

**Crafting a family business: wives weaving the
threads of work and family life**

by

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Declaration

The candidate hereby certifies that:

- This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award to the candidate of any other degree or diploma, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis;
- To the best of the candidate's knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis;
- Any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and,
- The thesis has met all the requirements of the Ethics Approval from Swinburne University of Technology (Appendix 4.1) and the final ethics report has been submitted.

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Barbara Cosson

April 2017

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Abstract

This research reveals the dynamic, complex and sometimes invisible way wives fashion family and business lives with important implications for the future of family firms. The study addresses two critical aspects of wives' experiences in family businesses: first, the 'common sense' ways gender is organized in the family business, and second, wives' influence in succession planning. It draws upon the varied experiences of 35 wives with different levels of involvement in the business to understand how gender manifests in material and symbolic ways and how these conditions are maintained and confronted.

In particular, the thesis demonstrates the difficulties for wives working in the business to comfortably inhabit an entrepreneurial identity. Participants indicate that at start up, an egalitarianism is frequently established as husbands and wives strive to make the business work in often challenging circumstances. The space opened up through this working arrangement is often foreclosed as the business becomes more established and the demands of the entrepreneurial ideology are met more readily by husbands than wives. The impact of gendered work, an unequal division of labour and the work wives do to 'reflect back' to men the heroic (masculine) discourse of entrepreneurship are implicated in these outcomes.

At the same time, the findings reveal a deep ambivalence about children joining the business. While wives can be a powerful force in undermining succession planning, they can also be influential in trying to manage it. Through a discourse of 'choice', wives craft the future of the business with a view to maintaining relationships.

In its critique of theories of social transformation, the thesis argues that the uncoupling of gender from traditional precepts is overstated. Rather, women achieve uneven recognition and status, highlighting the co-existence of equality with enduring masculine privilege. Significantly, it demonstrates wives' active role in children's involvement and the future of the business beyond informal emotional management skills previously highlighted in the family business literature.

Introduction

Warp threads are thicker than the weft, and made of a coarser wool as well. I think of them as like wives. Their work is not obvious - all you can see are the ridges they make under the colourful weft threads. But if they weren't there, there would be no tapestry. Tracy Chevalier, *The Lady and the Unicorn*

Crafting business and family life

This thesis explores how gender is organized in family businesses and how this varies according to wives' associations with them. It then draws on wives' experiences to make sense of their influence in succession planning. The research project is grounded in a concern for the limited attention wives' perceptions, actions and influence have received in succession planning research within the family business literature (Astrachan 2002). During the course of the interviews, it became apparent that this story could not be told without attending to broader gender issues relating to their work and care responsibilities in family businesses. In this respect, the tapestry metaphor above is illustrative of the experience of many wives in family businesses: their invisibility on the one hand, but their critical contributions on the other (Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003, Rowe and Hong 2000, Salganicoff 1990a).

Within the family business literature generally, the broad contributions of wives have been a neglected dimension. Researchers increasingly point to the important but often unrecognized and less valued work of women in family businesses which tend to be owned and led by men (Jimenez 2009, Lewis and Massey 2011, Mulholland 2003, Salganicoff 1990a). This absence has historical foundations. For example, Davidoff and Hall (1987), in their historical study of the emergence of the middle class in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, argue the work of wives in family enterprises was obscured. In this respect the autonomous individual actions of men in commerce were made possible by the women who supported them through 'their labour, their contacts and their capital' (Davidoff and Hall 1987: 33). This

absence, or lack of recognition of wives' contributions remains evident in the family business literature today.

There has been a steady increase in research on daughters in family businesses, especially in relation to the barriers they face in joining family businesses and in gaining leadership roles (Barrett and Moores 2009, Collins, Tucker and Pierce 2010, Constantinidis and Nelson 2009, Dumas 1989, 1992, Dumas 1998, Fattoum and Byrne 2011, Galiano and Vinturella 1995, Overbeke, Bilimoria and Perelli 2013, Vera and Dean 2005, Wang 2010). Growing attention is also being given to women-owned businesses and specifically differences in performance between male and female-run firms (Danes, Haberman and McTavish 2005, Fasci and Valdez 1998, Harveston, Davis and Lyden 1997, Sonfield and Lussier 2009, Watson 2002). However, the contributions of wives at the intersection of business and family is not well understood. Some researchers have drawn attention to traditional arrangements where wives are responsible for childcare, emotion management and household work, leaving husbands free to devote their energies to the business (Baines and Wheelock 2000, Bowman 2009, Cappuyns 2007, Marshack 1994, Smith 2000). Yet there is little depth of knowledge about how this work is managed and negotiated and the processes by which women adapt their care and work responsibilities and the impact this has on relationships in the family and the business (c.f. Hamilton 2013a). Nor has research they articulated how wives relationship to the business influences their views about the involvement of the children

More recently, conflicting views have emerged about wives' visibility and the degree to which they achieve equivalent status to their husbands, especially for those working in husband and wife partnerships (Cole 1997, Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Deacon, Harris and Worth 2014, Hamilton 2006, Millman and Martin 2007). These authors argue that gendered divisions in the business are less pronounced than previous research suggests and that women themselves show little resentment or concern about their level of recognition in the business. They argue against a homogenized view of general exclusion or inequality for women, suggesting women

are increasingly gaining leadership positions and equal status in family businesses (Galiano and Vinturella 1995). However, this research sometimes overlooks the limits of individual awareness in relation to its research participants, who are embedded in broader power relations. In this regard what people say cannot always be taken at face value (Bourdieu 1977). Moreover, they often do not interrogate the implications of a lack of sharing of care and household work for equality more generally.

Attention to wives in partnerships with their husbands has been a growing area of interest but those not working in the business or those who have joined existing family businesses owned by their husbands or his family, or wives who take over the family business from their husbands receive much less attention. This study is unique in its endeavour to make explicit the different associations of wives to family businesses. In this respect the thesis has two intrinsic concerns: first is with wives experiences of work and family life especially their visible and invisible work; second is with wives' influence in children's involvement in the business and succession planning, that is, a plan to pass the business to the next generation.

In Australia there has been limited attention to wives' experiences or perspectives on succession in the family business. This is surprising in view of the fact that surveys show wives are involved in 35 per cent of family businesses and 48 percent of them are owned by husbands and wives (Dana and Smyrniotis 2013). The significant rise in women's workplace participation over the last thirty years makes this absence all the more remarkable. Across the longest running survey into family businesses in Australia (the MGI Family Business Survey) there has been very little growth in the participation rates of women or in their establishment of family businesses. This contrasts with the US for example where women are said to run 33 percent of all family businesses (Astrachan 2002).

Existing research suggests wives do have influence in succession planning, but this is more generally related to their 'emotion management' skills. Two small studies by family business specialists argue that wives play a unique but often overlooked role in either mediating the relationship between the owner-manager and the successor or

fostering communication in the family and getting succession on the agenda (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001). Other researchers also point to these skills, suggesting wives' sensitivity to the needs of others makes them proficient at peace keeping and mediating relationships (Barnes and Hershon 1976, Dyer 1986). They have been described as the 'glue' that keeps families together (Cappuyns 2007, Folker, Sorenson and Hoelscher 2002, Poza and Messer 2001), the trust catalyst (LaChapelle and Barnes 1998) and the emotional guardian (Lansberg 1988). These perspectives draw attention to the often otherwise overlooked significance of emotion work in the success and day-to-day running of the business, but this focus also positions wives as having only informal influence, while male-decision making power is taken for granted (Hamilton 2006).

This study

This study is embedded in a research project titled *Family Business Succession Planning: dynamics, barriers and strategies* and funded by the Australian Research Council. The project was conceived in partnership with Pitcher Partners, a large financial services and wealth management company which also contributed additional financial and in-kind support. The focus on dynamics and barriers to succession planning was grounded in a significant literature which points to issues of uncertainty and delay in succession planning (Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Barach, Gantisky, Carson and Doochin 1988, Danco 1982, Dunn and Kaye 1999, Handler 1994, Ibrahim, Soufani and Lam 2001, Lansberg 1988, Le Breton-Miller, Miller and Steier 2004, Miller, Steier and Le Breton-Miller 2003, Ward 1987). With the majority of businesses in Australia understood to be family businesses, and baby boomers due to retire in large numbers, delay in succession planning is viewed as potentially having significant economic costs (Dana and Smyrnios 2013, KPMG 2013, Spoehr 2005).

As the PhD student on the project, I carved out a specific research topic that aimed to contribute to an understanding of succession planning motives and goals. The minimal attention to wives' influence in succession planning offered the opportunity to make an important contribution. However, I do not take an explicitly

business focus, though the concerns of succession are inherent to this project and the findings relevant to it. Rather, I am interested in the family business as the theatre where gender and family relations are staged to understand how issues of succession play out. In this respect my research question asks: how do wives' experience work and family life in contemporary family businesses, and how do their experiences impact on their views and actions in relation to family involvement and business succession. The thesis asks broad questions about how they participate in the business, how they negotiate responsibilities of care at the boundaries of work and family life and how their experiences and motivations impact on their influence on children's involvement.

Thirty-five wives, with a variety of associations to either multi-generation or first generation businesses, participated in this research. They included wives in partnerships with husbands, wives who have worked, or are working in their husbands' business, wives who have taken over the business and wives who have never worked in the business. Other women involved in family businesses were, where possible, addressed by researchers in the broader project.

In this study, I draw on a broad definition of family business. There has been an on-going debate among family business scholars about how a family business should be defined. Many scholars emphasize multi-generational involvement or a vision for the business to be passed on to the next generation in their definitions (Chrisman, Chua and Litz 2003, Chua, Chrisman and Sharma 1999, Dana and Smyrniotis 2010, Litz 1995). However, some family business scholars suggest a multi-generational emphasis can operate to exclude first generation businesses (Westhead and Cowling 1998). Only 15 percent of first generation businesses are said to be passed on to a second generation (Beckhard and Dyer 1983a). It is therefore important to take account of first generation businesses in order to adequately address the succession issue. Many first generation businesses do not set out to be family dynasties (as one of participants commented). The possibility often only becomes a prospect as owner/founders near retirement and even then continuity can still be uncertain as the thesis reveals. In light

of this, I used Westhead and Cowling's (1998) definition. It has four characteristics: a dominant family coalition has a controlling stake, the CEO, Managing Director or participant perceive the company to be a family business, the management team are predominantly made up of family members and the business has experienced intergenerational succession (Westhead and Cowling 1998). The authors argue that any two of these characteristics define a family business. I therefore concentrated on the first two characteristics in order to include first generation businesses in this study.

My findings reflect the dominant discourse of the family business (and particularly entrepreneurship) as a masculine pursuit (Ahl 2004, Dana and Smyrniotis 2013, Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003). The research shows that participants draw on, and are influenced by, specific discourses that include equality and entrepreneurship in their explanations of husband and wife partnerships and the demands of work. Though rarely directly stated, participants' who established businesses with their partners indicated an expectation that egalitarianism in the couple relationship (Jamieson 1998) would transpose to their business partnership. The thesis shows how equality is articulated as normative through the idea of 'equal' partnerships and 'team work' including a shared investment in time, energy and commitment to the business. It is also revealed in the joint effort they describe in on-going full or part-time external work on the part of one or both partners to fund the business, long hours, a requirement to develop new skills, learning through trial and error, and sometimes hard physical labour in order to realise their business idea.

Men were usually the formal or symbolic head of the business in these partnerships despite this research revealing how the efforts of both husband and wife are necessary for its sustainability and success. The study exposes inequalities that arise through the demands of an entrepreneurial ideology, issues related to who is the boss and a traditional division of labour. For example, participants in partnerships articulated an egalitarianism at start-up, but their stories also revealed that the space opened up by this working arrangement was often foreclosed as the business became more established.

To large degree, participants conveyed an acceptance of a hard work ideology that anticipated an intense commitment to the business as necessary for it to thrive. On the one hand, they describe how this was often only achieved by their husbands because of deeply embedded beliefs about women's responsibility for care. On the other hand, it shows that their husbands were also driven to work long hours to succeed, freeing them from household and care work. This responsibility for care work is shown to undermine the women's equality narrative because of the difficulty of meeting the intensely engaged, (heroic) entrepreneurial narrative. It is made clear in the constraints that care work puts on time they can spend in the business and on the impact the demands of care place on the work they can undertake which is mainly administrative in nature. As the gender and work literature reveals, this work is generally less valued than the work of the day to day running of the business, more commonly undertaken by men (Lewis and Massey 2011, Reskin 1993). In this respect, the 'heroic' commitment of a singular entrepreneur, often underpinned their stories, disrupting the story of their joint contributions as critical to business success.

The thesis highlights a 'one boss' ideology as significant in undermining the possibility of shared leadership along with a lack of recognition that their contributions were as critical as those of their husbands. It reveals how these issues led some participants to leave the business while others worked harder to negotiate fairer outcomes for themselves with varied success. A minority of participants 'live out' more egalitarian relations in their partnerships in a way that gives them similar professional standing in the business. This is manifest in more deliberate negotiations of care, in more respect for women's decision making and greater opportunities for them to drive the business and in joint CEO titles.

The research also reveals how choice and connectedness co-exist in participants stories in relation to children's involvement in the business. On the one hand, participants' indicate a desire for children to be given options, reflected in the normative expectation that children achieve autonomy by leaving home and following their own path (Kagitcibasi 2005). It shows that they place a strong emphasis on

children doing what is most meaningful to them, stressing the importance of children 'following their passions'. Yet it also elaborates how a concern that relationships might be put in jeopardy if children enter the business are influenced by their own experiences of relationship breakdown, but also by a concern about their husbands intense attachment to the business. In relation to the latter they worry about children's independence and the ability of their partners to 'let go' or share decision making. Concerns are also revealed about the business as potentially stifling of their potential or that it lacks the broad opportunities that are now available to them in a globalized world. As a result, participants can be complicit in the deferring of succession plans in the way they encourage children's own interests, refuse to assume any permanence about the arrangement if children join them in the business and encourage moving in and out of the business as children figure out what they want to do with their lives.

Where children join the business, participants, especially those who work in it, demonstrate a deep reflexivity about how to successfully integrate them without undermining relationships. The thesis describes how their desire to protect relationships leads them to take responsibility for driving the thinking about, and planning for, integration and succession. Participants' stories indicate how they craft family life and the future of the business with a view to maintaining relationships by working to conserve children's connection to them through a discourse of choice and a moral concern to 'do the right thing' so their children can live satisfying lives (Finch and Mason 1993). In this respect, the thesis shows that wives can be a powerful force in succession outcomes.

Understanding family businesses

Family businesses are ubiquitous and enduring features of most economies (Colli, Fernandez Perez and Rose 2003). Estimates of family businesses worldwide suggest between 75 to 95 per cent of businesses are family firms, employing up to eighty percent of the workforce and accounting for approximately 65 per cent of gross domestic product (Colli et al. 2003, Dreux 1990, Neubauer and Lank 1998). In Australia,

it is estimated that they make up 70 per cent of all businesses and 90 per cent of these are male owned and managed (Dana and Smyrniotis 2013). Sons are also six times more likely than daughters to take over the business (Dana and Smyrniotis 2013, KPMG 2009). This represents a distinct pattern of primogeniture, historically understood as passing the business to the eldest son, though in contemporary circumstances it can apply to any son.

The economic importance of family businesses to most economies has made them an increasingly important area of study over the last forty years. Within this literature, succession - or the passing of the business to the next generation - is among its most researched topics (Bird, Welsch, Astrachan and Pistrui 2002, Brockhaus 2004, Dyer and Handler 1994, Zahra and Sharma 2004). Scholars identify the precarious nature of succession and its potential negative economic consequences (Aronoff 1998, Barach et al. 1988, Dunn and Kaye 1999, File and Prince 1996, Handler 1994, Lansberg 1988, Le Breton-Miller et al. 2004, Miller et al. 2003, Ward 1987). This supports research attention to processes and preconditions for successful outcomes (Aronoff, McClure and Ward 2003, Barach et al. 1988, Dyck, Mauws, Starke and Mischke 2002, Keating and Little 1997, Morris, Williams, Allen and Avila 1997, Scotland 2010, Ward 1987).

At the same time, there are myriad concerns that preoccupy owner managers. Often they have multiple children with different skill sets and levels of interest. Issues of how to encourage interest and involvement, choose between family members for leadership positions, pass on knowledge, sustain relationships and fairly distribute family wealth through inheritance when it is often tied up in the business are just some of the problems founders and incumbents confront (Ayers 2002, Brockhaus 2004, Cabrera-Suárez, De Saá-Pérez and García-Almeida 2001, Dyer 1986, Gersick, Davis, Hampton and Landsberg 1997, Le Breton-Miller et al. 2004). Founders' or owner-managers' deeply felt connection to the business and the prospect of a loss of status when passing control to the next generation add to the potential problems (Aronoff and Ward 1995, Barnes and Hershon 1976, Brockhaus 2004, Dyer 1986,

Ibrahim et al. 2001, Lansberg 1988), as does the potential successor's level of commitment to the firm (Chrisman, Chua and Sharma 1998, Handler 1990, Sharma and Irving 2005).

Family relationships are seen as key to the success of the family business, yet the literature is often concerned with these relationships only in so far as they affect the functioning, performance and growth of the business (Holt and Popp 2013, Philbrick and Fitzgerald 2007). They are rarely concerned with the effects of the firm on the family or show an interest in the care and household work that goes into sustaining the business (Holt and Popp 2013, James, Jennings and Breitzkreuz 2012). This is related to the perceived importance of the economic, over the familial. For example, failure to transfer the family business is seen to have significant consequences for employees and the economy through job losses, loss of specialised knowledge and a reduction in economic growth, possible dilution of re-investment capacity as assets are divided among family members and loss of entrepreneurial capital and opportunity (European Commission 2012, File and Prince 1996, Spoehr 2005). This failure therefore is mostly viewed negatively and emphasis is placed on identifying the issues that lead to failure and proffering solutions (Barach et al. 1988, Dyck et al. 2002, Handler 1990, Le Breton-Miller et al. 2004, Morris et al. 1997).

The literature on succession emphasizes planning over the long-term. In this respect it is portrayed as a process or a journey which should begin when children are young and involve a range of different phases (Aronoff et al. 2003, Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Cadieux, Lorrain and Hugron 2002, Handler 1994, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Lansberg 1999, Longenecker and Schoen 1978, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Schröder, Schmitt-Rodermund and Arnaud 2011, Stavrou 1999). However, succession is also a deeply emotional experience and even traumatic if not well managed. Harvey and Evans (1994: 331) describe family businesses as 'fertile fields for conflict' which is confirmed by the number of families who end up in court as family members vie for control of, or a share of, the family business. In Australia, the Hancock-Rinehart family

is a case in point where members of the family were recently in court battling for control of a multi-billion dollar business trust fund (Carey 2012).

Understanding gender relations

With women's contributions and their views and influence on succession largely absent from the family business literature, this thesis takes an explicitly feminist perspective. It aims to provide a fuller account (DeVault 1996) of women's experience of the family business and the difficulties of passing it on to the next generation. It does this through an exploration of the material effects of workplace practices and the discourses within which wives are situated, in order to understand gendering practices; how they emerge, are challenged, accommodated or invested in. It then connects these experiences to wives' influence, in terms of their actions, feelings and perceptions of children's involvement in succession planning.

The thesis draws on different strands of feminism to understand how gender is organized in family businesses and its impact on wives and their relationship to the business and with partners and children. Gender identity formation is perceived as neither shaped entirely by material structures, nor discourse. Rather, in this thesis, it is seen as constituted by both. The work of Lois McNay (1999: 99, 2000, 2004, 2008) has been useful in articulating an understanding of how power relations and resulting social inequalities are 'inculcated upon the bodies' and dispositions of individuals rather than through 'institutional discrimination'. McNay has tried to overcome circular debates between material and cultural feminism by extending the relational phenomenology of Pierre Bourdieu. For material feminists gender is perceived as a structural location either within capitalism or intersecting with it, while for cultural feminists its location is within discursive or symbolic structures (McNay 2004: 175). McNay (2004) argues that both are inculcated on bodies and she suggests mediating concepts like agency, largely missing from both accounts, make visible the determining impact of economic and cultural forces on identity formation. In this account, experience understood in relational terms, is seen as necessary to comprehending how

aspects of gender relations are being 'thrown up' for renegotiation as women move into the workforce in large numbers (McNay 1999: 103).

In Bourdieu's notion of habitus, McNay (1999, 2000, 2004, 2008) finds a differentiated account of embodied subjectivity. This allows for an understanding of both the inculcation of power into bodies and the potential for creative action. Habitus is described as 'as an open system of dispositions which incline actors to think and feel in ways consistent with the limits of structure' (Ortner 2006: 40). In other words, how the outside gets in. Habitus draws attention to the embodied nature of gender identity as 'a lived form' of practical belief or unconscious self-mastery (McNay 1999: 101). This is what Bourdieu describes as 'a feel for the game'. Gender as 'lived' practice, opens up a space for variability and potential creativity in the everyday reality of social interactions, through what Bourdieu describes as 'regulated liberties' (McNay 1999: 109). In this respect it is a generative rather than deterministic theory (McNay 1999, 2000, 2008).

Thinking about women's place in family businesses in terms of gender identities and how these relate to wider familial, economic, social and cultural milieux, helps to identify embedded gendered meanings and the way identities are crafted in complex and contradictory ways (Kondo 1990). This suggests there is no easy relation between subordination and domination in relations between men and women (Alvesson 1998: 970, Lewis and Simpson 2010). Much of the family business literature misses these complex dynamics which 'inform an understanding of how the business is established and developed' (Hamilton 2006: 258).

'Reflexive modernization' or Individualization theory

In its attention to the complexity of intimate family and gender relations, this thesis endeavours to make sense of what is happening in family businesses within a period of rapid social change. In this respect, an understanding of the practical issues raised by these broad literatures can only be achieved by placing them within their social and historical context. I interpret these debates through the larger lens of social

theory known as reflexive modernization or individualization (Bauman 2003, Beck 1992, 1994, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, Giddens 1991, 1992). Individualization has occurred as a result of what Beck and Giddens describe as the uncoupling from tradition of gender, class and religion for example, which previously guided the life course of individuals. This is often referred to as detraditionalization (Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1991, 1992, Heelas 1996). This change has been driven by dramatic social transformations including globalization processes, significant labour market change, technological advances and social movements (Castells 1997, Giddens 1991, Stacey 1996), which have fostered an increasingly individualized society (Beck 1992, Giddens 1991).

According to Beck (1992) the 'risks' that emerge as a result of these transformations compel individuals to become the architects of their own biographies, or in Giddens' (1991: 5) terms, foster 'a reflexive project of the self' (see also Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995). Indeed, reflexivity about how to live is seen by these theorists as crucial to undermining the effects of social structures in determining individual lives as people reflect on, and change 'the social conditions of their existence' (Beck 1994: 174). On the one hand, such changes are argued to have led to greater freedoms and egalitarianism within families and relationships, but on the other, they also 'offer new challenges and constraints' (Lindsay and Dempsey 2009: 2). In turn, negotiation and reflexivity is demanded in relationships but this can create greater instability and fragility (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995).

While not opposing the ideas of Beck and other adherents of individualization theories outright, some scholars indicate significant concern about the degree to which individuals have been disconnected from traditions and obligations. Many gender and family theorists suggest that freedom from traditional constraints is exaggerated and that there is greater complexity in the negotiation of relationships than the detraditionalization story suggests (Adkins 1999, 2004, Gilding 2010, McNay 1999, 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012, Smart 2007).

The family business is a unique site for exploring how social transformations play out as it blurs two spheres usually viewed as separate, demonstrating that 'market' and 'family' are inextricably entwined (Fournier and Lightfoot 1997). This thesis is a touchstone to the extent and depth of social transformation in the way that both change and tradition are actualized in the everyday lives of individuals and families in family businesses. This idea is the departure point of this study in so far as it acknowledges the increasing open-endedness of relationships and a new gender contract, but questions the degree of gender refashioning that has occurred. The thesis argues that individualization has significant effects on succession planning outcomes in family businesses and that changing gender practices are unevenly experienced for participants in this study due to a complex of discursive and material inequalities.

Thesis Structure

The first three chapters set the scene for my findings. Chapter One explores the literatures relevant to the research including gender, work and family issues, family business (including the Australian context) and succession planning. It begins with a discussion about the individualization thesis, the theoretical framework for my research, to provide a context for understanding this literature. It pays specific attention to gender issues highlighted in the family business and entrepreneurship literatures. The chapter includes a discussion about the emergence of family business research as a discrete discipline and outlines debates about succession planning. It also provides a brief historical perspective on women's absence from the family business narrative and outlines the ways that women with different associations to the business are treated within the literature.

Chapter Two focuses on the work involved in *Crafting a study*. It captures the travails and successes of undertaking research including developing a purposeful sample, negotiating data collection within the broader research team and struggling with ontological and epistemological issues. In this chapter I situate myself as a

researcher and describe the analysis of my data through the multi-layered voices of participants.

In this thesis I apply the tapestry metaphor used at the start of the chapter, through the idea of 'crafting' which I borrow from Dorinne Kondo's (1990) *Crafting Selves*, a study of gender in a Japanese family business. Chapters Three, Four and Five explore the research findings in *Crafting a business*; *Crafting a family* and *Crafting a future*. 'Crafting' alludes to the dynamic nature of negotiation, investment and conformity within what Kondo calls 'shifting fields of power and meaning' (Kondo 1990:10). While Kondo's (1990: 48) book *Crafting Selves* refers to the way that identity is an on-going and creative process rather than a 'static object', she also implies agency in this term. She suggests human beings are involved in constructing, working on and challenging the limits of cultural constraints. Kondo points to the complex and paradoxical nature of deployments of gender where small acts of resistance can subvert hegemonic ideologies on the one hand, and reinforce them on the other (Kondo 1990: 259). The complexity of crafting gender identity emerges in the accounts of participants in relation to starting and growing businesses or supporting husbands who were doing so, while also having and raising children and managing family life. This too suggests an on-going project crafted in myriad ways. In this respect the crafting metaphor expresses the tension between individualization processes and traditional obligations, beliefs and practices.

In Chapter Three, *Crafting a business*, I examine the way that wives' contributions are shaped by a highly masculinized entrepreneurial symbolism associated with starting or taking over, and building a family business. While most businesses involved in the research were run by men, the chapter draws out the significant contributions of women. These contributions, while sometimes entrepreneurial in their own right, are rarely seen as such by the women themselves. Rather, a heroic entrepreneurial narrative is mostly reserved for men. This occurs despite wives generally drawing upon the notion of equality in relation to their commitment to the business, especially, though not only, wives in partnerships. While

this discourse resonates with ideas of reflexivity and democratization of intimate relationships as suggested by Giddens (1994) and Beck (1994), wives' lesser ability to occupy the entrepreneurial space represents the strength of traditional understandings of gender. The chapter also reveals how material effects emerge in their lived social relations in terms of the way they experience work structures and gender and organizational ideologies. In this respect, the chapter emphasizes the contradictions and ambiguities women confront and outlines how they deal with them in the interests of the relationship and the business. Reflexivity in relation to their circumstances and their ability to successfully negotiate egalitarian outcomes are shown to be irregular manifestations, emerging unevenly depending upon configurations of power (McNay 1999).

Chapter Four addresses the issue of family, household and care work. It shows how the material location of women as mothers impacts in terms of flexibility and informality in the family business which reproduces a traditional division of labour. In this respect the visibility of this unequal arrangement is obscured by a common sense need to 'just get things done' so that the business survives. Specifically, it elaborates a lack of consideration of care and household tasks as 'work' and the cultural and economic difficulties associated with calling attention to this issue. The chapter shows how women's cultural association with care, often accompanied by an economic rationalist perspective which assumes all else will be subordinated to the business, are implicated in this difficulty. The compromises wives make in adapting family and household work around business responsibilities are shown to impact on their ability to occupy the entrepreneurial space, despite an emerging 'engaged' father discourse.

In the third findings chapter, *Crafting a future*, the emphasis is on how wives participation in the business affects their feelings in relation to the involvement of children and identifies the factors that affect their views and or encouragement of children. This chapter draws out how discourses of choice and connectedness are employed to free children from pressure to join the business and encourage them to fulfil their own dreams. The emphasis on choice resonates with individualization

theory. At the same time, 'choice' cannot be taken at face value, as ideas of familial obligation, along with historical and cultural forces, act to constrain the choices that participants insist are available to their children. While seeming to be about independence, participants' discourse of choice is also a strategy of relationship maintenance, as wives protect family ties ahead of passing the business on to another generation.

The final chapter draws the threads of the various arguments together to show how the establishment and growth of family businesses remains subject to traditional gender practices despite some renegotiation of the gender contract (McNay 1999). In this respect the democratization of gender relations must be viewed with some scepticism. At the same time, a theory of individualization can be seen to have some relevance to the precarious nature of succession planning in the way that participants insist on choice and independence for children. However, a choice narrative can also be evidence of connectedness in the family context rather than family decline as posited by Beck (1992, see also Bauman 2003, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Popenoe 1993). It can be utilized as an important device in maintaining family relationships. In this respect wives in family businesses can traverse what has been called 'new moral terrain' (Smart 2007) in developing effective (and sometimes not so effective) solutions to the issue of children's involvement and succession planning.

Chapter 1 | Expanding the view: understanding intergenerational relations and gendered practice in family businesses

Introduction

This chapter explores a number of different literatures of relevance to the thesis. It aims to provide a depth of understanding about issues of gender and work as they relate to women broadly, and specifically, to women in family businesses. It provides background to the emergence of family business research as a discrete discipline, focusing on its central theme, succession planning. These literatures are positioned within the social theory of reflexive modernization or individualization as a context for thinking about women's experience of business and family life in a period of changing family and gender relations.

It begins with a discussion of the various debates both supporting and challenging individualization theory. It then proceeds to outline the ways that processes of individualization can reproduce gender inequalities in the workplace, specifically addressing debates about the gendering of professions and entrepreneurship. The chapter discusses how workplace structures, practices and discourses impact on women's ability to occupy managerial and entrepreneurial space. These debates elaborate the persistent inequity in women's experience of work and family life compared to men, highlighting the complexity of the intersection of gender and work in late modernity. They also provide the backdrop for a discussion on gender and family business research including women's different associations with these enterprises.

The chapter then elaborates the emergence of the family business as a discreet discipline. It highlights the ubiquity of family businesses across most societies, with estimates ranging from 75 to 95 percent of businesses globally (Colli et al. 2003, Dreux 1990, Neubauer and Lank 1998), underscoring their critical economic importance. It

also explores issues of succession, highlighting its precarious nature and the potential negative impact on the economy, employees and families. Issues relating to the management of interpersonal family relationships in the family business, the importance of these relations to business continuity and the absence of women's perspectives are all explored in this section. Finally, the chapter addresses the Australian context in relation to family businesses before drawing together the various threads in order to define the research parameters in the summary.

Individualization theory: gender and intergenerational change

Individualization theory is a social theory which I apply as a lens to consider the way gender is organized in contemporary family businesses and to understand problems of intergenerational business transfer. The theory posits that globalization, changing work practices, labour market change, technological developments and social movements such as feminism and gay and lesbian liberation have contributed to dramatic social changes over the last forty years. These transformations converge to weaken traditional beliefs and practices, forcing people to 'turn to their own resources' to make sense of their lives (Heelas 1996: 5). This uncoupling from pre-given ways of being and thinking is associated with cultural values including gender, class and religion, making individuals the architects of their own lives. Individualization theorists are generally pessimistic or ambivalent about their effects (Bauman 2003, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Popenoe 1993, Sennett 1998), though some are more optimistic (Cancian 1987, Giddens 1991, 1992, Stacey 1990, 1996). Other scholars however, challenge the degree to which traditions have been undermined and are sceptical about the degree and impact of change (Adkins 1999, Brannen and Nilsen 2005, Gilding 2010, Gillies 2003, Gross 2005, Heelas 1996, Jamieson 1998, McNay 1999, 2004, Smart 2007, Smart and Shipman 2004, Van Hooff 2013).

Pessimistic accounts suggest globalization and individualization processes have led to unemployment growth and the casualization of the labour market, and this along with a decline in structured communities (Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995) has undermined intimate relationships. Beck (1992) suggests the loosening of

traditional structures and belief systems that once determined individuals' lives have turned certainty into uncertainty, demanding greater reflexivity in relationships. This detraditionalization compels individuals to 'create their own biographies' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995: 7) without the guidance of 'pre-given affiliations' that previously governed the life course (Beck 1997: 161). Indeed, Beck suggests, 'men and women are released from their prescribed roles' (Beck 1992: 105). This highlights the increasing open-endedness of relationships and the need for negotiability in intimate relations (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Finch and Mason 1993, Giddens 1992, Silva and Smart 1999).

For Beck, individualization is particularly concerning because the less we can rely on traditions the more risks, decisions and choices have to be negotiated as an individual responsibility rather than collectively (Beck 1992). With the breakdown of traditional authority and the emergence of greater freedoms in terms of how people live and love, competing interests clash (Beck 1997, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995). With women's movement into the workforce, relationships can be destabilized by the demands of the labour market, which are not conducive to traditional family life. While new freedoms mean women have an expectation of equality, this cannot be easily realized, leading to what Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995: 14) describe as 'a long and bitter battle ahead'. The outcome is a decline of the family with high levels of divorce, defacto relationships, absent fathers and single mothers.

By contrast, Giddens (1991: 6) sees reflexivity arising in relationships as a 'transformation of intimacy'. His view suggests individuals are less bound by obligations and have greater ability to reshape gender relations in what he calls 'a post-traditional world' (Giddens 1994). He argues women's same-sex relationships have provided a more democratic template for how couples generally can relate to one another, with consequences for more egalitarian gender relations (Giddens 1992).

Though the transformation of intimacy relates to sex and gender, it has broader implications for family relations. Social bonds, once inherited, can no longer be taken for granted and have to be 'negotiated and bargained for' (Giddens 1992: 96, 1994),

giving rise to greater equality but also instability. In this respect, Giddens (1991: 80-81) argues individuals are engaged in a 'reflexive project of the self' in which they must think about how to live their lives and how they want to make themselves. At the same time, they are inundated with a diversity of choices from which they have no choice but to choose, without the certainty of outcome. Individualizing processes therefore account for the diversity of families, undermining the significant place of the 'traditional' nuclear family and the importance of blood and marriage in family formation. In this respect, a more flexible understanding of family acknowledges these diverse relations and the negotiated basis on which people actually live their personal lives (Lindsay and Dempsey 2009).

Scholars who are sceptical about the degree to which gender relations and family decline are occurring, make the point that despite some change, historically taken-for-granted practices persist and are deeply embedded (Adkins 1999, 2004, Edwards, McCarthy and Gillies 2012, Gilding 2010, Lewis 2001, McNay 1999, 2000, McRae 1999, Ribbens McCarthy 2012, Silva and Smart 1999, Smart 2007). In relation to family, McRae (1999) insists diversity rather than decline characterizes the modern family and that while structures might change, families continue to provide love and support to one another (Lewis 2001). Gilding (2010) suggests that paternity uncertainty, primogeniture in family businesses and inheritance practices are challenges to the new orthodoxy of reflexivity and individualization.

In relation to gender, Adkins (1999) argues that new configurations of gender inequality often arise as a result of individualization processes. Examples include the way that workplace flexibility can actually entrench women's responsibility for care and exclude them from promotion because they cannot conform to a long hours culture (Rutherford 2001).

Gender, work and organization

Individualization processes have been influential in the movement of large numbers women into the workforce over the last forty years (Beck and Beck-

Gernsheim 1995). This has enabled some women to gain access to senior executive and leadership positions. The 'restructuring of gender regimes' is linked to detraditionalization and especially increasing reflexivity (Adkins 2004: 197) about traditional gender arrangements. Women's increased access to education and the consequent opening up of diverse employment opportunities are significant to this change. Lois McNay (1999) tries to account for the changing gender contract, but also argues that men and women retain deeply held investments in traditional practices of masculinity and femininity. She calls into question the degree of change that the theory of reflexive modernization suggests. By drawing on the social theory of Pierre Bourdieu, she shows how change in gender relations arises in the public sphere. McNay argues that as women move into traditionally masculine spaces of work, this creates a 'lack for fit' between the feminine habitus and the fields into which they move. She suggests this gives rise to the potential for critical reflexivity and a transformation in gender arrangements as they negotiate conflicts and tensions within and across fields.

The capacity for reflexivity points to the transposable nature of the habitus, described by Bourdieu as enduring but not invariant dispositions. However, reflexivity is not a universal capacity, it emerges unevenly through what Bourdieu calls 'regulated liberties' and is dependent upon the power relations at play (McNay 1999: 104). McNay is insistent that women's increased workplace participation has not dismantled gender regimes, arguing instead that aspects of gender identity are unconscious and therefore difficult to refashion (McNay 1999: 103). This perspective suggests that understandings of masculinity and femininity and institutional inequalities are inculcated on bodies and minds (McNay 1999). In this respect 'choices' for both men and women are limited in a variety of ways. However, the cultural emphasis on women as mothers and carers' means women are often disadvantaged in ways that impact on their economic and social autonomy.

The strength of on-going traditional gender practices, expectations and obligations articulated by McNay, suggests changing gender relations must be viewed

within a complex of tradition-maintenance, detraditionalization and retraditionalization (Heelas 1996). For example Adkins (1999, 2004) argues that far from individualization leading to new freedoms from gender, it is tied to retraditionalization. Drawing on her work into the tourism industry, Adkins argues that women's family labour is often appropriated to enable others, usually men, to be the 'self-regulating, self-monitoring' individualized workers of late modernity (1999: 131).

The degree to which gendered practices remain deeply ingrained are explored and explained by gender researchers studying organizations. For example Acker (1990) argues that workplaces operate on the assumption of a full-time unencumbered worker highlighting the masculine basis of organizational foundations (Collinson 2005, Ferguson 1985, Mumby and Putnam 1992). In this respect she suggests that jobs are represented as 'abstract categories that have no occupants, no human bodies, no gender' yet they are actually deeply gendered (Acker 1990: 149). This is because it is assumed that ideal workers have someone at home to meet their daily needs and care for their children. Moreover, she argues that management policies and practices including selection processes, job evaluations and promotions are all implicated in the production and reproduction of gendered identities (Collinson and Hearn 1994).

Ogbor (2000: 622) sums up succinctly the Eurocentric nature of organizational management in Western countries:

Contemporary organizations and management practices are White-male dominated and White-male defined because white males have created organizations and adopted management practices that have met male needs, reinforced male values and best fit male experiences of the world around them.

The construction of leadership symbols and images reinforce unequal divisions of labour, and often involve the linking of technical skills to men and caring and support to women (Acker 1990, 1992). Quoting Bender, Joy Beatty suggests a process of othering occurs as 'feminine virtues of empathy, capacity for nurturance and self-

sacrifice are set against the assertive and competitive values necessary for success in business' (Bender cited in Beatty 2007: 39). In this respect, there is a need to position women as different (Beatty 2007, Mirchandani 1999, Wajcman 1999). For example, we talk of 'women' managers highlighting the way that management work is associated with men because to speak of men managers makes no sense (the same could also be said of 'women' entrepreneurs) (Calás and Smircich 1996). This work highlights the way in which men's experiences are positioned as the norm while masculinity remains invisible (Ahl 2006, Lewis and Simpson 2010, Mirchandani 1999). From this perspective, women's disadvantage is often concealed within 'hidden' gender arrangements (Lewis and Simpson 2010).

In turn, the divisions of labour that see men occupy the highest and most influential positions are often disguised under 'a cloak of equality' (Acker 1990, Benschop, Halsema and Schreurs 2001: 3). While seemingly gender neutral, what passes for leadership and its associated power and prestige, defines what kind of person that can fulfil, or is appropriate for that role. Others are then measured against those standards (Due Billing and Alvesson 2000). With men outnumbering women at all levels of management in most Western countries, leadership retains its masculine shape, despite women entering its ranks (Collinson and Hearn 1994, Due Billing and Alvesson 2000). Though female university graduates have outnumbered male graduates in Australia since 1987, there has been only limited destabilization of men's domination of leadership (Martin 2015). These debates confirm McNay's argument that deeply held beliefs about traditional notions of masculinity and femininity continue to play out despite some renegotiate of the gender contract (McNay 1999). Indeed, these debates suggest gender prescriptions reassert themselves in myriad ways.

This is evident in the way that categories of work are also gendered (Acker 1990, McDowell 1997, Pringle 1989). Sex-segregated work is a feature of workplaces generally (Cockburn 1991, Cockburn and Harley 1988, Padavic and Reskin 2002, Reskin 1993, Reskin and Roos 1990, Reskin and Bielby 2005, Walby 1988). This segregation

refers to the tendency for men and women to do different types of work, for example, women in nursing and teaching and men in transportation and construction; and to achieve different statuses, that is, women in low level positions and men occupying most of the senior executive positions (Cockburn 1991, Cockburn and Harley 1988, England and Folbre 2005).

Horizontal segregation denotes difference while vertical segregation refers to inequality (Blackburn, Browne, Brooks and Jarman 2002). Occupational segregation and flexible work can have significant adverse effects on women, limiting their opportunities for advancement confining them to devalued, lower paid work with less authority, especially women with childcare responsibilities, (Cohen and Huffman 2003, England 1992, Padavic and Reskin 2002, Reskin 1993, Reskin and Bielby 2005).

At the same time, women's cultural responsibility for care is often amplified because of the need to manage work and family commitments. This has generally been viewed in the workplace as a 'woman' problem rather than a parental problem. Liff and Cameron (1997: 36) suggest that the idea that 'women require special treatment to allow them to compete in the workplace, or even the view that women *are* the problem because they do not fit into existing practices', reinforces a perception that equality measures are not an issue for men.

Flexible work practices such as part-time work underscore the fact that women do not fit the ideal worker model, positioning them as 'deficient' (Liff and Cameron 1997). Part-time work is strongly correlated with motherhood in Australia where 65 percent of mothers with children aged five and under worked part-time in 2011-12 (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2013). Researchers indicate that part-time work is usually associated with poorer quality jobs and less job security the fewer hours women work (Charlesworth, Strazdins, O'Brien and Sims 2011).

An expectation of long working hours is also prevalent in Australian culture where a third of fathers work more than fifty hours compared to between four and six per cent of mothers (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006, Charlesworth et al.

2011). Long work hours affect the time available to maintain intimate connections especially with children (Hochschild 1997, Pocock 2001). At the same time, Hochschild (1997) suggests overwork is encouraged in societies that tie career success to self-worth. This has the effect of linking status and self-esteem to work rather than family or other obligations (Lewis 2003). Indeed, Pocock, Skinner and Williams (2012: 2) suggest that work has become 'central to moral worth' in Australia. Taking up flexibility options therefore, becomes a particularly perilous path for women in management (Burke and Cooper 2008, Williams, Blair-Loy and Berdahl 2013). Rather, women working in management roles accept 'male norms', also working long hours and drawing on the work of other women to manage family responsibilities (Due Billing and Alvesson 2000: 148).

These issues highlight the complexity of work and gender issues and the difficulty of finding easy solutions. Beck (Beck 1992: 124) suggests it is the responsibility of governments and organizations to ameliorate the effects of individualization in so far as it creates a clash of interests between work and family life and between men and women when both parents work. He suggests government and organizations should 'invoke family values' and provide some 'cushioning' of market relationships by supporting employees to manage their family responsibilities. The introduction of such cushioning, like flexibility options for example, often creates a raft of new problems as traditional gendered expectations and practice reassert themselves as the preceding discussion suggests.

Additionally, the demands of managing work and family create time pressure through work intensification and the need to meet financial burdens (Skinner and Pocock 2014). Working mothers report the most time strain, though fathers also feel under pressure, especially in relation to time with children (Hochschild 1997, Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi and Robinson 2004, Milkie, Raley and Bianchi 2009, Skinner and Pocock 2014). At the same time, new ways of thinking about work and family integration point to women's resilience despite part-time and casual work, the expectation of long hours and the adverse effects of time pressures. Recent research

suggests that life disruptions are normative and people have always found ways to work around them (Maher 2013). In this respect, women 'weave together' work and family obligations despite 'fraying and breakdown of sustainable patterns' (Maher 2013: 181). This perspective suggests the need to think about career progression as not necessarily linear (O'Neil and Bilimoria 2005, O'Neil, Hopkins and Bilimoria 2008) and about what constitutes career success (Maher 2013, Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger and Schmidt 2008).

While Maher shows that women in certain types of work, for example nursing, can overcome the structural and institutional constraints outlined above to some degree, research indicates considerable disadvantages still accrue to women trying to combine responsibility for childcare and household work while utilising workplace flexibility policies (Baxter and Hewitt 2013, Craig and Mullan 2009, Pocock 2005). Indeed, they highlight that gender identities are not easily destabilized (McNay 1999, 2004), despite women moving into the workforce in large numbers, many of them women with young children.

Research by Pocock (2003, 2005) indicates that while there have been benefits for women in taking on part-time work in terms of managing work and family life, this flexibility has also instituted in Australia what she calls the modified breadwinner model; husband as primary earner and wife as secondary earner (Craig and Mullan 2009, Craig and Powell 2012). Pocock (2005: 32) perceives this arrangement as a function of a particularly unstable work/care regime that is 'hostile' to workers who care for others. Choices for women with family and childcare responsibilities are often limited to either low paid or insecure part-time work or full-time work, where a 'full-time, care-free' male worker is still the norm (Pocock 2005). Without much needed restructuring of work, Pocock suggests, women must accept the work/care mismatch as a private concern. This highlights Beck's (1992) concern that individualization puts pressures on individuals rather than the collective in managing life risks.

In what for some has been a controversial view, Catherine Hakim (2000) argues that the predominance of women in part-time work owes more to women's choices

than structural and cultural constraints. She categorizes women as work-centred, home centred and adaptive. The former includes women who subordinate the family to their work, while home-centred women do the reverse if they work at all, and adaptive women fall between the two, adapting to work or family according to circumstances. She argues that most women fall into the adaptive category which suggests women will remain underrepresented in management as a matter of choice (Hakim 2000).

In contrast to Pocock, her preference theory frames women's work outcomes in terms of attitudinal factors rather than workplace inflexibility and lack of childcare and appropriate leave provisions (Kangas and Rostgaard 2007, Steiber and Haas 2012). While her work highlights the heterogeneous choices women make and the ways in which they try to overcome traditional gender practices, attitudes are influenced by cultural norms and deeply embodied and embedded practices which restrict the options available to them (McNay 1999, Walby 1989). For example, Ginn et al. (1996) argue that women's 'choice' to work part-time, which Hakim suggests is a voluntary decision, ignores the demands on women's time and the costs of childcare which impose constraints on women more so than men.

Regardless of whether women are employed full-time or part-time, they do the most care and household work, which Hochschild terms the 'second shift' (Hochschild 2003, Milkie et al. 2009). Despite an emerging cultural expectation that both fathers and mothers share the care of children, there has only been a marginal increase in men's care work (Baxter 2002, Baxter, Buchler, Perales and Western 2015, Craig and Mullan 2011). Indeed, of industrialized countries, Australia is one of the least equal when it comes to sharing care and household work (Craig and Mullan 2010). This research supports the contention that men have more choice to opt in or out of care (Brannen and Moss 1991).

