

Kinship and Business. Law, Gender and Generational Perspectives (16th–20th Centuries)

Veranstalter: Margareth Lanzinger, Wien; Siglinde Clementi, Bozen; Andrea Bonoldi, Trento

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The international conference *Kinship and Business. Law, Gender and Generational Perspectives (16th–20th Centuries)* was the result of a cooperative effort of the Competence Centre for Regional History at the Free University of Bolzano and the research project „The Role of Wealth in Defining and Constituting Kinship Spaces from 16th to the 18th Century“ at the University of Vienna, funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF). SIGLINDE CLEMENTI (Bolzano) gave the opening address and explained the goals and concept of the conference. From the perspective of kinship research, wealth that is generated, owned, managed, invested, transferred, etc. via protagonists' kin relations and economic activities is a central aspect that points in two directions: toward the constitution and practice of kinship orders, and toward the structure and practice of economic activities. Existing research has shown that kin relations played an exceptionally important role in commercial businesses, which had to do with consolidating ownership of such businesses, as well as with the organisation of the entrepreneurial activities in question. The papers particularly asked about the relevant sorts of kinship networks, the effects of family- and kin-related strategies on business (and vice-versa), which legal norms shaped family enterprises and the legal practices following from these norms, intergenerational transfer and succession, and what role women played in providing and transferring capital, connecting social networks and contributing labour to family businesses.

ZSUZSANNA PERES (Budapest) analysed the so-called *Aviticitas* and the *Fideicommissum* in the early modern kingdom of Hun-

gary. The *Aviticitas* differentiated between family lands and acquired lands. While the latter could be sold more freely, the former were strongly regulated. The *Fideicommissum* on the other hand was used to restrict the alienation of acquired land. Peres argued that together, these institutions helped retain land within the noble family, but at the same time had adverse effects on their liquidity.

STEFANIA LICINI (Bergamo) looked at entrepreneurial succession and generational transition in Milanese merchant families of the 19th century, specifically at the economic elite of the city. She found that even among the richest families, businessmen tried to balance the interests of the enterprise with those of the family. As a result, the success rate of entrepreneurial succession was high, which was also aided by favourable demographic conditions in a legal context in which only men were able to take over businesses. The problem of succession was also the central topic of DANIELA FELISINI's (Rome) presentation on the Torlonia bank. She chose two successions – one successful, one unsuccessful – to explore the relationship between kinship and business. Legal and customary institutions such as fideicommissum or primogeniture could endanger the succession to the most capable son. While deviating from such norms was not uncommon, doing so could lead to rivalry and conflict among brothers as prospective successors, while the absence of male heirs could endanger the bank as a whole.

Andrea Bonoldi (Trento) introduced the keynote address by MARTHA HOWELL (New York) who asked about the role of wives in family business. She argued that their concrete roles were dependent on the specific activities of the business, such as distribution, production or large-scale commerce. Ways in which wives could contribute were threefold: by providing capital to the business (e.g. as dowries or marriage portions), by serving as links in social networks (e.g. by connecting different mercantile families) or by providing labour and skills (e.g. in the sale of manufactured goods). Concerning the transition from the Early Modern to the Modern period, Howell concluded that on the level of small family shops the relationship be-

tween wives and business remained largely unchanged while in the corporate, capitalist world, things changed considerably.

ERICH LANDSTEINER (Vienna) presented the case of Jobst and Jacobina Croy, a merchant couple in Vienna originating from Nuremberg in the late 16th century. When he was unable to pay his debts, her relatives, who had acted as guarantors, prosecuted them in order to recover their money. Landsteiner showed how prevailing law became the subject of renegotiations, as Jacobina Croy, who was fully liable for her husband's debts from the creditors' point of view, managed to litigate her way out of debtor's prison. Juridically, it was crucial to what extent she was involved in the daily operation of her husband's business. The merchant family Spängler from 18th century Salzburg was the focus of the paper of REINHARD REITH (Salzburg). Using probate inventories and wills as sources for this case study, he analysed the connection between entrepreneurial logics and kinship dynamics. With high mortality, the question of succession formed an „invisible arc of suspense“ of the enterprise and complex marriage and re-marriage strategies served to ensure family continuity and skills. However, the relationship between family and business was overshadowed by the highly authoritative father, his frequent absences and conflicts with his son. MAXIMILIANE RIEDER (Munich) looked at the German merchant family Heinzelmänn who operated in Venice in the 18th and 19th centuries. Their daughters married into the leading *Fondaco* operations, becoming one of the most influential groups. With their marriage policy they secured a solid capital stock and sound resiliency against crises.

