degree of consistency. For this reason, the fragmentation perspective appears to be more

complex – as compared to the other two perspectives – when considering family business culture.

(Table 9.1 goes here)

3.3. *The significance of family business settings for organisational culture studies*

The context of family business emphasises that the sphere of organisational (work) life cannot be detached from domestic (family) life. For broader organisational culture studies, this connection signifies two key characteristics: (1) the inextricable cultures of the family and the business, where some values may be congruent and advantageous while others may be a potential source of conflict and (2) the intergenerational property of cultural studies. In research, these characteristics mean that family culture needs to be given more space in the foreground, and inquiries regarding the tension and relaxation between the two spheres (between the family and the business and between the new and old generations) may lead to a better understanding of the organisational culture. To give an example, inspiration can be drawn from Bråten's (2013) study from the field of sociology. In his ethnographic study on Javanese (Indonesia) micro family firms, he reveals that the 'market', the 'economic' and the 'social' spheres are intertwined in complex ways and that understanding the socio-cultural domains is important. These realms are embedded, he argues, hence the business domain cannot be fully understood without incorporating the social and cultural domains and vice versa. The implication is critical: it suggests that organisational culture scholars, especially those in family business studies, need to enter into these three levels of reality to have a holistic understanding of this micro-firms' embeddedness.

From a paradigmatic level, it is sufficient to say that the combination between positivistic and interpretivistic studies – and between culture as a variable and culture as a root metaphor – provide a fuller account when illustrating the nuanced and complex nature of the culture in

family business. The understanding of the mechanistic relationship between organisational culture and its neighbouring components, such as succession, leadership and entrepreneurship, need to be paired with the organic understanding that culture is dynamic and always in process. Table 9.1 presents a bird's-eye view of selected (non-exhaustive) works in family business culture studies to help the reader understand how the studies are grouped under the analytical lenses of metaphors and perspectives. In the final section that follows, we will touch upon future challenges and possibilities for our efforts to better understand family business culture.

4. Future challenges and possibilities

In this chapter, I have presented the origin and progression of organisational culture followed by a bracketed discussion in the field of family business studies. Re-interpretation of a classic by Berger and Luckmann (1967) is provided to underline the significance of intergenerational interaction in family business culture inquiry. Family business is rich in culture because of its vertical and horizontal generational interaction. That said, family business – as a type of organisation and as a field of study – offers promising potential in the social sciences arena to extend our understanding of the wider social world beyond the realm of business. However, cultural inquiries in family business have not come a long way in the last thirty years since Dyer (1986) first introduced the conceptual foundation of family business culture. While, in organisation studies, the struggle between the three perspectives (integration, differentiation, and fragmentation) is fierce and prominent, the presence of these perspectives in family business research is rather one-sided and dominated by the managerial-oriented integration perspective. Our agenda of family business culture research needs re-orientation and re-balancing. To make an impact, aspiring researchers should be well aware of this need and dare to take the path less travelled (yet strategic).

Theoretically, Danes (2014) projects that future research on family business studies should be directed to be more process-focused and multidisciplinary and should move away from firm financial performance towards multi-dimensional sustainability. This projection means not only that multiple theoretical points of view need to be acknowledged but that multiple voices within the family business also need to be fairly represented. The voices of non-family and non-manager employees as cultural members of the organisation are as important as those of the family members and managers. From the family business owners/managers' side, attention must be paid to the below-the-surface family culture. By taking these into account, it is hoped that the multidimensionality of the family business will be better illustrated and analysed. In this light, cultural research is deemed to be necessary, and it is inevitable that it will be conducted as an integrative framework that straddles multiple disciplines. Methodologically, more daring scholars can learn from the field of sociology and/or anthropology to conduct more imaginative research. Some, but few, have performed ethnography-inspired research that contributed a new way to understand both family businesses and business families (Fletcher, 2002; Wigren, 2003; López, 2012; Bråten, 2013). This method of inquiry needs empowering. Ethnography produces thick descriptions of culture, and ethnographic research in family business puts family and processes at its centre. Hence, corresponding to Danes (2014), the possibilities for more process-focused and multidisciplinary research are wide open. Even if full-scale ethnography, similar to those from anthropologists, is not produced, more business-related ethnography, such as workplace ethnography, yields a promising prospect for future research.