The body of research outlined here indicates that while there are new freedoms for women's financial independence and work aspirations to mirror those of men, these freedoms are mediated by institutional processes and practices which are

deeply embodied and are linked to women's 'intrinsic' caring and domestic responsibilities. This calls into question the degree to which gender can be said to be uncoupled from traditional beliefs and practices. In this respect, McRobbie (2009: 1) suggests women are being offered a 'notional form of equality' which is propagated in popular culture and in neoliberal policies (Bezanson 2006, Tudor 2012). Indeed, Adkins (2002: 123) argues that 'the self-reflexive subject' of individualization theory is closely connected to neoliberalism. Some scholars suggest that while individualization promotes agency, it does so by ignoring the resources needed to actively construct a do-it-yourself biography and ignoring the degree to which structural inequalities undermine that achievement (Brannen and Nilsen 2005). Within this view, women's access to education, employment and participation in the consumer culture, potentially creates the misconception that they are reaping the same rewards and opportunities as men (Bezanson 2006, McRobbie 2009). These debates suggest that tradition remains significant to women's experiences but that it keeps company with tradition, detraditionalization and the emergence of new traditions (Heelas 1996: 2).

While generally there is a perception that cultural gender differences are disadvantages in the workplace, one body of research appeals to ideas of difference as advantageous for women (Helgeson 1990, Rosener 1990). These writers argue that stereotypical traits of women such as cooperation, communication, empathy and caring are more relevant to contemporary workplaces because they promote team work, flexibility and collaboration (Claes 2006, Rosener 1990). Pini (2005) reveals the contradiction of this in her work on women leaders in Australian agriculture. She argues that while the so-called feminine advantage has enabled a break with the 'duality of both leadership and women', the attributes and skills from which this feminine 'advantage' emerges, rely on stereotypes that usually disqualify them from leadership (Due Billing and Alvesson 2000, Pini 2005: 85). Others argue that the 'women's advantage' is not being realised because of powerful and complex gender dynamics (Fletcher 2004, Fondas 1997). Fletcher (2004) suggests such traits are unconsciously associated with women and therefore remain invisible. Women

enacting this kind of leadership are perceived to be doing what women do rather than managing differently.

While there are debates about the degree to which men and women share traits of cooperation and empathy (Connell 2009), a large body of work indicates that women take on much of the emotional responsibility in intimate partnerships and the family (see Duncombe and Marsden 1995 for an overview). Indeed, findings from research in psychology suggest women have a greater ‘capacity to recognize, label, express and disclose feelings’ (Duncombe and Marsden 1995: 151). This research also suggests that men are less engaged with children and are able to switch them off in a way that women cannot (Duncombe and Marsden 1995: 152). McNay (1999) observes that individualization has ‘not freed women from the burden of emotional responsibilities’ and that for women, ‘living a life of one’s own’ clashes with the cultural idea that a woman should be there for others (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995 in McNay 1999: 103).

The two-person career

An early feminist literature tends to position women’s disadvantage as the result of external forces beyond their control. While more recent scholarship tries to avoid essentialism and promotes the interconnection of both structural influences and women’s agency. In my study, early research on women’s support of men’s careers, remains relevant, especially for women not working in the family business.

For example, Papanek (1973) developed the concept of the two-person career and other feminists have further advanced this idea more recently in similar ways (see also Williams 2001). She argues the workplace makes formal and informal demands on both a husband and wife even when it is only the husband who is employed. Women’s supporting role is consistent with ‘wife as supporter, comforter, backstage manager, home maintainer and the main raiser of children’ (Papanek 1973: 853). Papanek asserts that wives experience ambivalence about the support they provide because they are expected to act appropriately in settings related to their husbands’ work. For

example, they often play a mediating role with customers, clients and business associates in social situations or host dinners or functions (Papanek 1973: 860). This work is essentially outside the real world of work and therefore not recognized as such (Papanek 1973, Philipps 2008).

Finch (1983: 3) uses the metaphor of the 'two-sided' coin to describe how wives' incorporation into their husbands' work is both constrained and extracted. By this, she means that the structure of his work is imposed on her, often constraining her choices but also eliciting her labour. Her work enables him to devote himself to the business or organization, illuminating his individualism while obscuring her joint labour. His work must be 'accommodated and worked around' and she suggests that it is presumed by husbands and employers that wives will undertake this work (Bowman 2007, Finch 1983: 2, Kanter 1977, Wajcman 1999, Williams 2001). For some scholars, this work makes wives 'career adjuncts' (Fowlkes 1980: 44-45) because the marital services they provide are critical to their husbands' career advancement. In so doing they bring considerable social capital to their husband's workplace.

Some feminists suggest that there are benefits for women in supporting men in this way. Indeed in her seminal work on women's oppression, Germaine Greer (1971: 159) argued that women 'bask in the reflected glory' of their successful partners. There is often also a financial 'pay off' in terms of the lifestyle that an intense engagement with work can provide (Bowman 2009). In her research on entrepreneurs and their partners, Bowman found that women accept 'the deal' of men's disengagement from family life 'in return for a stable and privileged lifestyle', despite the risks of his entrepreneurialism (Bowman 2009: 171). Other feminists suggest that women do significant and often unconscious work to protect, placate and generally manage the feelings of men to boost their egos (Cline and Spender 1987). Drawing on ideas from Virginia Woolf, and as the title of their book suggests, Cline and Spender argue women do the work of *Reflecting men at twice their natural size*. This discussion and the preceding debates underscore the complexity of the gender and work intersections for women, including non-working spouses. The discussion highlights

how the public and the private spheres are deeply entangled but also how they continue to be viewed as separate, obscuring the role of the non-working wife in her husband's career. The vexed nature of ideas of democratization in intimate relationships and changing gender relations as they apply to husbands and wives at the work and family nexus are made plain in this discussion.

In the next section I elaborate issues pertaining to women's experiences in family businesses, which mirror those of business women generally. Their experiences are therefore related to 'social, economic and historical factors' which contribute to the disadvantages of women in the workplace (Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Fernandez Perez and Hamilton 2007: 9, Marlow and McAdam 2013). Before turning to these issues, I provide context for this discussion through a brief snapshot of the emergence of the family business as a discrete discipline.

Family business: the emergence of a discipline

Despite the dominance of family businesses worldwide, they represent a relatively new field of study (Schulze and Gedajlovic 2010). While family businesses dominated the economy during the industrial revolution (Colli 2003), some scholars have argued that the rise of the modern corporation and rational bureaucracy has made them less economically relevant (Berle and Means 1991 [1932], Chandler 1990). Both sociologists and economists have largely overlooked family businesses until recently because the former, who generally focus on family perceive them to be about business, while the latter perceive them to be concerned with family (Gilding, Gregory and Cosson 2015).

Recent research indicates the pervasiveness of family businesses. For example, family controlled corporations are the most common form of corporate organization (Colli et al. 2003, La Porta, Lopez-de-Silanes and Shleifer 1999). They are also the most prevalent small to medium firms in many industrial economies (Colli et al. 2003). They account for significant employment, employing approximately 80 per cent of the workforce (Neubauer and Lank 1998). While family businesses are presumed to be a

worldwide phenomenon, Colli et al. caution against a homogenous view. Rather family businesses are shaped by their local context, especially cultural meanings related to family, economic environment, institutional supports and business culture generally.

The importance of family businesses to the economy and their unique characteristics have underpinned its emergence as a discrete discipline. Family business consultants and practitioners drove early research in the field during the 1960s and 70s (Poutziouris, Smyrnios and Klein 2006), however academic research, drawing on a range of theories and methods has grown significantly (Fletcher 2014). It has evolved from an emphasis on the separation of family from business to an emphasis on the importance of the interrelationship of the two (Fletcher 2014).

Family businesses are principally examined from organizational performance, strategic management and psychodynamic perspectives. They are also subject to frequent scrutiny in terms of their sustainability and performance compared with non-family businesses (Stewart and Hitt 2012). Within the field, succession planning is among the most researched topics given the significance of business continuity to the economy (Bird et al. 2002, Brockhaus 2004, Zahra and Sharma 2004). While recognizing the embeddedness of family and business (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007, Firkin, Dupuis and de Bruin 2003, Hamilton 2013a, Jones and Conway 2000, Rogoff and Heck 2003, Zachary 2011), research is strongly oriented toward the benefits of family involvement on business management structures, performance, growth and continuity rather than an interest in 'family qua family' (Holt and Popp 2013: 892). An individual entrepreneur or driver of the family business continues to take centre stage in research with limited awareness of the family dynamics that underpin new venture creation and sustain existing businesses (Zachary 2011). This may, to some extent, account for the minimal attention given to

It may also explain why family is a taken-for-granted concept. In this respect, in family business research there is usually an assumption and rarely stated claim that 'family' is a group of people related by blood, marriage or adoption (Westhead and Cowling 1998, Winter, Fitzgerald, Heck, Haynes and Danes 1998), suggesting that it is a

relatively static institution (Holt and Popp 2013). Not only is this assumed, research rarely engages with diverse family forms, for example the businesses of same-sex couples or those established by single parents.

Gender and family businesses

Where the literature address women's contributions it has generally highlighted invisibility in the family business as a key concern (Baines and Wheelock 1998b, Gillis-Donovan and Moynihan-Bradt 1990, Jimenez 2009, Lewis and Massey 2011, Marshack 1994, Mulholland 2003, Salganicoff 1990a). While women have become more visible through this work, some scholars suggest that there is still a relative silence about their contributions (Mulholland 2003). It is argued that attention to their family role and emotional management work demonstrates an underlying assumption that the establishment and running of a family business is an expressly male prerogative (Bruni, Gherardi and Poggio 2004b, Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003).

One perspective suggests that invisibility has its basis in patriarchy, specifically the idea that wives are merged into the unity of the couple, represented by the husband in whose shadow the wife stands (Mulholland 2003). Moreover, this arrangement has its basis in the centuries-old legal doctrine of coverture which denied married women legal status. A woman and her husband were deemed to be one person in law (Mulholland 2003). Women could therefore not enter contracts, act as a partner in a business and had no rights to property (Beckert 2008, Davidoff and Hall 1987, Hoff 2007). Mulholland argues that the lingering effects of this doctrine explain the absence of women's contributions in men's stories about the establishment and growth of the business.

While a small but growing gender literature is addressing the absence of women, Fletcher (2014) suggests there is still little understanding about how relations of power operate through various structures, settings and practices. Rather, family business scholars generally have assumed women have a mainly supportive role to

play in the business behind the scenes, or they focus on differences between men and women in the business (Cappuyns 2007, Harveston et al. 1997, Sharma 2004, Vadrjal and Zupan 2009, Van Auken and Werbel 2006, Werbel and Danes 2010).

The literature largely draws on a liberal feminist tradition in highlighting inequality as a result of gender stereotypes and women's lack of access to resources and knowledge. In this respect, scholars argue that individual limitations, traditions and cultural norms can position women on the margins of the business, obscuring any recognition of their contributions and limiting access to leadership (Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Dumas 1989, Hollander and Bukowitz 1990, Lewis and Massey 2011, Lyman, Salganicoff and Hollander 1985, Salganicoff 1990a). At the same time, women are seen to have 'hidden' or unrecognized influence, positioning them as holders of informal power (Dhaliwal 1998, Gillis-Donovan and Moynihan-Bradt 1990, Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001, Salganicoff 1990a). For example, some scholars suggest that wives' position on the sidelines of the business can give them a 'unique vantage point' that can, if acknowledged, be useful to the business (Sharma 2004: 14). It can also potentially be a threat in terms of creating tensions and conflicts (Danes and Olson 2003).

Gender research also reveals a range of issues facing women in family businesses including occupational segregation, lack of promotion or opportunity to take over the business, and lack of decision making power (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, Dumas 1998, Galiano and Vinturella 1995, Jimenez 2009, Martin 2001, O'Connor, Hamouda, McKeon, Henry and Johnston 2006). Some research also suggests women working in the business are more likely to be unpaid or paid less than the market rate (Baines and Wheelock 1998b, Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Danes and Olson 2003, Philipps 2008, Rowe and Hong 2000). According to Rowe and Hong (2000), wives are likely to be the least well paid in the business, indicating that their work is undervalued.

At the same time, there is evidence that family businesses can offer specific advantages for the women who work within them. They can more readily access

leadership positions even in traditionally male-dominated industries (though generally when there are no sons or sons are not interested), and they have greater flexibility to manage family and work life at less cost to career trajectories (Cole 1997, Curimbaba 2002, Dumas 1992, Frishkoff and Brown 1993, Haynes, Avery and Hunts 1999, Iannarelli 1992, Salganicoff 1990a, Salganicoff 1990b). Where women advance quickly into leadership positions they can sometimes enjoy better pay rates than their counterparts in non-family businesses (Salganicoff 1990b). However, these advantages have also been shown to have a downside. Cromie and O'Sullivan (1999), highlight that while flexible work is seen to be more readily accommodated, it also reinforces traditional care arrangements (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, Marshack 1994, Smith 2000) which women indicate can impact on their opportunities in the business (Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999).

Gender debates in the family business literature have often been at odds over whether women continue to be invisible (for example Mulholland 2003), or whether they are participating in businesses much like men (Cole 1997). Increasingly, gender scholars are pointing to their greater access to senior roles and shared decision making, emphasizing men's and women's assertion of equality (Deacon et al. 2014). However, this research sometimes takes what men and women say at face value, and does not analyse it in the context of broader family or gender scholarship. Indeed, gender can be represented as unproblematic or less relevant, captured in this comment by Aronoff (1998: 184): '...in more and more families and family businesses in general, gender is becoming a nonissue as it relates to leadership and ownership participation'. This suggests the gender problem has been resolved and fails to recognize how gender disadvantage remains embedded, though often concealed, in norms and practices (Lewis and Simpson 2010, 2011).

Fletcher (2014: 137) argues that theorizing generally 'remains within the level of insight, exposure and illumination of family business problems and issues, rather than at the level of critique'. In this respect, there is very little disruption or challenge to dominant discourses. For example it is rare for gender research in this field to

challenge 'Eurocentric, elite, masculinist ideals' that underpin organizational concepts and practices (Calás and Smircich 2006: 290). Gender difference is taken for granted and women's experiences often homogenized (Pauli 2015). Such assumptions perpetuate the absence of women's perspectives. While women are often assumed to have a special 'vantage point' when they take on care and household work rather than formal business roles (Sharma 2004: 14), scholarship rarely interrogates this vantage point from the perspective of women because the emphasis is mostly on male founders and their heirs (Dumas 1998). Wives value is often perceived to be in their traditional roles such as peace keeping, behind the scenes advisor, emotions manager and imparting important business values to children during childhood (Cappuyns 2007, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Poza and Messer 2001, Sonfield and Lussier 2009). While this research highlights changing gender practices, detraditionalization is shown to be contingent and contextual for women in family businesses.

The overlap of family business and entrepreneurship

In contrast, entrepreneurship studies have engaged more deeply with critique (Achtenhagen and Welter 2007, Ahl 2006, Bourne 2010, García and Welter 2013, Hughes, Jennings, Brush, Carter and Welter 2012). The two literatures increasingly overlap in view of the fact that entrepreneurs who start new businesses (including increasing numbers of women and co-preneurs) often become family businesses over time (Dyer and Handler 1994) and because entrepreneurship is seen as important to family business sustainability across generations (Naldi, Nordqvist, Sjöberg and Wiklund 2007). Recent gender research in this field has drawn on feminist post-structuralism to articulate the socially constructed nature of gender identities and to challenge dominant masculine discourses of entrepreneurship in academic scholarship and the popular media, and in entrepreneurship education (Ahl 2004, 2006, Ahl and Marlow 2012). This research further amplifies the embeddedness of gender practices in discourses of entrepreneurship and in the implicit and explicit values that underpin much research in the field. In exploring this literature I highlight how a masculine

understanding of entrepreneurship can easily obscure the co-creation aspects of business establishment which is especially relevant for many participants in my study.

Commonly, entrepreneurship is viewed as an individual endeavour. Psychological characteristics and personal traits have often defined the entrepreneur in classic entrepreneurship literature and in the popular media, and they continue to pervade entrepreneurial discourse (Achtenhagen and Welter 2007, Ahl 2004, 2006, Bird and Brush 2002, Dawley, Hoffman and Smith 2004). A narrow range of traits is often inferred or made explicit including heroism, individualism, daring, competitiveness, risk taking and aggression, highlighting its masculine qualities (Ahl 2006, Ahl and Marlow 2012, Bird and Brush 2002, Hamilton 2013b, Ogbor 2000). These characteristics also imply an intense engagement with work (Bowman 2007). Media representations particularly have remained 'resolutely male' (Nicholson and Anderson 2005: 162). Radu and Redien-Collot (2008) indicate that entrepreneurial teams are rarely brought into view. These representations help shape and sustain a masculine and heroic entrepreneurial identity (Anderson and Warren 2011). Moreover, the endurance of this view is underpinned by the association of these qualities with hegemonic masculinity which Connell describes as 'the most honoured and desired' form of masculinity (Connell 2000: 10, Smith 2010). This emphasizes the difficulty for women in occupying entrepreneurial space.

There is growing gender awareness, represented in greater sensitivity to using 'the masculine pronoun' in research in the entrepreneurship field (Ahl 2006: 598). This contemporary sensibility also eschews the emphasis on (masculine) psychological characteristics, and focuses more broadly on new venture creation, opportunity exploitation and innovation as hallmarks of entrepreneurship (Shane and Venkataraman 2000, Timmons and Spinelli 1999). Such definitions create mixed messages in their assumption that 'entrepreneurship' is open to anyone as long as they have the capacity and skills (Ahl 2002, Ahl and Marlow 2012: 544). The mythic qualities of entrepreneurship remain deeply embedded and broader definitions overlook the fact that masculine discourse persists in how it is supposed to be enacted and in its

assessment of what comprises success (Ahl and Marlow 2012, Bruni et al. 2004b, de Bruin, Brush and Welter 2006).

These assumptions are visible in the attention to differences between female and male entrepreneurs and family business owners in the literature (Ahl 2006, Bruni et al. 2004b, Mirchandani 1999). In this respect an 'othering' process takes place (Bruni et al. 2004b). For example, research notes female entrepreneurs are more likely to be motivated by integrating the business with lifestyle than male entrepreneurs who are driven by wealth creation and advancement (DeMartino and Barbato 2003); as having less propensity for risk taking (Sexton and Bowman-Upton 1990); as being much less likely to be growth focused than men (Steffens, Stuetzer and Davidsson 2010); as having less profitable and smaller businesses than men (Fischer, Reuber and Dyke 1993); having less beneficial networks (Aldrich, Elam and Reese 1997, Renzulli, Aldrich and Moody 2000, Rosa and Hamilton 1994); as developing businesses that are different to those of men and managed differently (Brush 1992); and their entrepreneurial legitimacy is often called into question when their businesses are home based (Walker and Webster 2004).

Ahl (2002, 2006) suggests that difference research fails to interrogate its own epistemological assumptions regarding the organization of gender, unequal power relations and what constitutes entrepreneurship. Rather, the experience of male entrepreneurs is taken as the 'self-evident unit with which to produce knowledge about entrepreneurship' (Ogbor 2000: 622). Thus, women entrepreneurs sit somewhat uncomfortably within entrepreneurial discourse (Bruni et al. 2004b) as their feminine attributes represent a 'lack of fit' (García and Welter 2013, Rudman and Phelan 2008: 69). In this respect, the 'underperformance' of women's businesses is related to an assumption that women are not measuring up compared to male entrepreneurs (Ahl 2002, 2006, Mirchandani 1999). Ahl and Nelson (2010) challenge the usefulness of empirical research that reinforces a binary as an independent variable. Rather, they argue for a focus on the reasons for differences, taking into account social and cultural factors including unequal power relations (Ahl and Nelson 2010, Mirchandani 1999).

What counts as entrepreneurship is also important to understanding the lack of recognition of women's contribution to family businesses. In her research, Cramton (1993) found that women can have the idea for the business and provide the financial capital, but it is their partners who wear the entrepreneurial hat (Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003). In this respect, she argued for an emphasis on the couple relationship as inspiring entrepreneurship because the business emerges out of the ideas, skills, resources and capital of both. Increasingly, there is a call for attention to the embeddedness of entrepreneurship within social relations and networks, especially families (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, Cramton 1993, Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007, Firkin et al. 2003, Hamilton 2013a, Jones and Conway 2000, Rogoff and Heck 2003, Zachary 2011). Entrepreneurs, on this account, do not emerge in isolation. Indeed, sociologists and feminists have long problematized the idea of the autonomous individual, arguing individuals are embedded in webs of relations (Emirbayer 1997, Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012).

At the same time, some research addressing the family embeddedness perspective, though important in trying to put a value on spouses' contributions to the business, retains the view of the spouse [usually a wife] as a supporter of an entrepreneur. The importance of this work to the business and business owner often overlooks the effects on the family and does not interrogate the underlying subtext that often positions spouses as 'good' or 'bad' in terms of their business support, especially their emotional support (Foley and Powell 1997, Gudmunson, Danes, Werbel and Loy 2009, Matzek, Gudmunson and Danes 2010, Poza and Messer 2001, Van Auken and Werbel 2006).

Family business scholarship, as Fletcher (2014) argues, gives little critical attention to how practices, institutions and social structures impact on gender outcomes in the family business. Gender as a variable is common in this research (Danes, Stafford and Loy 2007, Harveston et al. 1997, Loscocco and Leicht 1993, Sonfield and Lussier 2009). Assessments of what comprises success in this field are built on similar masculine assumptions to those in entrepreneurship. For example,

implicit and explicit expressions of values assume the business requires hard work, long hours and often intense commitment (Bowman 2007, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006). These 'values' are highly prized. By their very nature they presuppose an unencumbered worker free of childcare responsibilities (Acker 1990). Like the women entrepreneurs who frequently 'fail' the entrepreneurial test because of a lack of attention to power relations (Ahl 2006: 595, Bird and Brush 2002, García and Welter 2013, Mirchandani 1999), women's contributions remain less visible in family businesses for similar reasons.

At the same time, there are often taken-for granted assumptions that the business should have priority. In another example, family business scholars privilege both the business and male owners' rights to devote their full attention to the business ahead of family responsibilities. In their paper on spousal commitment, Van Auken and Werbal (2006) write that 'family responsibilities can *detract* from the owner's ability to succeed in the business' citing Beach (1989) and Miller, Fitzgerald, Winter and Paul (1999). While the authors use the gender neutral terms of spouse and owner, the first two vignettes that they say frame debates refer to male business owners and their wives. In these stories, they position women as either good or bad although they do not use these terms. 'Good' (committed) wives are supportive of their husbands' dreams while the 'bad' (uncommitted) wives are discouraging and unhelpful when they question the viability of the business and do not give more help to make it work. Husbands are the entrepreneurs in this account and their work in the business is privileged, while wives are measured by their support.

According to Ahl and Marlow (2012: 554), such assumptions imply that wives are expected to have 'blind faith' in their husbands' business ventures even when joint savings are being used, which is considered part of the 'wifely' role. On this view, wives are perceived as obstructions to the creative and innovative work of entrepreneurship (Ahl and Marlow 2012) which is discursively positioned as critically important to economic growth (Ahl 2006, Jennings, Breitkreuz and James 2013).

Mulholland (2003), Cramton (1993) and Hamilton (2006) have all shown how public stories of entrepreneurship and family business establishment rarely match the private experience. In this respect they draw attention to the relational aspects of entrepreneurial action which are grounded in family relationships, especially the work of wives and often children. However, the joint creation of a venture is obscured by a discourse that positions entrepreneurial activity as individual and masculine.

Hamilton (2006, 2013a, 2013b) offers an alternative way of thinking about these issues. She suggests that gender identities are defined relationally and that thinking about gender in this way opens up the possibility for challenging the masculine discourse that underpins much family business and entrepreneurship literature. She contends that while leadership might be perceived as specifically masculine from the outside, inside the family business it is often more collaborative, taking 'multiple, shifting forms' which 'are constantly being negotiated and renegotiated' (Fernandez Perez and Hamilton 2007, Hamilton 2006: 268, 2013a). Hamilton (2006) argues that the narrow focus on economic rationality and individualism that pervades entrepreneurship and family business literature obscures this kind of practice. In this respect, women in family businesses often seem to be standing behind men, even when they are making equally significant contributions.

Variation in experiences of wives

The research on women in family businesses often assumes they have informal influence regardless of their association with the business. There is not a depth of scholarship in relation to how wives' different associations impact on their level of influence. My study attempts to address this by attending to complexity and variation in the experiences of wives depending on how they are connected to the business. The following literature outlines how their different associations have been understood by family business scholars to date.

Husband and wife partnerships

The husband and wife partnership has received increasing attention in the family business literature. Gender research indicates that equality is commonly inferred in family business studies of husband and wife partnerships, or 'co-preneurs' as they are often called. Indeed, Jaffe (1990: 159) suggests the most successful couple partnerships are those that are egalitarian. Despite there being no confirmed figures available for such partnerships in Australia, they are said to be a growing and significant part of the economy (Smith 2000). Dana and Smyrnios (2013) indicate that the majority of family businesses in Australia are owned by husbands and wives, but that husbands are invariably the CEO. According to this same research, wives are involved in 35 percent of these businesses, though it is unclear in what capacities.

Barnett and Barnett (1988) coined the term co-preneur to refer to couples who establish businesses together and have similar commitment and responsibility to them. In this respect they maintain a business and a personal relationship (Tompson and Tompson 2000). Research in this area is still small, but early studies indicate traditional divisions of labour exist despite couples declaring an equal partnership (Marshack 1994). Husbands are invariably the main decision makers and wives maintain responsibility for the home adapting to the demands of the business (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, Marshack 1994, O'Connor et al. 2006, Ponthieu and Caudill 1993, Smith 2000) unless the business is stereotypically feminine, for example a beauty or fashion business (Wicker and Burley 1991). This view contrasts to representations in the popular media and in the literature more broadly that such partnerships are egalitarian (Deacon et al. 2014, Kadis and McClendon 1991, Smith 2000). At the same time, it is assumed that wives have significant influence even if they are not the key decision maker or may not put in the same hours (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, Fitzgerald and Muske 2002).

Marshack's (1994) research on co-preneurs and dual earner couples who do not work together, shows that women in partnerships are more likely to undertake sex-segregated tasks such as administrative and book keeping functions than dual

earner women (Galiano and Vinturella 1995, Hollander and Bukowitz 1990, Lewis and Massey 2011, O'Connor et al. 2006). Ponthieu and Caudill (1993: 14) do not describe tasks in gendered terms, seeing them as 'equal but distinct'; even though women in their study indicated they would not make decisions without consulting their husbands whereas husbands made decisions without consulting wives. Such arrangements have been seen as evidence of pre-modern forms of working, or a 'reinvention of tradition' (Baines and Wheelock 1998a: 580, 2000) where women are sometimes doing work 'for which they have little taste' (Baines and Wheelock 1998a: 596).

While Marshack reported evidence of co-preneurial women taking on tasks and responsibilities previously undertaken by their husbands, such as sales and business planning, she suggested husbands were not taking up any of the women's responsibilities including household and family tasks. Husbands in these partnerships also worked longer hours than those in the dual earner group, causing her to surmise that they increased their work to maintain traditional boundaries (Marshack 1994: 63).

Smith's (2000: 283) research on couple partnerships also indicates women are responsible for care and household tasks but her participants indicated the 'disadvantages of living and working together were outweighed by opportunities for maximum autonomy and personal control'. She argues that this type of partnership enables men and women to work flexibly, enhancing work and family management. This does not mean there are not tensions. Danes and Morgan (2004) suggest conflict generally arises around work and family balance, and especially uneven distributions of time, money and effort. While strong, flexible and conflict-free relations are presumed to be necessary for co-preneurs to succeed (Jaffe 1990: 159), such ideas obscure the work that goes into the constant negotiation and renegotiation of couple relationships, and the degree to which cultural and gender practices contribute to the compromises that women often make (Hamilton 2013a).

At the same time, research shows that women often report satisfaction with the arrangements that see them take on most of the care work (Deacon et al. 2014, Marshack 1994, Smith 2000). However, in Smith's research women indicated that by

taking on this responsibility they 'avoided work family conflict' and it created more 'harmonious marital relations' (Smith 2000: 286). This implies that by doing the 'expected' work of care they free men to devote themselves to the business in a way in which women cannot. Another view suggests women feel the need to protect their husbands' egos and so they avoid clashes of power in order that their husbands do not feel emasculated (Cline and Spender 1987, Nelton 1986).

The issues raised in much co-preneurial research suggest women have less decision making power and are less likely to challenge their husbands, highlighting that they have less visibility in the business. This occurs despite participants often drawing on notions of equality. In contrast, some researchers are challenging this view. Cole (1997) argues women are active participants in the business with highly valued technical skills. Her participants included a broad range of family relationships including husbands and wives. She found there was generally agreement that men were supportive of family women working in the business and a norm of primogeniture was not evident. She highlights the complexity of women's experience and cautions against generalisations. Similarly, Frishoff and Brown (1993) argue that women are taking their place in the family business in senior roles and many women in partnerships are highly visible, running the business alongside their husbands.

Millman and Martin (2007), who expressly chose to interview couples where the wife was taking the lead role in the business, had analogous findings. While they found that the women's husbands played the more supportive role in the business, women retained responsibility for organising family life. Women in their research indicated they had to work hard to maintain a balance so that their husbands did not feel undermined. In trying to challenge the gendered divisions of labour that arise in husband and wife partnerships, Deacon et al (2014) suggest it is more useful to think of co-preneurial teams and the competencies within them. In this respect they suggest de-identifying biological and gender identities in order to get a better understanding of roles and contributions of actors (Deacon et al. 2014: 319). This approach comes out of an understanding that that there are more similarities than differences between

men and women, and also because couples in their research showed no resentments about divisions of labour even though women did most care work. While their intention is to take gender out of the equation, the approach poses no challenge to traditional gender practices and also assumes entrepreneurship is gender neutral.

In-laws working in family businesses

In-laws working in their husband's family business receive cursory attention in the family business literature. They are often perceived as a risk to the harmony of the kin group and are potentially dangerous in terms of keeping the business in tact if there is a divorce (Dugan, Krone, LeCouvie, Pendergast, Kenyon-Rouvinez and Schuman 2011, Santiago 2011). While their labour can be welcomed, it does not often translate into decision-making power. Some research indicates daughters-in-law experience the most stress in family businesses, especially as it relates to equality and team work (Marotz-Baden and Mattheis 1994: 132, Weigel and Weigel 1987: 381). Keating and Little (1991) surmise that this is related to their ambiguous place both in the family and in the business where they often make significant contributions (Marotz-Baden and Mattheis 1994, Pini 2007).

While their exclusion is related to their lack of 'blood ties', this is often concealed by the inference that in-law women are trouble makers or 'outlaws' (Pini 2007: 43). According to Pini (2007: 44) there can be a 'precariousness' associated with women and their bodies because of a presumed emotionality compared to men who are perceived as rational and able to 'get on with things' even after family 'blow-ups'. It is possibly for this reason that sons-in-law are more likely to be considered successors of a family business if there are no sons able, or interested, in taking over (Beckhard and Dyer 1983b, Rosenblatt, Mik, Anderson and Johnson 1985, Seymour 1993, Ward 1987). Daughters-in-law rarely achieve such recognition. This suggests the exclusion of in-law wives may have more to do with gender than blood relationship.

In-law wives' involvement is generally limited to the project or job for which they have been employed (which may be paid or unpaid). They are not expected to

have a voice in relation to wider management or business issues (Pini 2007, Poza and Messer 2001). It is not uncommon for wives to hold down a job outside the business as well as working inside it, while also managing family life and the household work (Rowe and Hong 2000) which has been described as women doing the third shift (Lee, Hong and Rowe 2006).

Wives not working in the family business

This group of women encompass those who may be completely isolated from the business, made paid or unpaid contributions for a short period, act as 'sounding boards' for their husbands and other family members in the business, or who may have made financial contributions to its start-up or expansion. They do not however, have a formal role. Women's contributions to family businesses in this respect can be significant but these accounts are often missing from the story of the business's founding and growth (Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003). Mulholland (2003: 1) suggests they are more often positioned as 'helpmeet' to their husbands or 'trophies' of successful men.

Women's participation in the business has been shown to be influenced by its generational stage. For example, Rowe and Hong (2000) suggest that wives are less likely to be working in a family business that is second generation and above. Mulholland (2003: 67) argues that as the business grows it becomes harder for wives to transition from 'helping out' to gaining professional recognition.

While the economic bond of marriage ensures that wives are stakeholders in the business regardless of their level of involvement (Van Auken and Werbel 2006), the contributions of wives who do not work in the business are often the least visible because they have no formal role. Though they are sometimes deemed to have unacknowledged influence (Gillis-Donovan and Moynihan-Bradt 1990), it is not recognized as 'work' and is therefore likely to be undervalued (Poza and Messer 2001).

Spousal commitment and social capital has only recently been viewed as potentially significant to business performance and has received limited research

attention (Folker et al. 2002, Gudmunson et al. 2009, Matzek et al. 2010, Van Auken and Werbel 2006, Werbel and Danes 2010). Wives importance as advisors and providing a listening ear to their partners has also received some attention in terms of their influence in decision making (Folker et al. 2002, Poza and Messer 2001, Van Auken and Werbel 2006).

Women who take over the family business

There is a growing literature in the field of women's entrepreneurship but attention to women who take over the family business usually focuses on daughters rather than wives. Scholarship and media representations often tries to shoe-horn women starting their own businesses into the kind of heroic entrepreneurial narrative usually reserved for men. For example, Ahl (2002, 2006) argues that successful women entrepreneurs are more likely to be represented as exceptional women or as 'tougher and more determined than men' (Barrett and Moores 2009: 11, Bruni et al. 2004b). Positioning women in this way portrays them as the exception rather than the rule. At times, a 'good mother' entrepreneur discourse is also invoked. This posits an alternative feminine entrepreneurial model where women are establishing businesses in order to work around their family responsibilities, undermining their entrepreneurial status (Ahl 2006, Bruni et al. 2004b).

An argument that there is a 'lack of fit' between womanhood or femininity with masculine accounts of entrepreneurship (García and Welter 2013) may account for the small number of women leaders of family businesses. The lack of women at the top is surprising in view of the thinking that family businesses are more collaborative environments. Women, whether daughters or wives, are seen to take the CEO role mainly in emergency situations (for example death or incapacitation of the male owner-manager), or where there is no other potential successor (notably sons) (Curimbaba 2002, Nelton 1998, Overbeke et al. 2013). There is often an emphasis on difference, for example how women in women-owned family businesses do succession or leadership differently to men (Cadieux et al. 2002, Harveston et al. 1997). The idea

of men's and women's difference appears to be a firmly embedded assumption in much of the entrepreneurship and family business literature (Ahl 2006).

As more women become involved in family businesses, they are said to be challenging primogeniture and traditional ideas that women's caring responsibilities limit their leadership ambitions (Dugan et al. 2011, Dumas 1989, 1990, Frishkoff and Brown 1993). The American family business survey (2007) reports interesting findings which show an increase from five per cent in 1997 to 24 per cent in 2007 of family businesses with a female CEO or President. The survey indicated that almost 60 per cent had women in management and team leadership positions (MassMutual American Family Business Survey 2007). However, this does not necessarily translate into women becoming CEOs (Barrett and Moores 2009). At the same time the most recent global female entrepreneurship index (GEDI 2015) which measures the best conditions for female entrepreneurship, ranked Australia second behind the United States, while the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM 2014) indicates that 10.3 percent of Australian women are entrepreneurs compared to 16 per cent of men.

Despite these advances, it is true to say that both the entrepreneurship and family business domains remain dominated by men, especially in Australia. In this respect, the experiences of women in family businesses mirror broader gender and work research (Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Fernandez Perez and Hamilton 2007, Marlow and McAdam 2013). The freedoms and opportunities won by women in the work place have not been matched by men in terms of taking on equal responsibility for sharing in care and household tasks, neither do workplace institutions and cultural norms make such options generally realisable (Baxter et al. 2015, Baxter and Smart 2011, Craig 2006, Craig and Mullan 2010, Pocock 2005). This occurs despite the normative expectation of egalitarian relations in the intimate partnership (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1992, Jamieson 1998). While men and women in business together could choose to structure it in more egalitarian ways, they generally do not (Baines and Wheelock 1998a).

Considering the burgeoning literature within the family business field, the attention given to wives is insignificant and what attention there is often fails to detail the diversity of their associations and experiences. Indeed, when it comes to succession planning their specific perspectives are largely absent. The next section begins by elaborating the problems of succession generally in the family business. It focuses on efforts to sustain intergenerational relations though it rarely addresses wives perspectives specifically. At the end of the next section, a small literature is explored which attends to wives' contributions to succession specifically but also includes literature which alludes to or has a relationship to their influence. This literature tends to portray wives contributions to succession in positive ways but does not address their influence in children's involvement or consider the more formalized ways in which they may be influential in any meaningful way. Hence, wives influence is seen to remain at the margins of the business. This research project addresses this gap in the literature.

Succession planning

From an economic perspective the importance of continuity of the family business is seen as self-evident (Gilding et al. 2015). In the contemporary context, in industrialized societies baby boomers are retiring in large numbers making passing on the family business to the next generation more salient in terms of individual families, their businesses and employees and the potential economic impact. However, the literature highlights that the process of succession planning is fraught with uncertainty and delay (Barach et al. 1988, Barnes and Hershon 1976, Beckhard and Dyer 1983b, Danco 1982, Dunn and Kaye 1999, Fischetti 1997, Lansberg 1988, Le Breton-Miller et al. 2004, Miller et al. 2003, Venter, Boshoff and Maas 2005, Ward 1987). This thesis suggests that this uncertainty has its basis in individualization processes, in particular the changing position of women, the weakening of patriarchal power and the demand for greater democratization in intimate relationships, which have created instability.

Succession issues are often the main source of conflict in families and this conflict is frequently highlighted as the reason for business failure and poor performance (Beckhard and Dyer 1983b, Dyer 1986, Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, File and Prince 1996, Gersick et al. 1997, Handler and Kram 1988, Kets de Vries 1993, Levinson 1971, Miller et al. 2003, Ward 1987). This is evident in the low percentage of businesses which are transferred to successive generations (Applegate and Feldman 1994, Beckhard and Dyer 1983a, Birley 1986, Ward 1987)¹.

A large body of scholarship addresses the causes of failure and success in succession. Research usually starts from the premise that family and business are embedded systems which therefore makes them 'ripe' for misunderstandings and conflict (Sharma 2004). The focus is on relationships between founders and successors, usually fathers and sons but occasionally fathers and daughters (Barnes 1988, Collins et al. 2010, Davis and Taguiri 1989, Dumas 1989, 1990, 1992, Haberman and Danes 2007, Iannarelli 1992, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Levinson 1971). It also addresses relationships between siblings and cousins (Danes et al. 2005, Friedman 1991, Gersick et al. 1997, Taylor and Norris 2000, Ward 1997).

More recently there has been attention to family dynamics more generally (Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, Eddleston, Otondo and Kellermanns 2008, Haberman and Danes 2007, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Kellermanns and Eddleston 2004, Morris et al. 1997). The dynamics of relationships in these studies suggest both a deep connectedness of family members in business together but also fragility and an imperative to increasingly negotiate relationships reflexively (Whiteside, Aronoff and Ward 1993). Planning is considered critical to successful successions (Ward 1987) but it also involves building trust among family members and encouraging open

¹ Many family business scholars reference Beckhard and Dyer's figure of only 30 percent of family business being passed to the next generation and Applegate and Feldman's figure of 10 to 15 percent to third generation and beyond. I have been unable to trace these references back to any rigorous statistical analysis in either case. These figures have however, entered the family business narrative as a mostly taken-for-granted assumption with very little interrogation of their genesis.

communication and shared values (Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, Handler 1992, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Morris et al. 1997, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Ward 1987).

Business performance is also related to reflexive negotiation of relationships because family businesses face particular challenges not encountered in non-family enterprises. For example, on the one hand families usually emphasize fairness for children through practices that promote equality (Deutsch 1975), evident in the norm of equal distributions in inheritance (Baker and Gilding 2011, Finch, Hayes, Mason, Masson and Wallis 1996, Gilding 2000). On the other, businesses usually perceive of fairness in terms of merit (Dyer and Handler 1994, Landsberg 1983). Trying to balance these competing dynamics can create potential for conflict and inequality (Dyer and Handler 1994, Ward 1987). This is especially evident when it comes to employment of family members, succession and ownership transfer, where equal distributions might not be compatible with business continuity (Ayers 1990, 2002), and where sons are usually favoured over daughters (Ahrens, Landmann and Woywode 2015, Vera and Dean 2005, Wang 2010).

While conflictual relations have the potential to impact on business performance, they can also derail the business (Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, Morris et al. 1997, Olson, Zuiker, Danes, Stafford, Heck and Duncan 2003, Ward 1987). On this score, the literature is replete with anecdotes about relationship failures. Founder/owners are perceived to resist succession planning until it is absolutely necessary and even then they may not go quietly (Galiano and Vinturella 1995, Sonnenfeld and Spence 1989). Specifically, the literature often portrays incumbent owner-managers as autocratic and narcissistic especially when it comes to stepping down from the business (Birley 1986, Danco 1982, Lansberg 1988, Lansberg and Astrachan 1994, Miller et al. 2003, Shepherd and Zacharakis 2000, Sonnenfeld and Spence 1989). In this respect they are deemed ambivalent and incapable of dealing with the perceived loss of status and the idea of their own mortality (Aronoff and Ward 1995, Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Barnes and Hershon 1976, Calfee 2000, Danco 1982, Fox, Nilakant and Hamilton 1996, Handler and Kram 1988, Lansberg 1988,

Levinson 1971, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Sonnenfeld and Spence 1989). This behaviour impacts on continuity by alienating or undermining potential successors who remain in the shadow of their business-owning parent (Davis and Harveston 1999, Miller et al. 2003). A successor's ability to develop a sense of individual identity can be restricted as a consequence (Handler 1992).

The inability to let go is one of a number of reasons for succession failure. Among others are lack of interest on the part of children along with 'unclear succession plans, incompetent or unprepared successors and family rivalries' (Miller et al. 2003: 514). In a study of Canadian family businesses undertaken by Sharma, Chrisman and Chua (2003: 9), succession planning was not generally undertaken unless there was a 'trusted successor to take over'.

While family businesses are often viewed as having the benefit of reciprocity, strong emotional ties and shared identity, altruism within families also has a dark side (Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino and Buchholtz 2001). Research by Schulz et al. (2001) points to the potential costs to the business of parental tolerance of free riding and children's sense of entitlement. Business sustainability maybe further threatened by parental bias about children's talents in the context of having the right skills for the job (Sharma and Irving 2005).

At the heart of these concerns are dysfunctional family relations including avoidance or failure of conflict management and/or imposition of decisions by the entrepreneur or incumbent owner-manager (Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Kellermanns and Eddleston 2006, Miller et al. 2003, Sorenson 1999, Ward 1997). As the supreme head, the (male) owner-manager is often positioned as ultimately responsible for motivating family members to join the business, for managing relationships better, for teaching and mentoring family members, and planning for succession in order to avoid business failure (Aronoff and Ward 1991, Carlock and Ward 2001, Danco 1982, Morris et al. 1997, Sharma et al. 2003, Ward 1987). This approach assumes a power/subordination relationship yet increasingly researchers agree that the quality of interpersonal relationships, particularly openness and shared decision making, have a

significant effect on succession success (Cabrera-Suárez 2005, Cabrera-Suárez et al. 2001, Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, Handler 1990, Lansberg 1988, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Sorenson 2000).

More recently, research which promotes professionalizing the business and establishing institutions such as family councils and codes of conduct has emerged as mechanisms of both democratization and rationalization of family relationships. Professionalization arguments tend to assume family businesses can overcome many of their problems, including relationship difficulties, if they operate like non-family businesses (Martínez, Stöhr and Quiroga 2007, Stewart and Hitt 2012). This suggests a less familial form of business is required to ensure more rational behaviour and a diverse pool of talent (Stewart and Hitt 2012).

Professionalization is not well defined in the literature (Von Nordenflycht 2010) so its meaning varies. At its most simplistic researchers employ it to describe the recruitment of professional, non-family personnel into key management positions, especially the CEO role (Chittoor and Das 2007, Gedajlovic, Lubatkin and Schulze 2004). For others it also incorporates formal governance mechanisms such as a board of directors and the establishment of formal strategic planning systems (Songini 2006). Independent directors on the board are seen as critical to providing expertise, facilitating discussion and providing a broader perspective in relation to succession planning (Lansberg 1988, Poza and Daugherty 2013, Ward 1987) and freeing the company from centralized decision-making of one person which can lead to dissent and lack of autonomy for managers (Songini 2006).

Professionalization also creates a more meritocratic environment where all employees, including family members are promoted on merit and where appropriate remuneration is set for both family and employees (Gnan and Songini 2003, Hillman and Dalziel 2003, Schulze et al. 2001). In such an environment, family women are able to demonstrate their skills and achieve positions based on their own achievements, therefore opening up opportunities for leadership including taking over the running of the business (Songini and Gnan 2009).

A more professionalized approach though, can potentially undermine the 'familiness' on which the business has been built and which is seen to be the basis of its competitive advantage (Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson 1997, Habbershon 2006, Habbershon, Williams and MacMillan 2003, Habbershon and Williams 1999). In this respect, the literature suggests family businesses have unique resources and capabilities. For example, successful family businesses engender loyalty and commitment from family members as a result of altruistic kinship relations (Davis et al. 1997, Habbershon 2006, Habbershon et al. 2003, Habbershon and Williams 1999). Pearson, Carr and Shaw (2008) describe familiness as social capital which forms from structural and cognitive dimensions. The former relates to patterns of interactions and strength of ties while the latter to the collective culture of the family including its 'unique' language and stories' which contribute to the shared vision of the business (Pearson et al. 2008: 957). In turn, the collective interests of the family prevail ahead of individual self-interest (Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, Zahra 2003).

While issues of conflict management only get more complex as family ownership becomes dispersed among different family groups such as siblings or cousins, successful succession is increasingly seen to be most effective in those family businesses which foster participative strategies (Corbetta and Salvato 2004). This approach is seen to minimize conflict and 'strengthen family bonds' (Corbetta and Salvato 2004: 356).

Overwhelmingly the literature views succession as a long-term process rather than a single event, where offspring are introduced into the business early, are given broad experience in different roles once they join and when sufficiently experienced, are passed the leadership mantle (Aronoff et al. 2003, Davis and Harveston 1998, Gersick et al. 1997, Handler 1994, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Stavrou 1999). Yet some family business scholars eschew the idea of a linear process arguing that succession is more complex than such thinking assumes (Aronoff 1998, Keating and Little 1997, Lansberg 1999). In both cases planning for succession is seen as critical as it leads to greater satisfaction and is more likely to be successful (Lansberg 1999, Ward 1987).

These debates indicate that involving children in the business, working with them and passing the business on require skilful negotiation of relationships. This supports Beck's (1997: 167) argument that individualization processes make relationships more fragile because values and expectations cannot be imposed, creating 'patterns of intergeneration conflict and compromise'. In the family business context, these issues can be further magnified as family members work in close connection. As Gilding (2000) suggests it can no longer be assumed that sons will follow fathers into the business or that daughters can be ignored, in other words, involving children cannot be taken for granted. Indeed, in satisfying the desire for 'a life of one's own' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, 2004) children are able to choose from a range of options and the family business may be just one of many. This suggests that parents are up against significant social forces that put pressure on the way relationships should be conducted which impacts on succession and the way the business is run.

Wives' contribution to succession planning

Debates about succession have rarely attended to the views of wives and mothers. On the one hand, this is surprising given the central place succession occupies in this literature. On the other it is emblematic of the invisibility of wives' contributions more generally and the way in which their contributions are usually stereotypically gendered (Hamilton 2006, 2013a, Lewis and Massey 2011, Mulholland 2003).