The timber business in eastern-alpine Italy provided the context of the presentation of CLAUDIO LORENZINI (Udine) and KATIA OCCHI (Trento). They found that timber merchants relied heavily on relatives and members of their family group for fulfilling various business functions which benefited the building of trust, the transmission of skills and the transfer of accumulated wealth. Marriage alliances between merchant families served the expansion of supply contexts and the reduction of potential competition. The proximity

to other territories (such as the Habsburg empire) and the resulting border-crossing supply chains led to a transnational marriage policy. For his paper, IVAYLO NAYDENOV (Sofia) looked at three generations of the Pulievi merchant family in 19th century Ottoman Bulgaria. He focussed on the transfer of business practices, contacts, capital, entrepreneurial know-how from generation to generation as well as the entrepreneurial activities and personal conflicts of the people involved. Naydenov highlighted the extensive networks of the family business that ensured wide procurement of the merchandise.

Undivided property among brothers was the topic of CINZIA LORANDINI's (Trento) paper. She argued that keeping a patrimony undivided was used in 18th and 19th century Trentino-Tyrol as a flexible tool that served to safeguard the value of the business and to ensure collaboration within the family enterprise. Patrimonies often remained undivided until individuals emerged at the top of the family hierarchy whose authority guaranteed family cohesion. Conversely, when such figures disappeared, centrifugal forces could become dominant and assets were divided. MANUELA MARTINI (Lyon) looked at firms in Paris and Wales founded by transalpine migrants from Italian villages in the valleys of Nure, Trebbia and Taro in the 19th and 20th centuries. She identified the practice of „circular migration“ (brief return to place of origin) in the interest of family strategies and professional endogamy and showed that forms of cohabitation and indivisibility of real estate among brothers that referred to models from their places of origin could be found in their places of destination as the foundation for their small enterprises.

KLEMENS KAPS (Linz) analysed networks of merchants from the Habsburg Empire in Spain, especially in Cádiz. He found that merchants of highly specialised products from the different national groups (e.g. Lombards, Bohemians, Tyroleans) married among each other but hardly ever intermarried with the local Spanish population. OLGA ZASLAVSKAYA (Budapest) followed the network of the Orosdy-Back family, who were of Hungarian origin but had to go into Turkish exile after the defeat of the revolution of

1848. Starting in Istanbul, they founded a transnational business empire that spanned Europe, the Middle East, and even extended into eastern Asia. Part of their success, she argued, was based on the utilisation of kinship relations in expanding into new markets and territories. PAOLA NARDONE, NATASCIA RIDOLFI and ADA DI NUCCI (Chieti/Pescara) set out from the lasting strength of Italian family businesses until the present day. In successful family enterprises, they argued, the well-being of the company is in symbiosis with the well-being of the family. They analysed the histories of two contrasting yet similar cases of pasta-manufacturers from Abruzzo – the industrial *De Cecco* and the artisanal *Cav. Cocco* – and identified the companies' ability to adapt to market changes.

Public notaries' offices in Early Modern Bilbao were the topic of the paper of NERE JONE INTXAUSTEGI JAUREGI (Deusto). The number of notarial office posts was strictly limited and was usually far exceeded by the number of prospective applicants. While women were not allowed to work in public offices, they were able to own and control them and also to enjoy the prestige they brought. Thus, notaries' offices were frequently transferred via women's dowries. As a result, she argued, strong social networks were created between notary families by frequent intermarriage.

MARIA ROSARIA DE ROSA (Naples) in her presentation asked about the differing functions of male and female money in Italy before the legal reforms of 1919. The analysis of former legal institutions such as „marital authorization“ (*autorizzazione maritale*) which required husbands' consent for women to act as merchants or businesswomen are central to reconstructing women's economic roles. Thus, she argued that the availability of a dowry or assets legally separate from that of the husband allowed them to invest safely in business, for the benefit of the family economy.

JANINE MAEGRAITH (Cambridge/Vienna) presented the case study of Christian Coriseller, a peasant from late 16th and early 17th century Tyrol, looking at his family background, marriage, and post-mortem planning and his accumulation of landed property and credit relations.

Maegraith emphasised that a lack of liquidity in the Early Modern countryside necessitated access to credit which depended on social relations, including (but not limited to) kin and in-laws, while family property could act as starting capital. Employing a flexible definition of kin, he could extend his networks significantly. Coriseller and early modern peasant families in general, she argued, should be regarded as „peasant entrepreneurs“ skilfully balancing available resources and building and employing complex socio-economic interconnections.