As a way forward, there are several areas in which family business studies can benefit from the application of organisational culture thinking. While the extant studies have revealed that culture significantly contributes to the family firms' competitive advantage, we do not know, for example, whether a family business culture with a high degree of unity is better or worse

than a family business culture with a certain level of tension. By emphasising the cultures of both the family and the business, positivistic studies can direct their research to seek out the optimum threshold at which tension between the family culture and the business culture can benefit organisational performance. Hence, the question should be less about whether family business culture affects performance, and more about how it affects performance and what is its optimal configuration, Interpretive-oriented scholars can delve deeper into the intricacies of both realms by examining how organisational members negotiate conflicting values and/or leverage congruent ones. What are the particular themes that may emerge by looking into the cultures of both the family and the business? Are these issues similar or different for small- to large-sized family firms? What processes are involved? And how do organisational members try to resolve tensions? These are among the questions that can be posed as a starting point. Finally, a big opportunity exists for studies that take a critical stance. We must not forget that the presence of family business is not only to serve an economic purpose, and our role as a researcher is not only instrumental to our subject's economic ends. A family business is also a context of social interaction, where meaning is construed and power is exercised. In this area, our knowledge about how culture produces power asymmetries in a family business is still very limited: this is an open invitation for critical-inspired scholars interested in the culture of family business. It must also be maintained, however, that I am not suggesting that culture as a competitive advantage should be taken for granted and left unquestioned. As explained earlier, scholars that lean towards interpretive-managerial interests are encouraged to explore what culture can do in family businesses. Constant inquiry in what we already know is always necessary. But we must be wary not to fall into the error lamented by Alvesson (2013), trying to use the concept of organisational culture to explain everything and consequently having it explain nothing.

Most importantly, we need to be more conscious that family businesses play a strategic role with their social, political, and cultural significance in the wider social world beyond a mere economic motive. This condition presents us with an opportunity. Promising potential lies in family business studies that are directed to contribute using interpretive and non-managerial interests that acknowledge the multidimensional perspectives of integration, differentiation, and fragmentation. On a different note, Fletcher et al. (2012) highlight that 'a fruitful area for future research on family business culture ... relates to critical stances towards culture.' I agree. The contribution to the wider social world lies in our ability to critically re-question concepts that have become a steady and convergent wisdom in the scholarship. Our effort to understand family business culture translates into reflexive research with the audacity to touch upon subtle, yet sensitive, social and political issues.

References

Ainsworth, S. and Cox, J. W. (2003), 'Families Divided: Culture and Control in Small Family Business', *Organization Studies*, **24** (9), 1463-1485.

Alvesson, M. (2013), Understanding Organizational Culture, London: SAGE.

Alvesson, M. and Berg, P. O. (1992), *Corporate Culture and Organizational Symbolism: An Overview*, New York: de Gruyter.

Alvesson, M. and Sandberg, J. (2013), *Constructing Research Questions: Doing Interesting Research*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Alvesson, M., Bridgman, T. and Willmot, H. (2009), 'Introduction', in Alvesson, M., Bridgman, T. and Willmot, H. (eds), T*he Oxford Handbook of Critical Management Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 1-28.

Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T. (1967), *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York: Anchor Books.

Bråten, E. (2013), 'Embedded Micro-Businesses: Trust, Incorporation and Scaling in Javanese Family Firms'', in Bråten, E. (ed), *Embedded Entrepreneurship: Market, Culture, and Micro-Business in Insular Southeast Asia*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 253-274.

Chirico, F. and Nordqvist, M. (2010), 'Dynamic Capabilities and Trans-Generational Value Creation in Family Firms: The Role of Organizational Culture', *International Small Business Journal*, **28** (5), 487-504.

Clement, R. (1994), 'Culture, leadership, and power: The keys to organizational change', *Business Horizons*, **37** (1), 33-39.

Cruz, A. D., Hamilton, E., and Jack, S. L. (2012). Understanding entrepreneurial cultures in family businesses: A study of family entrepreneurial teams in Honduras. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 3:147–161.

Danes, S. M. (2014), 'The Future of Family Business Research Through the Family Scientist's Lens', in Melin, L., Nordqvist, M. and Sharma, P. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Family Business*, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp. 611-619.

Danes, S. M. and Morgan, E. A. (2004), 'Family Business-Owning Couples: An EFT View into Their Unique Conflict Culture', *Contemporary Family Therapy*, **26** (3), 241-260.