While the family business literature does not give singular attention to the influence of the mother's contribution to either succession or children's involvement, two studies draw attention to spousal influence (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001). While in Poza and Messer's (2001) US based study they use the gender neutral term spouse, their sample of eleven was predominantly made up of wives. In this respect, they identify that some wives 'have engineered outcome-changing feats in the process of succession and continuity' (2001: 34). The authors suggest the wife of the owner-manager has a unique (yet mostly invisible) role as 'steward of the family

legacy, facilitator of communications, and touchstone of emotional intelligence in family relations' (2001:25). Because of this they can 'often play a determining role in successful generational transitions' (2001: 25), though it is unclear exactly how this occurs.

The authors develop a set of archetypes from the wives in their sample which identifies a range of traits and skills including 'the senior advisor and keeper of the family values', 'Vice President of Human Resources, Finances and Facilities', 'business partner or co-preneur', 'free agent' and curiously, 'jealous spouse' (2001: 30-31) who is unhappy about the obsessive attention her partner gives to the business. The principal skill wives bring to succession in this research is their emotion work, a role they call the 'Chief Trust Officer'. The emphasis of this work is on their ability to cultivate harmony and smooth over tensions and disagreements between the CEO and family members. The authors suggest that these wives have an appreciation of the interpersonal problems related to continuity and can help by synthesizing different points of view and get succession on the table for discussion. While they recognize wives' marginality, they also emphasize emotional skills which tends to reinforce wives cultural positioning as mothers rather than business decision makers. However, the authors suggest that women do not have to remain on the margins of the business 'as long as the agenda is about love and continuity, not power' (Poza and Messer 2001: 34). This view implies that the spouse's power rests in her ability to adjudicate and advise, not in challenging the CEO. In this respect the authors add weight to the notion of the family business as a male domain.

Janjuha-Jivraj's 2004 UK based study focused on nine male owners and successors in migrant family businesses who were asked their views on the spousal role in mediating relations between the two generations. Her study identifies wives 'as a critical buffer' between generations during the succession process (2004: 781). In these family firms the wife/mother is able to act in this way during succession because of cultural influences whereby family and business are more closely entwined in migrant firms. However, the subtle role played by the mother is often unrecognized by

other family members despite its significant influence in successful succession outcomes (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004).

These studies draw on ideas of women's 'natural femininity' in managing relationships in an unproblematic way. While such skills are undoubtedly important in family businesses, this emphasis reinforces gendered divisions of labour, actively recreating existing structures (Pauli 2015) and denies the emotional engagement of men, reinforcing the masculine entrepreneurial standard as independent and detached (Ahl 2006). This literature often focuses on women's competence with emotion and relationships as an important and undervalued resource (Cappuyns 2007, Folker et al. 2002, Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001, Salganicoff 1990a). This small literature also focuses largely on wives positive contributions to succession. There is little attention to their negative influence and what might underpin this, or the more formal ways that wives influence in succession. This research project addresses this gap in the literature.

Some researchers have looked at succession processes in women-owned family businesses to identify whether there are differences to those led by men, or to the succession processes identified as the most effective for successful transfers (Cadieux et al. 2002, Harveston et al. 1997). Neither study finds significant differences in either area, though in women-owned businesses succession planning is more comprehensive with the increasing size and formality of their organizations and where they are reliant on family funding. Size and formality were also important in male-run businesses though the effects were greater for those run by women (Harveston et al. 1997). Cadieux et al. (2002) found that succession processes did not differ significantly from those already identified in the literature but in their small sample of four businesses, there was a lack of planning until the arrival of a qualified successor. As identified in the literature more broadly, family dynamics including trust and good communication were critical to succession decisions. The researchers found that women owners, like their male counterparts, often had intense attachment to the business and struggled to hand over decision-making responsibilities. Astrachan has pointed to the lack of

attention to gender and succession (Astrachan 2002). Drawing on literature on feminine qualities of collaboration and cooperation, he postulates that women's approach might lead to smoother succession planning.

There is another small literature that considers wives' role in socializing children into the business and passing on important values relevant to the business. For example, Iannarelli's (1992) dissertation addresses difference in the socialization of males and females in the family business, including children's perceptions of their mother's influence. She found that mothers were influential in their children's careers in the business and this influence was reiterated in succession decisions. This is 'hidden' power according to Iannarelli. Others agree that wives play an important role in influencing children's involvement in the business and instilling management values, but they do not draw on specific studies in this regard (Cappuyns 2007, Lambrecht 2005). For example the authors suggest mothers play a 'major role' in inculcating values such as 'honesty and respect' as well as 'hard work and perseverance' which contribute to the success of business transfers (Lambrecht and Donckels 2006: 396).

In related research, Greene, Han and Marlow (2013) have shown that self-employed mothers influence daughters' propensity to become entrepreneurs, which suggests mothers working in family businesses might also play an important role in influencing daughters' involvement in the firm. Interestingly, Australian research shows that substantially more female family business managers than male, believe that daughters are as interested in the business as sons. Further, fewer senior family business women than men think work-family balance issues constrain daughters from taking top level positions – 68 percent compared to 47 percent (Dana and Smyrniotis 2013).

This research underscores wives' concerns about daughters' involvement and by extension, succession, thus their absence from succession debates is all the more surprising. While women are increasingly playing more visible roles in family businesses, assumptions about founder or owner-managers as principal decision makers perhaps explains the absence of wives' diverse perspectives.

Family business in the Australian context

Family business research in the Australian context is underdeveloped and tends to derive themes and understandings from the international and particularly, the American literature on this subject. In this respect, a patchwork of commercial surveys, often supported by large financial consultancy firms with interests in wealth preservation and management for their clients, are the predominant measure of the status of family businesses in Australia.

These surveys tell us that 70 percent of businesses are family businesses and that 90 percent are male owned and managed (Dana and Smyrnios 2013). Most CEO's (88 percent) are also male owners. We also know that businesses are generally passed on to sons rather than daughters. One of the reasons speculated by Dana and Smyrnios for the lack of involvement of daughters relates to work-family balance, though the literature suggests there is greater flexibility for women in family businesses. There is little information on what wives do in family businesses but we know they work in 35 percent of them (Dana and Smyrnios 2013). Intriguingly, the most recent KPMG (2015) survey (produced in partnership with the peak family business body, Family Business Australia) indicates that one of the characteristics of high performing family businesses is the presence of a female CEO. However, the survey also indicates a drop in the number of businesses with a female CEO from 23 percent in 2013 to 15 percent in 2015.

Findings often differ markedly, for example, the 2013 MGI Survey authored by Dana and Smyrnios, indicates an increase in problems of succession with 41 percent indicating that it will not be possible to implement leadership succession and only 21 percent indicating that passing on the business to the next generation is their main motivation. Sixty-four percent were seriously considering sale of their businesses. By contrast the 2015 KPMG survey indicates that 60 percent of respondents planned to pass the business to a family member though a high proportion (55 percent) felt successors were not yet sufficiently experienced. Only 21 percent indicated an interest in outright sale. This difference relates to sampling. The MGI survey uses random

sampling of 5000 Australian family businesses while the KPMG sample is made up of 1700 businesses on Family Business Australia and KPMG data bases. This latter sample includes businesses which are likely to be motivated to find solutions to family business problems through institutionalizing processes advocated by associations like the Australian family business body (Parada, Nordqvist and Gimeno 2010).

While the surveys are useful barometers of family business health, performance and future prospects, they cannot tell us very much about why we are seeing such a significant pattern of exclusion of women. Nor do they give us a complex understanding of succession uncertainty.

Chapter Summary

This broad ranging review highlights that the gendered experiences of women in family businesses reflect those of women in the workplace more broadly. These debates highlight that despite the changing gender contract, gender remains a key organizing principle in the private sphere and in the organization of work (Connell 2009, Mulinari and Sandell 2009). This suggests the theory of individualization obscures the degree to which gender relations remain embedded in traditional beliefs and practices (Adkins 1999, McNay 1999, Mulinari and Sandell 2009). It also indicates that family businesses are still positioned as masculine spaces where women's contributions are often seen to occur on the margins of the business.

The pattern of primogeniture in Australia underscores this view. Though the gender research to date has endeavoured to make their broad ranging work of women in family businesses more visible, this often does not provide an understanding of how it is 'relationally constructed' (Hamilton 2013a, McNay 2004: 179). The issue of how women craft a space for themselves in the business and negotiate tensions and conflicts in their intimate and business partnerships is an under-researched area within family business and entrepreneurship scholarship. In particular, their experiences of family caring responsibilities and how these intersect with the business are largely ignored, even though they have the potential to impact upon their business and

continuity perspectives. This thesis is especially concerned to address this absence but also to add nuance through its attention to the different associations wives have to family businesses. In this respect it elaborates how gender plays out materially and symbolically for women with diverse relationships to these businesses by paying attention to the lived social reality of their lives.

In particular, the thesis makes a significant contribution to the understanding of women's influence in children's involvement in the business and succession. It is noteworthy that there has been a lack of scrutiny of wives' perspectives on succession; in itself a comment on women's invisibility. The focus on wives' emotion skills in both studies highlighted in this review emphasizes their informal influence and the literature has little more to say on the subject, unless it is looking at succession in women-owned family businesses (e.g. Cadieux et al. 2002). In this respect, it misses the broad associations women have to the business, and the way their influence can play out in both positive and negative ways. This is especially important in view of the depth of interest and attention to succession issues. The thesis positions issues of succession within the individualization framework by pointing to the increasing fragility of relationships and the need for relationships to be 'negotiated and bargained for' in Giddens words (1992: 96).

This study attends to these issues by asking: how do wives' experiences of work and family life in contemporary family businesses impact on their views and actions in relation to children's involvement and business succession? The thesis asks broad questions about how they participate in the business, how they negotiate responsibilities of care at the boundaries of work and family life, how their experiences, actions and motivations impact on children's involvement and the consequences of these for succession. In this respect it documents the 'living through' of conflicts, struggles, accommodations and investments as women negotiate their relationship to the family, the business and their partners, articulating the consequences of these for visibility and invisibility.

Unlike family business scholars generally, I am not much concerned with organizational issues of performance and growth though they are inherent to this project. Neither am I much concerned about continuity as a function of its importance to the economy. Rather, following Kondo (1990: 9), I am interested to focus on human connectedness, particularly personal and family relationships for those in family businesses, viewed through a sociological and gender lens.

In the next chapter I detail methodological issues including definitional debates in the family business literature, research design and data collection and analysis.

Chapter 2 | Crafting a study

Introduction

This chapter explores the ‘messy business of research’ through an exposition of my own research experiences (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). It engages with the challenges researchers face in producing research that accounts for issues of power between researched and researcher (Mauthner and Doucet 1998, Punch 1998:136, Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002, Rose 1997), is sufficiently reflexive about the researcher’s influence on the research (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, Devault 1990, Mauthner and Doucet 2003), avoids claims to ‘truth’ (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, Haraway 1988, Lincoln and Guba 2003) and tells a coherent and plausible story (Becker 2000). In this chapter I situate myself as a researcher in order to address how my own experiences underpin my research interest (Doucet 2008, Mauthner and Doucet 2003). It also addresses methodological issues associated with doing a PhD whilst embedded in a research team. Specifically, it elaborates family business definitional issues, research design, sampling, recruitment, analytic approaches and ethical dilemmas, which Hammersley (1992) suggests are critical to enabling an assessment of ‘plausibility and credibility’ of the claims the research makes. It begins with a brief precis of how I came to choose the topic for the thesis.

This research is embedded in a broader Australian Research Council funded study into delay and uncertainty in family business succession which was supported by an industry partner. My interest in wives of family business owners was first piqued when the industry partner’s Chief Investigator on the project described working with a (male) client to develop a detailed succession plan for his family business. He indicated how easily the process could come unstuck when wives are excluded. When the plan was presented to his client’s wife she responded: ‘Over my dead body’. She ensured that the plan went back to the drawing board. I revisited the family business literature to see how wives’ perspectives were represented and found that as a group, their

views were barely visible. This suggested a significant gap in our understanding of wives' influence in family business succession planning, triggering my interest.

In describing participants as 'wives', I am aware that I am positioning them as partners to business owners even though some are owners themselves. Fletcher (2014), quoting Kanter (1977), argues that associating households or spouses and families with business 'is significant for encouraging a "feminine sociology"', potentially contributing to the 'feminisation of workplace practices'. Indeed, she indicates a concern that activities associated with the domestic and feminine emphasize these as informal and therefore secondary. I have similar concerns, but my focus on 'wives' and the intersection of the private and the public is to resist an understanding of the former as secondary, but rather to position it as equally important to the success of the business. I also wish to highlight how care and emotion work continues to be positioned as secondary in the way it leaves men free to devote their time to the business. Making their gendered work in the family less visible obscures the degree to which gender inequalities continue to play out in the family business and disrupts narratives of egalitarianism when women continue to be viewed as 'natural' care givers.

Gendered assumptions often underpin family business research and there is little engagement in the mainstream family business literature with a variety of gender theories. Critical engagement with the extent to which cultural practices and institutions such as the family and household impact on women's opportunities does not necessarily presuppose a feminine sociology. Indeed, family business research could be enhanced by greater attention to the 'family qua family' (Holt and Popp 2013) and engaging with sociological theories that elaborate family and gender practices to gain a more rounded perspective on issues of inequality. In this respect, wives' experiences at the intersection of family and work life are where institutional and discursive forces reveal themselves in the everyday lived reality of their social relations (McNay 2004: 175).

The deliberate focus on wives is, on the one hand, a comment on their absence from the succession literature in particular, but often the story of a family business's success as described in the introduction and chapter one. On the other, it puts front and centre the various ways that wives with different associations are co-creators of businesses, though the literature does not always perceive them in this way. There is a long tradition of feminist scholarship exploring the lives and voices of women. Using in-depth interviews to listen to women and understand women's lived experiences on their own terms has been an important feminist practice (Mauthner and Doucet 1998). In this thesis I do not suggest that wives' experiences are generalizable or that I have captured some essence or core of the participant, rather I emphasize partial knowledge. At the same time, I had the advantage of access to interviews from the broader research project which were predominantly with men. Some of my participants were wives of CEOs who were interviewed as part of the broader project.

It was revealing that sometimes the contributions that wives described received less recognition in their husbands stories, than the wives themselves had given them. It was also revealing to hear many male participants speak of their wives in pejorative terms as 'trouble makers'. These findings supported my decision that focusing on the women's stories was important to gaining a deeper understanding of their social experiences. Their accounts are shown to have meaningful effects in their lives (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). By placing their accounts within wider social, cultural and economic frameworks, the thesis endeavours to show, how they are constituted by various gendered discourses but also the influence of their material location in gendered bodies and as mothers.

To avoid homogenizing women and potentially obscuring their differences and their experiences of the tensions and contradictions they encounter (Kondo 1990), this thesis makes significant use of quotes. The aim is to allow participants to tell as much of their own stories as possible in order to capture the depth and complexity of varied experiences.

Research Design and working in collaboration

Doing a study that is part of a large, publicly funded research project has great advantages. You work with people with shared goals and interests making the PhD a less lonely journey than many students often describe. The flipside is that you do not have the same freedom to choose your topic and, along with wrestling with your own demons, you must accommodate others' ideas, timetables and idiosyncrasies about ways of working.

The research team was made up of three Chief Investigators including two Professors and a representative from the industry partner, Pitcher Partners, a Postdoctoral Fellow and myself. Pitcher Partners is a financial services firm of accountants, auditors and advisors. The firm has specific expertise in assisting family businesses with wealth management and preservation and providing support through managing transitions of ownership.

Initially the research design involved undertaking case studies with Pitcher Partner clients, but a decision was taken over a number of meetings to expand it beyond their clients to get a broader understanding of succession issues. This approach involved interviews with as many family businesses as possible and where possible, with multiple family members in those businesses, to get a range of perspectives.

A qualitative approach was adopted as the most suitable given a number of regular Australian surveys captured quantitative data on family businesses including succession. In-depth qualitative interviews were seen as the most effective means of understanding and elaborating issues of concern around family business continuity. The literature indicated that it was a sensitive topic that often involved difficult relations within the family and was sometimes the key reason for family business failure (Barnes and Hershon 1976, Lansberg 1988, Ward 1987). The approach therefore demanded qualitative research techniques which could draw out reflection and ambivalence.

With the input of the industry partner, a recruitment letter was written detailing evidence that succession was fraught with uncertainty and pointing to the consequences of this to the Australia economy. In particular, it highlighted the fact that businesses to the value of approximately \$3.5 trillion dollars would need to change hands over the next ten years as baby boomers retired in large numbers (Smyrniotis and Dana 2006). The industry partner was also influential in helping to craft the interview schedule. Six of the business's founding members were interviewed to provide context and background before we embarked on the research process. Drawing on their wide experience with family businesses over many years and especially the succession process, these interviews were invaluable in helping to pinpoint the central issues to address in the research.

A significant problem emerged in relation to identifying potential participants early in the project. With no official register of family businesses in Australia, the team decided to use the *Australian Business Review Weekly's* (BRW 2011) Top 500 private companies list to recruit appropriate participants. Succession planning was seen as particularly salient for the well-established family businesses on the list as it was likely most would have experienced succession issues. Some were easily identifiable as well-known large family businesses, but the majority were not. Agreeing on a definition which had a multi-generational emphasis was key to overcoming the problem of identification to some extent.

Definitional dilemma

Within the family business literature there has been an on-going debate about the definition of a family business. At its most simplistic, a family business is seen as one in which the family continues to own and control it from one generation to the next (Ward 1987), though there have been a number of more complex definitions which in some way try to include intergenerational involvement. For example Chua, Chrisman and Sharma (1999: 25) describe the family business as one that is 'shaped and pursued' by a group of family members in such a way as to make it 'potentially sustainable across generations'. Likewise, Litz (1995:71) suggests that there be an

intention of the family to keep control or to transfer the business to the next generation of family members. In 2003 a group of scholars developed a definition that combines a number of different definitional ideas which revolve around factors that are critical to the 'essence' of the family firm. They suggest a family business is one that has the:

intention to maintain family control by the dominant coalition; unique, inseparable and synergistic resources and capabilities arising from family involvement; a vision set by the family controlled dominant coalition and intended for trans-generational pursuance and; pursuance of such a vision (Chrisman et al. 2003: 470).

These definitions underpin the perceived importance of planned multi-generational involvement and for the purposes of the broader project, we used this definition to help us identify family businesses on the *BRW* list.

We initially sought to identify family businesses using IBISWORLD, a commercial data base providing comprehensive company information on Australian businesses. The database provided details on board membership, ownership and senior executives in the business. This had limitations as clear links could not always be drawn between family members on boards or in executive positions. Modern trends that impact on family make-up such as divorce and remarriage, blended and step families, wives who keep their own family name and daughters who change theirs all blur the certainty of who can be identified as family and who cannot. In the absence of this certainty we resorted to 'cold calling' a large number of businesses.

By early 2012 this process yielded potential interviewees from 188 family businesses. It was initially assumed that we would access wives through CEOs once we had agreement to their involvement. Ultimately, a lack of interest on the part of male CEOs to facilitate access to their wives led to a decision that I develop my own set of participants outside those on the *BRW* list. This had the advantage of broadening the

project beyond elites, but the experience of trying to define a family business for the broader project, led me to reconsider the definition for my own recruits.

This was driven in part by my reading of the literature, where some family business scholars suggest a multi-generational emphasis tends to exclude first generation businesses. It was also driven by the difficulty of accessing wives who are often 'hidden from view' in stories of business establishment. Women in partnerships with their husbands in first generation businesses, are generally easier to identify.

First generation businesses that owners perceive to be family businesses may only have one generation working in them. They may not have been established with the intention of passing the business on. A decision to involve children or transfer the business to another generation often only becomes a prospect as owners/founders age. This can be influenced by a variety of factors, for example, continuing the business may become important to maintain the owner's lifestyle; a significant trigger such as ill health or death may cause a rethink; or children may suddenly show an interest. These issues can open up the prospect, not initially assumed, that passing the business on is a feasible option.

Westhead and Cowling (1998) and Westhead, Cowling and Howorth (2001) have attempted to address this particular problem by defining the family business as one where the largest family group related by blood or marriage has a controlling stake in the business, the owner-manager describes the firm as a family business, the management team is predominately family members, and the company has experienced an intergenerational transition. Westhead and Cowling (1998: 39) suggest that any two of these characteristics satisfy a definition of a family business. I chose to focus primarily on the first two because they enabled me to incorporate first generation businesses. There is some critique of this definition as failing to adequately provide a demarcation of the boundaries of the family business phenomenon (Schulze and Gedajlovic 2010). Yet, without a broad definition such as this, an understanding of the issues related to passing the business onto a second generation may be

overlooked. In order to ensure first generation businesses were included, I adopted the Westhead and Cowling definition.

Recruitment

A small body of scholarship indicates women are able to exercise influence in the succession planning process (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001). These two studies are small and only one of them actually interviews wives themselves and then only a very small number. The emphasis in these studies on women's emotional skills in helping to manage the succession process limits wives' involvement to informal influence.

My own focus attempts to broaden the current knowledge on wives' influence in succession including both informal and formal practices with a much larger group of participants. With so many businesses in Australia led by men, wives perspectives seemed especially important. My research captures the views of 35 wives in 29 family businesses. All were, or had been, married rather than cohabitating. Two were second wives, one's partner had died and another had divorced. In the case of the latter two, both had taken over running the business that was previously run by their husbands. The research is expressly interested in the impact of dramatic social transformations and the relationship of these to gender organization in the business and children's involvement. In this respect, it asks broad questions including: How do wives participate in the family business and how do they perceive it? How do they negotiate responsibilities of care at the intersection of work and family life? What impact does their participation have on relationships? How does their experience in the business impact on their views/encouragement of children's involvement in the business? What implications does this have for succession planning?

For the purposes of a varied understanding of succession issues, participants were selected on the basis of their diverse associations with the business. Four different groups of wives were interviewed: 1) wives who do not work in the business; 2) wives who work in their husband's business; 3) wives who have taken over the

running of the business from their husbands and; 4) wives who have started a business with their husbands, frequently described in the literature as co-preneurs (Barnett and Barnett 1988).

While intuitively it might be assumed that wives who do not work in the business have less influence on succession than those who do, anecdotal evidence from the literature and the industry partner suggested they were often very influential. As a parent of the potential successor or partner of a son working in the business, non-working wives are likely to have an important stake in the business including succession outcomes (Van Auken and Werbel 2006). Business establishment often involves joint funds, another reason for wives' keen interest regardless of their work status.

My efforts to recruit participants were not straight forward. Gatekeeping by male owners was a problem even when recruiting participants using my own personal and professional networks. While this strategy did yield just under half of my 35 participants, I often had to gain access to wives through male owner/s and success was patchy. Fifteen came through my own networks, seven through snowballing techniques and ten through internet searches, media articles or industry associations. Four interviews from two different family businesses came from the broader research project's recruitment efforts which used the *BRW* Top 500 private companies list to identify family businesses. These interviews came via male CEOs who were recruited by the Postdoctoral Fellow who gained permission for me to make contact with their wives. An ethics approved email was sent to all of my contacts explaining my research and asking for family business contacts.

Generally, there was a concern amongst male owners about wives' involvement in the research. One family business owner who was particularly helpful in providing me with potential contacts, did not suggest his own wife and was 'vague' when I pressed him on her potential involvement. Another agreed to my approaching his own wife for an interview, but when asked if I could interview wives of other family

members, he told me they were off limits. He insisted wives were 'deliberately separated from the business'.

In one instance where I accessed a wife through her husband, he insisted on meeting me and giving me a tour of his business prior to the interview. As we toured the plant, it was made clear to me that this was his vision and his doing. In this respect he was firmly positioning his wife as secondary. In a similar experience to that described by Fletcher (2002), much of what I gleaned from this encounter was 'unspoken'. I understood the 'subtext' of our encounter to mean that whatever his wife had to say, I needed to know that he was the entrepreneur and key decision maker.

In this respect some owner-managers did not 'trust' wives to speak on the subject or felt they would not know enough about the issue, suggesting an entrenched view that wives on the periphery of the business have little influence. Wives too, showed concern about involvement. Some refused to participate either because they feared saying 'too much', felt they did not have much to offer, or felt their husbands were the appropriate 'face' of the business.

One participant who agreed to an interview without her husband's knowledge indicated the riskiness of her decision. She told me: 'my husband would die if he knew I was doing this' (I49). Her concern about doing the interview without his knowledge contributed to her desire not to name the business despite assurances of anonymity, which led to this confusing exchange:

Interviewee: ...It's not that sort of business. What happened ... we had a business and then we sold that business and then we went into this other business which we ran our business from and then we brought out this other business.

Interviewer: So you brought a business into the ...

Interviewee: We bought out a co-op.

Interviewer: Right and you brought that into the broader business?

Interviewee: No we bought the co-op and we bought ... and we own it now but it was what we originally did (I49).

Following this exchange, she realised the impossibility of my gaining any real understanding without some background information that would identify the business. In order to accommodate her fear of exposure I turned off the tape.

In the four categories that made up the participants, I interviewed nine wives who had worked or were working in the business, six wives who had never worked in the business seventeen co-preneurs and three wives who had taken over the family business. Participants ranged in age from 29 to 72. A broad range of participants were captured in terms of size and turnover. Employee numbers varied significantly from four to more than 160 and many more casual or seasonal employees in some instances. Annual turnover ranged between \$300,000 and \$564 million.

I interviewed some women associated with horticultural businesses (for example fruit and flower growing) but I did not talk to wives involved in traditional farming which has its own discrete literature on succession and passing the business on to successive generations on account of its distinctive dynamics.

The interviews

The interviews were conducted in participants' homes, cafes and occasionally in their place of work. They varied in length from 45 minutes to two and a half hours. The interview schedule was designed to explore the perspectives of women with different levels of engagement with the business and the succession process. It had a particular emphasis on their feelings, views and actions in relation to children's involvement but also their experiences more generally in the business and the family including the division of labour. I utilised a semi-structured interview schedule and started by asking respondents to recount their own stories. Specifically, I invited them to tell me about themselves, including their own families, where they grew up, how

they met their partners and how they became involved in the business if that was applicable. This enabled a free-flowing narrative to emerge which often built an early rapport as participants felt able to tell their own story. In the telling of their stories most of my questions were answered and I used the interview schedule more as a guide to ensure I had covered all the issues I wished to canvas.

I was interested in their level of engagement in the business, position descriptions if they had one, role in starting or providing support to the business, how they managed the issue of working in close proximity with their partners if they did, how they managed work and care and the degree to which they were involved in decision making. For those not working in the business, I was interested in how they perceived the business, whether or how they interacted with it and in what ways it impacted on their everyday lives. In relation to children's involvement, I inquired about whether children were encouraged to be involved early or at all, what kind of values were fostered, whether there was any sibling rivalry and how it was handled and family conflict more generally. I also explored issues of gender in relation to the involvement of both sons and daughters in the business, whether there were plans in place for business continuity and their views on inheritance.

Jennifer Mason (2002: 227) suggests that knowledge gained in this way 'is a co-production since it is dependent upon the combined efforts of the interviewer and participant in conjuring up the relevant contexts from which they think, talk, act and interpret'. Through this approach, the interview schedule became more of a prompt for me to ensure all the issues I was interested in exploring were covered. This ensured consistency in the information that was gathered. My choice of approach was grounded in the well-established sociological practice of asking about everyday life given that this is how people make sense of their lives (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, Mason 2002).

A question of power

Feminist perspectives on research often assume a powerful researcher and highlight the importance of not abusing that power (Acker, Barry and Esseveld 1991). At the same time, one cannot presume objectivity on the part of the researcher. Positioning one's self in relation to the researched is a way to 'ground knowledge' (Haraway 1988:193) by elaborating the social and political position of the researcher. This emphasizes that the researcher's location in the social world - their gender, race, class and sexuality - influences the research process (DeVault 1996, Finch 1984, Punch 1998, Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). I therefore briefly 'locate' myself to provide some understanding of my background and my motivations to undertake this research.

I am a middle aged, white woman who has come late to academia from a background in journalism and public relations. I am married with two children, a daughter and son both in early adulthood. I grew up in a family business of sorts. My father was a fisherman and at one time we owned a fish shop run by my mother. As children we were coerced into shelling and packaging scallops, a particularly odious task. Something that remains from that experience, apart from the mind numbing repetitiveness, was the expectation that children would 'pull their weight' (usually for no pay). It was not something you questioned or even really thought about. You just did it.

My choice to develop skills in journalism and public relations took me as far from that life as it is possible to imagine. Later, after my son was born I established my own business, consulting to private enterprise and government on communications and stakeholder relations. Around the same time my husband and I also went into partnership with another couple to establish a vineyard. My interest in issues of family and gender materialised and gained form during these years, related especially to the problems of managing family life and the running of these two businesses.

Like many of the participants, I ended up with responsibility for book keeping in the vineyard business while running two households (one in the country and one in the city) and supposedly working part-time (four days a week) in my own business. In my

experience, part-time is never that. Invariably I worked on weekends and often late at night, after the children were in bed, to meet the needs of my clients. It was these experiences that precipitated my return to study and underpinned my interest in gendered experiences of family and work.

The issues I encountered in my own businesses were often also central to respondents' stories about working in their businesses. Interestingly, it never seems to take long to find common ground with women who articulate personal experiences with such familiarity. Our similarities enabled me to express both solidarity and empathy with them around these common issues.

In this respect, the interviews involved reciprocity in terms of sharing experiences. This approach is a well-established feminist method which emphasizes the importance of developing relations of trust and is seen to reduce the asymmetry between researcher and subject, actively undermining issues of power (Acker et al. 1991, Finch 1984). However, it is worth noting that it is not always the researcher who holds the power in the research situation. Cotterill (1992) argues that 'interviews are fluid encounters where balances shift between and during different interview situations, and there are times when researchers as well as the researched are vulnerable' (Cotterill 1992:593). The issue of power, or at least the extent to which it can have detrimental effects, rests to large degree on the status of who is being interviewed (Cotterill 1992). My research involved mostly well-educated and articulate women who at times remained tight lipped despite my efforts to coax their stories from them. They told only as much as they chose and their manner and demeanour left me in no doubt that there were places I could not venture.

At the same time, women sometimes revealed intimate details of family life that may have left them feeling vulnerable. For example, one participant related a very personal episode that was both painful and humiliating, but it seemed to be a cathartic experience. Our rapport was such that she later said she felt like she had known me for years. My experience highlights the dilemma that researchers encounter when deeply

personal revelations are revealed. Ruth Behar eloquently sums up my feelings about this.

We ask for revelations from others but we reveal little or nothing of ourselves; we make others vulnerable, but we ourselves remain invulnerable (Behar cited in Fine, Weis, Wesseen and Wong 2000:169).

In my research approach I hoped to overcome this dilemma, yet, in retrospect, creating such a rapport also had its drawbacks. While it provided for a rich research experience, listening back to the interviews I felt my sensitivity to their revelations meant I missed opportunities to explore how relations in the family or business were shaped by these difficult issues. In this respect, sharing experiences in the spirit of reciprocity served to create a 'friendship' ethic. Once created, it made it difficult to risk undermining that rapport with questions that may have pushed the boundaries of the 'friendship'.

The reciprocity approach is not a panacea for equalizing issues of power. Indeed differentials in power are inevitable and researchers need to be cognisant of them (Mauthner and Doucet 2003). The researcher still holds the privileged position of guiding the interview process, interpreting the interview material and making the final decision about what is excluded and included (Acker et al. 1991). This was an issue I grappled with constantly when analysing my data and writing my findings chapters in terms of both faithfully representing participants' experiences whilst also viewing them within the wider social, cultural and economic milieu (Mauthner and Doucet 1998).

At the same time, the range of ethical issues I confronted brought me hard up against my own inexperience as a researcher. At the outset, I did not fully grasp the weightiness of potential ethical dilemmas and the responsibility that is imposed upon researchers. These issues came abruptly into view in the deeply personal and often painful recounting of family conflicts, ruptures and disappointments.

The importance of both protecting and re-presenting these stories and story-tellers seemed an onerous responsibility not least because I was, at the point of the telling, what Plummer describes as the 'coaxer' or seducer of stories (2002:21). It made me question what brings people to the 'brink of revealing all' (Plummer 2002:24-25) and in what circumstances, especially when some participants were frustratingly tight lipped or emotionally cool. More to the point, it made me consider more deeply than I had previously, that I had been entrusted with fragments of lives that needed to be 'handled' respectfully and carefully. Yet my attempts to equalize power in the interviews and think through ethical dilemmas must also be considered within broader issues of social and cultural power. Many of the participants were powerful women who were also protecting their own powerful interests. There is never complete transparency in the research encounter but rather a complex negotiation where inevitably 'some voices may be enhanced while others are silenced' (Mauthner and Doucet 2003: 423).

Analysis: Making sense of the data

My analysis utilizes a voice-centred relational method which emerged out of psychology (Brown and Gilligan 1992) but has been recrafted for sociology by Natasha Mauthner and Andrea Doucet (1998, 2003). The method is grounded in a relational ontology which Mauthner and Doucet (1998: 125) argue is similar to the sociological emphasis on 'understanding individuals within their social context'. As Edwards and Ribbens (1997: 17) argue, 'voice is a concept that can be used with different sets of meanings'. In relation to this research it is organized around 'listening' and 'hearing'. The use of this method along with the focus on women's experiences of relationships in the family and the business is to large extent a challenge to a hegemonic individualism (Ribbens McCarthy 2012) which has often been evident in the family business literature.

The methodology emphasizes different levels of analysis in terms of relationships with others and within the broader social, cultural and economic context.

These are viewed as 'critical backdrops' to participants' 'voiced experiences' in the way that material, ideological and discursive elements are revealed (Mauthner and Doucet 2003: 423). While the method, as articulated by Brown and Gilligan, had implicit feminist standpoint assumptions, Mauthner and Doucet have questioned the degree to which participants' accounts can be said to be completely transparent. Rather, they suggest that what is gleaned from the research encounter is always partial knowledge but at the same time something of participants' 'articulated experience and subjectivity' can be grasped (2003: 423).

A relational perspective has been explored and debated across a range of disciplines including psychology (Chodorow 1978, Gilligan 1982, Kagitcibasi 2005, Miller 2012, Miller, Jordan, Kaplan, Stiver and Surrey 1991), feminist philosophy and law (Baier 1985, Benhabib 1992, Code 1991, 2000, Friedman 1996, 2003, Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000, Meyers 1989, Meyers 2005, Nedelsky 1989, Oshana 2006), sociology, including family and relationships (Finch and Mason 1993, Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012, Smart 2007) and organizational and leadership studies (Fletcher 1999, Helgesen 1990, Hosking, Dachler and Gergen 1995, Rosener 1990). Gilligan (1982), Miller et al (1991) and Chodorow (1978) developed theoretical perspectives based on the experiences of gendered development which suggest females have a relational/caring orientation while males have a justice/separation orientation.

From this work a plethora of research emerged in relation to the importance of connectedness and interdependence symbolically associated with femininity, in a challenge to their traditional subordination to masculine concepts of self-sufficiency and individualism. Concepts such as self-in-relation (Surrey 1985) and growth-in-connection (Miller et al. 1991) were coined to capture this relational orientation. This work fostered the idea of the 'female advantage', positing women as better equipped for contemporary organizational leadership because of their relational traits (Helgeson 1990, Rosener 1990). These include but are not limited to power sharing, collaboration, empathy, team work and nurturing relationships in a business settings (Carr-Rufino 1993, Fondas 1997, Loden 1985, Rapoport and Bailyn 1996, Rosener

1990). The 'relational turn' in leadership studies has taken the traits symbolically associated with femininity and applied them more broadly to the leadership paradigm (Ospina and Uhl-Bien 2012). In this respect it emphasizes the collective dimensions and social embeddedness of leadership (Hosking et al. 1995). Within this frame, leadership is understood as a process of mutual influence (Uhl-Bien 2006).

Within feminist philosophy there have been intense debates in relation to an understanding of autonomy. The idea of the autonomous individual has been critiqued as 'inherently masculinist' because of its widespread cultural association with the individual and the rational (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000: 3). In their review of feminist relational perspectives, Mackenzie and Stoljar (2000: 5) argue that this is especially visible in the widely understood caricature of the 'self-sufficient, rugged male individualist' which is closely related to the heroic entrepreneur identified in the previous chapter. A feminist reconceptualization of autonomy as 'relational autonomy' captures a range of shared convictions about the embeddedness of persons in social relations and the idea that identities are shaped in complex ways through the intersections of class, race, gender and ethnicity (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000: 4). Feminists have been concerned to challenge the concept of human nature that is promoted by ideas of self-sufficiency, separation and individuality. These concepts are permeated by discourses of rights and rational self-interest (Code 1991). Code, for example, argues that this concept of human nature privileges 'substantive independence' over other values that emerge through interdependence such as 'trust, loyalty, friendship and caring' (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000: 6). Feminists generally agree that retaining aspects of autonomy are important for 'women's emancipation'. Friedman (2003: 17) suggests autonomy has 'individuating effects' on persons but never loses its 'social rootedness'.

Similarly, sociologists have been engaged in a debate about individualization which has become the primary lens through which much sociological analysis of family life is viewed. The field gives significant attention to the exploration of changing forms of intimacy and relationships. In a challenge to theories of individualization and

increasing fragility of family ties, close family relationships are seen by many theorists as crucial to the development of personhood (Smart and Shipman 2004). These ties can be constraining as well as supportive and in this respect relationality exists on a continuum (Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012). Smart's (2007) efforts to reconceptualise family and relationships through the idea of personal life recognises the central place of the individual without acceding to separateness. Rather she emphasizes the individual as immersed in webs of connectivity. In her account, generational networks, including families and others to whom individuals have emotional connections remain significant in the imaginary, as well as embodied being. While this is not a new idea, Smart suggests it often gets overshadowed by the cultural emphasis on the autonomous individual. While there is an acceptance among these scholars that the individual has (limited) agency or autonomy there is a deep commitment to social embeddedness of individuals (Mason 2004).

The issue of interdependence and connectedness in families is also widely debated in social psychology where there has long been an emphasis on individual independence as an indispensable part of healthy human development (Cross and Madson 1997, Daniels 1990, Kagitcibasi 1996, 2005:405-406). Kagitcibasi describes this longstanding view as a 'cherished' cultural value reflecting the individualistic Western perspective on 'human nature'. This is represented in the developmental expectation that adolescents disengage and distance themselves from parents to achieve autonomy. This model of independence and self-sufficiency, she suggests, is also linked to contemporary economic development. While Kagitcibasi points to an increasing debate within psychology about the importance of connectedness with family for individual well-being, the emphasis remains on the process of separation-individuation (Daniels 1990). Kagitcibasi argues that there is a need to 'distinguish material and psychological interdependencies in the family' (2005: 411). The need for material interdependences is reduced by greater affluence but psychological interdependency, or what she calls, 'closely-knit selves', remains through a deeply embedded culture of relatedness (2005: 411). From this perspective 'the connectedness with the growing child is desired, rather than separateness' (2005:

411). In this model of psychological interdependence, relatedness and autonomy co-exist satisfying two basic human needs.

The relational analysis utilised in this thesis is grounded in an interpretative approach which emphasizes embodied voices as always in relationship with the self and others and shaped in myriad ways by society, history and culture (Gilligan, Spencer, Weinberg and Bertsch 2006). The method is based in an interpretive tradition that includes dimensions of phenomenology and hermeneutics both of which reject the idea of the isolated self (Mauthner and Doucet 2003). An interpretative approach emerged as a challenge to methods used in the natural sciences and was argued to be better suited to understanding human experience (Crotty 1998, Mishler 1990, Schwandt 1994). The interpretive assumption is that knowledge is constructed intersubjectively through meanings and understandings that are formed through engagement with the social world (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, Angen 2000). The relationship between interpreter and interviewee is critical to this interpretation, particularly the assumptions that researchers bring to the encounter which need to be accounted for (Crotty 1998).

In paying attention to the perspective of the person in the 'lifeworld' as phenomenologists call the everyday realm, the fluidity of experience and the contextual and relational aspects that underpin thought, speech and action indicate the difficulty of grasping a unitary truth of human behaviour. Rather, interpretivist researchers aim for a deeper understanding of what it means to be human (Angen 2000, Crotty 1998). They look to what is revealed about the objectives, values, and beliefs, including the taken-for-granted assumptions of social actors in their 'lived' everyday experiences (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, Angen 2000).

Feminist theorists have also been advocates of interpretive methodology, especially the value of women expressing their experience from their own perspective or standpoint. This is considered important in the historical context of research written largely from the perspective of men (Acker et al. 1991, Devault 1990, 1996, Harding 1986, Oakley 1981, Smith 1987, Stanley and Wise 1983). Smith (1992: 90)

highlights the political nature of starting inquiry from women's standpoint because it points to the material locations where women 'live their lives', highlighting gender differences in experience and attitudes (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000, DeVault 1996). As women have moved steadily into the workforce and ideas of equality become increasingly normative, it is often as women describe their everyday lives that entrenched gendering practices are revealed as 'common sense', highlighting how they are situated within relations of power (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002). In this respect, an interpretive methodology seeks out implicit meanings and motivations that often go unrecognized. Bourdieu, for example, argues that in reconstructing lived experiences it is necessary to account for the limits of awareness including misrecognition and non-recognition often concealed within common sense (Bourdieu 1977, 2000). This means interpretation should take us beyond the descriptions of how people understand themselves by placing their stories within wider social, cultural and economic contexts (Josselson 2013).

The idea that experience can provide insight into 'reality' is called into question by post structuralists who argue experience only arises in language and discourse and therefore is an unreliable basis for claiming knowledge (Scott 1992). This idea has led to intense debates about the validity of experience as some feminists try to rescue the concept as a basis for understanding some of the realities of individuals' lives. In this respect they have argued that 'people live in real bodies, in real social relationships' and indeed that discourses themselves have real effects on people's lives (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002: 134). Alcoff (2000) also argues that experiences offer the potential to disrupt dominant knowledge. McNay (2004: 180) insists that 'experience', must be rethought in order to provide some purchase on 'self-hood, intention and reflexivity', without presuming that some essential core or truth is being revealed (Alcoff 1988, Alcoff 2000, Josselson 2013, Mauthner and Doucet 2003, Stanley and Wise 1983). The voice-centred relational method used in this thesis resonates with these arguments in its attention to the way participants' experiences are linked to 'abstract systems of power' (McNay 2004: 184). While the feminist project has often been associated with making visible the experiences of those who

are marginalized, it has not always explained how these are 'relationally constructed' (McNay 2004: 179). The relational emphasis of the method employed speaks to that concern. It also speaks to the need to make connections to 'extra-discursive realities' (Ramazanoglu and Holland 2002) in the exploration of both material and discursive effects in women's voiced experience of their social relations (McNay 1999, 2004).

In its attention to multi-layered voices telling diverse stories, the method allowed me to move between the personal, the social and the cultural with relative ease. It is also a method which maintains the context of the parts of stories within the whole in the necessity to constantly move between the two as I followed different leads to see where they might take me. This interpretive approach is somewhat at odds with recent enthusiasm for qualitative computer coding which 'confers a scientific objectivity to what is fundamentally a subjective and interpretive process' (Mauthner and Doucet 2003: 415). At the same time, my own experience of dealing with an overwhelming amount of data led me to look more favourably on such programs. In this respect I saw it as a useful tool for organizing evidence once the analysis was complete. As I planned each findings chapter I used NVivo to organize quotes relevant to the different topics I was addressing for ease of access as I needed them. Like Mauthner and Doucet, I have adapted the method to suit the circumstances of my research project (Doucet 2007, Mauthner and Doucet 1998).

Within this method, analysis evolves using a 'listening guide' which preferences 'listening to' rather than 'reading' the transcript because the former requires 'active participation on the part of the teller and the listener' (Gilligan et al. 2006: 256). The approach requires four separate 'listenings' which supports the idea of tuning into the story being told at multiple levels, enabling the different voices to emerge from a particular transcript (Doucet 2007). Gilligan et al (2006) argue that each voice bears the marks of the body as well as something of that person's history and culture.

The first two readings are more prescribed while the latter two are shaped by the researcher's own particular interests. In the first reading the researcher looks for what story is being told, what images and metaphors are repeated, and the dominant

themes. This is the macro context where a preliminary or raw interpretation begins (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). In this reading, the researcher adopts a 'reflexive strategy' (Doucet 2007) by reading for herself in the text, positioning herself in relation to the participant in terms of her social location and emotional and intellectual responses and how they influence the interview and data interpretation (Mauthner and Doucet 1998, 2003). However, Mauthner and Doucet (1998:122) caution that 'it is not easy to grasp the unconscious filters through which we experience the world', suggesting that it is difficult to be fully aware of how our deepest feelings may find their way into our interpretations. To the extent that this was possible, I took note of my feelings and assumptions as I 'listened', later reflecting upon them as I saw patterns appearing in the data, especially where they challenged my own beliefs.

The second reading seeks to know how participants speak of themselves within the bounds of social context before the researcher speaks of them (Doucet 2007). Gilligan et al suggest this is a crucial component of the relational method as it works against objectifying the participant through the creation of 'I' poems. This involves forming stanzas made up of parts of sentences which contain 'I', 'we' and 'you'. This process makes the narrator central and assists in identifying instances where there may be a shift in how the person perceives themselves (Doucet 2007). The process, though labour-intensive, provided interesting insights not initially picked up in the first listening and was particularly useful in helping to identify contradictions and silences highlighting the complexity of 'crafting selves' (Kondo 1990).

A section of Alison Carazo's (I12) 'I' poem illustrates the benefits of this approach:

I had no qualms

I always played a strong and active role

I've got a pretty strong push

I'm pretty dogged

I wouldn't allow them

I made him

I push him

This participant represented herself as a strong, capable woman. She takes control of situations, does not give in easily and is a bit authoritarian. This is what I 'heard' in the two- and-a-half hour interview. But the 'I' poem also drew out a more vulnerable voice that was harder to hear because it was overwhelmed by her determination and strength.

I had to be a woman

I had to be barefoot

I played that role

I struggled

It is interesting how she positions herself in an oppositional way to the previous stanza where she is strong and capable. There are two voices here which reflect both a challenge to cultural norms and values and a subordination to them. This vulnerable voice was heard less often but it provided a more nuanced understanding of the complexity of her feelings and provided insight into contradictions that emerged in her story. The 'I' poems generally made me more attuned to contradiction which often indicated less stability in relationships than their stories would otherwise suggest.

As mentioned earlier, this process did not yield transparent insight into some core or essential self (Doucet 2007:282). Rather, as Doucet suggests they can provide 'streams of light into what can metaphorically be called inner worlds'. The problem of the 'transparent self' was made clear during one of my interviews with a participant who presented a persona that was forthright, professional and capable. She indicated the relationship with her partner was egalitarian and based upon mutual respect. However, a chance encounter with her husband gave me the opportunity to see them interact and what I saw surprised me. The husband proceeded to retell me things his wife had already told me and to override her frustrated interjections that the issues

had already been covered. That brief moment in which my participant struggled to be heard called into question what I thought I had come to know of her during the interview. Holloway and Jefferson (2000) suggest that too often researchers assume they have access to interviewees' subjectivities – what they call the 'transparent self-problem'. They argue that a presumption that 'these accounts are unproblematic is counterproductive to the research process' (Holloway and Jefferson 2000:3). At the same time, problems associated with 'managing the relationship' that this respondent had alluded to during the interview, suddenly made more sense as a result of this encounter. I understood most clearly at that point the partial nature of participants' 'truths'.

The third 'reading' of the transcripts I call 'Relational Worlds'. In listening to participants' voices, I was specifically listening 'for and against conventions' of relationships - personal, societal and cultural (Brown and Gilligan 1992: 29). Power relations and dominant ideologies emerge in this reading and important discourses became apparent. In particular, 'common sense' or taken-for-granted assumptions embedded in cultural practices and wider structural relations emerged, especially in relation to gendered outcomes. The emphasis was therefore on how relationships were negotiated in work and family life and the consequences of these negotiations for women and their children.