The final paper of the conference was delivered by CHRISTINA STEHLING (Marburg) who spoke on the topic of the economic activities of university professors and their families in 17th and 18th century Marburg. University members were an important part of local economic activity as they participated actively in local trade or leased land to local peasants. Professors' families displayed highly endogenous marriage patterns which resulted in a university that was dominated by only a few leading kin groups. She argued that women played an important role here: they were involved in the transfer of assets via marriage portions or inheritance shares, but were also involved in the administration of wealth, especially in widowhood.

MARGARETH LANZINGER (Wien) delivered the concluding remarks, leading into the final discussion. She highlighted that the various contributions were connected by common starting questions, but revealed a wide spectrum of varying gender-specific logics and entanglements of kinship, business and the law. One of the main conclusions of the conference, she argued, was that the supposed unidirectional decline in the importance of kinship for business in the course of the modern era had to be revised. Modernisation theory had long argued that one of the defining features of modernity was a gradual increase in the importance of the building of trust via contractual relations, which rendered trust built via personal relations, such as kinship, less and less important. Instead, she argued, we can see a high number of contractual relations in pre-modern Europe as well as a persistently important role of kinship for business throughout modernity.

Conference Overview:

Siglinde CLEMENTI (Bolzano) / Andrea BONOLDI (Trento): Welcome and Introduction

Session 1: PROPERTY ARRANGEMENTS

Zsuzsanna PERES (Budapest), Kinship relations and family networks in the service of economic growth in the early modern Kingdom of Hungary

Stefania LICINI (Bergamo), Famiglia, patrimonio e impresa nei testament dell'élite milanese dell'800

Daniela FELISINI (Rome), Successioni complesse. Il caso del Banco Torlonia (1825–1863)

KEYNOTE

Martha HOWELL (New York), The promise and perils of kin

Session 2: CRISES AND NEGOTIATIONS

Erich LANDSTEINER (Vienna), Jacobina und Jobst Croy – ein Kaufmannsehepaar in der Schuldenfalle (1591-1597)

Reinhold REITH (Salzburg), Geschäftliche Logiken und verwandtschaftliche Beziehungen: ein Fallbeispiel zur Spänglerschen Tuch- und Seidenhandlung in Salzburg im 18. Jahrhundert

Maximiliane RIEDER (Munich), Merkantile Ehe-Arrangements. Die venezianischen Heiẗelmann im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert

Session 3: NETWORKS

Claudio LORENZINI (Udine)/Katia OCCHI (Trento), Scambi e parentele: il caso dei mercanti di legnami nelle Alpi orientali (secoli XVI-XX)

Ivaylo NAYDENOV (Sofia), Kinship relations and entrepreneurial activities in the 19th Century Ottoman Bulgaria: the case of the Pulievi merchant family

Session 4: UNDIVIDED PROPERTY AMONG BROTHERS

Cinzia LORANDINI (Trento), Merchant families and undivided patrimonies in Trentino-Tyrol (18th to mid-19th century)

Manuela MARTINI (Lyon), Family business.

Brotherhood and entrepreneurship between the Mediterranean mountains and northern Europe, late 19th-mid 20th century

Session 5: MERCHANT AND INDUSTRIAL FAMILIES

Klemens KAPS (Linz), Verwandtschaft und translokale Verknüpfungen im Fernhandel: Organisationsformen Tiroler, lombardischer und böhmischer Kaufleute in Cádiz im 18. Jahrhundert

Olga ZASLAVSKAYA (Budapest), Building business through family network and kinship during „Early Globalization“ in the Middle East and beyond

Paola NARDONE, Natascia RIDOLFI, Ada DI NUCCI (Chieti/Pescara), Imprenditori del cibo in Abruzzo. Family business e generazioni a confronto (XIX–XX sec.)

Session 6: NOTARY AND CREDIT

Nere Jone INTXAUSTEGI JAUREGI (Deusto), Women, public notaries network and doweries in Early Modern Bilbao

Maria Rosaria DE ROSA (Naples), Per amore e per affari. Il denaro dei coniugi, le norme, il credito (Napoli, 1900)

Session 7: FARMERS AND PROFESSORS

Janine MAEGRAITH (Cambridge/Vienna), Kin, credit, land, and goods: the farmer as entrepreneur (Southern Tyrol 16.-17. century)

Christina STEHLING (Marburg), Gelder zur Verleyhung vorrätig. Ökonomische Transaktionen Marburger Professorenfamilien im 17./18. Jahrhundert

FINAL COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Margareth LANZINGER (Vienna)

Tagungsbericht *Kinship and Business. Law, Gender and Generational Perspectives (16th–20th Centuries)*. 16.09.2021–18.09.2021, hybrid (Bozen / Bolzano), in: H-Soz-Kult 26.10.2021.