Denison, D., Lief, C. and Ward, J. L. (2004), 'Culture in Family-Owned Enterprises: Recognizing and Leveraging Unique Strengths', *Family Business Review*, **17** (1), 61-70.

Duh, M., Belak, J. and Milfelner, B. (2010), 'Core Values, Culture and Ethical Climate as Constitutional Elements of Ethical Behaviour: Exploring Differences Between Family and Non-Family Enterprises', *Journal of Business Ethics*, **97** (3), 473-489.

Dyer, W. G. (1986), *Cultural Change in Family Firms: Anticipating and Managing Business and Family Transitions*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Dyer, W. G. (1988), 'Culture and Continuity in Family Firms', *Family Business Review*, **1** (1), 37-50.

Eddleston, K. A. (2008), 'Commentary: The Prequel to Family Firm Culture and Stewardship: The Leadership Perspective of the Founder', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **32** (6), 1055-1061.

Fletcher, D. (2002), 'A Network Perspective of Cultural Organising and "Professional Management" in the Small, Family Business', *Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development*, **9** (4), 400-415.

Fletcher, D., Melin, L. and Gimeno, A. (2012), 'Culture and Values in Family Business – A Review and Suggestions for Future Research', *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, **3** (3), 127-131.

Geertz, C. (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

Gordon, G. G. and DiTomaso, N. (1992), 'Predicting Corporate Performance from Organizational Culture', *Journal of Management Studies*, **29** (6), 783-798.

Habbershon, T. G. and Williams, M. L. (1999), 'A Resource-Based Framework for Assessing the Strategic Advantages of Family Firms', *Family Business Review*, **12** (1), 1-26.

Hall, A., Melin, L. and Nordqvist, M. (2001), 'Entrepreneurship as Radical Change in the Family Business: Exploring the Role of Cultural Patterns', *Family Business Review*, **14** (3), 193-208.

Hallett, T. (2003), 'Symbolic Power and Organizational Culture', *Sociological Theory*, **21** (2), 128-149.

Hamilton, E. (2013), *Entrepreneurship across Generations: Narrative, Gender and Learning in Family Business*, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar.

Handler, W. C. and Kram, K. E. (1988), 'Succession in Family Firms: The Problem of Resistance', *Family Business Review*, **1** (4), 361-381.

Linstead, S. and Mullarkey, J. (2003), 'Time, Creativity and Culture: Introducing Bergson', *Culture and Organization*, **9** (1), 3-13.

López, A. S. (2012), 'Transnationalism, Motherhood, and Entrepreneurship: Chinese Women in Spain', *Advances in Gender Research*, **16** 39-59.

Martin, J. (1992), *Cultures in Organization: Three Perspectives*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Martin, J., Frost, P. J. and O'Neill, O. A. (2006), 'Organizational Culture: Beyond Struggles for Intellectual Dominance', in Clegg, S. R., Hardy, C., Lawrence, T. B. and Nord, W. R. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Organization Studies*, London: SAGE Publications, pp. 725-754.

Meek, V. L. (1988), 'Organizational Culture: Origins and Weaknesses', *Organization Studies*, **9** (4), 453-473.

Meyerson, D. and Martin, J. (1987), 'Cultural Change: An Integration of Three Different Views', *Journal of Management Studies*, **24** (6), 623-647.

Miller, D., Steier, L. and Le Breton-Miller, I. (2003), 'Lost in Time: Intergenerational Succession, Change and Failure in Family Business', *Journal of Business Venturing*, **18** (4), 513-531.

Ouchi, W. G. (1981), *Theory Z: How American Business Can Meet the Japanese Challenge*, Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Pub.

Peters, T. J. and Waterman, R. H. (1982), *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best-Run Companies*, New York: Harper & Row.

Pettigrew, A. M. (1979), 'On Studying Organizational Cultures', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **24** (4), 570-581.

Prasad, P. and Prasad, A. (2009), 'Endless Crossroad: Debates, Deliberations and Disagreements on Studying Organizational Culture', in Buchanan, D. A. and Bryman, A. (eds*), The SAGE Handbook of Organizational Research Methods*, London: SAGE Publications, pp. 128-142.

Riad, S. (2005), 'The Power of 'Organizational Culture' as a Discursive Formation in Merger Integration', *Organization Studies*, **26** (10), 1529-1554.

Salvato, C. and Melin, L. (2008), 'Creating Value Across Generations in Family-Controlled Business: The Role of Family Social Capital', *Family Business Review*, **21** (3), 259-276.