This 'listening' was set against the two key theoretical frameworks I utilize in this thesis, individualization theory and gender as a 'lived' social relation. Alvesson and Skoldberg argue for the importance of using different theoretical paradigms as part of a reflexive methodology (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000). In this way existing theory can be extended or challenged. The analysis was also informed by my broad engagement with research and theory in the areas of feminism, entrepreneurship and family business, families, and gender equality and difference. This listening was the basis of a more systematic interpretation 'allowing consideration of different meanings in the empirical material' (Alvesson and Skoldberg 2000: 250). For example, almost without exception wives emphasized choice in relation to children's involvement in the business. This emphasis strongly supported individualism and autonomy resonating

with the individualization thesis in which individual lives are described by Giddens (1991: 197) as a 'life politics' where choice, reflexivity and ethics are an individual project necessitated by rapid economic, political and social change. Yet this reading also made apparent that by professing choice for children, participants were concerned to protect and sustain relationships and children's well-being by not applying pressure and encouraging children to follow their own passions. Relational debates in the various disciplines outlined above, emphasize the paradox of wives articulation of choice, which operated within a framework of connectedness. This phenomenon reinforces the argument that autonomy needs to be understood relationally.

From a gender perspective, I identified how the impact of gender inequalities emerge in the experiences of the participants and how they challenged, accommodated or invested in them. In this respect gender identity emerges strongly as a set of potentialities and an on-going process that requires negotiation rather than just the imposition of gender norms (McNay 1999, 2004). For example, I noticed a pattern emerging in participants' stories about equality in the business and intimate relationship. This led me to listen more closely for how issues of egalitarianism played out in relationships. Understanding how women participated in the business, how they viewed their participation and how they negotiated work and family arrangements was significant to this approach. On the one hand, for those in partnerships their depth of involvement and commitment at start up, including financial contributions, suggested an egalitarianism in the partnership. Yet their stories revealed gendered practices including traditional care arrangements, occupational segregation, limitations to their contributions because of family commitments, struggles over recognition and the ideology of 'one boss', all of which led to variable outcomes for participants.

Their stories articulated both an increasing expectation and practice of democratization in their relationships and I therefore looked for ways that this was realised. Further patterns emerged that suggested an interplay of institutionalized

masculine privilege, traditional family obligations and economic rationalism were combined with new expectations and sometimes negotiations around gender equality, especially for those working in the business. However, the 'naturalness' of women's responsibility for care and also men's capacity to lead suggested deeply embedded beliefs about conventional practices of masculinity and femininity as suggested by McNay (1999). This called into question the extent of gender refashioning in the lives of these participants. Within their lived practice, few saw, or even thought about, new possibilities for egalitarian solutions to family and work responsibilities or to substantive issues of equality in their relationships. Reflexivity about these issues appeared to be subordinated to the demands of the family and the business. At the same time, I identified patterns amongst a small group of participants where they also seemed to surprise themselves in their ability to drive the growth of the business, or who took for granted their capacity to manage important aspects of the business. It was these diverse outcomes that began to intrigue me and to which I began to focus more attention.

The final reading specifically looked at family issues and the way in which respondents thought about, articulated and idealized family. I was interested in the relationship between these articulations and the involvement of children in the business. In this respect I drew on the work of Gillis (1997) whose book *A World of their own making: Myth, ritual and the quest for family values* got me thinking about how the imagined family we 'live by' impacts on every day interactions (Smart 2007) in the family business. Gillis suggests we are constantly at work on the 'ideal' family of our imagining through myth, ritual and image that constitute family life as nurturing and protective although this is frequently at odds with the reality of family relations. I 'glean' the imagined family through the way interviewees often 'represent' family and intimate relationships in highly idealized ways early in the interview. However, cracks in this imagery are revealed as participants become more comfortable and open during the interview providing a window into the family we 'live with'. Strong emotional responses to family issues gave me confidence that what I was capturing in these stories was meaningful to them and had significant effects

I wrote detailed summaries of the interviews as I completed each 'listening'. This was time consuming but effective in gaining a deep understanding of the data. However, the protracted process of writing very detailed accounts forced me to rethink my approach after completing about half of the interviews. Some summaries were over 5000 words long and I realised I could not sustain this approach in the timeframe available to me. While I continued with the four readings, I reduced the size of the summaries, except for the third reading – relational worlds because of its importance in elaborating personal, societal and cultural dynamics. Making sense of the data was very much an iterative and creative process as I worked backwards and forwards between the underlinings, highlighting, notes and summaries and the research questions to identify what the process had revealed to me and what evidence there was to support my interpretations.

However, turning it into a coherent argument was challenging because the participants were diverse in terms of their relationships to the business. There were no easy connections to be made between children's involvement in the business and women's relationship to it. In some families where women had very little influence in decision making, children were involved in the business and in other instances where wives had considerable influence but were ambivalent about children's involvement, children were employed in the business.

I experimented with a variety of frameworks. In the first instance I considered wives as either family centred or business centred. Unfortunately, the data did not delineate easily into these categories. In fact, there was considerable cross over. I then tried hierarchies of power and influence among the different groups of women but the contradictions and complexities of their stories resisted such neat divisions. A further attempt to structure my argument around wives' experiences at different points in time was hampered because many businesses were not first generation and some participants not actively involved in the business.

Drawing on Kondo's (1990) ethnography, *Crafting Selves* which was set in a small Japanese family business, I finally I settled on the metaphor of 'crafting' to

capture the on-going project of not just crafting identity but doing so through crafting business and family life and the future of the business. The metaphor captures the resourcefulness of participants as they negotiate new opportunities under conditions of constraint. This approach encompassed all participants, not just those working in the business. It was a direction that resonated with my desire to put the physical, emotional and intellectual contributions of wives' front and centre while also drawing out how their experiences impacted on their views about children's involvement.

While Kondo focuses on how selfhood and identity emerge in the 'arenas of company and family', I focus on the ways that wives either 'craft' a place for themselves or have it crafted for them in the sense of exclusion or limitations to influence. In one sense the two overlap as constraint and contingency enter into everyday interactions in the business. In another sense they are separate in the way that some wives are clearly influential while others have almost no opportunity to influence outcomes. As a metaphor it also seemed to illuminate the process I engaged in to develop a methodological strategy; hence the title of this chapter.

Finally, I also want to revisit the issue of reflexivity raised earlier in the chapter, in more detail. Mauthner and Doucet (2003) note that researchers who position themselves in relation to the research risk deploying their positions 'as badges' (Patai cited in Mauthner and Doucet 2003:419) with little impact on the actual interpretive process. To avoid that, I spent some time thinking about how the gendered experiences of inequality of the participants, particularly in terms of division of labour in the household, resonated with me. This issue, and the way women endeavoured to adapt to both the needs of the family and their work, has been a consistent academic focus for me. I was very closely attuned to these stories, not only because they resonated but because they seemed to be at the very heart of entrenched inequality.

One of the key reasons I struggled to find an effective framework was because of the difficulty in trying to 'place' alternative narratives that minimized these issues. On the one hand I saw more egalitarian arrangements as exemplars of how work and intimate relations could work, and on the other I found it difficult to overcome my

scepticism that this was the ‘real story’. Indeed, I fell into the trap of romanticizing the voices of women I felt were marginalized because they resonated so much with my own story, while feeling a need to silence voices that did not. As I worked through the different frameworks it became clear that the unevenness in gendered outcomes in family businesses *was* the story and that this provided important insights into continuity and change in regard to the renegotiation of gender relations in late modernity (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1992, McNay 1999, 2000).

Introducing the participants

Before proceeding to my first findings chapter which reveals the way wives craft family businesses, I introduce the participants (with pseudonyms) to give the reader some understanding of the range of industries in which they are located. The following table uses Australian Bureau of Statistics business classifications (Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006). ID numbers are not sequential because all interviews including those from the broader project were combined in one table for administrative purposes and so researchers could keep track of what each other was doing. It was useful when writing papers to have the interviews combined in this way.

ID No.	Participant Name	Business Industry
8	Anna Guest	Other services
12	Alison Carazo	Agriculture
13	Jessica Kelly	Agriculture
16	Fiona McIntyre	Agriculture/Manufacturing
19	Freya Janz	Agriculture/Manufacturing
20	Meredith Francis	Manufacturing & Retail Trade
22	Jenny Marsden	Transport
23	Rachel Bauer	Retail Trade

24	Maria Robertson	Retail Trade
25	Sandra Metcalf	Agriculture/Manufacturing
27	Amanda Heatherton	Manufacturing
34	Chloe Moore	Retail Trade
48	Jane Barone	Other services
49	Rennie Mitchell	Transport
50	Vivian Philpot	Accommodation and Food Services
51	Emma Martin	Retail Trade
52	Eva Herrera	Agriculture/Manufacturing
53	Hilary Mountford	Wholesale Trade
54	Robyn Combes	Retail Trade
55	Kate Williams	Wholesale Trade
56	Vikki Simmons	Retail Trade
57	Marion Rogers	Retail Trade
60	Lauren Hilton	Retail Trade
68	Christine Brandt	Other services
69	Julie Gantner	Agriculture
70	Harriet Farrelly	Agriculture
71	Imogen Howcroft	Agriculture
72	Rhonda Harris	Transport
73	Moira Lindsey	Agriculture

74	Sonya Hickson	Transport
75	Charlotte Bailey	Agriculture
76	Yolanda Crimmins	Other services
77	Joyce Hall	Manufacturing
83	Wendy Maugham	Other services
87	Sharon Wilkinson	Manufacturing

Chapter 3 | Crafting a business: wives' contributions

Introduction

This chapter considers wives' participation in the family business to gain a more nuanced understanding of their contributions and how their experiences impact on their feelings about the business and how they position themselves and are positioned within it. 'Participation' is used in broad terms and includes the work that 'non-working'² wives do in support of the business. The chapter emphasizes the variable experiences of wives and their different understandings of their contributions. It outlines their role in business establishment in the case of wives' in partnerships, the problems of recognition and authority for wives joining existing businesses, the social capital brought by non-working wives and the disruption to the entrepreneurial narrative by those wives who take over the business. It also engages with their contributions in terms of innovation, expansion and the efficient day-to-day running of the business. This attention introduces an understanding of the depth and breadth of the work wives undertake but also reveals issues related to equality, utilisation of skills and exclusion. Consequently, it shows how these participants manage conflict, contradiction, ambivalence and tension, as they negotiate the often delicate relations of combining intimacy and work.

The chapter draws attention to a strong discourse of equality in relation to the couple and business partnership. At the same time, wives' stories are frequently contradictory making it difficult to untangle what an emphasis on equality really means. The chapter begins by outlining the broad details of participants' contributions to the business. It then addresses issues of conflict and tension and the strategies wives use to try to resolve them. Finally, the discussion turns to more egalitarian arrangements between some couples in business. In this respect, the chapter

² By non-working I do not suggest they do not work at all, as most have careers of their own. I use quote marks this first time to denote that non-working means not working in the business. Hereafter, non-working (without quote marks) implies this.

articulates the unevenness with which reflexivity arises in regard to gendered practices and participants' ability to foster change.

Wives in partnerships

For wives in partnerships, the idea of equality is often expressed in terms of 'team work' and a shared investment in time, energy and commitment to the business. This occurs despite the fact that most participants assert the business emerges as a result of husbands' ideas or skills. Participants describe the need for on-going full or part-time external work on the part of one or both partners to fund the business, long hours, a requirement to develop new skills, learning through trial and error, and sometimes hard physical work.

Robyn Combes, for example, draws on the notion of team work and sharing external work to illustrate the egalitarian nature of her partnership with her husband. She describes how they started a new business only six weeks after they met, buying 'trash 'n treasures' and 'so-called antiques' (I54) and doing them up. They each continued to hold down other paid work because they lacked the capital to establish the business. Pooling their resources, they managed to open a store selling plants and furniture which was open 'from 10 in the morning to 10 at night'. Robyn explains that she ran the store during the day while her husband worked and he would run it at night while she worked. Neither had experience in this kind of work which meant establishing the business involved trial and error and a team effort. Robyn reflects on the shared nature of the endeavour as their enterprise grew and evolved into a large importation business:

I think as a team we worked very well like that because I enjoy buying as well and I think between us we did a lot of successful purchasing of product over the years ... we just learnt all of that ourselves (I54).

It was common that couples juggled business establishment and other work. Sometimes one took on day-to-day responsibility for the business while the other worked full-time until it was established. This was the case for Harriet Farrelly and her

husband. She ran their new horticulture business while husband Roger continued to work full-time. Like Robyn and her husband, neither had experience in this particular field, but they saw it as an opportunity to have more control over their work and build something together within an emerging new market. Roger focused on the financial side of the business while Harriet 'did all the planting' (I70) and he would help at weekends. Harriet observes that it was 'physically very hard work' (I70) and she ultimately swapped roles with Roger; he came into the business full-time and she went out to work as they built the business over time.

Hard work narratives like that expressed by Harriet, especially in the form of physical work and long hours, were integral to stories about team work for those working on the land. In developing their ventures, participants suggested they often had little in the way of resources to purchase additional labour. Consequently, couples pitched in together to get the work done. Moira Lindsey described how she and her husband had to plant out their 35 acres, 'about 6000 trees' (I73), with no additional help. Likewise, Charlotte Bailey described 'back breaking' (I75) work planting and harvesting a new crop never previously grown commercially in Australia and the associated long period of trial and error. She and her husband faced the prospect of harvesting alone just as their first child was born. They were forced to take it in turns to harvest and process the product so she could 'breastfeed in between' (I75). Moira and Charlotte and their partners also held down other jobs due to long lead times for the production of marketable quantities of their crops and because they had no additional financial resources to fall back on.

Almost all participants in this group described needing to develop new skills on the job and try things completely outside their experience to successfully establish new businesses. Women appear to approach these challenges pragmatically. In the manufacturing business begun by Meredith Francis and her husband, she took on the sales role. 'We had a business and someone had to sell the product and you have to work out how to do it. I had no background in sales' (I20).

Out of sheer curiosity, Joyce Hall and her husband developed a business distilling their own spirits. She learned the art of distilling while her husband continued to work full-time. She describes having to figure out 'how to run your still and know when to cut to get the best quality' (177). This involved a long process of experimentation to achieve the best product. Vivian Philpot explains that she and her husband took a completely new direction in their business after they found they were receiving diminishing returns each time they opened a new retail outlet. Vivian explains they sought a better way:

We heard of ... different companies franchising and we thought this is good because it means that the person running it, they pay a certain fee to us, they buy the business, and [through] their efforts, they will get the profit (150).

Rachel Bauer and her husband Henry were one of the few couples who both had extensive experience prior to establishing their joint enterprise. Each had run their own businesses in the retail sector. When they decided to completely reinvent an existing business together, Rachel indicates equality in decision making: 'we both saw potential absolutely and yeah so that was very much a joint effort' (123). For the participants, these stories suggest that starting a business together is mostly a shared responsibility. Decision making is often based around a process of trial and error as couples figure out how to develop their particular business often with few resources.

The equality discourse: contradictions

Wives' stories indicated they were equal risk takers in their ventures, yet having presented this idea in terms of team work and 'equal' contributions to the establishment of the business, some wives went on to describe husbands as pre-eminent. In so doing they devalued their contribution in comparison to their husbands, despite making a strong case for business co-creation. An exchange with Charlotte Bailey exemplifies this:

Interviewer: So it's a real partnership?

Interviewee: It's a real partnership ... He's the brains. I'm just the brawn ... I'm the brawn, he's the brains. He's the smart one (175).

Similarly, Robyn Combes, who initially describes the business as a team effort, affirms her husband's contribution as the more significant:

It's a credit to him where we've got because he's really dedicated in pushing it ... yeah and he's still very focussed and dedicated to taking this business ... to newer levels ... Me, I'm fumbling along these days (154).

In describing how their businesses were established these wives detailed how the business emerged as a result of their relationship (Cramton 1993) to which they both brought - or developed - skills and knowledge. In this respect both partners were dealing with the uncertainties while also learning on the run in order to construct a viable enterprise. An entrepreneurial discourse pervaded their stories implying the necessity for intense engagement with the business. At start-up, many described an egalitarianism, but increasingly women had to manage both childcare and a role in the business. Those who privileged husbands as chiefly responsible for the business's success, often described them as having 'inherent' capabilities, paradoxically positioning them as driving the business in an individualistic way (Bowman 2007). In this respect their husbands became the symbolic head and the heroic protagonist in the story of the business's growth and success despite wives integral role in its establishment.

The contradictions and inconsistencies in their stories suggest a 'lack of fit' (McNay 1999) between their roles in the business and a view of themselves as entrepreneurs. One way to think about this contradiction relates to the kind of work they do in the business and their management of childcare which interrupts a full-time commitment. In non-family organizations flexible or part-time work is often conceived as lacking in commitment (Liff and Ward 2001, McDonald, Bradley and Brown 2009). While wives in family businesses are financially and emotionally connected to the business, the demands of care mean it is not easy to maintain a presence. Their

material location as mothers effects their status in the business and the opportunity for shared leadership. It often positions them as 'secondary', disrupting the story of 'equal partnership' and reproduces gender divisions of work.

At the same time, women take on work that suits their circumstances, such as administrative tasks which can be done flexibly or from home as some participants' attest. Though critical to the day-to-day running of the business, they are not part of entrepreneurial discourse in the way that driving business growth is seen to be (Ahl 2006). Kate Williams for example, often worked from home or part-time as did most wives for a period of time. In this respect she felt she did not qualify for the same status as her husband. She states: 'he's the one who's here every single day and I have to respect that' (155). She also believes that there must be just one boss so that 'staff know who has the final word' (155). The role of the relationship in the successful functioning of the business receives little recognition in her story (Cramton 1993).

Two things are highlighted here. The first is that establishing a business venture does not necessarily bestow an entrepreneurial identity on women in partnerships in the same way that it does their partners, despite the business emerging out of their joint efforts (Cramton 1993, Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003). While the ideas or skills of their husbands often underpinned the business, ideas do not emerge in isolation (Aldrich and Cliff 2003). Indeed, wives proved very capable given most had had other careers prior to establishing the business, but these credentials did not always give them the same cachet. Participants describe husbands becoming more driven, embodying the heroic masculine entrepreneurial identity, while wives had to spread themselves thinly when they also had responsibility for childcare. Under such circumstances these women have an uneasy relationship with entrepreneurial identity. Narrow, but deeply embedded cultural understandings of entrepreneurship provide little visibility for the roles that women play in venture creation (Ahl 2006, Bird and Brush 2002, Cramton 1993). In this respect an economic emphasis (captured in notions of innovation and growth) does not necessarily capture 'all that entrepreneurship is or does' (Calás, Smircich and Bourne 2009: 553).

The second is that structures of work, such as part-time or home based can further erode the possibility of such an identity because it is evidence of less commitment to the business (Williams et al. 2013) . It is also feminised work and therefore less valued (Lewis and Massey 2011, Reskin 1993). Despite the fact that Kate was doing marketing, merchandising and accounting work, which by most accounts would be considered significant to the co-creation of the business (Lewis and Massey 2011), she did not position herself as a driver of it. In this respect, where husbands are intensely engaged with the enterprise, some women seem obliged to reflect the heroic entrepreneur discourse back to them (Cline and Spender 1987) undermining their own central role in venture creation.

Hamilton (2006, 2013a) has argued that from the outside it can appear that the husband is the leader in the family business, though on the inside leadership is often collaborative. This is undoubtedly true for some of the participants but this view also overlooks why husbands need to be the face of the business when we have seen the movement of women into the workforce in large numbers, including into leadership positions. At least to some extent, the profoundly masculine basis of entrepreneurship is implicated in that it does not always encompass much that women do in the business and therefore it is not a 'field' in which women can easily fashion a place for themselves (Ahl 2006, Ahl and Marlow 2012, Bruni et al. 2004b, de Bruin et al. 2006, Hamilton 2006, Hamilton 2013b).

The egalitarian discourse is interesting in this respect. Wives in this research were building and joining businesses between the late 1970s and into the early 1990s when women were demanding and finding a political voice and entering the workforce in increasing numbers. In turn, they appear to assert equality because it is a normative expectation, even in situations where it does not appear to happen in practice (Bittman and Pixley 1997). At the same time, they understand the business as a co-creation even if they do not achieve the status and authority bestowed upon their partners. In a very real sense, the relationship plays a significant role in the emergence and success of the business and is a key asset or even trigger for the business (Aldrich

and Cliff 2003, Cramton 1993, Kadis and McClendon 1991). Reference to equality in wives' accounts however, sometimes conceals an enduring gender hierarchy (Lewis and Simpson 2011).

Wives joining an existing family business

Women who marry into and work full-time in existing family businesses face some unique challenges. Participants indicate they believe they are entitled to equal treatment and should be given a voice because of the work they do. Though among the participants in this research, this rarely occurs. While they see themselves as committed team members, working as hard as other family members, these participants indicate they have little access to authority because of resistance by 'blood' relatives. Their experiences call into question exactly who counts as family (Santiago 2011).

Alison Carazo's experience is especially instructive. She took over the book work from her husband in his family's business so he could focus on other things. She completed a book keeping course and then used her new skills to institute proper protocols to put the business on a more professional footing. This included reducing informal cash-in-hand practices. This innovation was not well received by her husband's family. She suggests 'they struggled ... in some ways, they struggled with me wanting to have a say':

It was very difficult. I was never allowed to ... I never got to sign a cheque. It was always I had to take the cheque book to the brothers, one or other of the brothers to sign the cheques (I12).

This quote suggests her in-laws acted to limit any authority her new-found skills might endow. By Alison's account, this was both a comment on her in-law status and her gender. There were clear gender demarcations in relation to work in this business and like other family women she was confined to work in the warehouse, packing and organizing shipments while also managing the book work. She asserts that 'girls' were treated like 'workhorses' but could not 'have any say'. Rather, their job was simply to

support the men in the business. They were prohibited from doing any physical work relating to product production and management, because 'that was the boys' jobs'.

Alison felt the family exploited her. They were happy to use her skills and knowledge as the only university educated person in the business, but she was given no reward for this in terms of contribution to decision-making. Pini (2007) suggests that this is common practice in farming families where most in-law literature is situated. While in-law contributions are often expected, in-laws themselves are also treated with a good deal of suspicion.

Similarly, Julie Gantner was excluded from decision making in her husband's family business. Julie describes initially being welcomed into the 140-year-old horticultural business and being offered a small shareholding. Like Alison, she undertook packing and distribution work while taking charge of book keeping. Tensions arose when her husband took on board work outside the business and she attempted to step up and shoulder some of his responsibilities including dealing directly with customers. According to Julie, the in-law men were unhappy about this.

... they sort of didn't like that at all because I knew what was going on business wise, and I was starting to make a few decisions which they weren't happy about' (169).

It was made clear to her that she could not take this kind of initiative and could only 'speak through Eric', her husband. Both Julie's and Alison's experiences suggest a concern with in-laws being too closely associated with the management of the business and particularly decision making. Both actively resisted this positioning by family members which contributed to problems between different branches of the family.

In contrast, Eva Herrera took a less combative approach to the resistance she encountered from her in-laws to being included as a partner in the business. She explains that she had done a range of work in the business from processing orders to distribution and book keeping work. Latterly she has established a new arm to the

business that uses her considerable cooking skills to bring in a wider clientele. Despite her long years of work and commitment she believes there is a sense of distrust on the part of her in-laws:

... look, I don't know whether I'm just shooting from the hip, but it's just what I've always felt: don't put Eva's name on it because you'll get a divorce and you'll lose our land, okay? (I52)

She has not spoken out about her feelings but indicates a simmering resentment. While she views their perspective as 'out dated thinking', she feels they have influenced her husband. 'I don't know whether they've put that into Gabe's [husband] mind as well, because yeah, that's the feeling that I've always had (I52).

The four participants who joined existing family businesses indicated that siblings and/or parents came to see them as a threat though it was often never made clear what that threat entailed. According to these participants, feelings of resentment were common on both sides; by spouses denied a voice and by family members who believed, but often did not clearly state, that only blood relatives should have decision-making power. For the most part, wives working in existing businesses were expected to speak through their husbands which is indicative of the way that tradition continues to manifest in the lived experience of these women.

Yet some participants have an uneasy relationship with these expectations. The conflicts and tensions that arise as a result of their business involvement require skilful negotiation to avoid emotional family divisions while also allowing them to attain some level of decision making power. Indeed, the options open to them to resist are limited. While they initially accommodate to them, over time they have varied reactions from open subversion to simmering resentment. Julie for example, made some significant decisions in relation to customer demands without first speaking to her husband. While Alison was blamed for her husband's younger brother leaving the business because she insisted on having input to decisions when he felt she

should not. Responses of the other two participants included accommodating to family expectations on the one hand and leaving the business altogether on the other.

For Julie and Alison, their responses contributed to tragic consequences for family relationships. The businesses were eventually divided between brothers and in both cases the brothers no longer speak to one another. While there are complex reasons for the division of the businesses, the wives associated with them bore the blame, portrayed as troublemakers or 'outlaws' as one spouse described herself (Pini 2007).

Contributions of wives not working in the business

Wives who do not work in the family business are often called upon to make non-market or brief contributions to the family business which may or may not be paid. They also can play a significant role through their emotional and sometimes strategic support and in relation to social activities related to the business. These women are generally kept at arms-length from the operation of the business but are still expected to craft family relationships (especially with other in-law women) so as not to threaten the sometimes fragile relations between their partners and siblings. This 'work' occurs below the radar because it is relational work that culturally falls to women (Fletcher 2004).

The extent to which this work can be significant to the business is illustrated by Lauren Hilton. During her interview, Lauren describes the all-consuming nature of the family business in which she feels ensnared. The intensity of her emotion is revealed when asked how she feels about her husband's involvement in the family business. She responds: 'Trapped. Damn, damn, damn' (I60). Lauren's feelings are underpinned by deep family tensions that have been suppressed over many years. She suggests it's difficult to 'maintain a sense of your own family' (I60) when the broader family is so closely bound up together because of the business. She follows this with, 'you know there's personalities in there ... I didn't marry his brothers and certainly wouldn't be friends [with them]' (I60). She also has an ambivalent relationship with her sisters-in-

law. Shortly before the interview, family tensions had erupted as a result of a family crisis. This gave Lauren the permission she had been looking for to refuse the relational work long expected of her and other family women. Her actions have unsettled family relationships and left family members bewildered, while also revealing long hidden rifts between siblings working in the business. Her story illustrates that when women refuse the 'feminine' work of managing relationships or do 'what wives should do to support their husbands' (Ahl and Marlow 2012: 552), there can be consequences for the business.

At the same time most women in this group were doing support work which was rarely viewed as significant to business outcomes. Hilary Mountford is a good example of how this work plays out. Despite not being employed in the business and without direct business experience, she recalls getting a babysitter and sitting down with her husband to strategize about how they could move forward with the business. He really needed to 'pull it together' according to Hilary who told him that he had to 'sell some land...sell the shop' (I53) in order to get some capital so they could construct a manufacturing facility outside the CBD area where the business was then located.

Hilary also described playing an important role in 'pushing' her husband to do things in the business that he might not have otherwise done. In supporting him to establish and build the business she was sharing the risk. She encouraged him to become involved in a community service organization where he became a leader, building his confidence and a strong business network. Hilary reflects: 'There's lots of things ... with the family business ... a lot comes from me which will set the ball rolling' (I53). She believes this support helped her husband become a better businessman. In her narrative there is a sense that she has been the strength behind him, illustrated in the following statement:

I certainly helped John grow as a person in his confidence, his ability ... I might have put a bit of pressure on him [said laughing to indicate this is an understatement]. I wanted us to be as good as we could be (I53).

Her comments reflect the degree to which the 'relationship' rather than the lone individual is responsible for the development and growth of the business. However, these contributions counted for little when Hilary wanted the opportunity to work in the business. Both her husband's and father's responses to her suggestion that she had something to offer left her in no doubt that her role was in standing behind him. She reflects:

John [her husband] in one breath said, 'yeah what training have you done? Okay so what could you bring into the business in formal training', and dad just pooh poohed [it] and said 'Oh just let John do his own thing. It's no place for you Hilary'. And I remember going to the bedroom and just crying my eyes out having two knock downs like that. And you know you just have to accept it (153).

Viewed within the context of Hilary's efforts to help her husband be a better businessman, which in themselves show business acumen, the denial of any consideration of her potential demonstrates the invisibility of both her contributions and their relationship, as significant to the business and his success. The taken-for-grantedness of this work means it is her husband who embodies prestige, not her. However, in accommodating to this outcome, Hilary did not confine herself to wifely duties. While she continued to have an 'informal' role in the business as advisor and instigator of action when issues arose that her husband would otherwise ignore, she went on to develop a level of expertise in property speculation that has also contributed to family wealth.

As Hilary's contribution indicates, non-working spouses undertake a variety of 'duties' in the business. Aside from advice, they attend business gatherings, trade shows, conferences and social gatherings related to the business and help their partners deal with emotional issues by lending an ear to business problems. Karen Wilkinson (187) illustrates this work well. She says her husband seeks her advice about decisions he is making in the business and about the problems he has with his father who, now in his 80s, still comes into the office every day. She also attends conferences

with him. If her husband were to become incapacitated, despite never working in the business, she indicates it is their plan that she would step into the CEO role in the short-term. Karen has significant credentials as an accomplished business woman in her own right, working in a family business with her mother and siblings. This arrangement is unusual in the context of the long history of primogeniture in this family business and speaks to the way that a changing gender contract can, in meaningful ways disrupt traditional practices, notwithstanding the fact the men still vastly outnumber women in management and senior executive positions in industrialized countries (Calás and Smircich 2006, Due Billing and Alvesson 2000).

Wives within this group are sometimes called upon to make short-term contributions to help the business through a difficult period or provide additional skill and resources. These take wide-ranging forms from helping out at special events to taking on short-term consulting jobs. Sandra Metcalf, despite having her own full-time career, describes doing catering work for events associated with her husband's family business. She was called upon to accommodate and cook for overseas visitors because of the lack of nearby facilities. 'I would say on average I'd put on a dinner party at least once a week. We'd have people staying in our home. We constantly entertained' (I25). Chloe Moore also played an important role in helping her husband market a new product in his family business. She organized marketing launches and social functions and describes herself as the 'face of things with him' (I34) at these events.

Such work 'obliges' wives to represent their husbands and the business well and therefore requires authentic performances (Finch 1983). These are not just emotional skills, which are often emphasized as a key contribution by wives to family businesses. They are social, creative and business skills, which impact on performance, reputation and growth. The social capital wives provide to the business through this kind of work is generally taken for granted by researchers, husbands, wider family and even wives themselves, who play down its significance. More commonly this work is seen to be done out of love, given these wives do not have formal roles in the business. Under these circumstances it is difficult to perceive the importance of the

relationship to effective business functioning, or at least to see it as significant. While there has been some attention to the impact on performance of spousal capital and commitment to the business (Gudmunson et al. 2009, Matzek et al. 2010, Van Auken and Werbel 2006), this is not often viewed from the perspective of wives themselves.

The literature does suggest that the behind the scenes vantage point of women can give them important insights into business issues and especially relationship dynamics (Gillis-Donovan and Moynihan-Bradt 1990, Lyman et al. 1985, Poza and Messer 2001, Salganicoff 1990a). In this respect, wives are said to have 'unacknowledged power and influence' (Gillis-Donovan and Moynihan-Bradt 1990: 153) but invariably this is seen to be exercised on the margins of the business which is perhaps, why it is not more closely examined. Despite women sometimes being viewed as an 'untapped resource' (Lyman et al. 1985), there remains very little mainstream attention to the depth and breadth of this work. Indeed, a lack of consideration of this work as significant to business co-creation and sustainability means non-working wives often have little 'cachet' in the business, especially those who are more formally excluded.

At the same time, businesses are often happy to 'co-opt' wives and their skills tapping into a sense of obligation that is hard to challenge. Emma Martin exemplifies this practice. She describes how she was initially 'roped in' to do some basic clerical work. This transformed into a significant job researching and implementing a new computerized accounting system for the company. Emma had a young child at the time and did not want full-time work. She tried to negotiate the job on a project basis but 'ended up being defacto office manager' (I51). While on the one hand the work was completely flexible, on the other, it was 'inflexible in terms of the responsibility for the job' (I51). As she explains this put her in a difficult position:

That is probably the core thing about the family business that is different. I was an employee on paper but I was a member of the family, my husband's wife and I had a responsibility to him and to myself to make the thing run. There's no-one else. I can't just go to them and say this isn't fair and walk away. So my

hours were completely flexible but I had to get the job done ... I look back on that time as extremely stressful with no escape (I51).

These stories articulate the varied work of wives who do not generally have formal roles in the business, yet, the contributions they describe aptly position them as co-creators in the daily reproduction of the business. Scholarship that addresses the issue of women's role in supporting men's careers describe them as 'career adjuncts' in the sense that they are either 'enhancing their partner's reputation' (or in this case, the business's reputation) (Fowlkes 1980, Kanter 1977). However, where family businesses are concerned I apply the more apt term of co-creator, especially in view of the idea of the embeddedness of family in entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, Rogoff and Heck 2003). This idea disrupts the notion that entrepreneurship is an individual undertaking and draws attention to myriad ways that family influences the process (Aldrich and Cliff 2003).

Yet this influence is more generally seen as 'supportive' work while one person needs to be acknowledged as the business driver or entrepreneur in order to delimit boundaries for research purposes (Calás et al. 2009). To broaden definitions beyond specific parameters would be to destabilise the field, though as Gartner (2001) suggests, efforts to define what entrepreneurship is, will only ever be partial.

While, increasingly businesses expound the importance of social and emotional skills (Goleman 1998), which these stories emphasize, in practice such work is usually not viewed as important (c.f. Firkin et al. 2003, Gudmunson et al. 2009, Matzek et al. 2010, Van Auken and Werbel 2006). From a business perspective, a wife is expected to provide the necessary support for her husband to devote himself to the business - illuminating his individualism while obscuring her own labour. This suggests a refusal or an inability to see women's social competencies as skills in their own right and valuable to business sustainability. While not suggesting that women necessarily have more or better skills in this area, I draw attention to the fact that when women enact these skills they are less likely to be visible, and therefore valued because they are often stereotypically associated with them (Due Billing and Alvesson 2000, Fletcher 2004).

Taking over the family business

Three of the participants are running their family businesses. One has taken over the business as a result of a divorce, another because of ill-health and a third took over the day-to-day running to drive expansion and allow her husband to focus on the creative side of the business. Entrepreneurial discourses about dedication, long hours and risk taking underpin their stories in their descriptions of taking over and expanding businesses. However, they do not occupy the conventional entrepreneurial persona because they are often focussed on relational matters in their management of their businesses (Hamilton 2013a). They articulate collective, rather than autonomous tales of business establishment, growth and success, though at times a 'heroic' mastery can enter their stories. In this respect, they craft businesses that are embedded in, and emphasize relationships.

Two of these women have stepped into the key leadership role with little experience in running a business. A third has developed business management skills over time. These women emphasize that circumstances were central to their decisions to run the business. While many the participants attributed their husbands' entrepreneurialism to something inherent in their personalities, these women did not describe themselves in these terms. For example, Jenny Marsden faced the choice of either going on alone in the transport business her husband had established, or accepting a government pension when he was taken ill because at that point the business had little commercial value. She initially asked 'guys [in the industry] that I truly believed I could trust with my life' (I22) to look after their clients while she nursed her husband. When she decided to return to the business, her 'friends' were unwilling to relinquish her former clients. She recalls returning to the depot where, 'I wouldn't turn the lights on in this horrible little office because I didn't know if I could afford the electricity' (I22).

Jenny had primarily been responsible for book keeping and managing client relations when she worked with her husband. She knew rebuilding the business was a

risk given the highly masculine environment in which she was operating and many were sceptical about her chances of success. 'Plenty of blokes in the industry said, "Oh she'll never make it on her own". And I did. And did far better than I ever dreamed' (122).

The circumstances around Sonya Hickson's decision to take over the running of her family business related to her divorce. Though she had never had a hands-on role in the business and had her own career in an unrelated industry, she had a deep commitment to public transport; the basis of the enterprise. She originally became involved in the business through her husband who joined it as an employee in the 1970s. An attempt by corporate raiders to take it over convinced her that they should try and buy it to protect it from being 'stripped bare' (174). Sonya's sense of social responsibility in maintaining good public transport access, drove her commitment and her efforts to convince her husband, who was not as enthusiastic or 'as adventurous' (174) in terms of taking on debt.

They managed to buy the business by bringing other investors on board, but over time she and her husband obtained complete ownership. The couple divorced early in the 2000s but she decided to continue on her own 'because he wasn't as interested' (174). Since taking over she has focused on bringing in more women drivers and extending services.

Meredith Francis's circumstances are different to the other two as her husband remains involved in the business and she describes them as 'a great team' (120). The business started as home-based, built around her husband's skill as a craftsman. Initially she took on the task of selling the products he made through different retail outlets. As the business grew, she developed a broad range of business management skills which gave her the confidence to drive the business into completely new territory, opening retail stores nationally to support the manufacturing side of the business. She indicates her husband is content to focus on creative pursuits which support the business leaving the day-to-day running to her.

Both Jenny and Sonya indicate they overcame overt gender prejudice to develop and expand successful enterprises, but this probably would not have occurred but for illness and divorce entering their lives. At the same time, the running of their businesses is not complicated by managing intimate relationships and work. By contrast, Meredith continues to manage complex personal relations. For example, she is initially vague in the interview about what her husband does. Even though she says he never saw the business as only his, she protects his status by not giving a clear indication of the degree of his involvement. This calls to mind research by Millman and Martin (2007) where wives were running businesses. While the authors indicate that husbands played a more supportive role, wives needed to be mindful of keeping a balance so that their husbands did not feel undermined.

The experiences of these women demonstrate the opportunities for leadership opening up to women in family businesses to challenge a masculinist entrepreneur narrative (Ahl 2006, Bird and Brush 2002, Hamilton 2013a) but it is still rare for wives to take over as these women have (Vadnjal and Zupan 2009). Indeed, for Sonya and Jenny entrepreneurial opportunity only arose as a result of painful family circumstances which meant their husbands, previously leaders in the businesses, were no longer involved.

All are in businesses in male-dominated industries which are atypical for women and they have therefore had to secure their legitimacy, though this has been more of an issue for Jenny and Sonya (Blake and Hanson 2005). These women have negotiated tensions about their roles in very different ways. Jenny has exploited traditional notions of femininity to overcome potential discrimination and to advance the business. For example, she states:

I love working with blokes. They are so easy to work with. You just have to be pleasant to them and ask them nicely and they will do anything for you, particularly the married men who have been married for some time (I22).

She suggests in this quote that long-married men are no longer treated with respect by their wives. To survive in a masculine environment where she relies on male drivers, she uses a 'little sweet talking' to make them feel good about themselves. This approach has been very lucrative for the business.

In contrast, Sonya has had to confront gender inequality head on, not only by running a masculine business but also by encouraging gender diversity in driver positions. However, she reveals that she is not 'very good at management' and she feels that perhaps she has made too many compromises. In this respect both Jenny and Sonya would possibly struggle to meet conventional (masculine) entrepreneurial standards (Ahl 2006, Mirchandani 1999). Descriptions of the entrepreneur in both media and scholarly representations, promotes the idea that 'he' is 'a special breed' of person, requiring 'a high need of achievement' and also 'of autonomy, dominance, aggressiveness, and low need of support and conformity' he is also independent with a 'task orientation and high risk propensity' (Ogbor 2000: 616-617). These women disrupt this traditional discourse by using 'feminine' skills, revealing vulnerability and positioning the success of their businesses as embedded in wider relations.

Women's role in innovations and expansions

The contributions of wives often fail to fall within the rubric of entrepreneurialism because they tend to be overshadowed by their husbands. Women involved in family businesses often function at high levels despite having multiple roles (Philbrick and Fitzgerald 2007). They aspire to achieving family goals with their partners and achieve great satisfaction from their work in the business. At the same time, those working in the business often make critical contributions especially when businesses are at a crossroads. These have consequences for the flourishing of the business and involve innovative solutions, new directions, business diversification and expansion.

Participants in this research emphasized the necessity to respond to the needs of employees, adapting to changing circumstances, taking advantage of profile raising

opportunities and rethinking the direction of the business at times, in order to survive and grow their businesses. For example, Meredith Francis was at the forefront of driving her family business in a new direction. Facing the prospect of increasing competition from Chinese imports, she and her husband were concerned for the viability of their manufacturing business. They could see that if they did not establish their own retail outlets they 'would not have a business' (I20). This was a risky venture however, as Meredith observes:

... lots of manufacturers think they can open stores but they can't. Retailers think they can manufacture but they can't because it's totally, totally and utterly different skills that are used in retailing and manufacturing, totally different (I20).

Despite the inherent difficulties, Meredith opened nine stores across four states. The move helped them grow into a multi-million dollar company. Their success, she contends, was associated with the depth of talent they had in the business across both manufacturing and sales which was achieved in large part through employing a number of family members.

Like Meredith, Sonya Hickson has been the driver of new strategic directions in her transport business. She stepped into the CEO role after buying out her husband following their divorce. Whilst she had previously been a director, she found it difficult to influence decision making and initiate new ideas because of resistance from her husband and other male directors. At the time she had her own career in a completely different field. Since taking over she has employed more drivers and expanded services. She has also promoted a program to employ more women drivers. It has not been the easiest path to tread given the traditionally masculine workforce. According to Sonya, there was a significant backlash from 'the men...the drivers who said, well why would you use a woman? We said, because we want more women. We want to have a much better spread and representative workforce here' (I74). She has overcome the resistance with slow and methodical steps and succeeded in developing a more collegiate culture which was confirmed to her at an end of year Christmas

party. She states: 'I had three wives... who said for the first time in their careers, their husbands are happy to go to work' (I74).

Jenny Marsden, who took over her husband's transport company when he fell ill, has also been innovative in addressing the needs of people who work in the business. Her business uses large numbers of sub-contractors and so she has been focused on developing facilities for them at considerable cost. At the same time, she has promoted an inclusive culture that enables drivers to feel appreciated. She describes it this way:

... nobody works for us, everybody works with us, that's the difference between our business and all of the others out there. Out there they're treated like shit, here they're treated like family and this is their home away from home (I22).

She has built a separate bunk room for the drivers where they can sleep and have access to a shower and a tea room where fresh fruit is always available. She encourages them to eat breakfast there rather than eat at McDonalds. Her emphasis on a nurturing approach on the one hand reflects a need for consistency with cultural expectations of women as carers, but on the other, it has enabled her to maintain her driver workforce in a very competitive industry. In this respect, she has brought a 'woman's touch' to the transport business which has given her a point of difference from other, especially large, transport companies, contributing to her success (Blake and Hanson 2005).

Meredith Francis demonstrates a similar concern for employees, embracing the notion of family in her business philosophy in relation to health and well-being. She indicates that their business has been at the forefront of this approach and that she has been invited onto government round tables to establish best practice in employee health. Her approach involves providing:

... breakfast, newspapers, fruit, nuts for everybody at the factory always have. We have health sessions on nutrition and men's health, women's health. We

provide annual heart health checks for everybody. We provide flu vaccinations; we provide a counsellor at the factory two days a week (I20).

She also runs fitness campaigns with staff to try to reduce the incidence of diabetes which was a problem identified in the regular health checks she instigated. She does not see anything out of the ordinary in this. It is 'just the way we do business' (I20). As a company, they instituted these practices many years ago when they employed large numbers of young apprentices. They came mostly from country areas and many had never been away from home before and didn't really know 'how to look after themselves' (I20). In this way she has brought feminine practices of care into the business, creating a sense of loyalty among her staff, many of whom are long-standing.

Alison Carazo's experiences in her husband's family business provides a good example of how joint knowledge combines to take the enterprise in new directions. Though marginalized in the business, her educational qualifications were instrumental to business expansion. Her degree in botany underpinned a move into new, more productive crops. As the only university educated person in the family, she introduced her husband 'to plant physiology...to what makes plants tick' (I12). Alison continued to help him expand his knowledge by attending conferences with him and explaining 'some of the more technical elements' (I12).

Wives are also frequently effective in managing the day-to-day running of the business while husband's focus on using their knowledge and skills to develop and refine production. Moira Lindsey, for instance, supported her husband's dream to establish a cherry farm and threw herself into the challenge of developing markets with very little experience. She was instrumental in bringing a new innovation to local growers though not without resistance. She introduced a co-operative arrangement to better utilise their considerable investment in packing technology. The idea of pooling resources had not been tried before as growers were protective of their own markets. Moira observes:

We had the capacity to pack and we had the markets. I developed export markets, I developed markets in Melbourne and Brisbane and Sydney, and we could go to those markets but we needed the quantity of fruit to ... be able to keep that establishment and so we were doing that for a few years (173).

Similarly, Charlotte Bailey's pivotal role in developing the profile of the business was instrumental in opening up access to supermarkets. She put together a submission for an influential national business awards program which won them the State Micro Business Award. According to Charlotte they also 'beat 55,000 other businesses that year for the Regional Award as well. And that got us into the rest of the supermarkets [that they had been trying to access]' (175).

Yolanda Crimmins used a similar tactic to gain profile for her family business. She and her husband built a business around his engineering skills but it was her emphasis on training and 'upskilling' staff that won them both State and National *Employer of the Year Awards*. The effectiveness of these 'wins' for improving the profile of the business drove Yolanda to consider submissions for other awards and they also went on to win *Exporter of the Year* and *Small Business of the Year* awards. Not only did these awards raise awareness about their business, but they also gave Yolanda significant profile in her own right, leading to an approach to put herself forward for an entrepreneurial award.

These women were active in finding ways to build profile, develop better employee relations, and expand their businesses. Joyce Hall's main focus was to overcome short term cash flow problems. She decided to try to make liqueurs which could be produced more quickly than other spirits. Unfortunately, a key ingredient was not readily available. Through talking to people in the food industry she tried a local alternative and spent six months developing a unique range of bush liqueurs through a process of trial and error. She indicates they worked 'amazingly well' (179). In the process she discovered lucrative new products and overcame their cash flow problem.

These descriptions point to the varied ways in which women make innovative contributions to their businesses and industries beyond the day-to-day tasks in the areas of finance, human resources or administrative work, where women are traditionally located in family businesses (Larsen 2006, O'Connor et al. 2006). These contributions are significant to business expansion, efficiency, viability and accessing new markets even though businesses are often built around their husband's skills or ideas.

While there is a strong sense among participants that without their contributions there would not be a business, they often do not perceive themselves as entrepreneurial. In many instances, they are overshadowed by the profile of their husbands. For example, Alison Carazo's husband is seen in the industry as 'the guru' (I12) of plant production. However, Meredith Francis neatly encapsulates the idea of co-creation when she says that her husband 'could think of it forever but he could not have had a business if I wasn't involved' (I20). This emphasizes the importance of the relationship as the key asset of the business (Cramton 1993, Kadis and McClendon 1991).

The emergence of tension and conflict

From an organizational perspective, family businesses can be said to work by different social rules 'that sanction what is appropriate to feel and express' (Fineman 2008:1). The normal cultural imperatives to outwardly control particular emotions in the workplace setting such as fear, anger and love frequently do not apply to family members involved in a business. Jane Barone summarises this problem well when she says: 'you can't work together without having disagreements but there is often "no boundary over your tongue" when you work in a family business' (I48).

Regardless of their association to the business, women in this study negotiate tensions and conflict but the degree to which reflexivity arises in relation to gendered practice varies significantly. There are two themes which emerge: the first relates to equality, fairness and recognition issues in the business; the second is to do with

frustrations participants' feel toward the business and the relationships within it. At least half of the participants expressed some level of concern around these issues.

The couple relationship

Amongst husbands and wives, issues tend to revolve around equality and recognition. In particular, they emerge when wives believe their values of equality are undermined by their husbands. While women in this study often accept the need for one boss in the business, generally their husbands, it is contingent on their partners behaving in ways that respect their notions of equality. The way in which this can be undermined was evident in this exchange in the interview with Martin and Anna Guest, who were the only participants who asked to be interviewed together.

Martin: So Anna looks after all the bookwork, and so forth, and anything else that comes along. So I guess I'd be called the managing director I suppose. Glen, our son, he runs the warehouse, and has a lot to do with sales. And Shona [their daughter] is our receptionist and she does a bit of bookkeeping as well. All clerical stuff (17).

In this comment Martin positions himself and Glen as having the more important responsibilities, Martin as 'managing director' in the first instance and Glen as the one who 'runs' the warehouse. His comments are indicative of how he perceives the work the women do, for example they do book work and 'anything else that comes along' which implies general dogsbody. This undermines the idea of an equal partnership between him and his wife. The disjuncture between his idea of her work and hers becomes clear when he later refers to Anna as a co-director. She angrily responds: 'In name only,' and then went on to say:

...Martin was the boss, and you can put my name on a card, you can do whatever you like, but he's the boss. And he's always told everybody what to do, and he continued to tell me what to do and that caused a lot of friction (18).

Her indignant response, it transpired, related to Martin's failure to listen when she advised him that certain customers were a credit risk. Instead he put his trust in

his customers who then became bankrupt. Her response suggests she assumed an equal partnership at the outset but this was not realised in their day-to-day practices. To Anna the lack of trust exhibited in Martin's behaviour, not only undermined the partnership but also devalued her expertise.

The issue of who is the boss and how that mantle then influences behaviour was also contentious for Imogen Howcroft. She suggests the main issue with her husband was that he 'wasn't able to work in a partnership' (I71). While she acknowledged that there could only be one boss, she was frustrated by a lack of communication:

...he didn't set up close communication between us as a partnership to ensure that we were in sync...I thought it was the Howcroft family as in husband and wife but it doesn't work that way. That was how I've seen it or I've felt it (I71).

In this respect, Imogen emphasizes the importance of the relationship in establishment and running of the business. While she feels that she has given as much of her life and expertise to the business as her husband Rod, there has been a lack of acknowledgement and recognition.

It's the wallpaper thing. You get taken for granted. Yeah so no point sort of going there too much but that's been the biggest problem. I mean I think I've been the most competent manager here all modesty aside, and the one that's been the least acknowledged (I71).

A similar sentiment was expressed by Christine Brandt. She explains that when her son took over the day-to-day running of the business he called a meeting of all the staff where he thanked his father Thomas for all his work and while he mentioned Christine, she did not feel she was equally appreciated, '... I felt "oh I put so much in was I really appreciated", I was sort of on the sideline' (I68). At times she also felt excluded from decision making. She comments:

From the wife's point of view, I think, do you know what, somehow you feel probably a little bit left out of it, even though you're not really left out work-wise but in decision making, in decision making (168).

She later contradicts herself saying that Thomas would think things through then discuss them with her and that she would always let him do what he wanted, but she insists 'sometimes I was not quite as much involved' (168). Christine implies that while she was consulted, the ideas were her husband's and in that sense she was merely giving her imprimatur rather than being actively engaged in the process. Her participation is closely connected to Thomas's ambition to be in his own business which drove him and, by default, her too. In her desire to support him and their family she really had to commit herself to that success but that commitment does not give her similar or equal status.

Wives who struggled to openly negotiate equal partnerships were often blunt about their frustration. For example, Harriet Farrelly told me: 'I didn't really enjoy working with my husband all that much' (170). In Harriet's account her husband preferred to work alone and would often take over things she was doing. The real issue though was that he was not receptive to ideas that were not his own. She explains, 'He doesn't want to know alternatives. 'He will say, "I've thought this through and this is the way we're doing it"' (170). For this reason, she doesn't feel her 'voice is valued' (170).

Yolanda Crimmins also confronted the issue of who was really in charge of the business when her efforts to raise the profile of the company gave her significant visibility among wider business networks. This work opened up opportunities for speaking engagements and positions on a variety of boards which culminated in a nomination for a national entrepreneurial award. Yet, her visibility created tensions with her husband who insisted that such contributions 'did nothing for the business' (176). Her husband suggests awards are meaningless and a waste of time because in his words they do not 'make us any money' (176). His comments suggest a level of resentment about her success which he undermines by trying to ridicule the value of

her work. This perspective is possibly driven by the fact that it is his skills that have underpinned the business and therefore her visibility is only earned through his efforts. In this respect, he does not perceive the business as fundamentally emerging and sustained through their relationship - their joint knowledge and skills.

Under these circumstances it is perhaps not surprising that he resisted Yolanda's insistence that she should have an equivalent title to him. She remarks: 'I could see that titles were important for the men I was meeting' but her husband argued that titles were not important despite being both managing director and chairman. 'If he doesn't think it's important, let me be, and he wouldn't. It is important' (176). The fact that it was her husband who could bestow a title on her or not highlights the power he takes for granted in their partnership, as does Yolanda who has to 'ask' for a title.

Leadership issues were contentious as has been shown but the common sense ways in which gendered practice emerges makes it difficult for couples to perceive of 'gender'. This resonates with the idea of gender as unconscious self-mastery and therefore, the 'irregular manifestation' of reflexivity (McNay 1999: 109). Jane Barone's experience is instructive in this respect. She was among the few who indicated very little conflict and tension with her husband, yet she had to reconcile her own deeply felt sense of women's and men's equal capacities, when she handed over the key leadership position to her husband when he joined a business she had started. At the time he joined, she was pregnant with their first child. She called it 'succession by pregnancy effectively' (148). Though she makes light of it by saying it was: 'A sneaky way to do it', it is clear there was an emotional impact: 'I felt the loss of control. I did' (148). However, Jane was pragmatic about this arrangement, seeing it as common sense, because 'he had an MBA when nobody had MBAs' and she had a night school education. Ironically, she established the business because of discrimination in the workplace. She had been passed over in favour of a man whom she was then expected to train. While Jane felt that despite the title they had a collaborative approach to

business management, outward appearances say much about the perception of leadership as a masculine undertaking (Hamilton 2013a).

Gender tensions and conflict were also less visible in the account given by Alison Carazo. She was difficult to categorize as she initially joined an existing family business as an in-law but deep divisions in the family led to the business being divided between two brothers. Alison went on to build a very successful business with her husband. She was responsible for professionalizing the business, instituting appropriate financial and human resource processes and protocols and establishing quality assurance practices. She undertook a director's course and also completed a post-graduate diploma in agri-business. In contrast her husband had no formal training. She underplays her significant role by saying that 'he was the boss and I was his assistant' (112). Again, the assumed equality of the couple partnership is evident here as Alison presents as a highly capable business woman. But even she does not seem to recognize the degree to which this business has emerged from joint knowledge and skill. The contradictions in her story indicate deeply unconscious gender practice where an accomplished woman allows her own capacities to be exploited by her husband for which he then receives the status and kudos as the 'guru' in their industry. It is this that possibly accounts for her the deep frustration and distress articulated in the following exchange:

Alison: I'd always end up having to do the courses. If there were courses that needed to be done, I did the courses because Leo hated courses...So I would go off and learn the stuff, bring it back, talk to him about what I'd learned and we'd discuss it and he would either decide he liked it or didn't like it, he'd implement it or he wouldn't implement it.

Interviewer: You really enabled him to ...

Alison: Be who he is.

Interviewer: Immerse himself in his passion?

Alison: Yes, yes. I've given up my life to allow him that privilege and I think that is some of the things that I get ... actually, my daughter said to me just yesterday, she said, 'Mum, you sound bitter. In fact, I've noticed you getting more bitter over the last 12 months,' and I said, 'No, Philippa, I don't think I'm bitter. I think I'm just now prepared to articulate how I feel about it.' (I12)

The extent of Alison's contributions and the skills she brings to the business in part through access to education, illustrate the destabilization of traditional gender expectations yet as McNay (1999) suggests, this destabilization can lead to the emergence of other inequalities and these may be more difficult to perceive. In this respect, for women in family businesses, the assumptions underpinning the intimate partnership can serve to conceal gender inequality. This adds weight to claims that women are being offered a 'spurious' or 'nominal' gender equality through their greater access to education and employment (McRobbie 2009, Tudor 2012)

The issue of leadership and particularly who is considered the 'boss' in the business points to enduring gender inequalities in leadership and entrepreneurship discourses, making the one 'boss' ideology difficult to challenge. This is because having one boss is accepted as 'common sense' knowledge (Ponthieu and Caudill 1993). This has material effects as it suggests two people cannot be seen to be making the key business decisions and in this respect can facilitate a hierarchy of power that participants do not anticipate. It can also undermine the idea of the relationship as the key asset and basis on which the business functions effectively. As women experience their work as not sufficiently recognized, expertise not acknowledged or decision-making power limited, they realize that their ideas about partnership are not the same as their husbands. However, these difficulties are for the most part seen as failings of the relationship rather than a pattern of gender practice. For many who experience this inequality, it represents a serious emotional rupture to their business partnership making it difficult to continue working together though some put in considerable emotional and cognitive effort in thinking through possibilities to mend rifts.

The family 'partnership'

Another group of participants experience the most conflict with family members other than their husbands. For example, Freya Janz has a fraught relationship with her brother-in-law who views Freya and her husband as positioning themselves to take over the business ahead of him and his other siblings. 'It got to the point where I actually thought it was so ridiculous that I had to say something regardless of being the "gold-digging" in-law' (I19). Increasingly uneasy about her involvement in the business, Freya indicates she struggles with feelings of dependence and is losing a sense of her own autonomy:

You're getting your income from your in-laws, you're getting a house from your in-laws, you're having dinner with your in-laws. Where am I here? (I19).

The uneasiness that Freya articulates commonly leads to a sense of ambivalence about the business, especially for non-working wives. Chloe Moore exemplifies this through her increasing detachment from anything to do with the family business, though she does not work in it. Having moved back into the workforce after a long period focused on raising children she is now following her own passion. The family business has therefore lost its centrality in her life and with it, its allure. She says she no longer gives the business the 'respect' she should and does not 'regard it highly'. This relates to broader family discord among male siblings working in the business, though this discord is largely hidden from view. Indeed, the degree to which the brothers can resolve differences is much admired by their wives. Yet wives reveal a range of antagonisms exist among the brothers, requiring the discord to be relocated to the wives who actually understand the depth of sibling rivalry and are freer to openly express resentments on behalf of their husbands.

At the same time, there is an unspoken agreement that wives need to manage relationships in the interests of the business. Chloe indicates that wives work hard at maintaining relations and not making issues 'any worse' (I34) because not to do this work risks going into some 'pretty grey and dark territory' (I34). These comments indicate the degree to which non-working spouses undertake emotional labour in the

interests of the family and the business. In a contradictory comment, she implies that perhaps wives have either not been very successful at this or she no longer wishes to do this work. She states that she does not 'get involved' anymore, 'I just go the other way...I don't want to know about it' (I34).

Rennie Mitchell also articulates frustration with the family business, especially the 'grandstanding' between brothers within it. While wives are excluded from any involvement, this does not prevent her from putting a frank point of view. 'Some are just bully-boys' she states. 'It all comes down to egos. You know they all think their son is the one [to take over]'. While she has strong views, she also indicates she has little ability to influence outcomes and her frustration is palpable during the interview as she expresses concerns about both her husband and son being caught up in toxic relations in the business.

These stories of conflict and tension among participants indicate the degree to which the husband and wife relationship is embedded in the business. In this respect wives are deeply entangled in family businesses even when they are formally excluded. All must negotiate around these issues but those not working in them often have little power to effect change within the business. Some opt for detachment as over time they come to realise that issues are unlikely to be resolved to their satisfaction. Again, gender is difficult to discern on the surface of these accounts, but wives' exclusion means that conflicts and tensions within the business often play out on its margins where wives do significant emotion management work to maintain the outward appearance of family cohesion (Duncombe and Marsden 1995). Wives have a variety of skills in this regard and they are by no means always successful, but without this taken-for-granted work the business can be at risk of unravelling. This only serves to emphasize the importance of the relationship to the sustainability of family businesses.

Strategies

Participants describe a range of strategies which they employ to manage relations in the business and sustain a sense of equality. These include withdrawal, avoidance, detachment, investment, negotiation and accommodation, however there is considerable complexity among these choices and outcomes are not reducible to any single one (Kondo 1990). The problems that Anna Guest encountered with her husband offer a good example. She saw no easy solution to an entrenched belief that men lead. As a consequence, she 'gave up' the struggle for the collaborative leadership she expected. This had a significant material impact on Anna who chose to leave the business because 'I just wasn't being listened to, so I felt that it was better for the marriage for me to take a step back' (I7). She elaborates:

I could honestly say the business means absolutely zero to me right now. I hardly go in, I almost have a panic attack to go in, and I don't ask questions about it. And it's a means to an end I think ... (I7).

At the same time, Anna's resistance has been influential in changing business practice. Indeed, during the interview her husband agreed that he had been wrong to ignore his wife's advice. While the business partnership was irrevocably damaged, her husband who has demonstrated an obsession with the business, working long hours and rarely taking a holiday, is trying to pull back to spend more time with his wife.

A concern for the marriage was also the reason given by Imogen Howcroft for taking the decision to step away from the business. Like Anna, she did not see a way to destabilize perceptions about who leads without risking their relationship. At the same time, she also feels a deep rupture to the equality values she had thought were shared. It is perhaps for this reason she makes the decision to at least protect the intimate relationship where equality is more generally understood as embedded. She indicates: 'I'd rather have the marriage than be involved in the business' (I71) and in this respect gender is obscured. The problems are deemed to be in his personality, rather than gender inequality, even though in this study it is women who generally

have to make these choices than men. Imogen, more than many others, is reflexive about the issues relating to the rupture and indicates a level of resistance when she expresses concerns about her husband's ability to keep her adequately informed as a shareholder and director,

In fact, I'm on the brink of saying I can't do due diligence... So he's got himself in this very ... this is judgemental but he's got himself in inefficient management systems and processes and he's not disciplined. So he keeps promising monthly meetings and reports and they don't happen. He gets hijacked by events and he's – you know so it's got to the point where I get irritated by my brain being picked and just having the crumbs when I need a slice of bread ... so if it doesn't change it's not going to be a threat it's going to be - as a consequence of that I'm sorry I have to resign...no-one else would put up with it either so why should I? (I71)

Imogen's director role indicates that she is not powerless despite the decision she has taken to leave the business, but this comment suggests she has not been freed from managing the business relationship. She oscillates between acting decisively on the one hand, and supporting her husband to develop better ways of working, on the other. Her responses reflect the difficulty of combining intimate relations and work, and further highlights the degree to which the relationship is deeply important to the business in view of her husband's reliance on her to help him deal with his failings as a CEO. It is also an indication of the work women often do to bolster men (Cline and Spender 1987). The idea of 'accommodation' however sits uneasily in this account as she retains significant influence in the business. In this respect, her decision to withdraw emphasizes that it is easier to negotiate an equal marriage partnership than an equal business partnership (Foley and Powell 1997). Dealing with these issues has not been easy for Imogen who suggests she has had to seek the support of other women in her industry.

I have availed myself of every known sort of thing to support myself ... That's why I really gravitated to [a Women-in-business association] and women, you

know supporting women because I'm sort of yeah ... no need to say anymore (171).

Utilising the support of women in their industries in times of need was a common strategy of participants. Duncombe and Marsden (1995) suggest that building emotional lives around friendships with other women is not an uncommon response to disappointments that women face in their intimate relationships with men. These groups are also places where women in this study found empathy and understanding of the kinds of challenges they face in their industries and with their partners.

Indeed, women-in-industry groups provided some wives in partnerships with the opportunity to carve out a space for themselves that they could call their own, opening up opportunities for work on boards and government advisory committees or mentoring roles. This involvement was an effective strategy to achieve status, respect and appreciation of their skills outside the business while still bringing something important to it. At the time of interview, Harriet Farrelly for example, was being mentored by a female industry colleague to help her deal with problems she was experiencing working with her husband. She had avoided confronting him about his need to take over and make all the decisions, by frequently working away from the business. She indicates she has come to a crossroads as her husband's intransigence in relation to sharing decision making is impacting on their son who has joined the business. She has decided to institute regular family meetings in the hope that they can try to articulate 'a shared vision' (170). She suggests:

We need to each be able to share our vision I think and I've been working on that in terms of trying to get my own direction ... maybe there's a whole lot of home truths that we need to put on the table very openly and maybe the best way is to have an external facilitator there (170).

She is uncertain and somewhat nervous about the success of such an approach but she also realises now that not dealing with the problems sooner reflected a need to maintain the relationship ahead of her own satisfaction in the business.

I think maybe what's behind it is I don't want it to jeopardize my marriage. I think – yeah, that's pretty much what's behind it because I don't want to be on my own. More than that, I actually want to be with Roger (I70).

Once more gender is obscured in this story which is an example of gender hierarchy in an enterprise where the participant initially assumed egalitarianism. These stories emphasize that they are often disappointed that men assume leadership is their domain. It also emphasizes the delicacy of managing relationships and the work done by wives to maintain them. While wives' cultural responsibility for managing relationships is highlighted, Harriet's reflexivity about her own inability to stand up to her husband are made evident in the way she is trying to renegotiate the power relations in the business. She understands that it is difficult to destabilize these relations. This is why she has sought help from others. This represents a need to think beyond 'binaries of domination and resistance' that underpin some feminist perspectives (McNay 1999: 105). Rather it necessitates attention to nuance and complexity which are evident in participants' accounts (McNay 1999, 2008).

The experience of Yolanda Crimmins to ameliorate or diminish the rift with her husband in regard to her contribution to the business and demand for an equivalent title are instructive on this score. To address his concern about her visibility ahead of his own, she encouraged her husband to accept awards on the business's behalf rather than her. She also put him forward for a leadership award. 'I wrote his submission...and he won it' (I76). Yet her 'accommodation' to his insecurity must be viewed in the broader context of the achievement of an executive title. She became the managing director of one of their three related businesses.

While Yolanda has had to 'manage' her husband's ego, she has also achieved a significant degree of respect and visibility within the wider business community

through her work in a traditionally masculine engineering company. Her need to 'renegotiate' power, evidenced by her husband's ability to bestow a title, requires her to compromise some of her visibility in order to achieve greater credibility through her new managing director title. The idea of resistance or even accommodation fail to capture the way in which this scenario played out for Yolanda (Kondo 1990, McNay 1999). As Kondo (1990: 299) contends, resistance may be 'mitigated by collusion and compromise at different levels of consciousness' while at the same time, accommodation may have 'subversive effects' highlighting the complexity of gender practices and the difficulty of any easy analysis of how gender plays out for women family businesses.

Another example is evident in wives' decision to leave the business. This could be seen as complicity with the dominant norm of male leadership. However, this would not capture the significant difference Anna's decision to leave the business made to financial practices in the business and to her husband's attention to their relationship. Imogen too, found gender hierarchy in the business untenable, but she was endeavouring to broker some change through her influence as a director. Reflexivity about gender relations is often missing from these accounts, but gender is deeply embedded within these practices. This lends weight to those sceptical of the degree of renegotiation of the gender contract in late capitalism (Adkins 2004, McNay 1999, 2000, 2004, Smart 2007). Indeed, it indicates that critical reflection on taken-for-granted gender norms is in some sense an oxymoron. These stories however, indicate that women in family businesses are struggling at a deep level with the 'lack of fit' they feel when gender hierarchy becomes visible. As Kondo (1990) suggests, small but effective subversions are possible as women negotiate conflicts and tensions that arise around gendered leadership. Without attention to such complexity in gender relations, research will only offer up only partial understandings of the degree to which male dominance in family businesses is being challenged.

Priority of the business over the family

Participants indicate the business is often prioritized over family relations and activities when men are intensely engaged in the business. This suggests that even in family businesses, individualism is a deeply embedded practice. A number of wives accept this as a normal part of their marriage to 'hard working' entrepreneurs. Bowman (2009) argues this is part of 'the deal' where acceptance is traded for smooth relations and a comfortable life. This is summed up in the following remark:

I made a decision before we were even married that I would never get Chris to choose between me and the business because I know what his decision would be [laughter] (125).

Sandra Metcalf's husband works long hours and travels extensively. In her quote she implies that the business is his life. She expresses no resentment about this and perceives his commitment to work as something of a 'noble endeavour' (Finch 1983). In this respect she supports the 'heroic' effort required to achieve success on your own terms in the economic realm. In this view, entrepreneurship articulated in this way is inherently incompatible with family responsibilities (Bowman 2009, Finch 1983). Indeed, she draws on similar economic rational discourse which emphasizes the importance of self-reliance and independence to describe her own busy life. She has maintained her own career and insists that full-time work, caring for her family and community activities take up much of her time. In this context her comment is ambiguous. It does not seem to imply any grievance. Yet there is also a very clear division of labour in their relationship. The priority of her husband's work has required her to adapt her employment around raising their children. She also indicates that she is careful to ensure her husband never feels pressure to be more involved in family activities. For example, in organizing family holidays, she never assumed he would join them, nor did she ever insist on it.

This suggests some emotional labour is required in negotiating around the demands of her husband's work. The priority of the business and the long hours it

requires are self-evident. There is rarely a challenge to this way of working, although one participant did threaten to throw her husband's mobile phone into the sea when they were on holiday. Mostly though, women in this research accommodate to it in everyday acts of deference which assumes the business comes ahead of relationships or family life. Yet there is also a good deal of complexity in the way women perceive their own identities. For example, Sandra believed it was important to demonstrate to her daughters that her identity was not encapsulated in being a wife and mother. Indeed, nearly all non-working spouses had careers of their own outside the business. In Sandra's case she wanted to be a 'role model' for her children by maintaining her career and following her own passions even though, economically speaking, she did not need to work.

Where conflict and tension was evident, wives worked to protect relationships sometimes by withdrawing from the business (and by their actions, protected the business), or they put energy and effort into trying to resolve difficulties so as not to undermine their husbands' status while also obtaining recognition for themselves. In so doing, they protected both the relationship and the business. Generally, they also exclusively took on care work so that husbands could devote themselves to the business. In this way they often deftly weave together the threads of work and family life with an emphasis on maintaining family relations *and* the stability of the business, though not always in satisfying ways.

Changing gender practice

While changing gender practice is evident, men are overwhelming the leaders of their businesses, where they are in partnerships with their wives. At the same time, there is, evidence of more equal or even greater status for wives in the business and/or industry in which they operate. Wives are also taking over and running the family business, though the numbers are small among the participants in this research.

Some wives indicate considerable satisfaction working with their partners, but this does not mean gender is irrelevant. In terms of public recognition of equal status

through job titles such as joint CEOs for example, only one participant, Vivian Philpot, shared this title with her husband. They divided responsibilities in the business so that the departments reporting to her included finance, IT, HR and communications including marketing and PR whereas husband Trevor has 'property, projects, purchasing and operations' (I50). Jane Barone and her husband shared the management of client relations but he held the CEO role and had responsibility for sales while she looked after HR. Gender diversity research in Australia indicates that where women are in executive positions they are commonly located in work classified as 'support' such as human resources, public affairs and communication, finance tax and compliance (Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency (EOWA) 2010). Most of the participants, including these women, were responsible for this type of work.

Those in the most satisfying partnerships had significant leadership roles. For example, Moira Lindsey was a key driver of her family business. Her focus was on sales, marketing and export while her husband focused on growing a high quality product. In her story she describes a constant struggle against the elements including a severe drought which destroyed a large proportion of their crop in the early 2000s. She indicates this fostered a need to 'pull together' to survive in hard times which meant there were no real tensions about who did what. Their tasks were still gendered in that he took charge of product production while she did the administrative tasks. However, she was also responsible for sales and export. As a result, she had a high profile in the industry though she gave no indication this was a problem for her husband.

Julie Gantner told a similar story of having to 'pull together' through difficult times following a dramatic splitting of the business between two brothers. Julie's story focuses more on surviving the tensions associated with the division of the business and between the two families. Because of this she articulates a strong partnership with her husband in the face of a particularly rancorous family feud. For example, she states:

It was a big gamble that Eric and I took on, you know, with a very small orchard and a fairly old orchard, [as to whether] we'd be able to make a go of it and we have and I think it's proved to a lot of people in the district that said, "you won't be there, you won't last", so I'm a pretty determined sort of a person (I69).

There are high stakes for couples in these circumstances should they fail. While such demands could place further stress on the partnership, in this study it seemed to reduce conflict. Julie indicates her husband is supportive of her decision making even when it has been particularly risky for the business. For example, she refused to sell to a major supermarket chain after they became 'unreasonably' demanding, ordering them off the premises. When the company complained to her husband he told them to 'get over it. That's the way it is' (I69) and they have refused to supply them since.

Another participant described working with her husband and sons as 'her passion' (I72). Like other participants, she takes responsibility for financial, HR and compliance aspects of their business – work which is less visible and frequently positioned as secondary (EOWA 2010). At the same time, she has received public recognition for advocacy work in her industry. She describes a particularly close relationship with her husband Ray, claiming that they have developed a decision making style that enables them to reduce tensions. She reflects that early in their marriage they decided major decisions are only taken seriously if they are made when both are in a 'good headspace' allowing them to 'disregard stupid statements' (I72).

Interestingly, participants in this group were less likely to emphasize issues of equality even though husbands were sometimes the actual or symbolic head. Nor did these wives articulate heroic tales about their husbands in the establishment or growth of the business. Rather, they indicated a culture of egalitarianism existed from the start. In this respect, they profess a collaborative leadership style where each is equally invested in, and responsible for the success of the business (Hamilton 2013a). Other wives in partnerships also indicated leadership was collaborative, but they did

not credit themselves with the success of the business in the same way that participants in this group did.

Chapter Summary

This chapter documents the varied ways in which women participate in the family business and the effects of their experiences on relationships. Participants' stories indicate the deft work required by women in crafting relationships in the business. They indicate that new ventures often emerge out of joint knowledge and skills, but some participants feel obliged to 'reflect back' (Cline and Spender 1987) the heroic discourse of the entrepreneur to their partners who are intensely engaged in the business. They thereby sustain the 'individualistic' narrative of business emergence. Under these circumstances it is difficult to perceive of themselves as entrepreneurial especially given most wives live lives that are more about connection to, rather than detachment from, family. While some choose to leave the business when their egalitarian values are undermined, others try to negotiate outcomes with their partners that satisfy their sense of equality. At the same time, 'shifting fields of power' (Kondo 1990) are evident in the degree to which some women achieve more egalitarian business partnerships.

To some extent the problems women in this study encounter relate to a lack of recognition which can be summed up in terms of 'value', both in the literature and the business. Entrepreneurial and family business literature maintains a narrow focus on economic activity including performance and growth which overlooks all that 'entrepreneurship is and does' (Ahl 2006, Blake and Hanson 2005, Calás et al. 2009: 553). At the same time there is a focus on a single entrepreneur who is the 'prime mover' or driver of the business while wives who are involved in the business are often positioned as 'followers' (Foley and Powell 1997: 40). Their value is frequently seen to reside in supportive business functions, emotion work or transferring important values to children. An understanding of how work is valued rarely enters into the discussion. Issues of value of work and who decides are critical to what constitutes 'entrepreneurship' (Ahl and Marlow 2012). The wide-ranging contributions of women

that support and often underpin the day-to-day running of the enterprise are less visible when gender, power relations and differentiated value of work are not recognized, notwithstanding the problems associated with 'seeing' gender.

The negotiated nature of gender and leadership identities is made particularly visible in the 'lived social relations' of participants, in the tensions and conflicts and the contradictions which emerge and the 'lack of fit' some feel between their own expectation of equality and how leadership is perceived in the business (McNay 2004). Gender is deeply implicated in these outcomes but frequently concealed by the intimate relationship. Indeed, reflexivity in relation to gender inequalities in the business partnership can be constrained because of the risks to the intimate relationship. In this respect, some wives develop relationship-saving strategies aimed at maintaining the intimate partnership and in the process, protecting the business (Jamieson 1998). This requires significant emotion management. Indeed, research indicates that emotion work is deeply gendered and is often expected of women because of their association with the traditional caring role (Duncombe and Marsden 1995). At the same time, Hochschild (1979, 1983) argues that emotion is commercialized through the expectation that certain emotions are performed in the interests of the business. This 'emotional labour' is often unrecognized as work and can have detrimental psychological effects. For those women working with their partners, this may make relationships even more complex as emotions which are acceptable in the family are often not acceptable in the workplace. Many of these participants demonstrate vigilance to emotion, or emotional labour in Hochschild's terms, as relationships are negotiated in ways that sustain the business. This work is not easily explained by reference to ideas of resistance and accommodation (Kondo 1990, McNay 1999, 2008).

At one level, the chapter articulates the socially transforming phenomenon of democratization of intimate relations (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1991, 1992), on another, participants' stories are illustrative of the on-going struggle for gender equality but also the difficulty in reshaping deeply embodied gender practice

(McNay 1999, 2000, 2004, 2008). In view of this, the degree to which women have been freed from traditions and obligations suggested by some individualization theorists are exaggerated. Rather, the chapter elaborates the 'complexities and hazards' (Gillies 2003: 11) that come with detraditionalization. The potential for these to destabilize relationships can mean traditional expectations and obligations are reinforced rather than challenged.

At the same time, wives draw on a normative equality narrative which can serve to obscure inequality, particularly the difficulty of making themselves central to the story of the business's success. The 'heroic' narrative of the entrepreneur (Ahl 2006) coupled with the attachment men and women have to 'conventional images of masculinity and femininity' impact on the ability of wives to easily 'refashion' their gender identity as leaders and entrepreneurs and to mark out equal authority in the business (McNay 1999: 103, 2000). Where a heroic discourse is absent, wives achieve more success in crafting collaborative leadership arrangements.

Finally, the chapter, reveals that in an environment where owners can essentially make their own rules, couples working together in this study tend to adhere to more traditional arrangements where husbands lead and wives support (Baines and Wheelock 1998a). In this respect the family business, during its establishment, seems to open up a space for greater egalitarianism as per democratization, but then later forecloses it suggesting what Adkins terms a retraditionalization in terms of an intensification of the appropriation of women's family labour and women's responsibility for childcare (Adkins 1999:129). While participants take on more work traditionally done by men, the reverse rarely occurs (Marshack 1994). In this respect, husbands in family businesses are often the 'self-regulating, self-monitoring workers' of an individualized society, but they cannot achieve this without gendered work and the knowledge and skills derived from the partnership (Adkins 1999:131). Further evidence of this is illustrated in the next chapter which attends to the responsibility participants take in managing family care.

Chapter 4 | Crafting a family: A mother's responsibility

Introduction

This chapter addresses the women's experiences of family caring responsibilities and how these intersect with the business. The research indicates that women are primarily responsible for crafting family life. Crafting emphasizes the creative endeavour involved in adapting to the needs of the family and the business. In this respect wives craft identities around both spheres (Kondo 1990). Their husbands, in contrast, are mostly relieved of the responsibility for care and often the management of intimate relations and therefore have more freedom to build identities around work and business prowess.

Wives associated with family businesses are embedded in discourses of economic rationalism and entrepreneurship which structure their lives, subjecting them to 'common sense' notions of who does what in the interests of business survivability and sustainability. These discourses are grounded in male-centred structures of work and organization that make it difficult to conceive of different ways of working (Acker 1990, Scott, Crompton and Lyonette 2010).

The cultural association of women with care (Kondo 1990) and emotional management (Hochschild 1979), alongside deeply embodied maternal feelings (McNay 1999) sanction this work as women's work. While women's lives are dramatically altered by their movement into paid work in the market, the gendered practice of care is reinforced in women's experiences of workplace structures that undermine their capacity to meet workplace demands (Connell 2009, Hochschild 1997, Pocock 2003, 2005, Williams 2001). The emergence of new 'involved' father discourses have done little to destabilize caring as gendered practice (Baxter and Smart 2011, Craig and Mullan 2011). In this study, many participants describe their partners as intensely engaged in the business, which comes to define them in meaningful and sometimes dysfunctional ways (Aronoff and Ward 1995, Lansberg 1988, 1999, Levinson 1971, Miller et al. 2003, Neubauer and Lank 1998) contributing to 'workaholism' or hyper-

involvement in their businesses at the expense of their family life (Dyer and Handler 1994, Kets de Vries 1993, Mulholland 2003). Those starting new businesses are especially prone to long hours (Lewin-Epstein and Yuchtman-Yaar 1991). In this respect family time is sacrificed for business time which is closely tied to men's identity. This is not to say women do not have business identities. Where they are responsible for care though, their commitment to the business is likely to be less intense, at least for a period of time.

In this chapter, wives describe the effort involved in crafting care and managing relationships within powerful discursive frames where work is frequently structured around a '24/7' commitment. This was a widely articulated view among participants, and while long hours applied to both men and women working in the business, it was especially relevant to husbands. Indeed, intense engagement in work is part of heroic (masculine) narratives of leadership and entrepreneurship (Bird and Brush 2002, Bowman 2007, Williams 2010). This masculine practice is deeply embedded in family business narratives in this study, but also reflected in interviews I undertook with six advisors to family businesses who provided background to the research. Without exception, each presumed a male leader and spoke of the necessary support needed at home to enable men to work 'seven days a week' in family businesses (I1-4).

The chapter begins by elaborating the 'naturalness' of care work in participants' accounts and discussion of their capacity to effectively weave it around with their work commitments. It then addresses the labour involved in this work and the creative ways women adapt, but also the consequences of care for their status in the business. The chapter then turns to participants' perspectives on the impact of fathers' absence. It elaborates changing expectations of fatherhood and how this plays out in terms of men shouldering care responsibilities.

Crafting care and work

Few participants described actively negotiating the management of work and care with their partners. Predominantly, family responsibilities fell to women in a

taken-for-granted way. Combining work and care is a difficult and time consuming accomplishment requiring preparation and planning (Beck-Gernsheim 1998, Pocock 2003, Williams 2004), but many participants underplay the effort involved. Their material location as mothers means responsibility for this work is rarely questioned, rather it makes sense in the context of 'just needing to get things done' so the business survives and flourishes. Indeed, many emphasize competence at managing both work and care when in effect, within prevailing neoliberal ideology they have gained the freedom to work, *along with* the traditional tasks of family life (Bezanson 2006). To this end, they make it work as best they can, often calling on the support of other women.

Corby and Stanworth (2009) argue that women often make trade-offs against positive elements of their work. They liken this to satisficing³, 'a decision which is good enough but not optimal' (Corby and Stanworth 2009: 163). For working mothers, satisficing describes the adaptive work they do to integrate the two spheres of home and work. This allows them to respond to the opportunities that the business offers them but within the constraints of family work (Corby and Stanworth 2009). At the same time, the authors suggest that women also put up with unfair practices because they see it as part of the deal which enables them to adapt. McRobbie's (2009) idea of a 'notional equality' has cachet here. She suggests access to education and employment have given women a sense that they have gained equality with men, making it more difficult to draw attention to situations where their difference, for example their care responsibilities, singles them out as requiring special arrangements (Liff and Cameron 1997).

Consequently, participants perceive their care work as unremarkable, even though it contradicts narratives of equality in the business and relationships. One group describes weaving work and care 'seamlessly'. For example, Meredith Francis ran the sales side of their business while 'doing it all' (I20). Not only did she take responsibility for care, she also 'made all their clothes [and] did all the cooking (I20).

³ A term coined by Simon (1957) to describe the fact that managers make decisions without complete knowledge and therefore 'choices are made within limiting constraints' (Corby, S. and Stanworth, C. (2009). 'A price worth paying?' *Equal Opportunities International* 28 (2): 162-178.

(There is a hint of the heroic in the domestic in this story, comparable to the discourse of the entrepreneur.) Similarly, Rhonda Harris did the company accounts 'at the dining room table' (172) while attending to the needs of five children.

There is a view in the family business literature that women have greater flexibility to manage care and work at less cost to career trajectories (Cole 1997, Curimbaba 2002, Dumas 1992, Frishkoff and Brown 1993, Haynes et al. 1999, Salganicoff 1990a). Cromie and O'Sullivan's research disputes the idea that women's careers are not affected if they take time out for childcare which is important in the context of flexibility operating to entrench a traditional division of labour in family businesses (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, Baines and Wheelock 2000, Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999).

In this study care work was undertaken often with little support from partners. Participants only rarely expressed resentment about this. Indeed, they often equated their ability to manage as a sign of their competence. As Meredith Francis asserted, she could manage work and care because she was, 'highly organized and I'm really focussed' (120), while Anna Guest said 'I'm just very capable' (18). This emphasis on competence relates to two factors; the status (and satisfaction) associated with paid work and the fact that unpaid responsibilities are not often viewed as 'work' (Folbre 2001). The former demands a competent worker narrative, while the latter is deeply embedded in assumptions that women undertake such work as an expression of love (Folbre 2001). For women in business partnerships in particular, the competence discourse is important to sustaining the rhetoric of equality which they emphasize in their business relations. In portraying their capacity to manage as unremarkable and relatively effortless, wives make the labour involved in care work less visible. Hochschild (2003: 25) suggests that such descriptions promote the idea that competence in successfully weaving care and work are personal characteristics, not adaptations to very demanding schedules, hence the 'superwomen' label often applied to women who 'do it all' in the popular media. In this respect they conceal the extent to which women feel under pressure and time poor.

Drawing on the work of Trentmann (2009), Maher (2013) argues that stress and time poverty are not the only way to view women's competing desires and aspirations. She suggests 'changeability' and 'disruption' at the intersection of career and care is increasingly normative. On this view, these stories can also be read as a reflection of wives' ability to 'braid together' work and family responsibilities in both resilient and adaptive ways (Maher 2013: 175), as the next section elaborates.

Finding support: women supporting women and paid help

To effectively craft care, household and work responsibilities, participants in this study often draw on the support of other women, usually mothers or mothers-in-law, aunts or sisters-in-law. A number of the participants' workplaces were either home-based or near their homes which meant children were frequently 'around' and so care could more easily be shared with other family women. Alison Carazo describes keeping a monitor in the warehouse where she worked with her sister-in-law. They would 'take it in turns to attend to kids' (I12) when they woke up. Similarly, Julie Gantner also shared care with a sister-in-law and an aunt but the children were also frequently in the warehouse while she worked.

It is not just family women who step into the breach. Joyce Hall provided an interesting example of how a sense of community and solidarity between women was critical to crafting work in the business and care of her young child, who she took to work with her.

So there were all these other ladies that had shops around and if I was busy one of them would come and grab Joe and everybody had Joe toys and so Joe belonged to [name of town]. He was a communal baby ... (I77).

These accounts reflect the creative thinking, organization and interdependency necessary to successfully manage care and household tasks so wives can also meet work commitments. Even where private providers are engaged, it is not a straight forward exercise for women to employ them. Rather they negotiate this with their husbands who sometimes have to be convinced of their value. Alison Carazo, for

example, had to badger her husband over a number of years to get help in the house. She recounts: 'It took me many, many years ... for him to agree for me to have a house cleaner' (112). For Wendy Maugham, pregnant with her fourth child, the solution to managing work and home life was to outsource household work. She told her husband, "I can't do this anymore, look at the house. I can't keep the books and do everything" (183). These comments represent the difficulty of positioning household tasks and care as 'work'. The fact that women need to convince partners that they are in effect holding down two jobs (Hochschild 2003) is an indication of the secondary place of the private sphere and the work that occurs there (Williams 2001).

Only one participant was able to significantly reduce her 'second shift' (Hochschild 2003). While Jenny Marsden managed the organization of it, care and household work was undertaken by her nanny/household manager. This enabled her to devote more attention to the business.

I had Thelma [nanny] looking after Kevin ... Thelma came when Kevin was about four, so Thelma took Kevin to kindergarten, I never did. She took him for his first day at school, I never did. I think I got to one parent/teacher interview (122).

These stories demonstrate the cultural norm that it is women who do care, whether mothers or other women if they are not available (Hays 1998). In one respect the work they do is commonplace and women readily adapt to it, but scholars of the work and family 'collision' point to the strains that 'outdated' workplace structures, modes of working and gender stereotypes place on families, but especially women with childcare responsibilities (Hochschild 1997, 2003, Pocock 2003, 2005, Williams 2001, 2010). These issues are highlighted in the next section.

Lifting the lid: the stresses and strains

Wives in family businesses are embedded within economic and entrepreneurial discourses that often demand heroic sacrifice, long hours and intense commitment which impact on their ability to weave their dual responsibilities as seamlessly as they

would like (Hamilton 2006, Hamilton 2013b, Williams 2010). In this respect, some are less sanguine about the effort involved. Joyce Hall exemplifies this. She describes trying to establish the business and care for her young son while her husband held down a full-time job. She remembers this as a particularly harrowing time. The drive to and from work with the baby and the long hours were so exhausting that she feared she would have an accident. After falling asleep at the traffic lights one day, she told her husband: 'I can't go on like this, I'm going to kill Joe and I, I just can't. I'm getting too tired' (177). They resolved the issue, not by reducing her workload, but by moving the business closer to home. Similarly, Wendy Maugham described the stress of taking the children along when she went debt collecting though she used the opportunity to good effect: 'We'd sit in the people's office and I'd go "I have to be paid, I've got to feed these four children. What are you doing?"' (183).

Ideologies of the 'good mother' position mothering as time consuming, labour-intensive work which, it is suggested, has intensified rather than diminished as mothers have moved into the workforce in large numbers (Hays 1998). While mothers often have an ambivalent relation to good and intensive mothering, such ideologies can contribute to the stresses wives experience as they endeavour to maintain a day-to-day commitment to the business. Rachel Bauer's story exemplifies this. She employed a nanny to help her manage care work so she could remain intimately involved in the development of a new business with her husband. The business was based in a regional centre and required regular travel to and from Melbourne where they lived. Rachel would often take the children with her. While her husband would drive, she and the children would go by train so it was more of 'an adventure for them' (123). In her mind however, such efforts were a poor substitute for her absence because of work commitments. She describes the experience of managing both tasks as being put through a 'psychological wringer' and never feeling that she 'was doing either job really, really 100 per cent' (123).

This comment suggests that some mothers labour under a societal expectation that they must give 100 per cent to the care of their children undercutting any notion

that care and work can be effectively managed (Hays 1998). In this respect, Rachel has actively discouraged her daughter, who is one of the few female CEOs in the next generation in this study, from thinking she can manage both jobs at once. 'I must admit I've said to her don't try to do it all but maybe...put in 100 per cent here, then stop ...' (123). She indicates her daughter can always come back to the business at a later date if she wants to. This perspective tends to assume that her daughter is likely to have little or limited support from the child's father in managing care, or that her daughter would or should be the primary caregiver. However, Rachel also points to the ease with which family women can re-join the business or adapt work and family responsibilities around the business with less impact on their careers (Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Salganicoff 1990a). With so few women at the top in family businesses in Australia and the alignment of management and entrepreneurship with discourses of hard work, self-reliance and long hours, it remains to be seen whether she can maintain her CEO position under these circumstances.

Motherhood narratives and household work

A small number of wives who did not work in the family business indicated they 'were happily rearing children' (134). Lauren Hilton preferred to be home as she had difficulty leaving the children with others. At one time her husband was holding down two demanding jobs so she felt the need to be available. She indicated that caring for three children and a father with a serious illness meant that her 'life was too hectic' (160). She was also not comfortable leaving the children with others.

I used to work a little bit in retail with the first two but when David came along it was all too hard. I'm not very good at juggling of all those things. I was never good at leaving children (160).

Another participant, Emma Martin, initially indicated she happily adopted the traditional division of labour so she could pursue creative interests,

So we have quite a strong division of labour it's just the way it suits us to do it. I'm really happy. I wouldn't have it any other way and I think I'm extremely

fortunate to be able to do that...I do everything at home. We're just really old fashioned. I am the domestic. I do it all and he doesn't have to worry about it and I don't have to go to work so we're both happy (I51).

It is revealing that Emma does not see household responsibilities in the same light as work in the public sphere. However, she later qualifies this comment by saying that she was not prepared to both work and be responsible for the household management:

Actually, when I was working I was doing all the domestic work. Typical pattern and that's probably partly why I don't want to go back to work because I know that I will be doing all the domestic work as well. Feminism's got us so far but we've got a big chore there to sort of negotiate...the second job. (I51)

Emma is engaged in both household work and creative pursuits which she works at from home. Her comments are indicative of cultural ideas that what counts as 'real' work happens in the public sphere which impacts on the value of work in the private (Daniels 1987, Williams 2001).

Like Emma, Amanda Heatherton draws attention to the unfairness of the division of household work. She openly expresses her frustration about her husband's lack of engagement with this work, especially now their children have left home. She also indicates the sensitivity of expressing this view in the following comment:

I don't know whether I should probably say this as it's being taped, [Laughter] but you know, you both work and Brian [husband] has – he does have a responsibility. He's the main breadwinner I suppose, but we kind of both work. Then you think we both work, both should do a bit at home, but I feel as though I've always pretty well done everything. And I suppose just trying to juggle that and come to terms with you've got to work and then you come

home and you put your other hat on and continue working in a different kind of environment. That's probably the hardest struggle (127).

These accounts indicate that whether they work outside the home or not, women take on household and family responsibilities, enabling their husbands the freedom to devote themselves to the business. As unpaid work, family care and household work is often invisible business support. Indeed, Matzek et al (2010: 60) describe it as important 'spousal social capital'. Feminists writing on the subject over a number of decades have tried to make the value of this work visible as 'work' in order that its importance to both society and the economy is recognized (Daniels 1987, Waring 1999, 2003). The fact that these accounts are generally missing from the family business literature highlights the difficulty of entrenching such a view. In so far as family business scholars show any concern with this work, they generally focus on mothers inculcating important values in children or their 'agreement' to do this work so the entrepreneur can focus on the business (Cappuyens 2007, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Matzek et al. 2010). The absence of a 'parents' perspective here, reproduces the cultural association of women as carers, while reinforcing the assumption that men are focused on the business and therefore unable to play a significant role in childrearing.

Consequences of care

Responsibility for care can have consequences for wives' status in the business. Wives who started out putting in what they saw as equal time during the establishment of the business had their contributions curtailed by care work. Inevitably this meant husbands took more of the lead role (Hamilton 2013a).

Contradictions sometimes emerged around this issue of work and time with family. For example, Robyn emphasizes that she has always been full-time in the business, even when the children were young. She worked from home managing the book keeping for a time and also employed a nanny to assist her so she could go into the office. At the same time, she emphasized her commitment to her family when she

said that she 'breast fed the last two [children] for eighteen months so it meant I was committed at home' (I54). She describes the process of weaving work and care in the following way:

I was pretty much always customer service side of things. When I had the kids I did a lot of work from home in the early stages so I did a lot of the bookwork side of things and the payrolls and all of that and three kids sort of over six years I guess (I54).

At the same time, her family responsibilities restricted her ability to accompany her husband on overseas buying trips.

We used to go together ... when we had children it became difficult and it was too hard for both of us to be away and so *I opted* to be the stay-at-home person but still working in the business through all of that time and having support with nannies and things like that (I54). (My italics).

While this quote suggests being the primary carer was a choice, there was never any suggestion in the interview that this was a negotiated outcome.