Schein, E. H. (1983), 'The Role of the Founder in Creating Organizational Culture', *Organizational Dynamics*, **12,** 13-28.

Sharma, P., Melin, L. and Nordqvist, M. (2014), 'Introduction: Scope, Evolution and Future of Family Business Studies', in Melin, L., Nordqvist, M. and Sharma, P. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Family Business*, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp. 1-22.

Shrivastava, P. (1985), 'Integrating Strategy Formulation with Organizational Culture', *Journal of Business Strategy*, **5** (3), 103-111.

Sirmon, D. G. (2014), 'Developing the Field of Family Business Research', in Melin, L., Nordqvist, M. and Sharma, P. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Family Business*, Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, pp. 642-647.

Smircich, L. (1983), 'Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, **28**, 339-358.

Sorenson, R. L. (2000), 'The Contribution of Leadership Style and Practices to Family and Business Success', *Family Business Review*, **13** (3), 183-200.

Stavrou, E. T., Kleanthous, T. and Anastasiou, T. (2005), 'Leadership Personality and Firm Culture during Hereditary Transitions in Family Firms: Model Development and Empirical Investigation', *Journal of Small Business Management*, **43** (2), 187-206.

Vallejo, M. C. (2008), 'Is the Culture of Family Firms Really Different? A Value-Based Model for Its Survival', *Journal of Business Ethics*, **81** (2), 261-279.

Wigren, C. (2003). The Spirit of Gnosjö: The Grand Narative and Beyond. *JIBS Dissertation Series No. 017*.

Willmot, H. (1993), 'Strength is Ignorance; Slavery is Freedom: Managing Culture in Modern Organizations', *Journal of Management Studies*, **30** (4), 515-552.

Zahra, S. A. (2005), 'Entrepreneurial Risk Taking in Family Firms', *Family Business Review*, **18** (1), 23-40.

Zahra, S. A., Hayton, J. C. and Salvato, C. (2004), 'Entrepreneurship in Family vs. Non-Family Firms: A Resource-Based Analysis of the Effect of Organizational Culture', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **28** (4), 363-381.

Zahra, S. A., Hayton, J. C., Neubaum, D. O., Dibrell, C. and Craig, J. (2008), 'Culture of Family Commitment and Strategic Flexibility: The Moderating Effect of Stewardship', *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, **32** (6), 1035-1054.

Table 9.1: Select published works on organizational culture in family business research

Publication outlet	Author(s)	Culture aspect(s)	Approach	Culture as	Culture perspective
Journal article	Denison, Lief & Ward (2004	Culture and performance of family firms vs. non-family firms	Positivistic	Variable	Integration
Journal article	Zahra, Hayton & Salvato (2004)	Association between four dimensions of organizational culture and entrepreneurship in family firms vs. non-family firms			
Journal article	Vallejo (2008)	Comparative analysis of the organizational culture of family firms vs. non-family firms			
Journal article	Zahra, Hayton, Neubaum, Dibrell & Craig (2008)	The moderating effect of stewardship in the culture of family commitment and strategic flexibility			
Journal article	Duh, Belak & Milfelner (2010)	Family firms vs. non-family firms culture as a constitutional element of ethical behavior			
Journal article	Dyer (1988)	Categorization of cultures found in the business side of the family firm	Interpretive	Metaphor	
Journal article	Hall, Melin & Nordqvist (2001)	The role of cultural patterns in family firms entrepreneurship			
Journal article	Salvato & Melin (2008)	The role of family social capital in cross generational value creation			
Journal article	Chirico & Nordqvist (2010)	The role of organizational culture in the creation of dynamic capabilities and trans-generational value creation in family firms			
Journal article	Discua Cruz, Hamilton & Jack (2012)	Entrepreneurial cultures in family businesses			
Book chapter	Bråten (2013)	Cultural embeddedness of micro family businesses			
ournal article	Ainsworth & Cox (2003)	The use of shared understanding of divisions and difference in constituting organizational culture	Critical interpretive		Differentiation
Journal article	Fletcher (2002)	Relationship between organizational networking and cultural organizing in the family firm			
Book	Wigren (2003)	Process-oriented cultural perspective in understanding the grand narrative of family firms	Interpretive		Fragmentation
Book	Hamilton (2013)	Narrative, gender and learning in family business			