On the one hand Robyn articulates a desire to be viewed as an equal partner through her emphasis on a full-time commitment to the business, and on the other her 'commitment' to the needs of her children indicates a need to meet normative expectations of good mothering. The contradiction in her suggestion that she is giving full-time attention to both suggests an emotional struggle in relation to her ability to give each 'sufficient' time. In this, she mirrors Rachel's view that it is almost impossible to do either job to one's full capacity. Robyn was among a group of participants who positioned their husbands as the driver of the business after earlier describing a much more egalitarian effort at start-up.

Kate Williams articulated similar difficulties in meeting the demands of the business and managing care. 'I find it frustrating because I really couldn't do – you know, finish all the marketing stuff because I was tied to being at home so I couldn't do

the interstate travel' (155). These comments point to the taken-for-granted nature of this work and the assumption that it is a woman's job to organize their time efficiently so they can engage effectively in both. This is possibly even more stressful given the business is their livelihood. Their struggles to meet competing demands indicate how care has the potential to disrupt a leadership or entrepreneurial identity that demands an intense and uninterrupted commitment to the business, something their husbands are more free to do.

In so far as this work can restrict their capacity to be as engaged as they once were in the business, this has material effects in terms of their opportunities to maintain networks, skills and profile, and their 'situated knowledge' are reduced (Hamilton 2013a: 96). Wives in family businesses can therefore go from being 'the team' some described at business establishment to playing a more secondary role unless they can outsource care, though this was uncommon in this study. As these women emphasize, flexible or part-time work enables them to remain engaged in the business, but it is not without cost, especially when they receive little support from husbands. In this respect they take on work compatible with caring responsibilities which are generally administrative tasks, work most often associated with less authority and value (Cohen and Huffman 2003, England 1992, Lewis and Massey 2011, Padavic and Reskin 2002, Reskin 1993). These issues underscore the complexity of how a traditional division of labour can impact on wives' level of involvement and how husbands come to be viewed, and view themselves, as the key leadership figure. As women resume more full-time involvement when childrearing responsibilities reduce, it can be difficult to destabilize the gender hierarchy that has emerged.

At the same time, men's intense engagement with the business underpins the necessity for wives to do the adaptive work of weaving business and family together. In this respect, many do this in ways that are not always optimal in terms of their sense of being both 'good' mothers and committed workers, or in so far as they can maintain shared values of equality in the business.

Fatherhood, family and work

Father absence

According to participants, most fathers were generally absent, remote or had only limited engagement in care work. A majority of wives described their husbands in this way and some indicated their husbands played little or no role in the raising of children. These women frequently describe husbands as 'workaholics' whose intense engagement in the business leaves them little time for family.

Eva Herrera's experience is illustrative of these accounts. Her husband Gabe only spent Sunday afternoons with her when the children were little because of the work he put into the business. Eva asserts 'he didn't really have a lot of time for his family ... so it was me and the kids and I had to basically beg him to spend time with me' (I52). It was only when their eldest child started 'acting up' about the age of eight that Eva confronted him about spending more time with his son. Although Gabe acquiesced, he and Eva's ideas about quality time differed markedly. While she thought they should 'go fishing or something' (I52), Gabe decided to take his son to work with him.

This kind of commitment to work ahead of family was similarly expressed by Alison Carazo who bemoaned the fact that time off was just not on her husband's radar. Their children were three and five and they were married for eight years 'before we even took a weekend or anything off really' (I12).

Some wives indicated a lack of emotional connection rather than just absence. Robyn Combes, who described herself as 'the main 'raiser' of the children' (I54) suggested her husband was 'a little bit aloof' and not really a 'gushy' kind of Dad. Alison Carazo described her husband's relationship with the children as 'remote', adding 'I wouldn't call it a great relationship, no' (I12). She described him as 'opting out' of care.

He never really contributed to bringing up the children as far as decision making was concerned. He loves what he does so passionately that he basically excuses himself from everything else that's his responsibility in the family because he is providing for us (I12).

Other wives spoke frankly to their husbands about their lack of engagement. Yolanda Crimmins, for example warned her husband against being too focussed on work. 'I used to say, "You're going to regret this. You've got to be with the children more." He'd say "No, I won't." Anyway, he's acknowledged that I was right' (I76), implying that his absence has had an adverse impact on relationships with their children. Similarly, Marion Rogers suggested to her husband that golf was not 'a family sport' (I57), to make the point that he needed to spend more time with the children at the weekend.

Wives generally accept the priority of the business and husbands' commitment even when it disrupts significant life events such as the birth of a child. Sandra Metcalf explained that when their first child was born, her husband was doing a course and so 'sent my parents in to pick me up from hospital' (I25), and very shortly afterwards headed overseas for an extended period. Sandra reconciled this by saying she was a more mature mum, suggesting she was better able to manage on her own. Similarly, Anna Guest reflected that: 'I was in hospital having babies and he was at work. That came ahead of taking a week off.' (I8).

Sandra also carefully engineered quality time with children around holidays by not applying overt pressure. Rather she would 'just organize the holiday and say to Chris [husband] "right we're going. Are you coming, are you staying here or whatever"' (I25).

While father absence did not necessarily mean relations with children were strained it did often mean mothers had more meaningful relationships. Amanda Heatherton illustrates this well:

I know I've got a wonderful relationship with the kids, really open and I feel a lot of it is to do with the fact that I was there as a mum in those early years. I really think that's important (I27).

She describes her husband Brian as having 'missed out' on the younger years of their children's lives because of the time he devoted to the business and other pursuits. According to Amanda, the children had a very strong view about this, telling their father: 'Dad, you don't have to be doing all these other things' (I27). Similarly, Hilary Mountford described how absence and remoteness contributes to lack of understanding of children's 'strengths and weaknesses and their personalities' (I53).

Few condemned husbands for their lack of involvement. Indeed, wives would often excuse them by saying that 'he's a great father but...' (I55). This alluded to the fact that there was less societal pressure for fathers to be emotionally involved with their children in the same way mothers are expected to be (Wall and Arnold 2007). But this created a conundrum for one participant who on the one hand expressed a concern about her husbands' lack of engagement in family life, but on the other saw his commitment to the business as admirable.

I love the fact that my husband is such a dogged person. He will succeed at any cost basically, and I love that about him even though it frustrates me in another sense because it is at a cost. It's a family cost in so many ways (I12).

This conundrum to some extent has its basis in discourses of entrepreneurship as a heroic and worthy endeavour. It is emblematic of neo-liberal ideology in terms of its emphasis on self-reliance, hard work and independence. It is therefore to be admired and from the point of view of most western governments, supported and cultivated (Jennings et al. 2013). Indeed, in calling for critical engagement with entrepreneurship Jennings et al. (2013) ask if it is good for family well-being.

These stories suggest that in terms of father engagement it is not, especially in children's formative years. They also indicate that the 'new', more involved father of contemporary discourse is not compatible with business establishment and

management. However, researchers more broadly note that fathers' engagement in childcare has increased only marginally over the last thirty years, especially where fathers work full-time. These findings suggest that fathers described in this study are not unusual in their absence (Baxter 2002, Bittman and Pixley 1997, Craig 2006, Craig and Mullan 2011). Though fathers say they want to spend more time with children (Milkie, Mattingly, Nomaguchi, Bianchi and Robinson 2004), participants in this study indicate that very few fathers took on any significant responsibility for childcare despite being more able to control work hours.

Father involvement

Fathers' absence from care was by no means universal, though their engagement varied widely (Baxter and Smart 2011), from being home in time for dinner to actively caring for children during school holidays. Jane Barone and her husband Paul were a rare example of a shared care arrangement. According to Jane, the decision to share care was prompted by a serious health scare affecting Paul which saw him briefly incapacitated rather than a desire for egalitarianism. As a result, they developed a strong family ethos, reflected in her oft-repeated comment, 'the business serves the family not the family serve the business' (I48). She seemed to indicate two reasons for this. The first was that the business should never be seen as rival for parental affection by their children, and the second was that they wanted a comfortable lifestyle but not at the cost of family time. To achieve this, they sold off the retail arm of their business and concentrated on growing the wholesale division. Jane recounts how their beliefs translated into practice:

They [the children] sat down to meals at night, their dad sat with them. He may have worked later on, I may have worked later on, but they didn't see that. We built a business nationally around Australia. We travelled a lot. He went or I went, so someone was home. I picked them up every day after school. We went and had all the activities. There was always somebody. School holidays were spent in every different state around Australia ... I would sit by the beach, he would work. He would sit by the beach; I would work (I48).

Another example, albeit less egalitarian, was recounted by Wendy Maugham. Wendy insisted that both she and her husband were 'very hands on with the kids' (183). As well as sharing and participating in a sporting interest with their children, her husband would come home early from work and they would always sit down for a family dinner. She asserts that he was also involved in the children's school lives:

If there was stuff at school he'd take time off and go to the school thing, if there was any function that I thought he should've been at he was there even if he was the only dad, he'd be there (183).

While her husband makes an effort to be actively involved with their children, it is noteworthy that it is still *her* job to advise him what he should 'be at'. This indicates the degree to which women take responsibility not just for caring tasks, but for organizing and planning around care.

There were frequent contradictions in wives' stories about their husbands' involvement with children. For example, Hilary Mountford suggests her husband 'really tried' to be involved when the children were little. 'He would come home at 5.30, 6 and he might get one or two of them out of the bath and he might do a jigsaw with them' (153). As soon as they were in bed however, he would work until the early hours and then would be gone by five or six in the morning. At the same time, Hilary described her husband as remote from the children and totally focussed on the business. This suggests he may have been 'present but emotionally absent' (Parreñas 2005: 327). Similarly, Rachel Bauer's described her husband as working '24/7' in the business but then said he was also keen to ensure that their blended family would 'merge and mesh and be brothers and sisters' (123). Rachel suggests it was important for both of them that they worked together to achieve this. She explains that this was their 'biggest task. That's been the thing that we have been most serious about' (123). These contradictions make it difficult to gauge the true degree of 'active' participation in the care of children.

However, for some fathers it was clear that at least part of the time they were actively engaged in care work. Rhonda Harris's husband Ray, a truck driver, would take the children away with him during school holidays. 'He had terrific one-on-one time with them' (172). In fact, this one-on-one involvement was partly responsible for the establishment of the business because 'the boys enjoyed it so much' (172). Another participant, Rennie Mitchell, who did not work in the family business, said she could not have continued with her career if it wasn't for her husband who would always take the children away on school holidays. 'I worked full-time ... I couldn't have worked if it wasn't for him ... He'd come home and cook the meals and I'd clean up ... he was great' (149).

There was an assumption among some wives that household work and childcare would be at least partly shared by husbands. Vivian Philpot, who built a multi-national business with her husband, suggests this was her expectation even if she did take the greater responsibility for it:

Just as all young couples do, you just shared child minding, shared dropping them off to kinder. You just do. I think (whispers) most females do the lion's share [laughter] that's 'cause we can – I would have done more to run the house and make sure the kids got to school. I did more – absolutely I did more (150).

Even though the family business environment could be advantageous for sharing care arrangements, especially when it was home based, only one home based couple actively did this. Charlotte and her husband were forced to share care by the difficult circumstances of their business establishment and lack of any other resources to support them. Charlotte explains: 'Yeah we could work it between us on the farm and [our] work off site - one of us could always look after our baby from when he was three to six months' (175).

These accounts indicate a shift in some relationships toward more involved fatherhood. The level of their engagement however is difficult to gauge, though wives' stories indicate fathers were more likely to 'help out' rather than take on primary responsibility for care. Regardless of their work demands, it was invariably wives who did the management of, and thinking about, the requirements of care (Baker 2001, 2010, Bittman and Pixley 1997, Coltrane 2000, Craig and Mullan 2010, 2011, Hochschild 2003).

Family narratives in the accounts of 'workaholic' women

When women's caring responsibilities were reduced, some wives took on similar practices of intense engagement with the business and long hours. Three participants described such practices. For example, Meredith Francis asserted that:

I work seven days a week every week because you have to. I've always got my iPad with me, I've always got my phone because manufacturing is five days a week but retail is seven days and I'm across both so that's what happens (I20).

However, she also emphasized her connectedness with family. She comments that it is no co-incidence that she has four children working in the business. While she is dedicated to the business, this does not come at the expense of family relationships which she works hard at cultivating through daily contact, inclusivity and family rituals. Meredith describes herself as the architect of this closeness, not her husband:

I mean we have fantastic parties with our kids, we have a great time, we have a lot of fun with our kids. Our kids enjoy our company and we enjoy their company and always have and it's been driven by me and not by Mick ... I mean we eat together, we drink together, we have fun together, we go shopping together, I buy their clothes. We have a lot of fun together; we know what each other are doing (I20).

Meredith's account suggests crafting is more broadly defined as cultivating and maintaining relationships rather than just organizing the twin tasks of care and work.

Jenny Marsden also indicated a 'heroic' attachment to work but it was mediated by a need to accommodate to the circumstances of her husband's illness. She describes an intense need to put work first, suggesting she often worked '18 hour days' and this level of commitment was not diminished when she went into labour in the office. After her waters broke she resisted going to hospital, telling her office manager, "I can't go yet because I've got to do the invoices" (122). It was not until some hours later that she finally left for hospital. Yet her story also provides a deeply emotional account of the care of her husband when he became incapacitated through illness and the need to weave caring solutions for both he and her son around the even greater demands of the business, now she was running it alone. This took the form of shared care. In her son's case she shared care with the nanny, while also frequently bringing him to work with her. In her husband's case, she had a shared arrangement where he would spend time with her at home, and also some time at an external nursing home.

A third participant, Yolanda Crimmins, volunteered that she, like her husband, was a 'workaholic' (176). At one point she held down three jobs while she and he were working to establish the business. She emphasized however, that unlike her husband she did not lose sight of family which she described in biological terms: 'I was always still aware of the children. I think a mother's instinct of looking after your children is so strong' (176).

Jordan, Redley and James (1994) argue that there is a moral necessity to 'put family first' in parents' accounts which is not specifically gendered. In this respect both male and female entrepreneurs emphasize the centrality of family. While men's accounts are often framed within their provider role (see for example Bowman 2007), there is a gendered emphasis on attention to care and relationship management in these participants' accounts. Men in Bowman's research tended to discuss the way that family commitments 'disrupt' work while participants in this research saw it as critical to maintain connectedness regardless of the demands of work. These differences are culturally associated with feminine rather masculine behaviour, though

McNay (1999) suggests that women's maternal feelings are deeply embedded in gender identity and therefore not amenable to easy refashioning. Both studies illustrate the strength of men's and women's investments in traditional ideas about masculinity and femininity as it relates to care (McNay 1999, 2000).

At the same time, the participants who are in the lead role in family businesses in this research destabilise the symbolic features of entrepreneurship (Bruni et al. 2004b). Their attention to the emotional as well as the rational aspects of the business, and the collective emphasis in relation to business development positions them at odds with conventional notions about qualities of individualism that supposedly inhere in entrepreneurs.

Managing and maintaining relationships

Intimate partner relationships

Much has been made in the family business literature about women's skill with emotions and relationship management (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001). While acknowledging its importance, it is often perceived as informal work, therefore positioning women who do it on the margins of the business and reinforcing notions of men as rational and women as emotional (Jaggar 1989, Plumwood 1993).

Participants in this study indicated that such work was often related to power imbalances. In businesses where husbands took the lead role and perceived themselves to be the boss, this sometimes created hierarchies of power which affected the relationship. Wives in these business indicated they were actively 'working on' or 'thinking about' the best way to maintain intimacy given this disruption to their equality values.

Kate Williams exemplifies this requirement. When asked about the main challenges for her and her partner in the business she states:

Well for me I think it's just been working with David, just in managing our relationship so that we still like each other [laughter]. For him, look I think he's

really loved it. He just loves driving it and seeing the figures and the sales and all that sort of thing (I55).

It is revealing that that she is relationship focused and he is business focused. Her need to 'manage the relationship so they still like each other' is further illuminated when she later explains that they had more respect for one another when they had separate careers. She feels that working together has 'affected our relationship' (I55). While her comment implies that the issue of loss of respect is mutual, her attention to managing the relationship possibly suggests that he does not feel this loss as she does. This may be because he already has higher status in the business.

The idea of maintaining intimacy was expressed differently by Anna Guest. She was actually motivated to join the business because she thought it would foster closeness. She and her husband had to fight to secure the business ahead of other family members when her husband's father died. This provided the opportunity for it to become a couple partnership. In this respect, her decision to join the business was in part related to a belief that by working closely together she would gain a greater understanding of what drove her husband's absence from her and the family. Anna demonstrates reflexivity about the relationship when she says:

I thought it would bring us together. That's why when we bought it I thought it would be a really good thing to have us both going down the same path without me whingeing so much why wasn't he there, so I could get more of a feel for why he wasn't there (I8).

She indicates a desire to understand his deep engagement with the business and feels that this insight will be able to reduce conflict over his long hours and work commitment. Unfortunately, things did not work out as she hoped and her difficulties working with her husband led her to 'save the marriage' (I8) by leaving the business. At the same time, her decision to opt out suggests it was untenable to remain when her values of equality were undermined. She suggests her husband did not perceive the lack of respect of her expertise and the undermining of her decision making power

because of a belief in his status as key decision maker. His leadership and commitment to the business is a self-evident necessity in view of the fact that his skills underpin it. In this respect, there is little acknowledgement of the importance of the relationship in securing the business, and its functioning and efficiency.

Alison Carazo is a good example of how partners often have competing interests, which invariably impinge more on wives than husbands. She has pulled back from the business after years of devotion and believes it is now time for her husband to give some attention to their relationship. Instead he has 'tripled the operation' (I12). She has negotiated a commitment from him that he will look to retire in three years, but one year has already passed and she says, 'three hasn't changed into two yet' (I12). Somewhat tongue in cheek she remarks, 'I'll just put my hands up in exasperation and walk away in two or three years if he hasn't achieved what he wants to achieve and wants to continue doing what he does' (I12).

Much of the literature on husbands and wives in partnerships suggest that working together enables couples to more effectively weave together their aspirations for control and autonomy with family life, which enhances their relationship (Frishkoff and Brown 1993, Kadis and McClendon 1991, Smith 2000). Yet research also highlights that there can be significant stress on a relationship when couples work together (Danes and Olson 2003, Larsen 2006). While participants highlight a range of relationship difficulties, wives in partnerships in this study mostly suggest their working relationship is sound. Where gender hierarchy is evident at work however, this does not occur without considerable work to maintain the relationship. The accounts of wives in this study, suggest they generally undertake this work.

The individualization thesis suggests the uncoupling of the individual from traditional social structures has 'fundamentally altered the experience of love, sexuality and family life' (Gillies 2003: 9). Giddens (1992) suggests that there has been a transformation of intimacy, leading to greater democratization in relationships. The participants' stories demonstrate this to some extent. At the same time the degree to which traditional gendered expectations continue to impact are evident in

participants' responsibility for care and the work of thinking about and strategizing in relation to managing relationships. In some respects, fragility is also evident, though it is revealing that where wives' values of equality have been significantly undermined in the partnership, they choose to pull back from the business to protect the intimate relationship. Participants' stories often describe and imply 'democratic values of respect and negotiation', but stark choices about remaining in the business or protecting the relationship suggests that negotiation has its limits (Gillies 2003: 15) and in this study at least, it is women who have to make the choice. In this respect, wives imply the importance of intensive engagement in work to men's identity and the impact of this on their understandings of leadership can restrict their ability for reflexivity about gender inequality.

Steering and mediating family relationships

The need to actively keep relations between husbands and children on an even keel was common in wives' accounts. Wives stepped up in a variety of ways in this respect. Alison Carazo described herself as the 'family counsellor' as a result of her husband's behaviour toward the children. 'I've protected my children from my husband all of their lives and that sounds awful, but he can be at times unnecessarily cruel or mean' (I12). While this 'cruelty' was emotional rather than physical, it meant that Alison had to help him 'come to terms with some of the things I perceived him not doing well as a dad and husband and I was counselling the children so they didn't bear the brunt of it'. In this respect Alison appears to be 'interpreting fatherhood' for him and supporting him in his parenting (Duncombe and Marsden 1995:153). In contrast, Hilary Mountford suggests her husband is not one to confront issues head on at the intersection of the family and the business and prefers to avoid them or 'sweep them under the carpet' (I53). Her role, she believes, has been to 'initiate, to make sure things are dealt with'. These accounts suggest that men can feel 'a lack of fit' with family (Bowman 2007).

Women's reflexivity about managing relationships between children and fathers is further elaborated by Christina Brandt who mediates conflict between her husband and their children:

If they [their sons] would do something ... or confront Thomas [husband] with certain things or whatever ... He'd get very upset and you'd have to say "but look maybe we need to do this or maybe we have to be more clear". I think honestly women think a little bit deeper sometimes than men. Men are very businesslike but as far as family is concerned they may not think as deep as a woman does. And you sort of have to say, "well maybe we have to act a bit differently, maybe we have to give him more rights, you have to let him go more" (168).

Christine's comment is illustrative of the taken-for-granted notion that women are 'naturally' suited to care and relationship work (Kondo 1990). At the same time she seems more attuned to the changing societal emphasis on autonomy and the necessity for negotiation of family relationships ahead of patriarchal authority (Gilding 2000).

By focusing on the relational work of wives, I do not mean to suggest that men do neither emotion nor relationship work. However, participants' stories indicate that they did the thinking about relationships and how to manage them in a way that their husbands did not. Indeed, some expressly noted their efforts, ahead of their husbands. Meredith Francis for example emphasized that she maintained relationships with their children, not her husband. Similarly, Jane Barone indicated that the work that went into effectively integrating the children into the business was initiated and driven by her, not her husband. Much research attests to the fact that men are frequently driven to work long hours and therefore neglect relationships (Dyer and Handler 1994). In this respect, as Alison suggests, they can use the financial rewards which result from their deep commitment to the business to frame the terms of engagement with the family (Bowman 2007).

Evidence of men's concern for relationships was scant in the wives' accounts, although not totally absent. Freya Janz, for example, described a situation where her husband felt the need to protect her from conflict with his brother.

It puts a lot of extra pressure on everybody [spouses joining the business] so it can put a lot of extra pressure on, you know, on us personally and our relationship, it can put extra pressure on Edward because if anything goes wrong, you know, there's that sort of immediate need to side with you and want to protect you... (I19).

Freya's experience illustrates that couples often do joint work to protect their relationship when they encounter a threat, such as dysfunctional relationships in the wider family. This was also evident in stories of other participants where businesses were split between brothers, or they faced significant problems with wider family relationships.

Chapter Summary

This chapter addresses the question of how women manage care and relationships at the intersection of work and family life. It shows how deeply entrenched traditional arrangements are for care, household and relationship work in these so-called 'post-traditional' (Giddens 1994) family businesses (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, Baines and Wheelock 2000). With few exceptions, for those who have children, care work - either the day-to-day tasks or organising the management of it - fall to women, whether they work in the business or not. Only one participant (who was not working in the business) framed care as a political issue. Rather, most saw it as unremarkable and few expressed much resentment about absent husbands. In weaving together work and care as effectively as they could, some demonstrated the idea of satisficing, that is, accepting sub-optimal outcomes in order to maintain an often necessary role in the business.

Flexible work practices are key to this, but are not without their consequences. In this women working in family businesses experience similar issues to those

encountered by business women generally (Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999, Fernandez Perez and Hamilton 2007, Marlow and McAdam 2013). These include the association of part-time work with a lack of commitment, the stresses and strains involved in meeting competing responsibilities, and occupational segregation which often sees them undertake lower status work. At the same time childcare responsibilities are more readily accommodated in the family business in terms of flexible work having less impact on careers in the business. It is something of a paradox however, that while care work is accommodated, it also entrenches traditional arrangements (Baines and Wheelock 2000, Cromie and O'Sullivan 1999), recreating the 'modified breadwinner model' (Pocock 2005) with husbands working full-time and wives working flexibly.

While at pains to emphasize their competence in crafting work and family life, participants can struggle to meet the entrepreneurial standard to which husbands more readily conform. Wives fashioned solutions to the problem of combining competing responsibilities with the support of other women, either paid or unpaid. In this respect, most participants' working lives are made possible, not through the direct support of husbands but through help from family women, communities of women or resources to fund paid help (also women). Despite a new involved father discourse, the men in this study did very little care work. They were able to choose to participate in care work or not (Brannen and Moss 1991).

In this respect, there did not seem to be much possibility of renegotiating gendered care arrangements for these participants. The common sense of women's care work obscures its gendered nature and the labour involved, putting it at odds with participants' assertions of equality. Establishing and running a family business makes 'common sense' decisions about care work more likely because of the pressures of the individual or couple responsibility for their livelihood. Yet the skill with which these participants sustain their commitment to the business and the family emphasizes this arrangement as the new normal (Maher 2013).

Discourses of economic rationalism and entrepreneurship support structures of work that make meeting the demands of business and family challenging. Tradition and detraditionalization have an uneasy association here. Unlike non-family business women, participants in partnerships do not lose out financially in view of the fact that the business is mostly a joint endeavour, but a range of factors combine to reproduce gendered practices of care in the everyday reality of their lived social relations. This can contribute to undermining women's status in comparison with their partners. While the more egalitarian sharing of work and care responsibilities in the relationships of Jane and Charlotte point to possibilities for change, the increasingly democratic intimate relations posited by Giddens and others (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1992) are mostly challenged in participants' accounts. Their experiences suggest that women have won new freedoms and rights to work while continuing to do the lion's share of traditional work (Bezanson 2006). The observation that 'living a life of one's own is in conflictual relation with the conventional expectation of being there for others', was never more apt than in these participants' accounts (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995: 22). The success of their business ventures owe much to the resilience of these women and their capacity to effectively adapt, despite their lives sometimes 'fraying' at the seams (Maher 2013).

Chapter 5 | Crafting the future: ambivalence, choice and uncertainty in succession planning

‘What if they came into the business and we had a falling out? What if the family imploded because we didn’t do it right’ (148)?

Introduction

This quote exemplifies wives’ concern about relationships if children join the family business. Indeed, the small literature on wives’ influence in succession relates to their emotion management skills in helping to ease tensions and smooth conflict (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Poza and Messer 2001). As the most active in maintaining family bonds (Putney and Bengtson 2005), wives in this study are reflexive about the potential relationship problems if children work in the business. Children’s involvement and passing the business on to them are therefore key concerns and as a result their influence can be both positive and negative.

The chapter addresses their concerns and the ways in which culture, gender and their own lived experiences impact on their actions and thinking. On the one hand the chapter elaborates how wives’ concerns manifest in complicity with the uncertainty of business continuity and succession planning. This often results in a ‘wait and see’ attitude on the part of parent owners. On the other hand, it describes wives’ desire to think through and effectively manage the process of children’s integration and succession where children have come into the business. In this respect, the chapter demonstrates that wives’ influence extends beyond emotion management often privileged in the literature on spousal influence in succession planning, notwithstanding that it may well have its foundations there. Consequently, they can be critical to crafting the future of the business but not always in ways that support continuity.

The chapter begins by briefly describing the optimal processes for successful succession planning. It then discusses participants' emphasis on choice for children, in particular, participants' desire for children to follow their own 'dreams' and find their 'own passions' so they can live personally fulfilling lives. It also articulates how husbands' attachment to be business, social change in relation to intergenerational relationships and gender issues contribute to succession outcomes and especially to uncertainty for the future of the business.

Family business succession is often seen as emerging through multiple stages as potential successor/s are integrated into the business where they develop skills and knowledge that enable them to eventually assume the CEO role as the incumbent owner-manager withdraws. In this respect it is 'more a process than an event' (Handler 1994: 134). Written plans and agreements are considered important to formalizing the process which generally also involves management and ownership transfer, retirement planning for the incumbent and possibly external experience for the successor and/or further education to prepare them for the job (Dunn and Kaye 1999, Gersick et al. 1997, Handler 1994, Handler 1992, Lambrecht 2005, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Ward 1987). Failure to plan is generally associated with precariousness or poor outcomes for business continuity (Dunn and Kaye 1999, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Miller et al. 2003). Dunn and Kaye (1999: 42) suggest families who do not plan can 'blunder into succession transitions' causing anxiety and conflict or creating the environment for sabotage and subversion.

Understanding uncertainty in succession planning

Within this project, uncertainty is a hallmark of business continuity. In sixteen out of 29 businesses, participants suggest they have taken a 'wait and see' approach. Three reasons underpin this position: children are yet to find their own way into the business; children may work in the business but wives are loath to assume this is necessarily permanent and even encourage moving in and out of the business; or children are too young to make a choice. In another eight businesses, continuity is assured, even if participants are still unsure about who exactly will be the successor,

particularly if there is more than one child in the business. In a third group of five businesses, sale is the most likely outcome. In this case, children have either shown no interest, have not been encouraged, succession planning has failed, or it is considered too complex to pass the business on to the next generation.

First generation businesses predominate in the wait and see group. Among these a number of wives have been especially ambivalent about their children's participation. In keeping with the individualization thesis, these participants are keen for children to have options in 'creating their own biographies' (Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995). Even if children have joined the business they prefer them to be able to come and go, or retain the flexibility to follow other dreams if they so desire. There are also some who see their industry as particularly precarious, or worry about fairness if one child comes in and not others. Some wives have had a problematic relationship with the business themselves which contributes to their ambivalence.

To varying degrees, all wives advocate for choice in children's decision making about joining the business. 'Choice' is universally used to frame what is seen as an inalienable right of children not to be pressed to join the firm. For example, Rachel Bauer states: 'There is no plan, there's no pressure, they all know they have a share of the business' (123). Robyn Combes is actually opposed to formal succession planning despite having two children in the business, because she feels that any kind of formality would put too much pressure on them. She insists: 'They need to feel that they have choices'. Wendy Maugham also maintains that children should not be compelled to be involved:

They understand that we're pretty easy with if they want to get involved. We'd be really happy for them to but if they don't there's no pressure they can just continue on the way they want to continue on (183).

Similarly, Fiona McIntyre indicated there was an understanding in the family business that the children were not to feel pressured. She commented: ‘... which was good because kids don’t need that sort of pressure’ (I16).

Among first generation businesses most do not profess a strong commitment to continuity. As Jane Barone put it, she and her husband ‘weren’t thinking about dynasty’ when they started the business. ‘It was our job for us. That’s what it was created for’ (I48). Similarly, Kate Williams said: ‘Yeah, it’s fine [if the children do not join the business] because I sort of think this was our thing’ (I55), while Joyce Hall maintained that the distillery was ‘their dream not the kids dream’ (I77). Vivian Philpott summed up the general view that ‘as a mother, all you desire is for them [children] to be happy and have productive, fruitful lives’ (I50). In this respect, participants’ advocate for children to design their own lives and have few expectations that they will have the same interests as them.

The power of the choice narrative among wives is such that if husbands either openly display a desire for children’s involvement or assume this will occur, they may either be overtly or covertly undermined by their wives. For example, Alison Carazo said her husband Leo assumed that the children would come into the business, just as his father had expected him to be involved. Alison, however, had different ideas.

I was always very much “our children will have an education”. I was very adamant about it. Our children will have an education and they will have the flexibility of making a choice (I12).

The overt power of the wife’s influence is also exemplified in Karen Wilkinson’s comment when asked why her children had not been groomed for the business in the way their father was. She responded: ‘Because of me’ (I87). She suggested her children have ‘more choices’ and she has fostered the idea that they should do what they are passionate about. She adds: ‘...it’s a global world now... they go away to work, or whatever; job opportunities aren’t just Australia anymore’ (I87).

In contrast, Amanda Heatherton who had deep concerns about independence and fairness in relation to children's involvement, was more covert in her approach.

John, when Janice [employee] left said "Oh let's get Tom [son] in," and I'm the one saying, "I don't think that will work with the other staff. He hasn't actually had experience in this area" (I27).

In this quote Amanda points to a concern with a lack of experience, but she also indicated that this was a ruse. In the interview she states that she has not encouraged the children to be involved. She expresses a concern about her son's involvement on the grounds that if he comes in, this may impact adversely on their other children in terms of fairness in inheritance. She also worries about the potential for relationship problems. Her husband was largely absent when the children were growing up and the business is closely tied to his identity. She sees potential for conflict if her son is subordinate to his father in the business.

Emma Martin was among the most adamant that the children should have choice and not be pressured to join the business, to the point where she indicated, 'we don't discuss who wants to join Michael [her husband] in the family business. Never mentioned' (I51). She elaborates:

They [the children] have to make up their own minds. We don't have that sense of, 'this is what we want for our children, how are we going to manipulate them into doing it'. We want them to be happy... (I51).

There is a prevailing view in the family business literature that children should be encouraged to participate from a young age and that it is incumbent on parents (and fathers in particular) to foster their interest (Danco 1982, Davis and Harveston 1998, Lambrecht 2005, Ward 1987). These participants offer a very different perspective. Some wives in this research see such an approach as potentially 'limiting' children's options.

On the face of it, wives advocating for choice are demonstrating one of the main contentions of the individualization thesis. Late modernity is all about choices

but also the compulsion to make them (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2004). Yet choice in these narratives serves to 'protect' family relationships by respecting autonomy and undermining obligation. In this respect, choice underpins the necessity for negotiation around children's interests and the wide variety of options open to them. A deeper concern is about not risking relationships in the business, and in this respect choice is about maintaining connectedness.

Following their own path

Of those who have significant reservations about their children's involvement, there are a range of perspectives about why it is better for children to follow their own path rather than join the family firm. Some think involvement is complicated by the number of children in the next generation, others are concerned about the all-consuming nature of the business or they see it as limiting children's potential and would prefer them to 'broaden their horizons'. Another group alludes to a concern about husbands overshadowing their children and the loss of children's independence.

Jessica Kelly (I13), for example, has encouraged her children to follow their own passions because her husband's family business is already complex enough. Coming up for its centenary, there are a number of children in the fourth generation currently working in the business. There is wide variance in age that sees some fourth generation members in their 20s and 30s and others in their 50s. While she thinks it would be sad if this well-established family business did not continue into a fifth generation, she also feels her children are better off following their own interests.

Chloe Moore, who (like Jessica) does not work in the family business, had greater difficulty articulating the reasons for her reservations about children's potential involvement:

Chloe: I just presume that my children will not be better off in the business.

Interviewer: So why do you say they wouldn't be better off in it?

Chloe: I don't know. I can't quite put my finger on it. There's something...

Interviewer: It sounds like reluctance.

Chloe: Yes, there's some reluctance.

Interviewer: Is it because of the complex family relationships?

Chloe: Yes, possibly and the independence thing because it can be consuming as well. I don't want them to be consumed by it. In saying that, what I'm saying to you is that it's consuming but it's also incredibly uplifting and it does nurture people to success (134).

Chloe is ambivalent about the business, fostered by difficult family relationships. While she is critical of the family business and told me she did not 'respect it' or hold it in 'high regard', these statements were always followed by positive comments about how the business supports the family. She appeared to oscillate between the benefits and costs of being associated with a family business. In contrast, Lauren Hilton who has felt 'trapped' by the family business is more adamant. She hopes her son will not go into the business because she perceives it as 'limiting' and would rather he broadened his horizons. She states:

James [son] has a great interest in it. When he comes home he always...he's fascinated with the building, he loves the finance side of everything, but I don't know how another generation would go quite honestly ... I would like him to be a bit broader than, you know living the Hilton family business dream myself (160).

Kate Williams indicates both her children are 'following their own paths' and are happy doing what they are doing. While she recognises that at some time down the track they might change their minds, she and her husband do not give it much thought because they are 'not really ready to retire' (155). Neither parent feels the issue of their involvement is pressing and Kate indicates she would not be upset if the

children didn't come into the business. 'As long as they are happy' is the frequent refrain.

Joyce Hall's situation is slightly different. Her daughter Helen was the succession plan for the family distillery business, and her sons were never interested. Helen spent time overseas working in other distilleries and honing her skills developing specific expertise in yeast regimes. However, Helen married a man whose job required him to be mobile. Joyce is philosophical saying that her daughter's 'life is with her husband, as it should be' (I77). Though Helen still runs an aspect of the business remotely, it is clear she will not be taking over. For this reason, Joyce and her husband have decided to sell eighty percent of their business. Her husband will remain as the face of the business and Joyce will be a director on the board but her contribution will be greatly reduced.

For a small group of participants, the issue of wanting children to follow their own path revolves around the hard work of establishing and building a business under challenging circumstances. They suggest their children have observed the impact of struggling with very few resources and especially the heartache of drought and crop failure. Charlotte Bailey is illustrative of this view. She believes her son has been put off the business as a result of seeing its impact on their emotional and physical health and the lack of relief from its demands. She believes that the home based business can be a negative for children because,

he's had to eat, breathe, hear it for 18 years ... he's seen the heartache, he's seen illness from both of us at a time where our friends had to come and help us to make sure that the stock still went out (I75).

She also has her own reservations. Despite successfully introducing a new product not previously commercially grown in Australia, and building a viable business that is now ripe for expansion, Charlotte would rather her son pursued another career. She believes that trying to make a living off the land is too difficult even though their particular product has proven successful. As she and her husband head toward

retirement, she feels their best solution is to sell the business though her husband is keen to continue their expansion, leaving the door open for their son who is still too young to decide. Charlotte however, has actively encouraged him to look at other options.

Worrying about independence

Wives exhibit reflexivity about the issue of independence and are often expressly concerned that it may be stifled if children become involved in the business. Their concerns played out in a variety of ways. One is a concern for children to be free of family enmeshment, to stand on their own two feet and find their own way in the world. This concern was underpinned by a desire for children to have broad experiences of work, enabling them to build skills and confidence. Another was a fear of the children being subject to 'patriarchal authority' if they came into the business without first establishing themselves elsewhere. This was often framed as children being 'overshadowed' or not mentored by their fathers. The third was more to do with parents' ability to let go and pass control to the children. The views and experiences described by participants below are illustrative of these issues.

Rachel Bauer indicates that independence is an important value for her in our interview. She elaborates a strong view that women should be financially independent, an idea fostered by her mother. In this respect, she talks about establishing her own business prior to meeting her husband Henry:

... I did it independently of Henry [set up her own retail stores]. It was something that my mother always taught me ... She always said stay in your own business, be financially independent and to this day I am still financially independent and I like that (I23).

Her account of 'making it on her own' is somewhat at odds with her husband's desire to bring their children into their businesses as soon as they completed their studies. She indicates she was less enthusiastic about this than her husband, stating, 'Henry always did always, always, always hoped [the children would come in]. I was a

little reluctant. I always thought that it would be great if they went off and did their own thing' (123). She also suggests the experience and knowledge that can be gained from children working elsewhere can benefit the business if they choose to join it at a later date.

Rachel's reluctance highlights her ambivalent feelings about the children's involvement. While never clearly stated, her emphasis on her own independence suggests her concerns have been overridden by her husband's desire for the children's early participation. To this end he offered them tantalizing opportunities with considerable responsibility and potential for financial reward. In view of the fact that two children have been successfully integrated into their various businesses and a third is currently being given an opportunity to learn the ropes, Rachel manages her ambivalence by stressing the positives. For example, she points to the success of their daughter who is only in her early thirties and is already CEO of their state-wide retail business, under the mentorship of her father. While Rachel stresses the children have choices, only one of their four children has so far resisted their father's keen desire for their participation, and this son is adamant he would rather 'get away' from the family business.

A silence underpins the concerns of Rachel and other participants which relates to children's relationships with their fathers. While at least six wives alluded to this, it was rarely plainly articulated. Specifically, there seemed to be a concern that children might be overshadowed by fathers who have been intensely engaged with the business and often remote when children were growing up. Participants therefore express a concern about the importance of balancing dependence and independence in family relationships (Finch and Mason 1993). This is because dependence implies a power imbalance which can be the cause of tension and conflict (Finch and Mason 1993: 39). Working outside the business first was identified as a way for children to build new skills and knowledge while also developing a sense of independence and capability outside the influence of the family and the firm. With this kind of experience, wives suggest a decision to join the business is made with greater

maturity. It also means that if they decide they want to come in, they are more likely to bring something to the business, as suggested by Rachel, but it may also help them better resist patriarchal authority, as suggested by Robyn Combes.

Robyn has concerns about her daughter Hannah's decision to join their business which was prompted by her husband's serious illness. At the very least, she would have preferred that Hannah worked outside the business first.

I wish Hannah had done that ... but illness put a whole new slant on it for all of us. We were sort of like – we didn't have the time that we perhaps would have if illness hadn't come (154).

Robyn thinks that if children work outside the business first, they are less likely to be subject to the 'authority of the patriarch' (154). Unlike her husband who is happy for the children to be in the business regardless of outside experience, Robyn intimates less commitment to passing the business to the next generation, especially if there is evidence that it may not be what her daughter really wants. In this respect, she wants her daughter to be free to change her mind, which is why she resists a formal succession plan. In this respect, Robyn is complicit with uncertainty about the future of the business.

Amanda Heatherton demonstrates her concern about independence, by suggesting that any involvement by her son could possibly only work successfully, if her husband carved off a discrete area of the business and gave it to him to build on his own terms.

We should have given him [product name] where he had his own little project and he could have tried to build that business up and maybe taken it out of this [business] and gone on his own, that's what I think (127).

She feels that this approach would ensure his independence, and get him out from under the shadow of his father.

Letting go

The attachment to the business identified by participants often correlates with issues of letting go and passing the reins to the next generation. This issue has been highlighted by family business scholars as a potential impediment to successful succession planning (Chrisman, Chua, Sharma and Yoder 2009, De Massis, Chua and Chrisman 2008, Gersick et al. 1997, Handler 1990, Kets de Vries 2003, Lansberg 1988, Sharma, Chrisman and Chua 2003). This literature is replete with examples of fathers in particular, struggling to bow out quietly (Aronoff and Ward 1995, Barnes and Hershon 1976, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Kets de Vries 1993, Marshall, Sorenson, Brigham, Wieling, Reifman and Wampler 2006). Incidents of on-going interference, failure to take a back seat and even the undermining of the children who take over are highlighted. For those who have built the business there is also the added problem of letting go of something intrinsically tied to their identity.

Wives frequently spoke about their husbands as totally immersed in the business and driven to succeed. For example, Amanda Heatherton described her husband as 'the personality behind the business...and he is the one who has always driven the business' (I27). Similarly, Alison Carazo described the business as her husband's great passion to which he devoted long hours. [Leo] lives, breathes and sleeps [product]. He just loves what he does (I12). Robyn Combes indicated that her husband would always be in the business, 'unless he is in the grave,' (I54). Such sentiments seemed to underpin wives' concerns about children being overshadowed or for them to remain subject to their father's authority with its attendant potential for conflict.

Where children are in the business, participants are reflexive about relationships and are often at the forefront of trying to resolve or ensure opportunities for self-realization and independence by allowing children to take responsibility for decision making. Jane Barone, who educated herself in best practice in relation to

succession planning, was well versed in the kind of issues that undermine passing on the business to the next generation. She was therefore focused on crafting an agreed timetable with her husband for their departure, enabling the children to take full responsibility for the business. She actively took steps to pull back from the business according to the plan which included passing many of her responsibilities to her son. She also took up a position reporting to him though her husband, as CEO of the business, was less inclined to let go. She articulated this difference between them in the following way:

I've been really hard line on it because it's a declaration more for everybody else than to myself that it's my way of making sure that I don't butt into what they're doing, number one, and number two, it's making the other staff less reliant on me... We made the agreement, and I made the declaration ... and I said to Paul [husband] so which day are you taking off to spend with me? And I got kind of a blank look. And I could see the inner struggle (148).

As a result of a recent illness, Jane indicates that her husband has come to realise that, 'if left alone and we get out of their way, they make a really good fist of it' (148).

One participant was expressly concerned about her husband's ability to share decision making so their son could feel a sense of accomplishment and also be able to make independent decisions without his father overriding them. According to Harriet Farrelly, her husband was unwilling to take on board their son's ideas:

Roger [her husband] goes into them [family meetings] with very clear views on what we're going to do ... and really gets quite cross when Ewan [son] or I say, "Well, yeah, that's a great idea, but have we thought about this?" (170).

The relationship between father and son is fragile because Roger takes over projects that Ewan starts. According to Harriet, 'Ewan just walks away from it and then Roger complains that he's doing all the work'. Harriet has found herself caught in the middle and is constantly trying to find ways to overcome her husband's intransigence regarding decision making. She is worried her son will become so frustrated that he

will just leave the business. To this end she is considering bringing in a family business consultant to mediate at the next family meeting, though the business can ill afford it. While Harriet is doing the traditionally feminine work of 'peace keeping', she is also endeavouring to craft solutions to family problems in creative ways in order to sustain them *and* the business.

In another instance, a participant who wanted to manage the succession process in her family business undermined independence herself, with consequences for succession. Problems arose when her son wanted to involve his wife in the business. Alison Carazo had a deeply ambivalent attitude to spouse involvement despite having come into the family firm as one herself. She suggested that wives exert pressures on their husbands that are not always compatible with the interests of the wider family or the business. In this, she was relying on previous experience which saw toxic relations develop between her husband and his brother exacerbated, according to Alison, by her and her sister-in-law. Eventually relations soured to such a degree that the business was divided between the brothers. In her efforts to avoid this happening again she took a particularly hard line stance after initially suppressing her deep-felt concerns.

At first, she and her husband offered her son and his wife the opportunity to run a discrete part of their firm which could easily be separated from the core business. The agreement was that they could run it for 12 months, take half the profit and then decide if they wanted to buy it.

So they took that option ... and at the end of 12 months they decided that, no, they didn't want to run the tourist business and the reason that they didn't want to run the tourist business was because Leo [her husband] was growing the [product] and he still had a control of the finances, their finances, if you like (12).

While Alison gave no indication that her son and his wife had mismanaged the business during this time, she and Leo decided not to negotiate further on the issues

her son had raised. Alison's view was that her daughter-in-law 'influenced' her son too much and so she was not prepared to have her as a partner in the business. Rather, they offered their son a role in the business but Alison told their daughter-in-law they could not employ her. The consequence of undermining the independence of their son and his wife was that they did not speak to her for more than 12 months.

They also later offered their daughter the same opportunity but with the condition that her husband could not be involved. While this did not create the same disruption to relationships, her daughter declined the offer. As the driver of succession planning in her business, she feels a sense of confusion at how things could have gone so wrong but at the same time she does not resile from her views about in-laws.

I thought I had watched it all, looked at it all, assessed it and come up with the right plan of attack with it all. I've really tried hard, but as soon as in-laws come into the picture, they have their wants and needs and expectations, which they filter into their spouse and their spouses, therefore, naturally side with them (112).

As a consequence of these machinations, neither child now shows an interest in taking over and Alison and her husband expect to sell the business.

In these stories, wives articulate an understanding of the importance of a sense of independence and personal accomplishment for children. At the same time, Alison's story highlights how things can go very wrong for the future of the business when independence and trust are not sufficiently attended to. Without this, a power/subordination dynamic can emerge which can undermine relationships (Finch and Mason 1993). The demand for negotiation in family relationships underscores the fact that they cannot be taken for granted, thereby undermining parental power (Beck 1997). Finch and Mason indicate that, generally speaking, women are more often attuned to the importance of a balance between dependence and independence. As the main carers, they are more likely to have experienced dependence as adults and

understand the feelings it can evoke. However, as can be seen from Alison's experience, wives' ability to smooth over conflict (Barnes and Hershon 1976, Poza and Messer 2001) has no automatic alignment to so-called feminine skills. Rather, it indicates the complexity of relationships and the problems of negotiating them at the intersection of the family and the business.

Flexibility for children

In their emphasis on choice, many participants operated a kind of 'open door policy' whereby children were encouraged to follow their own interests but the business was there if they wanted to participate. They offer considerable flexibility, allowing children to move in and out of the business as they figure out what they want to do with their lives. While this impacts on future certainty both for the business and parents' retirement, they do not see this as disruption but rather remain committed to choice. For example, Meredith Francis's daughter Joanne 'decided she wanted to do good in the world and went to work with the government...[but] after six months was really bored so she came back to the business' (I20). She then left again and went overseas for some years to study and is now back in the business again.

Similarly, Wendy Maugham and her husband have been flexible with their sons. The three boys have all worked in the business. She indicates that the younger two travelled overseas for some months then returned to the business for a short time before leaving to do it again. Wendy indicates that the boys are,

in a real mode of not really knowing [what they want] and we're not worried about whether they take over or not, as long as the company is running well and we've got good management going through we'll always look after them there but make sure they don't get a free ride (I83).

At the same time, they are supporting their third son, who has sporting ambitions and has moved interstate. He works in the business remotely doing web design and setting up new technical systems while he follows his sporting passion.

Flexibility is also evident in Vivian Philpott's account. While she has two children in the business, she indicates it is run by a highly efficient team with oversight by a Board of Directors. The children are in key senior management positions but Vivian insists it is not a problem if one or both of them chooses to do something else as the team will still continue to function and both children will remain equal shareholders.

Robyn Combes also promotes flexibility because she is fearful her daughter Hannah may have made the decision to join the business because of her husband's illness and not because it was what she wanted to do. Robyn is therefore loath to consider succession planning because she wants to keep her daughter's options open. This is because she believes Hannah's real interest lies in the sciences rather than the family business.

I think that was her passion and she had the options with her preferences [for university] she said "Oh you know, I could do this commerce one and that would be good for the business", and I said "Well what do you really want to do? What do you want?", and that was my influence probably. "Do what you want to do. Don't do what you think is the right thing to do" (I54).

Robyn suggests that she tried to influence her daughter to follow her own passions. Indeed, she is not the only participant in this research who indicates their influence in children's career directions in ways not favourable to their involvement in the business. While her daughter did follow her specific interests at university, ultimately she chose to take up a role in the business. Robyn worries that her daughter's sense of obligation is overriding her 'dreams' to follow a different path. She thinks this because she 'knows' her daughter. She knows 'she has always been that kind of a kid' (I54). Robyn's concern emanates from an idea that following a career that is one's passion will make a person happier than doing something out of a feeling of obligation (Savickas 2000). For these reasons she is not prepared to see her daughter's involvement as a permanent arrangement even though Hannah has taken on a significant management role in the business.

The strong emphasis on children finding their own passion and doing what is meaningful to them was exemplified in comments made by Karen Wilkinson and Imogen Howcroft. Karen has always told her children that, 'if you're not passionate about it, you don't want to be doing it. You've got to be able to be happy to get in your car in the morning and go off to work' (I87). Imogen suggests that 'people need to find in their own heart, what they really want to do' (I71). This emphasis on passions, dreams and happiness ahead of business involvement underpins participants' desire to offer flexibility. Wives' perspectives are consistent with individualization in so far as they are focused on individual needs rather than collective goals. These ideas are at odds with the family business literature which promotes early involvement of children and succession as a long-term project (Aronoff et al. 2003, Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Danco 1982, Gersick et al. 1997, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Lambrecht 2005, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Longenecker and Schoen 1978, Schröder et al. 2011, Ward 1987). Rather, wives more often see children's early work in the business as a stop-gap measure to the main game of finding their real passion in life.

While the discourse of following your heart or passion is widely promoted, it can conflict with what to do about the business as parents think seriously about retirement. This is especially true if parents have been unable to build significant superannuation and are reliant on either business continuity or sale to fund their retirement. For example, Amanda Heatherton indicates that she and her husband would like to retire but currently 'can't see a way out' (I27). Their 'son may have an interest but who really knows? ... You just keep going until something happens that forces your hand basically'. There is also some doubt about saleability, as manufacturing businesses like theirs are under great pressure from cheaper imports from Asia.

Anna and Martin Guest were also confronting issues of retirement planning and the future of the business. They could not 'just walk away and say "here's the business, now we'll go and have a happy retirement," because we'll run out of money in six

months' (18). However, neither could either of their children easily raise the money to buy them out. While sale was being considered, they were also worried about the saleability of their particular enterprise.

Of the participants who thought sale was more likely, they often entertained the hope that someone might offer them 'bucket loads of money'. The reality was much more gloomy. Most were uncertain about whether the business would attract a buyer, let alone be sold for significant sums. A wait and see approach is consistent with this uncertainty. While they want children to follow their passions on the one hand, they also want to keep the door open in the hope that children may find their own way there given time, and this may resolve their retirement concerns.

Fairness, gender and the problem of 'choice'

When participants spoke of 'choice' for children in relation to joining the business they mostly presume it is freely made. The fact that choice is always mediated by a range of historical, social and financial factors (Smart 2007) is often overlooked. The issue of who has 'choice' is inherent to gender considerations in the involvement of children for example.

Fairness and gender are often entwined issues in the family business and are sometimes at the heart of uncertainty for wives. Issues of succession, children's involvement in the business and estate planning are frequently conflated in their accounts. For example, the majority of wives are adamant children should inherit family assets on the basis of equal shares. Some are also aware that daughters stand to be disadvantaged because of the on-going practice of primogeniture.

Vikki Simmons exemplifies this perspective. She married into a second generation family business and has never worked in it, but is aware of the complexities that can arise around dividing assets. Her sister-in-law, who was not involved in the business established by her father and run by her brothers, had an equal share and wanted to be bought out. This created significant cash flow challenges for the business as they went through the process of negotiating an outcome. It also had the

potential to create ill feeling, though Vikki indicates it has been achieved amicably. However, she can see the potential for problems for her daughters, none of whom are in the business, as she indicates in the following quote:

I have concerns about how they [her husband and his brother] are going to make that work. And I know they [the daughters] have entitlement being a child but they're not included [in the business] and I think they would like to have a say but if they're not involved ... so that hasn't really come up yet but I think it could do. And whatever share they get they're going to want because our kids, well especially them [the girls], don't have the life that we've had (156).

Vikki's concerns are underpinned by the fact that her son will not have to buy into the business as his father's shares will be given to him when his father retires. While Vikki seems to suggest the norm of equal shares for all children is the most ideal when she talks about her daughters' entitlement, she also realises that this is unlikely to happen. The sons (including her nephew who also has a senior role in the business) are seen to have 'chosen' to work in this successful automotive business while the daughters are viewed as having made different 'choices'. This illustrates that entitlement to work in the business is often unequally structured. This is associated with the gendered nature of 'masculine' businesses which means unequal outcomes are often not seen as a gender issue.

For example, some scholars suggest that women in family businesses can often access senior positions in male dominated industries (for example, Salganicoff 1990a), such as the one Vikki is associated with. However, masculine and feminine identities are deeply embodied in individuals and societal norms to large extent continue to dictate the types of work men and women can do, therefore reducing opportunities for both genders (McNay 1999). Consequently, daughters (and other women) are more likely to be excluded from male dominated businesses, or exclude themselves, especially if gendered assumptions exist at home. Daughters often only get

opportunities in these types of businesses when there are no sons to take over (Curimbaba 2002).

One interviewee in the broader research project who also worked in the automotive industry illustrated the difficulties for women in gaining access to management in these businesses when he said, 'this isn't really a woman's business, right?... it's not really a lady's job' (I44). This is not to say women cannot be successful in this industry. The same participant also added, 'strong ladies have run dealerships. They're in the minority. Less than two percent of dealer principals have been women'. Note the reference to 'strong women', which implies women generally are not tough enough to survive in this business and therefore it takes an exceptional woman to succeed. Such ideas underpin the emphasis in the family business and entrepreneurship literatures on differences between men and women. This type of research invariably overlooks its own assumptions about gender and what defines success (Ahl 2006). The latter is an issue because definitions of success are generally grounded in the masculine symbolism associated with both leadership and entrepreneurship (Ahl 2002, 2006, Ahl and Nelson 2010, Mirchandani 1999).

In Vikki's case, she seems to struggle with the idea of an equitable rather than equal solution because of the potential for unfairness and conflict between her son and daughters. Equally she sees no easy solution because her daughters do not work in the business and therefore are not entitled to any say, even though she indicates they would like to express their views. These issues make inheritance both complex and contentious and highlight that the structuring of gender relations can have more negative outcomes for daughters and other women in the business such as sisters.

Rennie Mitchell gave a similar account. She indicates that while sons are involved in the third generation business run by her husband and his brothers, no daughters are involved. When asked if the daughters were ever interested she responded, 'they're not allowed to be' (I49). At the same time, she indicates that there was considerable unfairness in the way the sisters of the owning brothers were

treated when they were bought out. In her view they 'never got paid what they should have' as none had legal advice.

While unfairness was recognized by Rennie, this is not always the case. Marion Rogers illustrates how the issue of gendered practice can play out with very little awareness. Her daughter, who has recently joined the family business in an administrative and part-time role, had to apply for her job alongside other applicants, though this process did not apply for her brother. Rather, her husband had a job ready for him. 'It was just like "I'd like you to be a salesman if you'd like to be"' (157).

Marion seemed unaware of the implicit discrimination in the processes of entry. From her perspective her son 'chose' the business and had worked his way up. In contrast, her daughter had established a career and worked interstate and overseas and then returned home as a young mother. In order to be involved, she had to do so by 'fair' and transparent process. In this respect, Marion felt she could be taking a job from other staff and suggested people could not just 'come and go as you please' (157). However, she overlooked the fact that her son's path into the business was eased by her husband, supporting the historical legacy of primogeniture.

Gender assumptions were also salient to Anna and Martin Guest's circumstances. In discussions about their plans for either succession or sale, they demonstrate the hidden gender bias that can exist in the family business. As in previous examples, Anna and Martin run a business in the male-dominated automotive industry. This sheds some light on the assumption made by Martin that his son, William, would most likely take over.

Martin: We're hoping that we can come up with a plan that will help us in our retirement, and also make it possible for William to take over, if that's what he wants to do, if he agrees to some sort of plan (17).

Anna: I think Martin said before, that Shona [daughter] didn't have much interest. I think she does actually have an interest in being a part owner ...

She's certainly shown an interest that she would like to, that she thought it would be a good opportunity (18).

Anna's insistence that they cannot overlook their daughter is evidence of the societal shift in awareness of gender equality. At the same time, she draws attention to the complexity and contradictions of negotiating succession in contemporary businesses. While Anna promotes her daughter's interests on the one hand, she later undermines them on the other.

She [Shona] works very hard, and she does her job perfectly, but she doesn't go and look for extra stuff. So William, who hasn't had lunch, gets a bit annoyed because she's sitting here having her half hour break, and he doesn't get a break – or he might eat a sandwich at four o'clock (18).

In this respect, Anna believes William has 'got more of a case' to take over the business in his own right in part because he engages in it more intensively. It is worth noting that her daughter does the 'feminine' work of administration and book keeping as Anna herself did. This work is less valued and does not carry the same status (Dumas 1998, Lewis and Massey 2011, O'Connor et al. 2006) as the work William does in managing the factory. At the same time it is work that enables her the time to take a lunch break but she is then penalised for not working as hard as her brother who seems to be mirroring the work practices of his father. It is surprising that Anna does not recognize these issues in view of the fact that it was these same issues that created conflict between she and Martin, forcing her to make the decision to leave the business. It may well be that her daughter, having viewed the lesser status of her mother, has decided there is not much point going the extra mile when it is not appreciated.

In a significant break with tradition, Alison Carazo indicates that it is likely her daughter will get at least part of the business ahead of her son. She and her husband plan to leave their son equal value in assets or as close to equal as possible. This decision is extraordinary in the context of this family where first and second

generation women were excluded from decision making and confined to warehouse work. Alison has been instrumental in changing gendered practices in this business through her renegotiation of women's decision making power. While it has not come without costs to her, it has at least helped pave the way for her daughter. In this respect, Alison has been instrumental in encouraging her daughter's ambitions to undertake a horticultural specialization that brings important skills to the business. Her daughter has still had to battle the traditional ideas of her father about gendered work, but as Alison proudly proclaims, she is now his 'right hand man' (I12).

Despite this remarkable departure from gendered practice, Alison and her husband expect to sell the business as neither child wants to take over. While they plan to sell, they would like to keep part of it, for their daughter, as they feel she may make a different choice once they are no longer around:

Yes, we've gone through creating our wills. That equality is a really, really tough one to handle and at the moment ... I don't think just to sell it all up and give them half each is a sensible way to go because there's too much of Philippa's [daughter] soul in what we have here and I think that for her we need to provide some of this business so that she can then make the choice without us (I12).

This was the only example in my research of a business being left to a daughter rather than a son when both had worked in the business. Alison is cognisant that their decision might cause trouble between their son and daughter and indicates they have made provision for this so that their daughter is 'protected from any fallout'. By this she means ensuring there is no way their son can successfully contest their decision. Despite the potential for resentment and disagreement, Alison has put in place a merit-based approach to inheritance in terms of who gets the business though it is also significantly related to concerns about the 'influence' of her daughter-in-law on her son.

There was also a gender dimension to Amanda Heatherton's concern about fairness in relation to any involvement in the business by their son. In their teenage years the children told their father they did not want to work in the business, but Amanda indicates their son is now showing interest despite having his own a career in another industry. Her husband has been keen to entice him into the business for some time, something which Amanda has tried to thwart. This is because she has strong views about equal shares.

I mean look – about the kids coming into the business I think that is kind of an awkward one. Say our son decides to come into the business, does he buy his way in? There is no way I want the business to cause any disruption to our family, that's my number one thing. I don't want to have a family breakup over, 'Oh he's in the business, he's getting this, I'm not getting that.'" I'd like to think that the kids mightn't be like that but I don't want to ever go there. So that's why I'm probably happier if they just stay away in some ways (127).

She makes it clear in this comment that even the likelihood that their daughters might feel they are not being treated equally is enough to prevent her from promoting the children's involvement. She also does not want to deny them the opportunity if they want to be involved 'because I know in a lot of family businesses it can work beautifully'. At the moment the situation is irreconcilable as their son is yet to completely show his hand. While she has adopted a wait and see attitude, she is unconvinced it can work successfully. For Amanda, the potential risk to relationships seems too high a price to pay. She errs therefore, on the side of discouragement.

A different perspective was offered by Eva Herrera who had both a son and daughter in the business in which the daughter had had the longer tenure. She indicated that relations between the two are strained. While Eva and husband Gabe have adopted family meetings as a way for everyone to openly put issues on the table, these have been discontinued because they became too emotionally fraught. They recently brought in a counsellor to work with their children to help them resolve their differences which revolve around succession issues.

Eva suggests her daughter Claudia thinks her brother, Oscar, wants her job. There are also disagreements about job boundaries. Eva indicates how seriously disharmony and conflict can impact on family members: 'It was just hell on earth for a while there'. She states that it was like 'emotionally trying to keep people surviving, keeping your kids from jumping over a cliff really' (I52).

It is interesting that the daughter is positioned as the problem here. Eva mentions that despite her daughter's significant involvement in the business and their openness to putting things on the table in family meetings, she was excluded from an important business decision. Eva indicated that they only consulted with their son despite their daughter having considerable experience of the issue. On the one hand this suggests implicit gendered understandings about who can lead the business, but on the other their son was keen to take the project on while they knew their daughter would resist. This was something her daughter was, 'very, very, angry about, yeah really very, very angry' (I52). New cultural scripts about gender equality perhaps underpin the deep fissures that have occurred here. In view of her dedication to the family ethos of hard work and her contribution to the business, Claudia possibly does not feel the need to play second fiddle to her brother and is therefore outspoken about this exclusion. In this case, there are clearly consequences for her in the way she is perceived to be provoking the problems.

While Eva hopes relationships can get back on track with the help of the counsellor, this is not guaranteed. Historically, there have been traditional gender practices in this business which may undermine the potential for a resolution that will satisfy Claudia. The relations between her children have been so difficult that Eva has wanted to sell the business as a way to protect them. She does not think business continuity is worth risking family relationships. However, she is uncertain about the saleability of the business and she and Gabe remain hopeful relationships can be mended. In the meantime, they are taking a wait and see approach to the future.

Despite having concerns about fairness in terms of equal distributions, participants generally express confidence that everything will work out fairly. Their

optimism seems at odds with the potential complexity and opportunity for daughters to be disadvantaged especially in multi-generation businesses. Emma Martin, who despite an understanding that their business would most likely be sold within the next five to ten years, suggests the door is still open on children's involvement. While she insists that division of assets 'has to be exactly equal, no other way'(151), she also indicates it is unlikely any daughters in the next generation will join as most are settled in other careers or have young families. This is also a male-dominated industry so sons are the most likely to join the business though none are currently involved, nor have they been encouraged. Trying to sustain an equal shares narrative when they are twelve children in the next generation, the majority of them daughters, seems to be an unrealistic expectation and unlikely to work in practice without putting strains on the business, relationships or both.

These accounts show the complexity created by the entwinement of the issues of gender and equal distributions for children. While gendered practices often fly under the radar of parents and children themselves, they are salient to equality. While most participants agree that children should receive equal shares, how this was to be achieved in practice was often unclear. There was sometimes a view, especially in larger businesses where families had more resources, that daughters not working in the business or in less influential roles, would be 'looked after'. In an environment of changing gender relations, the degree to which daughters might view this as fair remains open to speculation.

At the same time, wives' insistence on equal shares suggests it is a normative ideal (Baker and Gilding 2011, Finch et al. 1996, Finch and Mason 2000, Gilding 2000, Sussman, Cates and Smith 1970, Wilhelm 1996). However, as suggested in Chapter two, the family business literature often promotes equitable rather than equal distributions (Ayers 1990, 2002, Danco 2001, Gersick 1996, Landsberg 2002). This puts fairness ahead of equality for family members. Scotland (2010) is one of the few to observe that such an approach militates against successful succession. Participants in this research, seem to concur with most asserting equal shares, notwithstanding the

difficulty some have in articulating how it might happen in practice. Such contradictions are unlikely to support certainty about the future of the business.

From a gender perspective it is interesting to note that among the participants, where wives worked in the business and had both sons and daughters (15), more than half had both genders working in the business (9). Where both genders worked in the business, daughters were favoured to take over in two businesses, in two others they were in the process of taking over as CEOs of their family businesses (one, jointly with her brother), and in another business it was expected that the brother and sister would eventually jointly run the business. This seems to suggest that wives working in family businesses are influential in crafting businesses in less gendered ways.

The picture was different for participants in my research who did not work in the business and had sons and daughters (10). They did not often have both genders working in the business or if they did sons were generally in senior roles while daughters were in less influential roles and worked part-time. Where children were yet to decide, participants in this group suggested their sons were more likely than daughters to join the business. In this respect, despite most of these participants having careers of their own, this did not seem to be influential in daughters' involvement in the family business. Only one had daughters who were potential successors.

Business continuity and family business institutions

The three wives running first generation family businesses are likely to pass their businesses on to the next generation. Jenny Marsden's succession is straight forward even though she did not originally anticipate her son's involvement. She built the business out of necessity to support them after her husband was incapacitated and later died. From a working class background, Jenny put all her resources into her son's education in the hope that he would go on and make his own mark in the world. However, their circumstances led to Kevin's early immersion in the business as Jenny

worked long hours to maintain its viability and Kevin was often with her at work.

Jenny states:

When Allan [husband] fell over Kevin was only nine, so Kevin spent every weekend and every school holidays at work with me ... he was driving a forklift when he was 10...(I22)

He also designed and built a warehouse management system in his late teens. Kevin resisted Jenny's education aspirations and she eventually acceded to his desire to join her in the business. Not surprisingly, he is now managing director while Jenny remains on as Chair.

In the case of Sonya Hickson, she has crafted a creative solution to the problem of family involvement, accommodating the fact that all her children have chosen to follow other paths. She has a strong commitment to keeping the business in the family and, at the time of interview, was considering establishing an advisory group on which her children could share family representation. This would free them from any obligation in the day-to-day running of the business, accommodating their own work interests.

Meredith Francis has five children in her business. She does not believe any of the children have the broad range of skills needed for the CEO role and is considering bringing in a professional manager to take some of the burden off herself.

It's quite difficult because really the kids have very particular skills and they're very good at those things ... I think the difference is that with me we started the business and so my skills have developed like across financial skills, HR skills and like every single aspect of the business because you have to ... but I don't know that there's any of the kids who would really want to, or necessarily have the skills to, run the whole show. So my thought is that we would probably employ a CEO who would be from outside the business (I20).

She does not view this position as sitting over the top of the business. Rather she states: 'a CEO is no more important than the person who heads up the product

design or the person who heads up the marketing or the person who heads up retail' (120). From her perspective it is about establishing the best team, which is coordinated by the CEO. In this way, she ensures both a flat structure and family members do not feel their power is usurped in the business. This is further reinforced in her plan for all children to share ownership regardless of employment in the business. She believes the children who work there are well paid and so this does not entitle them to any special consideration, highlighting once more the normative notion of equal shares.

Of all businesses represented in the research, Jane Barone developed the most comprehensive plan and processes for bringing her son and daughter into the business and for succession. Her primary focus was that 'the business serves the family and that the family isn't disrupted by the business (148)'. When her daughter showed some interest in the business she could see potential for conflict. 'I guess it opened my eyes to the what ifs'. She joined the peak family business body to learn as much as she could in order to prevent problems arising. She then drove the process, instigating a code of conduct and family meetings. She also brought in family business expertise including a business psychologist, to help them design a process to integrate the children and plan for succession. In this respect she saw succession not as a single event, but rather 'a journey if it's managed well. So we embarked on this program of understanding what the needs were' (148) in which they involved their whole management team.

The children's involvement took the classic form of a multi-stage process. They worked in all areas of the business under the supervision of a senior manager and not their parents, as they gradually built their skills and knowledge. The children also have undertaken a variety of training courses and a commitment to education remains an important value for the business. An agreed plan was developed including a time frame for parent's exit. Both children will eventually take over the business as joint CEOs and Jane and her husband, were, at the time of interview, slowly taking more of a back seat.

While, generally speaking, wives not working in the business were less influential in relation to succession decision making, Hilary Mountford was an exception. She was instrumental in involving the family in the peak family business body which then assisted her husband to tackle the issue of succession. Hilary explained that she and her daughter attended one of the peak body's conferences and she then told her husband and sons that they needed to get involved. However, they were 'not interested, they weren't honestly interested at all' (153). The following year she attended the conference again and on her return, 'sat them down together' and 'insisted' they get involved.

One of the reasons Hilary had to push so hard was because her husband is 'the sort of person who doesn't confront issues because it worries him and he sweeps things under the carpet, he just wants to shove them out, because he can't cope' (153). In this respect, she was concerned that succession issues would not be addressed because he would perceive them as 'too hard'. She indicates her husband is grateful for the intervention and has admitted that without the support from the family business body, he would not have been able address succession effectively.

A small number of other businesses have also put in place processes to manage family involvement with the aim of giving all family members an understanding of the business and plans for the future. For example, Sandra Metcalf described regular family meetings that involved all family members including wives and children even though they did not work in the business. She describes the meetings as,

opportunities to sort of talk about things. So everything's always been out in the open. So people always knew where they stood, and it's sort of, about being honest and people knowing where they were. I suppose that's been very important (125).

Having a desire to pass the business on was more common in multi-generational businesses, though not every case. Wives in these businesses are less likely to be working in the business and tend to 'go along' with their partners' ideas

about whether when and how to involve children, given they have no ownership of the business. However, these businesses also are generally larger and highly professionalized with human resource systems in place to which children are often subject. They also have greater resources to bring in professional management if their children do not want to work in the business.

Living with uncertainty

Uncertainty about the future is something that owners of family businesses in this study learn to live with. Indeed, some wives are complicit in it. Those without a clear plan or solution to business survival across generations suggest that while they and/or their partners are capable and still enjoying the business, they are happy with (or in some cases, resigned to) a wait and see approach. This is at odds with the family business literature which often approaches a lack of planning with concern, even alarm (Dunn and Kaye 1999, Lansberg 1988, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Ward 1987). Yet in this research, even where children are in the business, some wives indicate that succession planning might put pressure on them. In this respect children's involvement is no guarantee that they will stay. In fact, many wives are alert to dissatisfaction or feelings of obligation. Under these circumstances it is perhaps no surprise that succession plans were rare among the participants.

Other issues also come into play. Robyn Combes indicates that while she and her husband have considerable assets, they also have significant debt and she believes it is 'unfair to lumber the children with it and expect that they will keep the business running' (154). She and her husband are both still active in the business and so she is prepared to wait and see how things pan out.

Uncertainty is strengthened further by the need for negotiation in relation to children's involvement and succession. Yolanda Crimmins for example, says that the son with the most appropriate skills to take over their business is not yet working in it and when she has tried to raise the issue with him, 'he's belligerent and won't talk about it' (176). She says that she will take the running on managing a succession

process. This means thinking through how best to bring her son in and how he might be prepared for the task of taking over the business down the track. However, his belligerence indicates that succession could be precarious. Their son-in-law is in the business and runs one arm of it. She is hopeful she might elicit his help in encouraging her son's involvement, though how her son-in-law might feel about that is open to question.

Negotiating around complex legal and regulatory factors can also throw up barriers to children taking over the business and can undermine negotiation. For example, Rhonda Harris has expended considerable energy in trying to get her children to address the issue of succession. Her efforts have been thwarted by their fears about compliance demands of their industry.

The boys said, you know, we're not confident that if one of our drivers did something ... really blindingly stupid, and someone ended up being hurt badly, or killed, that could be us in jail, and we don't want to be bringing our kids up from the wrong side of a jail cell. And we said, "Yeah, but we've been part of an accreditation test pilot in the late eighties, early nineties. We've got policing procedures in place to manage all of that. We've the documents to show that we're doing all that we can to ensure the safety of our people, and other road users. And we've got statutory liability insurance to make sure that ... we have the funds to defend us at law, and all that". And they said, "Yeah, that's okay for you, we're happy you've got that confidence, but we don't" (172).

Rhonda has been active in lobbying government about compliance because of the responsibility they have if things go wrong. For this reason, even though she and her husband are in partnership, her husband is the sole director. This is because 'with the whole compliance stuff in our industry, if anyone goes to jail it's him' (172). Rhonda has been instrumental in putting protective policies in place because she understands these are concerns for her sons, but at the same time, she also accepts their reluctance. She and her husband are therefore considering their options which include professional management or sale.

Rhonda's preference is for their sons to take over but she wants 'what's ideal for them' (172). All the same, she continues to live in hope. She indicates the boys always said they would not be in the business and they are now involved, so she and her husband have committed to another five years and she hopes that during that time their sons' thinking might change. She is also therefore in wait and see mode.

Chapter Summary

This chapter highlights participants' concerns about children's involvement in the business and the way they endeavour to protect family relationships using a strong discourse of 'choice'. While some theorists argue that choice is responsible for the undoing of kin relationships (Bauman 2003), these participants perceive it as a way to maintain them. Wives craft uncertainty by encouraging children's self-fulfilment through following their own 'passions'. On the one hand this shows respect for children's autonomy and their desire to see them live satisfying lives, and on the other reduces the chance that relationships might be jeopardised through working in the business. In so doing they maintain connectedness. Where children chose to join, some also protect connectedness by closely managing the process, thinking through the issues that could upset relationships and putting in place mechanisms to protect them.

Through a discourse of choice, they support children's need for self-realisation (Neubauer and Hurrelmann 1995) which has material effects in terms of business continuity. The loosening of traditional hierarchies of gender in husband and wife partnerships are echoed in relations between parents and children (Beck 1997, Neubauer and Hurrelmann 1995). While this necessitates more negotiation, it also creates potential for conflict and tension. Participants demonstrate their concern about what this might mean for relationships through their ambivalence about family business succession. They are also cognisant of the many options available to their children in the contemporary labour market, and the family business can appear either stifling or limiting in comparison. In this respect, while the door was rarely closed on children's involvement, succession planning was not widely practiced. Rather the

desire not to influence children sometimes meant that their involvement in the business was never mentioned or considerable flexibility was offered for children to move into and out of the business as they figured out their life path.

In contrast, family business scholarship often expresses concern about a lack of succession planning and recommends the early involvement of children (Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Danco 1982, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Lambrecht 2005, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Longenecker and Schoen 1978, Schröder et al. 2011, Ward 1987). Wives in this research appear to disagree, with some indicating that 'socializing' children into the business from a young age can undermine 'choice'. At the same time, their concern for both business continuity and relationships meant that they often took a leading role in working out how children could be effectively integrated into the business if they showed an interest, without disrupting relationships.

Both approaches of fostering choice and attending to processes for involvement speak to the importance of family connectedness, notwithstanding a social and cultural emphasis on autonomy (Kagitcibasi 2005, Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012). Wives' emphasis on protecting connectedness through choice and flexibility for children even at the cost of continuity is 'at odds' with the family business literature which is invariably underpinned by economic principles making the importance of continuity self-evident. Consequently, within the succession literature, there is an almost universal focus on how businesses can be successfully transferred to the next generation. The issue of 'choice', while not entirely overlooked, does not feature as a key research interest for two reasons. Choices are seen to be freely made on the one hand, and on the other, where children were discouraged from involvement, continuity would cease to be central.

It has frequently been assumed that one of the key roles of wives is to inculcate family business values that are critical to the business and that promote commitment (Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Poza and Messer 2001). In this research the values wives promote are choice and freedom. In part, this is connected to a norm in Western societies that children need to separate from parents to develop

independence (Kagitcibasi 2005) which contributes to the ambivalence participants' feel about their involvement. Women's own experiences in the business also often strengthen ambivalence even when those experiences are largely positive. They understand the compromises, risks and joys of working with a family member. As Jane observed, 'There is no boundary over your tongue' (148) in family businesses and therefore the potential for family breakdown is ever present. At the same time, the closeness of family ties can also provide great opportunities for problems to be resolved through effective negotiation and good communication.

Wives' accounts suggest they are aware that relationships cannot be taken for granted as the individualization thesis suggests (Giddens 1991). Recognition of fragility is expressed in their commitment to a wait and see approach rather than promoting formal succession planning. This is especially evident in first generation businesses where some wives indicate the business was established 'for them' not to create a dynasty. They therefore did not assume their children would share their interests. For participants, respecting choice and providing space for children to find their own way was critical to maintaining close connections, as this militates against obligation or any suggestion parents have expectations for their involvement in the business. In this respect commitment to family emerges through 'family practices of mutual exchange and satisfaction' for both parents and adult children rather than 'obligation and duty' (Lindsay and Dempsey 2009: 232). Uncertainty about business continuity can be the result, even where children are working in the business. In this respect, flexibility in providing opportunities for children to come and go implies few assumptions about children's commitment to the business.

Finally, the chapter highlights that 'choice' is always mediated by a range of social, financial, cultural and gender discourses and practices which are historically located. In this respect the enduring influence of tradition and convention (Gilding 2010, Gillies 2003, Heelas 1996, McNay 1999, Ribbens McCarthy 2012) continues to shape the opportunities for children in the business. Specifically, primogeniture remains widespread and is little reflected upon in family businesses involved in this

research (Gilding 2010, Martin 2001, Mulholland 2003, Wang 2010). Daughters continue to be passed over in favour of sons if they are in the business at all. At the same time, the number of daughters working in family businesses in senior management and occasionally, the CEO role, is evidence of changing gender relations. However, in the Australian context where sons are six times more likely to take over the family business than daughters, the pace of change is slow (Dana and Smyrnios 2013). Importantly, wives working in family businesses appear to be a significant barometer of change. The fact that both daughters and sons were generally working full-time in the business when mothers in this study also work in them suggests they may be instrumental in fostering a fairer environment.

Chapter 6 | Conclusion: Weaving the threads of work and family life

Introduction

Family businesses are seen as significant to the stability and growth of most economies. This significance underpins the perceived importance of business sustainability across time and multiple generations. An understanding of how family business continuity is achieved is the subject of a large body of work within the family business literature. In this respect, the perspectives of founders, owner-managers and children have been widely canvassed, but those of wives have received only limited attention. A holistic understanding of the beliefs, motivations and behaviours that affect the transfer of the business to the next generation cannot be complete without assessing the influence of all those who have a stake in the family business. The absence of the wife's perspective is associated with an historical view that men run family businesses and that while wives' contributions may be important, they operate more commonly on the margins of the business (Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003, Poza and Messer 2001). In the family business literature, wives' key contribution is often perceived to be in their emotion management skills, in terms of smoothing over conflicts and in transferring important values that underpin children's involvement in the business (Cappuyens 2007, Janjuha-Jivraj 2004, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Poza and Messer 2001).

This study set out to explore the issue of succession and business continuity from the perspective of wives. Its aim was to understand how wives were involved in processes of succession; their perceptions, motivations and influence. To gain a depth of understanding about these issues, the thesis asks broad questions about how they participate in the business, how they negotiate responsibilities of care at the boundaries of work and family life and how their experiences and motivations impact on children's involvement. In this respect it aimed to draw out how relationships are

negotiated and gender is practised in the family business at a time of dramatic social transformations and changing intergenerational and gender relations.

The thesis makes two important contributions. The first has been to make the variety of women's participation and their care work central to an understanding of how the family business functions day to day. The thesis reveals the degree to which women contribute to the business but more importantly, shows how gender continues to structure leadership and entrepreneurship in significant ways. In this respect, wives experience diverse gender outcomes suggesting that the degree to which gender has been 'disembedded' from traditional beliefs and practices is contingent and contextual. In this study, all women in partnerships with their husbands' emphasized equality but only a minority indicated egalitarianism in terms of leadership. A number of factors revealed how gendered outcomes occurred for those working in the business. These included having almost complete responsibility for childcare, a one boss ideology, occupational segregation and lack of recognition, which contributed to women's lesser status in different ways. At the same time, a small number of women had taken over the business and described how they had expanded it beyond their partners' imagining.

While detraditionalization was evident in the way that women were active and visible in the running of the business, for some there was also a retraditionalization in the way their roles were undermined through a lack of respect or recognition for their work or their decision making. Participants tended to see this as a relationship failing rather than a gender issue, and they acted decisively but in different ways. They either pulled back from the business, or they tried to negotiate more egalitarian arrangements with varying degrees of success. Further, retraditionalization also occurred for in-law women who joined existing family businesses. Their work can be co-opted in the interests of the family business but these women are unable to enjoy the same privileges as 'blood relatives'. They are often denied ownership or decision making power and must speak through their husbands. Another group of women described a process of 'team work' in building the business but their stories revealed

that this egalitarianism was later foreclosed as the entrepreneurial demands of the business were more readily met by men who were freed from childcare responsibilities. In this respect, the idea that women have been freed from the constraints of traditions and obligations seems overstated (Beck 1992, Giddens 1991). As a metaphor, crafting, used throughout this thesis, captures participants' resourcefulness as they negotiate the tensions that arise as a result of new freedoms for women under conditions of deeply embedded cultural and institutional constraints. This tension is evident in the way tradition co-exists with detraditionalization and retraditionalization, underscoring the complexity of gender relations in contemporary family businesses.

The second contribution relates to wives' absence from succession debates and the positioning of their influence on the margins of the business. The thesis shows they have significant informal *and* formal influence on children's involvement in the business and succession planning in both positive and negative ways. This is in contrast to the small literature that exists in relation to wives' and succession planning, which describes mainly positive, informal influence. The thesis shows how wives' experiences in family businesses create concerns about the fragility of relationships, hence a strong choice narrative for children. Almost without exception participants insisted children should find their own path without pressure to join the business. In this respect their main desire was not necessarily the continuity of the business, but rather, the opportunity for their children to live satisfying lives. Participants can therefore act in ways that are complicit with the precariousness of succession planning, but some also take a formal role in driving succession planning. Both groups think deeply about the potential for relationship breakdown, but some also show a concern that the business might be stifling or that a globalized world offers better options for children to realise their potential.

An emphasis on children following their own path leads to succession uncertainty as parents 'wait and see' if in the long term children might still decide to join the business. Where children do join, some wives, especially in first generation

businesses, take responsibility for thinking through and driving processes for children's involvement and for succession planning. On the one hand an emphasis on children's autonomy and freedom to decide resonates with the individualization thesis. On the other, the thesis reveals that this is driven by participants' desire to protect relationships and maintain connectedness, undermining the extent to which individualization can be said to 'undo' family relationships (Bauman 2003).

The thesis therefore contributes new knowledge about the intersections of work and family life and the impact these can have on diverse gendered outcomes for women. It also extends knowledge about wives informal *and* formal influence and how this effects business continuity in both positive *and* negative ways.

In this concluding chapter I summarize the main themes and describe how these enlarge upon or challenge theories of social transformation and their impact on relationships and issues of gender equality. The chapter discusses the implications of the findings, suggesting that a deeper and more critical engagement with gender theory is necessary to provide a fuller and more nuanced account of gender practice in the family business. At the same time, it emphasizes how engagement with sociological theories of social transformation, such as individualization, can provide new insights into taken-for-granted notions of choice in the family business literature and women's complicity with succession uncertainty.

Understanding wives' participation in the family business

Family business and entrepreneurship literature often underestimates or even ignores the extent to which new and existing enterprises are supported and facilitated by wives. Entrepreneurship literature in particular emphasizes the individual (Ahl 2002, 2006), which is at odds with business partnerships that involve husbands and wives establishing businesses together. As these literatures increasingly intersect and overlap, an awareness is growing that individuals 'are not atomized decision makers, but rather are implicated in a network of social relations' and are therefore 'influenced by significant others' (Aldrich and Cliff 2003: 577, Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson

2007, Jones and Conway 2000, Rogoff and Heck 2003). This study focuses on the degree to which wives are facilitators, supporters and partners in new and existing family businesses and how their contributions, both market and non-market, impact business sustainability and continuity. Indeed, many of the businesses in this research emerge out of couple relationships even though the idea or principal skill which underpins the business comes from the husband. Within this understanding, wives are co-creators and equal risk takers though they are not always viewed, or perceive themselves in this way.

Wives in this study are often deeply engaged in family businesses and are making a variety of contributions some of which may not be recognized as significant to business sustainability, while others are entrepreneurial, but not always understood as such. Their contributions are broad. Those not working in the business may provide strategic advice or a listening ear. They also contribute social capital through their care of children, sustaining the business's reputation through the gendered work of cooking and entertaining clients and the relational work of encouraging husbands in their endeavours. This includes pushing them to broaden their business networks or attend to relationship issues and providing advice about how to deal with them. Those who work in the business are often instrumental in establishing and growing the business, undertaking a range of work from attending to administrative, financial, human resources, marketing, client management and quality assurance tasks and sometimes hands-on physical work. These patterns of support indicate the degree to which family and business are deeply entwined, yet are persistently understood as separate systems (Aldrich and Cliff 2003).

Claiming equality

The research reveal how wives anticipate egalitarianism in their intimate partnerships highlighting equality as a normative ideal (Jamieson 1998). This expectation transposes to the business partnership, though participants did not indicate that this was expressly negotiated or discussed. Rather, it was assumed.

Equality however, was a rather slippery term which had a variety of meanings depending on wives' circumstances and position in the business.

For the majority of participants, the understanding of business establishment and functioning were pervaded by entrepreneurial ideals that assumed intensive engagement (Bowman 2007). Many describe an equivalence of effort in the early stages of business co-creation and emphasize team work. This may involve one or the other continuing to work full-time in another job to provide the economic resources to sustain them during start up, while the other puts in the ground work of establishing the business. Women and men both took on these roles and gendered responsibilities were not always evident.

Impact of entrepreneurial discourse

At the same time, in the family business literature, a dichotomy is often constructed between the 'heroic male' founder of traditional entrepreneurial models, and the 'invisible' wife who supports him (Hamilton 2006, Mulholland 2003). This emerges in part because men and women are constructed as essentially different in this literature and women are less likely to be perceived as leaders or decision makers (Mulholland 2003, Salganicoff 1990a). In this respect, researchers draw on gendered assumptions about how business is done and who does it (Ahl 2006). The contributions wives make in administrative and financial areas of the business are rarely part of conventional notions of entrepreneurship which favours a 'rugged individualism' (Cramton 1993). Yet many businesses in this study emerge as a result of the couple partnership and wives are instrumental in the work of planning, researching, financing and resourcing businesses which are part of entrepreneurial processes (Bennett and Dann 2000). A focus on an individual entrepreneur therefore only provides a partial perspective on new business creation and the sustainability of existing businesses (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, Rogoff and Heck 2003, Zachary 2011). For example, Jack and Anderson (2002) suggest a significant dimension of entrepreneurship is learning how business is conducted, a process in which wives working in family firms are deeply engaged.

This does not necessarily bestow a legitimate entrepreneurial identity. While definitional debates have moved away from psychological and dispositional characteristics to an emphasis on venture creation, innovation and opportunity exploitation (Shane and Venkataraman 2000, Timmons and Spinelli 1999), some gender researchers insist this does not mean 'entrepreneurship' is open to anyone (Ahl and Marlow 2012: 543). They point out the pervasiveness of unrecognized gender bias, often embedded in entrepreneurship research and in media representations that privilege masculine experience (Achtenhagen and Welter 2007, Ahl 2002, 2006, Bird and Brush 2002, Bruni et al. 2004b, García and Welter 2013, Nicholson and Anderson 2005, Radu and Redien-Collot 2008). In this respect a constant search for differences between male and female entrepreneurs generally find women fail to live up to the standards set by men (Ahl 2006, Mirchandani 1999). With the pervasiveness of a masculine discourse, other factors serve to confirm women's 'lack of fit' in this study. This includes the work they do in the business, the expectation of intense engagement met more readily by husbands, their flexible work practices and the fact that businesses are based on husbands' ideas or skills. Participants therefore have an uncomfortable relationship with entrepreneurship (Bruni et al. 2004b) made more ambivalent through lives lived in connection to family rather than the detachment often demonstrated by their partners.

In their stories participants usually implied collaborative leadership, consistent with an equality narrative. However, this was undermined in two ways. The first was that despite making the case for co-creation, some wives recognized the business as deeply important to their husband's identity and sense of self-mastery (Lansberg 1988, Pyromalis, Vozikis, Kalkanteras, Rogdaki and Sigalas 2008, Sonnenfeld and Spence 1989). In this respect they chose to privilege their husbands as more critical to business success. The second was that husbands who espoused an equal partnership sometimes did not enact this value in every day practice. In regard to the former, participants variously describe their partners' commitment as '24/7', 'obsessive', 'single-minded' and 'passionate'. Under such circumstances, and possibly also because women are seen to be responsible for emotion management (Cappuyns 2007, Poza

and Messer 2001), some wives seemed to feel obliged to 'reflect back' (Cline and Spender 1987) the heroic masculine entrepreneurial discourse in the interests of sustaining this identity. Indeed, female kin generally are seen to collaborate in both producing and maintaining this identity (Hamilton 2013a: 102).

The second way that collaborative leadership was undermined was in most husband and wife partnerships, the businesses were led by men, some of whom perceived themselves to be the key decision maker. Wives working in the business often accepted their husbands' leadership role because they believed it was important for staff to know there was 'one boss'. They did not perceive this arrangement to be in conflict with an equality discourse because they assumed leadership to be collaborative. Unfortunately, husbands failed to demonstrate this in some cases through lack of recognition of wives' work or expertise. Some also made decisions that presumed they knew best, which had material effects in terms positioning women as 'secondary' and subordinate. For some this led to their disengagement from the business.

Where this occurred, wives often indicated there was agreement to the idea of one boss, though some suggested that husbands made this assumption. While wives had a range of views about why this happened, it appeared to be associated with a perceived (and unspoken) hierarchy of knowledge in view of the fact that businesses were built on husbands' skills or idea and the gendered practices which emerged through the necessity for care work. Agreed or not, it could set up a power differential that made working in the business untenable for the wife, whose values of egalitarianism were undermined. Some opted to leave the business in order to save the intimate relationship. In this respect, there are limited alternatives in husband and wife partnerships if wives challenge their husbands, but do not gain concessions. In other cases, wives were able to put in place creative relationship-saving strategies to try to negotiate a status they were comfortable with. In a very real sense, wives who had these experiences ensured the survival of both the relationship and the business. While on the face of it, power issues were central to the betrayal of what they

understood to be an equal partnership, they were also deeply disappointed that connectedness, belonging, trust and fairness, so central to intimate relations, had been undermined (Danes and Morgan 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012).

Gendered work

These issues indicate how opportunities for leadership in family businesses can be compromised. How work is valued is also implicated (Lewis and Massey 2011, Mulholland 2003). For example, participants frequently take responsibility for administrative systems but also marketing, client relations and human resources. Husbands are mostly doing work more generally perceived as 'entrepreneurial' including product development and implementation, overseeing operations and focusing on developing markets. Gender and work research suggests that work typically done by women has less prestige and authority because it is done by women than work typically done by men (Benschop et al. 2001, Cockburn 1991, Cockburn and Harley 1988, Jacobs and Powell 1985, Padavic and Reskin 2002, Reskin and Bielby 2005). This may add to a perception of a knowledge hierarchy in the businesses in this research.

In the case of entrepreneurship, its masculine framing positions administrative work, however critical to business establishment, functioning and even growth, as less important than the endeavour of innovation and opportunity recognition. In the co-creation of the business, the work of wives can be viewed as less significant, even to the women themselves. For example, Alison Carazo's university education was instrumental in taking the business in a new direction and to its on-going success because she was able to 'educate' her husband about 'what makes plants tick' (I12). However, she did not see herself as entrepreneurial. This example illustrates that the couple partnership is frequently the catalyst for business establishment or sustainability because of the unpaid work, knowledge and resources that both provide to enable it to happen (Cramton 1993). At the same time, husbands' ideas do not arise in a vacuum as Aldrich and Cliff (2003) assert, but are often 'thrashed out' with their partners or emerge through joint knowledge.

Yet inequalities of status associated with gendered work may not be apparent at the level of consciousness because they are deeply embodied gender practices (McNay 1999). They are reinforced through discourses of business creation, the association of masculinity with leadership and entrepreneurship and 'hostile' work/care regimes (Ahl 2006, Ahl and Marlow 2012, Calás and Smircich 1996, Due Billing and Alvesson 2000, Pocock 2005: 32, Sinclair 2005).

In this respect, inequalities need to also be viewed through the prism of working conditions more generally that position men and women as workers with similar rights and privileges but ignores the gendered nature of care work and the way in which work can be valued differently depending on who does it (Bezanson 2006, Pocock 2005, Williams 2001). In turn, an equality discourse enables women in this study to claim for themselves the individualism and citizenship rights that feminists have fought to obtain (Larner 2000). At the same time, it obscures the degree to which they can enjoy those same rights and privileges because of their inability to commit themselves fully to the labour market if they have caring responsibilities (Larner 2000, Pocock 2003, 2005). They therefore often take up work which allows them to adapt to the competing needs of the business and the family but it is often less valued work. In this respect, neoliberalism has offered 'a spurious' or 'notional gender equality' (McRobbie 2009: 1, Tudor 2012: 333) forcing many of the women in this study to craft identities that meet concepts of ideal worker and ideal motherhood. Unsurprisingly, this leads to contradictions and ambiguity in their stories about equality in their partnerships.

Managing care work at the intersection of the business and family life

While wives working with their husbands generally indicated a high degree of respect for their partners and shared responsibility for the business, they also invariably opted for a traditional division of labour (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, Kadis and McClendon 1991, Marshack 1994, Smith 2000). Mostly, wives were entirely responsible for care work and therefore were crafting these responsibilities around work in the business, or their own careers for those not working in the business. In

pursuit of a business livelihood often in challenging circumstances, 'common sense decisions' are made to effectively manage family and work responsibilities (Baines and Wheelock 2000). Women's cultural positioning as carers, and often their own deeply-felt sense of mothering, underscores their responsibility for this work (Kondo 1990). At the same time, care work is often unrecognized as 'work' and therefore undervalued in comparison to market employment (Fraser 1997, Lewis 2006, Williams 2001).

Marshack (1994) has argued that the division of labour adopted by co-preneurs positions women as secondary, leaving husbands in the role of key decision maker. Yet the roles wives undertake in the business are often those that are best suited to flexible work practices, further accentuating the complexity of how husbands become the face of the business. Hamilton (2013a: 96) argues that who is seen to lead the business is complicated and usually rests on 'situated knowledge'. Women not fully engaged in the business because of childcare responsibilities often forfeit leadership because they do not know the minutiae of the day-to-day running of the business (Hamilton 2013a). This potentially supports a hierarchy of knowledge which seemed to emerge in husbands' notion of who was the boss. While flexibility was an advantage in enabling women to weave their care and work responsibilities together, it possibly also contributed to the idea that women were less committed to the business. In this respect flexibility is both an advantage and disadvantage because it enables women to maintain involvement in the business and manage childcare responsibilities, but it also entrenches traditional care arrangements (Baines and Wheelock 1998a, 2000, Marshack 1994). Indeed, the new fatherhood discourse had little discernible impact on the partners of the participants. Rather, there was little negotiated sharing of care work. Father involvement ranged from being home in time for dinner to involvement in leisure activities with children and some holiday care.

This arrangement seemed to be at odds with participants' firm commitment to equality. The orthodoxy of this arrangement suggested little need for reflexivity on their part, but two discourses indicated a disjuncture between motherhood and

worker identities. The first was that by working flexibly and often having children with them at work, or working nights and weekends, they did not do either job well. The second was that by applying good time management practices and being very efficient and competent, they managed work and family life reasonably well. The former emphasizes the labour involved in crafting work and family but highlights the stress and guilt some women feel when they cannot live up to the demands of either job (Hochschild 2003, Smith 2000). The latter risks concealing the labour and stress involved in crafting a fit between work and family responsibilities (Hochschild 2003). Calling on 'competence' enabled wives to assert their legitimacy as business women. It firmly establishes their work credentials and commitment to the business, which supported an 'equality' narrative in relation to their work effort.

There is inherent conflict within the two narratives. The former denotes a contest between culturally intensive motherhood (Hays 1998) and equally intensive work expectations. The latter conceals the work involved in care by making it look effortless while also obscuring the inequality of the division of labour. Such a division can create a power/subordination dynamic disrupting the team work idea and their status in the business (Finch and Mason 1993: 40). Craib (2002) has argued that there will always be 'complex inequalities of effort' in any relationship. He suggests 'partners must be willing to exploit and be exploited for periods of time' (Craib 2002: 128). Yet it is revealing that these women felt it was important to maintain a sense of equality by trying to keep the scales balanced, within the constraints of their care work. Paradoxically, their competence in crafting care and work 'seamlessly' actually enabled their husbands to pursue their interests intensively, contributing to their absence from family.

Maher (2013) argues that we should not lose sight of the fact that disruptions in life are normative and that the creative and adaptive work women do at the intersection of career and childcare emphasize their ability to 'braid together' the threads of work and family life. This emphasizes women's resilience and competence. She also argues that there is a need to think about career success in ways other than

linear progression. In this respect women's careers have more commonly followed 'snake-like' patterns (O'Neil et al. 2008). This does not mean they cannot 'deliver effective and affective care and maintain employment opportunities and aspirations' (Maher 2013: 181).

What Maher describes is evident in the experiences of wives in this study. They effectively weave care and work responsibilities, albeit often with great difficulty, and as their childcare responsibilities reduce they generally give their full attention to the business. Some forge significant leadership roles for themselves both in the business and within their industries. Two issues arise here. On the one hand unequal divisions of labour reinforce individualistic and masculine notions of business creation and development, and on the other, they further cement gendered practices of care. Further, the possibility for women to be viewed (and view themselves) as entrepreneurial can be deeply compromised by the necessity to adapt to both work and family responsibilities. This is made evident in the leadership arrangements in couple partnerships in this research.

These issues point to an inherent contradiction in the equality discourse. On the one hand it suggests women in family firms perceive their rights to ownership and opportunity in the business, but on the other 'new' freedoms to enjoy the rights and privileges of work rarely reduces their responsibilities for care work unless they have the resources to outsource such work (Bezanson 2006). While this research confirms the findings of other gender research in the family business domain in relation to wives' expectation of egalitarianism, it draws attention to the way that women come to expect and assert this value but argues that their ability to realise it is uneven (McNay 1999). This is because the effects of material inequalities and symbolic discourses differ for different women depending on the power relations that exist in the relationship and the business.

Understanding diverse experiences

It is important to acknowledge that while the practices outlined above are broadly experienced by participants, wives with different associations had experiences that were similar but also different. For example, my findings suggest that wives joining businesses owned by their husbands' family must negotiate a complex of family relations and a belief that only 'blood' relatives should have decision-making power (Pini 2007). Research suggests family members fear divorce, which underpins a desire to curtail in-law power in the business and refuse ownership (Pini 2007). While wives' work may be valued, family members institute strategies and practices that makes it clear who has authority to speak and what can be said (Kondo 1990: 142-143).

In this respect, wives who do not follow the often unwritten rules that position them as outsiders because they are not blood relatives, can be viewed as trouble-makers or 'outlaws' justifying their exclusion (Pini 2007)(Pini 2007). The fact that some women in this group did not allow these sanctions to prevent them from speaking up, signals the changing nature of the gender contract in late modernity. They did this despite the potential and actual costs of doing so to wider family relations. Their actions undoubtedly contributed to businesses being divided between brothers, but they went on to become partners and play instrumental roles in the 're-establishment' of these businesses. Not all wives resisted in the same way. One maintained resentments over a long period of time, while another chose to leave the business to protect family relationships.

Similarly, wives who did not work in the business often had muted voices despite providing significant social capital and emotional support to their husbands (Cappuyns 2007, Folker et al. 2002, LaChapelle and Barnes 1998, Poza and Messer 2001). Their own efforts for the business are more often perceived as naturally feminine responses rather than 'work' (Finch 1983, Papanek 1973). Indeed, a moral imperative underpinned their support given the priority of the business in their lives. Their husbands often embodied the 'heroic' entrepreneur discourse, contributing to wives sanctioning their absence and long work hours, freeing husbands from family

pressures (Bowman 2007, Finch 1983). At the same time, some wives were influential in encouraging children to look beyond the business or in helping their husbands address succession planning issues.

Gender as lived experience

It is a measure of the extent of changing gender practices that wives who described less conflict and more egalitarian relations, and those who have taken over the business, see their leadership as unremarkable. While their stories represent the possibilities for women in late modernity, most were not freed from the responsibility of childcare. At the same time, this group of participants rarely positioned their partners as heroic protagonists in the story of the businesses' development. Rather, they indicated that their expectations of egalitarianism were met, though their stories contained contradictions.

As Hochschild (2003) emphasizes, among men and women there are often different ideologies at play – traditional, transitional and egalitarian. While nearly all women in this study presumed egalitarian ideals on the part of their husbands, it only seemed to occur in practice for a minority. Other stories demonstrated that these ideologies are not straight forwardly practised. For example, a man may publicly ascribe to egalitarianism while privately be more traditional. Alternatively, a 'transitional' man may be comfortable with his partner working but assumes she will continue to take responsibility for care and household work (Hochschild 2003: 16). He may even profess egalitarianism in abstract terms but not when challenged, for example when his decision making is questioned. For some participants in this study where this occurred, the importance of the business to their livelihood meant they had to make stark choices about remaining in the business or not.

Among participants, creative agency was especially visible in their ability to mark out a space more in keeping with their own interests in the business. For example, Eva Herrera set up a new business as a complement to the existing firm, utilising her specific skills and building on her own interests, giving her additional

cachet in the business. Jane Barone's passion to ensure effective integration of her children set her on a path to understand best practice in succession. This brought her into contact with the peak family business body where she became active, bestowing broader rewards and status. A number of women gravitated to industry associations where they were active in promoting better conditions and opportunities for women and were sometimes publicly recognized for their work.

Reflexivity in these contexts involves women reaching out beyond the business, or 'redreaming the dream' initially associated with their husbands' idea or skill, to create something that is specifically meaningful and often gave them recognition beyond the business, while also contributing to it. To some extent this work also reduced the possibility of directly competing with their husband's entrepreneurial status.

To this end, participants demonstrated an ambivalent relationship to entrepreneurship. Those who are running family businesses or in more egalitarian partnerships appeared to both identify and dis-identify with it (Skeggs 1997). In this respect they provide a challenge to conventional notions of entrepreneurship by being attentive to relationships and indeed, continue to actively and deliberately cultivate them despite engaging in long hours themselves. The diverse experiences revealed in this research underscores the complexity of the husband and wife partnership (including wives not working in the business). As these participants engage in everyday activities and relationships, reflexivity emerges irregularly depending on the possibilities they perceive for negotiation (McNay 1999: 109). Where there are few possibilities some opt to reduce their physical or psychological investment in the business. Others are more willing and able to broker compromises that enable them to feel that their egalitarian values are being met. In this respect, negotiating conflicts and tensions in a social space traditionally reserved for men, can leave many wives feeling ambivalent about the business.

Participants' accounts give purchase to an understanding that both material and discursive gender inequalities are revealed in the lived reality of women's lives (McNay

2004). In this respect they occur routinely in the habits and practices of daily life and are therefore, often taken-for-granted. While participants demonstrate creative agency in crafting a place for themselves in the business, they do so within limitations, or as Bourdieu suggests, 'regulated liberties' (McNay 1999, 2004). At the same time their accounts suggest there is no easy analysis of the organization of gender in family businesses. In wives' investments in the business there is both 'collusion and compromise at different levels of consciousness' which temper agency, but at times where there is the appearance of accommodation, this may have 'subversive effects' (Kondo 1990: 299).

An important implication of this research is that while it appears that the traditional social system is not 'straight forwardly' reproduced because of women's increasing visibility in family businesses, this does not mean dominant norms are undermined (McNay 1999: 105) or that 'gender is no longer relevant' as Aronoff (1998: 184) suggests. Women's resistances to these norms may have only 'superficial effects' as this study has shown, and therefore may not disrupt deeper structural relations (McNay 1999: 105). This is the point often missed in the family business literature, which often takes at face value men's and women's expressions of egalitarianism without considering the effects of power relations. It therefore overlooks the implications of what this might mean for business sustainability and continuity.

Children's involvement and succession planning

Succession planning has long been a key concern of family business scholars who highlight its precarious nature (Aronoff and Ward 1995, Barach et al. 1988, Lansberg 1988, Miller et al. 2003, Neubauer and Lank 1998). In this respect early planning and involvement of children are seen as important components of succession planning (Handler 1994). While the literature on this subject is considerable, the perspectives or influence of wives (mothers) in relation to succession has received very little attention. This is surprising in view of the stake they have in harmonious family relations. While wives' skill with emotion management has been recognized as significant to the business and can assist in succession processes (Janjuha-Jivraj 2004,

Poza and Messer 2001), there is little evidence of how this work might play out broadly for continuity, or any understanding of the more formalized ways in which they influence succession.

Drawing on new conceptualizations which emphasize the open-endedness of relationships and increasing reflexivity (Jamieson 1998, Smart 2007), this research demonstrates wives' broad ranging influence in succession planning. This study links wives' cultural responsibility for emotion management and their own experiences in the business to their desire to craft outcomes that are good for family relations, but may not always be good for business continuity. In this respect, some wives act covertly or overtly to undermine husbands' assumptions about their children's involvement and instead, encourage children to follow their own dreams. This is especially true of wives in first generation businesses who indicate the business was established by, and for them and their husbands, not for their children. As a consequence, they do not assume children will share the same interests. In contrast to family business scholarship, which expresses a concern about the lack of succession planning, especially the early involvement of children (Aronoff et al. 2003, Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Danco 1982, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Lambrecht 2005, Lambrecht and Donckels 2006, Longenecker and Schoen 1978, Schröder et al. 2011, Ward 1987), some participants suggest 'socialising' children into the business undermines their choices. At the same time, where children showed an interest in the business, wives sometimes took a leading role in thinking through and managing children's involvement and succession planning, though not always with successful outcomes.

The findings of this study suggest wives often have ambivalent feelings about children's involvement. In this respect, they articulate a choice narrative which relates to a normative view that children should follow their own path free of parental influence. However, insisting on choice is also a relationship protection mechanism. On the one hand, it reduces the possibility of jeopardising relationships were children to work in the business. On the other, not applying pressure and encouraging children to follow their passions indicates respect for their autonomy.

Wives have a range of responses in relation to their children's involvement: the first is to discourage, or at least not encourage involvement; the second involves ensuring children understand the undertaking; the third is acceptance of children's involvement and succession plans without much reflection; and the fourth is to not assume succession will take place even if children choose to join the business. Mostly, their accounts reveal they are aware relationships cannot be taken for granted, emphasising their fragility. This is a key contention of the individualization thesis (Bauman 2003, Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995), which argues dramatic social transformations have destabilised family life as a result of the breakdown of traditional authority structures. While new freedoms have emerged 'to live a life of one's own', this goes hand in hand with demands for greater negotiation in family relationships (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1994). Bauman (2003: 29) for example, argues that choice makes kin relationships more tenuous. He suggests kin relationships have become like affinity and as such must be constantly worked upon or they will 'wilt, fade and decay' (Bauman 2003: 29). In this respect he perceives relationships as no longer solid and durable and suggests an unwillingness on the part of individual members to put in the work that is now required to maintain them.

In contrast, participants' relational work in this study, suggests that rather than a decline in family connectedness as posited by Bauman and others (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Popenoe 1993), wives often traverse new moral terrain (Smart 2007, Smart and Neale 1999) in developing effective (but sometimes not so effective) solutions to children's involvement in the business and succession planning. Practices of fostering choice and attending to processes of integration emphasize that family relatedness and connection is deeply felt, notwithstanding a social and cultural emphasis on autonomy (Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012).

Participants' attention to 'choice' is a foil against feelings of obligation and parental pressure. For this reason, very few participants indicate that they have clear succession plans; rather most businesses are in a holding pattern, taking a wait and see approach regarding children's ultimate decision. This is at odds with the family

business literature which promotes a planned approach to succession planning, indicating 'grave consequences' where planning is avoided or delayed (Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Barach et al. 1988, Dunn and Kaye 1999, Ibrahim et al. 2001, Janjua-Jivraj and Woods 2002, Lansberg 1988, Lansberg and Astrachan 1994: 40, Miller et al. 2003, Neubauer and Lank 1998, Ward 1987). This study suggests this assertion does not correlate with the way people actually live their lives, nor does it fully grasp wives' (mothers') ambivalence about encouraging children's involvement. In this respect, there is a moral dimension to their influence, in view of the array of options education and globalization has thrown up for children to realise their potential.

Understanding discourses of choice

While choice, in terms of children's involvement is often inferred in the family business literature, it is not critically analysed, nor does it feature to any significant degree as a critical issue for succession planning. Where research addresses children's intentions to work in the business, for example Schroder Schmitt-Rodermund and Arnaud (2011), it underestimates the degree to which 'choices' are shaped by cultural and social forces and gender practices. Although the authors of this research were alert to gender, most businesses in their sample were in the construction industry and most participants were male. The study involved owners and leaders of family businesses (though they did not indicate the gender of the adult participant, most studies suggest men run family businesses), along with male and female adolescents, most of whom were boys. The gendered nature of these businesses is possibly a more accurate predictor of their finding about daughters' intention to choose to work outside the business rather than succeed their parent. In this latter respect, perceptions about whether a lead role would even be 'open' to them, may also be implicated in daughters' 'choices'.

Notwithstanding the importance of highlighting the need for family business owners to consider daughters as potential successors, the depth of deeply embedded conventional images of masculinity and femininity (McNay 1999) is overlooked in this research. This can often operate to exclude daughters from 'masculinized' businesses.

Daughters may also exclude themselves for the same reason. At the same time, the authors suggest that despite the normative expectation of children's freedom to choose a career, that parents should be clear about wanting the business to continue when children are young, and to actively foster their involvement in the business. Yet, in this study most wives oppose the idea that children should feel any pressure in relation to the continuation of the business, highlighting a disconnect between what scholars think should be done and the reality of people's lives.

Typically, participants are concerned about relationships. Wives in first generation businesses are generally more deeply engaged with the issue of children working in the business. Their concern is unsurprising given family businesses are notoriously unstable. Research indicates only 30 percent of first generation businesses are passed on to a second generation and generational transmission falls dramatically from there (Beckhard and Dyer 1983a, Birley 1986, Ward 1987). My own research is thick with descriptions of relationship failure, family disintegration and physical and emotional disconnection from the business. Not surprisingly wives are acutely aware of the risks because most have had to fashion their lives around business and family life and have sometimes played central roles in these skirmishes. This research gives some purchase on why such a small number of businesses are transferred to a second generation.

Their central concern is for their children to be happy. Participants' worries revolve around some key issues: the possibility that relationships may irreconcilably break down; that children may make choices out of a sense of obligation instead of following their own passions; that children might be overshadowed by their fathers and lack independence; that the business could limit their potential; or that fairness for all children in the family may be compromised if one child joins the business and not others. These concerns underscore the complexity of involving children in, and passing on the family business.

Family business research suggests that families with a cohesive or collectivist orientation often do succession and business transfer better (Lansberg and Astrachan

1994). Wives in this study engage in a discourse of choice which privileges autonomy and individual interests. This does not mean they do not desire cohesion; indeed, it is in the interests of cohesion that they promote the idea of children following their passions. For many, discourses of choice and connectedness also have a moral and gender sensibility which involves thinking about others' wellbeing, being attuned to their individuality (hence an emphasis on finding their own path), interpreting their needs and organizing and managing relationships with others (Mason 1996).

These ideas have a relationship to Smart and Neale's (Smart 2000, Smart and Neale 1999) concept of new moral terrains. They argue that couples who divorce have to figure out new ways of relating in the midst of family breakdown where children are involved and that this has a moral dimension. Similarly wives in family businesses are often concerned with 'the right thing to do' (Finch 1989, Finch and Mason 1993) when it comes to children's involvement. Where children may potentially join the family business, participants often do not want to leave family cohesion to chance. While the business can be a source of well-being it can also be deeply dysfunctional. In this respect they act in ways they think will safeguard relationships (Smart 2000: 10).

There are numerous examples of women's reflexivity about relationships and the refusal to take them for granted. For example, this emphasis on moral sensibility is evident in the way that Jane Barone thinks through the best way for the children to be involved in the business without disrupting relationships. The care she takes, for example, to bring in outside expertise including a workplace psychologist to ensure the children understand the undertaking involved, helps her to feel confident the children are making an informed choice for themselves, especially as they joined as soon as their studies were complete. At the same time, it represents an effort to create certainty where there is none when it comes to protecting relationships (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Giddens 1991, 1992). Her elaborate planning is indicative of the necessity for negotiation and reflexivity about how best to sustain family bonds (Beck 1997, Giddens 1994). At the same time, women do not have a monopoly on well managed emotions. Alison Carazo's difficulties in trying to plan for succession by

excluding in-laws, indicates that emotional skills vary significantly and are not perhaps as gendered as the family business literature sometimes implies.

The research reveals that wives associated with large, long-standing multi-generational businesses also privilege a choice narrative, articulating the idea that there is no pressure on children to join the business. Some, however are less aware of the 'unseen' pressures which impact on children's decisions. In these businesses, where wives were often held at arms-length, there were professional recruitment processes in place to which their children were often, though not always, subject. Their children rarely had to answer directly to a parent, minimizing the risk to relationships. They therefore privileged children's 'autonomous' decisions to join the business. However, this view overlooks the impact of family culture and specifically the psychological attachment to family business history when it survives across generations. Such an attachment can underpin children's 'choice' to join the business, especially when businesses offer the potential for significant economic and social prestige and financial rewards. It cannot be assumed that joining the business in these circumstances is necessarily in children's interests as Rennie Mitchell articulated. Concern about conflicts in the business or the potential for daughters to be disadvantaged when most multi-generational family businesses are passed on to sons, are sometimes in evidence, though participants' struggle with how they might be overcome.

Protecting relationships: equal shares and independence

Relationship breakdown, lack of independence and concerns about children being treated unfairly in inheritance decisions are well documented in the family business literature. The view that the business can be potentially stifling or prevent children from realising their potential receives less attention. In particular, issues such as a domineering or narcissistic owner who overshadows the successor and undermines children's independence (Davis and Harveston 1999, Kets de Vries and Carlock 2010, Lansberg 1988, Miller et al. 2003) are represented in some participants' concern about children's relationships with fathers to whom the business is central.

An unwillingness to share decision making or the possibility of stifling individuality were fundamental to these concerns. Sometimes participants were explicit, but at other times they alluded to these issues through disquiet about children's independence. Many wives see their husbands as driven and the business as their 'baby'. Developing an individual identity and having the opportunity to achieve a sense of their own accomplishment are perceived as either potential, or actual problems where children were already in the business. Working outside the business was often seen as a way to foster confidence in their skills and talents. These thoughts were grounded in the idea that children are better off following their own passions first and foremost. At the same time, they felt this would enable them to make a more informed judgement about joining the business, if they later chose to do so, on the basis of their greater maturity and experience.

While the family business literature also supports the idea that children should gain experience outside the business (Barach and Ganitsky 1995, Barach et al. 1988, Dyer 1986, Ward 1987), there is a presumption that they should be working to develop skills relevant to the family business in preparation for succession. They generally do not promote the idea that children should be encouraged to follow their own passions (unless they have no interest in the business), as do wives, because this implies 'personal independence' rather than an interest in collective family goals (Handler 1992: 292) which risks business continuity. Handler's research suggests that children themselves sometimes regret not getting outside experience prior to joining the business and some express a concern about the business limiting their exposure to other opportunities. Participants are attuned to these issues and therefore often act overtly or covertly to undermine their husbands if they believe they have expectations about the children joining them in the enterprise.

These concerns are consistent with the notion that obligation, solidarity and the rule of the father (Gilding 2000) hold less sway as 'individualized' children anticipate freedom and choice (Beck 1997). According to Beck (1997: 167) 'patterns of intergeneration conflict and compromise are typical of the times' because values and

expectations can no longer be imposed. In the family business context, these issues are magnified as intimate family and work relations become enmeshed. Participants' desire to encourage children's self-realisation through finding their own passions operates to pre-empt such problems arising (Neubauer and Hurrelmann 1995).

Choice should also be viewed within the wider debate about the 'value' of children. Zelizer (1985: 23) argues that there has been a transformation in the cultural meaning of childhood beginning in the late nineteenth century which has given children 'exalted' sentimental status. This arises as a result of the progressive shift from 'economically useful to economically useless but emotionally priceless child' (Zelizer 1985: 57). Despite a declining birth rate in most industrialized societies, the 'value' of children increases because relationships come and go but children are a constant, offering 'an anchor in life' (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995: 73). Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (1995) suggest parents increasingly seek out expert advice about how best to raise children creating an intensification of motherhood (also see Hays 1998), and also to a degree, fatherhood, especially amongst the middle class. Individualization pushes parents as individuals to achieve their potential, but so must they provide opportunities for their children to reach theirs (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995: 131).

In view of children's 'exalted' status, parents, but especially mothers as the kin keepers in families (Bengtson 2001, Putney and Bengtson 2005), must weigh the possibility of fractured relationships against the success and continuity of the business. Such issues are further complicated by the idea of equal shares for all children. When most of the family's assets are tied up in the business, the idea of equal shares becomes problematic if some children work in the business and others do not. In the family business literature, providing equal value in assets for family members not in the business has been posited as a solution to fairness (Ayers 1990). Ayers (1990, 2002) argues that equality is virtually impossible to achieve and recommends parents institute what he calls 'rough family justice' or equity (fairness) rather than equality in their estate and succession planning to ensure the survival of the business. According

to Ayers (1990: 5), not only does this 'serve the best interests of the family business', but it is also a more 'realistic goal'.

Ayers' pragmatic approach underestimates the importance wives attach to equal shares even if they struggle to articulate how it might occur in practice. Indeed, Scotland (2010) argues that the concept of 'rough family justice' is a rationalization of inequality by those in a more powerful position. Almost universally in this study, wives assert the importance of equality in the distribution of family assets. Some would rather the business was sold than risk relationship breakdown as a result of perceived unfairness. However, a minority were positive about the chances of achieving equity rather than equality in distributions. Wives sometimes recognised the possibility of daughters' disadvantage because of the still widespread practice of primogeniture (Dana and Smyrnios 2010, 2013), though they did not often know how this could be overcome.

Children, of course, continue to make choices in favour of the business, sometimes despite their mothers' concerns. In this respect there was evidence of significant flexibility for children to come and go from the business. It seemed to be understood that with the lengthening out of adolescence, children need more time to decide what they want (Mortimer and Larson 2002). Youth researchers suggest the passage into adulthood is being redefined in late modernity (Furstenberg 2010). During the 1950s and 60s young people were generally married with children by the age of twenty-five, whereas now transitions are often not complete until they are in their thirties. In accommodating to this change, participants do not assume that if children join them, this is necessarily a permanent arrangement. This was best illustrated by Robyn Combes who was opposed to formal succession planning for fear it would put pressure on her two children who were in the business. Rather she wanted them to feel as though they had 'options'. It is an approach that privileges children's individualism and self-development. This resonates with Beck's (1992: 135) argument that:

In an individualized society the individual must learn on pain of permanent disadvantage to conceive of himself or herself as the centre of action, as the planning office with respect of his/her own biography, abilities, orientations and relationships and so on.

This view emphasizes the relational challenges that family businesses face in terms of negotiating relationships, but it allows little latitude for the connectedness such flexibility promotes. Wives in this study seem cognisant of the many options that education and a globalized world can offer children and they do not want to limit them as Robyn articulates. In this respect they promote autonomy and individuality. Children feel not only that their choices are supported but that parents encourage their self-fulfilment through allowing them time to find out if the business is for them or lies down some other path. Parent-child power dynamics are undermined in favour of respect and negotiation. An emphasis on supporting children's agency by giving them freedom to come and go, calls attention to the way relatedness and autonomy are interwoven in ways that support connectedness (Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012).

Succession uncertainty

Wives who support uncertainty in relation to the future of the business, suggest they draw on their own experiences including compromise and constant adaption to family and business responsibilities and problems managing relationships which are cause for pause when considering their children's involvement. The lack of recognition they sometimes experience and the family disputes they are part of and observe, contribute to a sense of unease. Their work in supporting their husbands' dreams, may also contribute to their disquiet. At the same time, their responsibility for care work gives them insights into children's interests and aptitudes and they may feel the business will not help them achieve their potential. They therefore have a desire for them to grow and develop beyond the family business. In this respect, participants indicated that they were often influential in helping children make educational choices that were in keeping with their broader career interests (Iannarelli 1992). Even

participants who indicate harmonious and egalitarian relationships with their husbands are sanguine about their children making other choices.

In some ways family businesses are the antithesis of the individualization thesis in the way they represent the collective group working in the interests of all family members rather than in their individual self-interest (Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007, Zahra 2003). This representation belies the work that goes into acknowledging, respecting and negotiating around choice and the precariousness that results in terms of the future of the business.

The necessity for social bonds 'to be made rather than inherited' is implicit in wives' accounts (Giddens 1994: 107). However, their stories indicate that individualism and relationalism (Finch and Mason 1993, Mason 2004, Ribbens McCarthy 2012) are entangled in complex ways as wives attempt to craft a fit between the interests of children and the business especially, but not only, in first generation businesses. Not all are successful or influential. Powerful familial, economic and historical forces can undermine the influence of wives, especially those associated with successful multi-generational businesses.

The suggestion however, that family bonds are diminishing (Bauman 2003, Beck 1992, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 1995, Popenoe 1993) is little in evidence in wives' accounts in this study. Rather, an emphasis on connectedness underpins their strong desire to give children choices. In this respect, as women weave the threads of work and family life they also actively craft the future of the family business whether it involves continuity or not.

Women driving succession planning

While succession planning had not been undertaken in most businesses in this study, ten participants had either led, were leading or had been influential in getting the issue of succession addressed. Three were running the family business and all but two of the others were in partnerships. Though planning or thinking about succession had taken place in these businesses, some were still in wait and see mode. Jane

Barone was the only 'text book' example of succession and was in the process of pulling back so the children could take over. Others had drawn on various ideas from succession discourse and had organized mediated meetings and planning sessions and had done the thinking about how the process might be advanced, though not always with successful outcomes. While women's role in working behind the scenes has been touched on, researchers have overlooked the extent to which some women are formally driving the succession process in their businesses. In this respect, this research builds on the work of Poza and Messer (2001) and Janjuha-Jivraj (2004).

Participants who do this work suggest that often their partners are too immersed in the day-to-day running of the business to give it much thought, or they find the relationship work involved too confronting. In taking on the job, these wives' attempt to negotiate a path through family and business interests so that both children and parents can plan for the future.

Succession outcomes were patchy and sometimes forced participants back into wait and see mode. For example, Rhonda Harris has been unable to get agreement from her sons about succession. She and her husband have decided to put in another five years in the hope that the boys will change their minds. Alison Carazo, who excluded in-laws from the business to protect the firm and family relationships, ended up alienating her children in the process. While she was coming from a place of deep concern about family relationships, her experience emphasizes the difficulties of getting it right when negotiating relations with adult children in late modernity (Beck 1997, Finch and Mason 1993, Luscher 2003).

Limitations of this thesis

While qualitative methods can provide nuance and a depth of understanding of complex issues such as family relationships, they also involve small samples. In this respect, my research is indicative rather than representative. Issues of gender inequality are increasingly difficult to identify (Lewis and Simpson 2010), especially when participants themselves do not necessarily perceive them in this way. By placing

issues of visibility and invisibility of wives within broader social and cultural frameworks this research tries to reveal the way in which gender inequality often remains concealed in norms and practices. However, gender and organizational context have a significant impact on the way that invisibility may be experienced and therefore how it is understood will vary depending on these dimensions. As a result, a different group of participants may yield different results.

Using my own contacts to identify participants for this research potentially skewed my sample towards mostly white, middle class women. While some cultural differences were present, it was not an ethnically diverse group of participants. Succession experiences may well be different for wives from other cultural backgrounds working in family businesses and therefore offers further research opportunities. The ease of locating wives who were in partnerships with their husbands ahead of less visible women such as those working in their husband's or husband's family business also reflects their greater number within this group. In this respect, the diversity of women's experiences could be further enhanced by attention to wives' different associations to the business. For example, the experiences of in-law women who work in established family businesses is a neglected area of research. Greater attention to these women's experiences would provide a better understanding of the degree to which 'blood' relations mediate their access to decision-making power or ownership and contribute to both business success and conflict. It may also illuminate the practices or circumstances that enable them to overcome this disadvantage.

In this study where women worked in the business and had sons and daughters, both children often worked in the business. A larger quantitative study testing two hypotheses could broaden the understanding of women's influence on business continuity. These hypotheses would suggest that where wives are involved in the business children are more likely to be involved, and where wives are involved, daughters will more likely be involved if there are both sons and daughters in the family.

Critical reflection on family business inquiry

Family business literature does not often engage with family beyond its use as a resource for the business. While research is beginning to engage with issues of wives' social capital in the business (for example Folker et al. 2002, Gudmunson et al. 2009), it sometimes does not interrogate its own gendered assumptions in the way that it positions wives as supporters and husbands as entrepreneurs. This occurs despite the authors' use of gender neutral terminology and their attempts to link the value of the work women do, to business performance. Indeed, the use of gender neutral terminology sometimes conceals the degree to which traditional gendered practices continue to play out. For many researchers, in line with the detraditionalization thesis, gendered arrangements are viewed as 'choices' with the assumption that equality has been achieved, is well on the way to be being achieved as women more readily access leadership roles, or is not a concern to participants in their research. This study calls these views into question (Lewis and Simpson 2011).

Fletcher (2014: 137) argues that family business inquiry lacks 'critical reflection on the relationship between wider institutions, discourses and ideologies'. Indeed, Zahra and Sharma (2004) suggest family business scholars tend to talk to one another rather than engaging with other disciplines. This research responds to Fletcher's call and in so doing demonstrates the value of placing inquiry within a broader social, discursive and gender context.

The findings reveal that wives in partnerships anticipate egalitarianism in their intimate and business relationship though it is not always realised in practice. At its most extreme, this can have significant effects in terms of their disengagement from the business. All emphasize a discourse of equality, drawing on ideas of team work and emphasizing their joint efforts, especially at start-up. Yet it was clear that meanings of egalitarianism or equality varied significantly. For some women there was a confusing contradiction as they emphasized equality of effort but then undermined their own contribution, positioning their husbands as pre-eminent. Others were disillusioned and even angry that their values of egalitarianism were undermined by

partners who assumed they were the boss. Another smaller group, described a strong sense of equality in the division of labour in the business (and sometimes in the home, though this was rare).

Diverse outcomes emerge in the way participants craft their working relationship, deal with tensions and conflicts in the business and wider family relations and manage the stresses and strains of the business. In this respect, they show resourcefulness, even creativity in the way they make a place for themselves in the business, despite the constraints of patriarchy. These include traditional practices of care which suggests gendered expectations and obligations continue to be deeply embedded in business and family life. They are often concealed by the need to 'just get things done' so the business survives and flourishes. Narrow parameters of entrepreneurship also limit wives' occupation of this space even as they co-create and sustain businesses in meaningful ways. The crafting metaphor used throughout the thesis emphasizes the way that participants negotiate these tensions. These findings support an emerging view of the embeddedness of entrepreneurship in webs of social relations (Aldrich and Cliff 2003, Drakopoulou Dodd and Anderson 2007, Firkin et al. 2003, Hamilton 2013a, Rogoff and Heck 2003, Zachary 2011).

At the same time wives' lived experiences in the business can make them ambivalent about its future. While some work to undermine succession, others can work hard to manage it effectively. Both are driven to protect relationships. Almost universally, participants emphasized the importance of choice for children, a perspective that resonates strongly with the individualization thesis. Yet their stories emphasize that ideas of choice are related to connectedness rather than separateness in relationships, which individualization is said to undermine.

Participants express concerns about the potential risks to relationships if children join the business, but some also see the many and varied opportunities that education and a globalized world offer their children to realise their potential. Not applying pressure and encouraging children to follow their own passions, are seen to be opportunities to maintain connectedness and to protect and sustain relationships

and children's well-being. Where children show an interest in joining the business, some participants in partnerships with their husbands, are deeply reflexive about children's involvement indicating a concern to protect relationships. They do this by taking responsibility for driving the thinking and planning in relation to children's integration and succession planning. These actions emphasize the paradox that a discourse of choice, actually operates within a framework of connectedness, reinforcing the idea that autonomy needs to be understood relationally. The thesis therefore reveals the extent of women's influence in socializing children in ways that are not always conducive to family business continuity. In this respect, wives actively weave the threads of work and family life and craft the future of the business in both positive and negative ways.

To conclude, in this thesis I have pointed to the depth of wives' engagement in family businesses. Their work in crafting family and business life is shown to be integral to the effective functioning of the business and family relationships. At the beginning of this thesis I used a tapestry metaphor to describe the hidden but critical work women do. This study has led me to 'restitch' the tapestry in ways that reveal how tradition and change co-exist and the considerable complexity this engenders in relationships and gender outcomes. This provides a deeper understanding of the way gender is organized in the family business and what this means for business continuity. In this respect, wives need not be confined to invisible warp threads. In so far as tapestries are depictions of dominant myths (Kruger 2001), this one upsets traditional notions of entrepreneurship and women's support of family business continuity. Instead it weaves business co-creation and some of its many facets into the story in intricate detail, producing a more complex and colourful tapestry.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1.1 Project Ethics Approval

SUHREC Project 2011/104 Family business succession planning: dynamics, barriers and strategies

Prof Michael Gilding, FLSS; Ms Barbara Cosson et al

Approved Duration (Phase 1): 23/06/2011 To 22/06/2014 [Adjusted]

I refer to the ethical review of the above project protocol undertaken by Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC). Your responses to the review, as emailed on 22 June 2011 with attachments, were put to a delegate of SUHREC for consideration.

I am pleased to advise that, as submitted to date (effectively covering Phase 1 of the wider project), the project has approval to proceed in line with standard on-going ethics clearance conditions outlined below.

- All human research activity undertaken under Swinburne auspices must conform to Swinburne and external regulatory standards, including the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and with respect to secure data use, retention and disposal.

- The named Swinburne Chief Investigator/Supervisor remains responsible for any personnel appointed to or associated with the project being made aware of ethics clearance conditions, including research and consent procedures or instruments approved. Any change in chief investigator/supervisor requires timely notification and SUHREC endorsement.

- The above project has been approved as submitted for ethical review by or on behalf of SUHREC. Amendments to approved procedures or instruments ordinarily require prior ethical appraisal/ clearance. SUHREC must be notified immediately or as soon as possible thereafter of (a) any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants and any redress measures; (b) proposed changes in protocols; and (c) unforeseen events which might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project.

- At a minimum, an annual report on the progress of the project is required as well as at the conclusion (or abandonment) of the project.

- A duly authorised external or internal audit of the project may be undertaken at any time.

Please contact the Research Ethics Office if you have any queries about on-going ethics clearance, citing the SUHREC project number. Copies of clearance emails should be retained as part of project record-keeping.

Best wishes for the project.

Yours sincerely
Keith Wilkins
Secretary, SUHREC

Research Ethics Officer
Swinburne Research (H68)
Swinburne University of Technology
P O Box 218
HAWTHORN VIC 3122

Appendix 1.2 Ethics Approved Email to my networks

Dear X

I am in the recruitment stage of my PhD research project on family business succession planning and I am hoping you may be able to help me. I am looking to interview women in family businesses who may or may not be directly involved in the business and I am writing on the off chance that you may know someone who fits my criteria. Specifically I am looking to interview:

- Spouses actively involved in their husband/partner's business
- Spouses not necessarily actively involved but who provide support to family members behind the scenes
- Women who have co-founded a family business with their husband/partner
- Spouses who may have succeeded their husbands in the family business

An enormous number of family businesses will change hands over the next decade and the success of these transitions will have a significant impact on the economy and research in this area is sadly lacking.

By way of background, my research is embedded in a broader research project on family business succession being undertaken by a team of researchers from Swinburne University in partnership with Pitcher Partners and is funded by the Australian Research Council.

If you know of anyone who you think may fit my criteria, I would be very grateful if you could first obtain their permission before passing their contact on to me.

I really appreciate any help you may be able to offer.

Appendix 1.3 Participant Information Statement

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Participant Information Statement

FAMILY BUSINESS SUCCESSION PLANNING:

DYNAMICS, BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES

Principal Investigators/Researchers:

Professor Michael Gilding, Swinburne University of Technology

Dr Richard Shrapnel, Pitcher Partners

Professor Russell Kenley, Swinburne University of Technology

Dr Sheree Gregory, Swinburne University of Technology

Ms Barbara Cosson, Swinburne University of Technology

This information statement about the above named research project discloses what is involved, who is involved, why and how it is being undertaken.

What is the project about and why is it being undertaken?

You are invited to participate in a study funded by the Australian Research Council (ARC) and conducted by a team of researchers at Swinburne University of Technology and at Pitcher Partners. The research project will be exploring the dynamics, barriers and success strategies for succession in Australian Businesses.

We are interested in speaking to family businesses in order to better understand the issues surrounding succession planning in order to support family businesses. We invite you and your family to participate in this research project to share your family's knowledge and experience.

This project is subject to Swinburne University Research Ethics guidelines and as such all information obtained during the research is confidential and the identity of parties will not be disclosed in any findings. The project is also undertaken as Doctor of Philosophy research by Barbara Cosson, at Swinburne University of Technology.

If you agree to take part in this research under the conditions outlined here, we need you to sign the attached consent form to say that you agree to participate in being interviewed.

What participation will involve / What will you have to do?

We would expect that your commitment would entail an interview (time and location convenient to you) not exceeding 60 minutes with each key family member.

Participation in this research is entirely voluntary. If you participate, you will be interviewed, at a time and place that suits you. With your permission, the interviews will be tape-recorded and later transcribed.

Participant rights and interests:

Any and all information you provide will be treated with the strictest confidence. We will use a pseudonym instead of your real name when writing the findings for academic conferences/forums and publications such as academic journal articles and books, and we will take out any other information that could identify you or your family. All the information collected will be held by the University in a locked and secure space for the duration and after the completion of the research project, for up to five years after any publication based on the data, after which time it will be destroyed. Your signed consent form will also be stored separately from the data, in a locked filing cabinet. All researchers will sign a confidentiality agreement.

In the unlikely event of a significant dispute occurring amongst participants during the conduct of the research the researchers will meet to discuss and give full consideration to ceasing research participation and omitting any data collected to date, where appropriate in regards to participants in dispute.

If you are asked a question you do not wish to answer just let the interviewer know. If you change your mind about participating in the study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

The anonymous information will be used in a variety of ways. These include, conference papers and presentations; progress and final report for the ARC, to be published in written form and electronically; published academic journals articles; newspaper articles.

THANK YOU for taking the time to read this information statement.

Dr Sheree Gregory, Postdoctoral Research Fellow, is the key contact researcher for the broader study and interviewer. Sheree may be contacted via e-mail sgregory@swin.edu.au or telephone (03) 9214-4569.

Ms Barbara Cosson, APAI-PhD Candidate, is researching the role of spouses in family business succession planning and conducting interviews with spouses and women co-founders of family businesses. Barbara may be contacted via email bcosson@swin.edu.au or telephone (03) 9214-5978.

Any questions regarding the project can be directed to the Chief Investigator, Professor Michael Gilding, Swinburne University of Technology, email mgilding@swin.edu.au or telephone (03) 9214-8102, and to Dr. Richard Shrapnel, Chief Investigator and Industry Partner, Pitcher Partners, email Richard.shrapnel@pitcher.com.au or telephone (03) 8610-5819.

Concerns and complaints about this project:

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne's Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer, Swinburne Research (H68),
Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122.
Tel (03) 9214 5218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or reethics@swin.edu.au

Appendix 1.4 Participant Consent Form

SWINBURNE UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

CONSENT FORM

FAMILY BUSINESS SUCCESSION PLANNING: DYNAMICS, BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES

Principal Investigators/Researchers:

Professor Michael Gilding, Swinburne University of Technology

Dr Richard Shrapnel, Pitcher Partners

Professor Russell Kenley, Swinburne University of Technology

Dr Sheree Gregory, Swinburne University of Technology

Ms Barbara Cosson, Swinburne University of Technology

I consent to participate in the project named above. I have read the recruitment letter and participant information statement about the research project named above, being conducted by researchers from Swinburne University of Technology and Pitcher Partners. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

In relation to this project, please circle your response to the following:

- I agree to be interviewed by the researcher **Yes/No**

I acknowledge that:

- a) my participation is voluntary and that I have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time without comment or penalty;
- b) I have been given the opportunity to discuss the research project and I understand my involvement in this research;
- c) my information will be kept in strict confidence;
- d) I will not be identified in publications or otherwise without my express written consent. This research project has been approved by the Swinburne University of Technology ethics committee, and all researchers have signed

a confidentiality agreement with Pitcher Partners; the security of data obtained is assured following completion of the study; and,

- e) in the unlikely event of a significant dispute occurring amongst participants that comes to the attention of researchers, the researchers will meet to discuss and give full consideration to ceasing research participation and omitting any data collected to date, where appropriate.

By signing this document, I give my consent to participate in this research project under the conditions specified in this consent form.

Name of Participant

Signature **Date** / / 201_

Concerns and complaints about this project:

This project has been approved by or on behalf of Swinburne’s Human Research Ethics Committee (SUHREC) in line with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this project, you can contact:

Research Ethics Officer, Swinburne Research (H68),
Swinburne University of Technology, P O Box 218, HAWTHORN VIC 3122.
Tel (03) 9214 5218 or +61 3 9214 5218 or resethics@swin.edu.au

Appendix 1.5 Background for participants and promotional purposes

Spouses perspectives on succession planning in family business – a research project

Research being conducted by Swinburne University PhD candidate Barbara Cosson aims to shed light on the perspectives of spouses in relation to family business succession planning.

Barbara says there is very little research on the subject of wives' contributions to family businesses. What research there is suggests wives fall into two camps - visible and invisible. Visible work includes decision-making roles either as co-founders, managers or directors or providing administrative support or other expertise. Occasionally spouses take over the business and run it themselves.

Barbara is seeking participants for her study. Participation involves a face-to-face interview of approximately one hour at a location convenient to the interviewee. She is seeking to interview women who fall into the following categories:

- Spouses who are or have been actively involved in their husband's business;
- Spouses who are not actively involved but who provide support to family members behind the scenes;
- Spouses who have co-founded a family business with their husbands/life partners
- Women who have succeeded their husbands in the business

Succession takes a variety of forms in family businesses today and passing on the firm to the next generation is just one option. It can also include putting in professional management or even preparing the business for sale especially if children are not interested or not yet ready to take over the business.

Family businesses make up approximately 70 per cent of all businesses in Australia and a considerable number will change hands over the next decade as baby boomers retire. The ease of these transitions has important consequences not only for the survival of individual family businesses but also for the Australian economy. Gaining insight into the range of factors that impact on whether succession processes are developed or not is critical to understanding the barriers and challenges that family businesses face. Clearly, family dynamics play an important role and women's perspectives on these dynamics and their role in the business are significant to a comprehensive understanding of the issues.

Barbara's project is embedded in a broader research project on succession planning in family businesses being undertaken by a team of researchers at Swinburne University in partnership with Pitcher Partners. The project is funded by the Australian Research Council.

The confidentiality of all participants will be protected and Barbara is happy to share her findings. Anyone interested in participating can contact Barbara directly on 9214 5091; on mobile: 0419386153; or via email at bcosson@swin.edu.au.

Appendix 1.6 Interview Guide

- Interviewee background: history, husband, family, involved in the business or not.
- Impetus for your involvement.
- Tell me about the business? When did it start/what is its history? Who within the family are involved and what are their roles?
- Describe your contribution to the business over time? How is your contribution perceived by others do you think?
- Have you and your husband tried to foster a particular culture or philosophy within the family and the business? If so how have you done this?
- What does the business mean to you? What about your partner? Other family members?
- Relationships: how does work in business impact with partner, children, wider family e.g. long work hours? Key challenges working in the business/with your partner/taking over the business/being associated with the business/working with other family members?
- To what extent does the business 'intrude' into family life?
- Views on children's involvement in the business? How were/are they brought into the business? Was it expected that they would be involved? Sons and daughters involved? If gender issue why?
- If there has been conflict how has it been managed?
- Almost all families face issues of balance in relation to juggling the tasks of managing work and family. How have you managed this?

Succession Planning

- Is there a plan for succession in the business?
- Who are the main stakeholders? Over what period of time has it been developed?
- Is there broad agreement to the plan? If not can you talk about differing views and how they have been managed?
- Have you had outside assistance in developing the plan?
- [If completed] Do you think anything should have been done differently?
- Have your views been sought and/ or taken account of? Have you felt included in the process?
- Do you have concerns? What would happen if you didn't agree with the plan?
- If a transition is planned how will it take place for example clean break by owners/founder/s? What would you like to see happen?
- What have been the most difficult issues for you? For your partner?
- If no succession plan, is there estate planning e.g. Wills; or movement towards a plan?
- What do you think might be the impediment to developing a plan?

Inheritance

- Research suggests wives most likely to inherit family assets from their partners, is this complicated by having a family business?
- Can you discuss what provision has been made for you?

- Can you tell me your views on fairness in relation to providing for children and other family members involved in the business?
- How do you envisage your future post succession? Is retirement on the agenda?

Demographic questions

- Age, country of birth, educational attainment, length of employment, hours of work in business