

Management and Organization Review

Special Issue on ‘Family Dynamics and Entrepreneurship: Interaction between Changes in Families and Changes in Entrepreneurial Activities in China’

Guest Editors

(listed in alphabetic order of the last name)

David Ahlstrom (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)
James Chrisman (Mississippi State University)
Hanqing (Chevy) Fang (Missouri University of Science and Technology)
Bin Liu (Xiamen University)

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Special Issue Theme Background

While increasing attention is being given to individual and corporate entrepreneurial activities in China and the Asian context (Ahlstrom & Ding, 2014; Bruton, Ahlstrom, & Obloj, 2008; Meyer, Prashantham, & Xu, 2021), few studies have drawn attention to *family dynamics* and their theoretical frameworks. There is a strong linkage between family systems and entrepreneurship (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003), especially in China (Filatotchev, Wei, Sarala, Dick, & Prescott, 2020; Lu, Huang, Xu, Chung, & He, 2022). As noted by Aldrich and Cliff (2003: 573): ‘transformations in the institution of the family have implications for the emergence of new business opportunities, opportunity recognition, business start-up decisions, and the resource mobilization process’. Herein, family dynamics can be defined as substantial family transitions that often include structural change in the family system and altered relationships (and hierarchies) among family members.

Historically, family systems and their dynamics with respect to business have been investigated by different disciplines, including anthropology and sociology, among others (Martinez & Aldrich, 2014). Some of the classic topics in this regard include role differentiation among family members; family size, age, and ethnicity; variation of family forms and family structures; social class and social mobility between families; and the effect of social change on the family. New topics are emerging, and research continues to investigate new social trends aligned with gender, sexuality, intimacy, emotion, and other factors related to the family (Cheal, 2002), and their impact on entrepreneurial activities.

In addition, although the universality of the family in social life has been widely recognized, scholars also note the inevitable variation of family forms as well as the changing of relationships among family members (Treas, Scott, & Richards, 2017). A common theme here is to explore differences between Chinese and Western families, as well as their distinctive impact on economic activities. For instance, *extended family* or even *family lineage* is often documented as the most common form of family structure in China (Eastman, 1989). Different from the nuclear families more prevalent in Western culture, family lineage or family clan in China is often clustered in a small geographic area, featured by a large number of individuals with a shared family surname, shared ancestors, common family history, and shared ownership of some public (lineage) property (Freedman, 1966; Holcombe, 2017). Such a distinction calls for an examination of how those issues influence new venture creation and entrepreneurship in China.

Moreover, governance of family systems in China often features kinship networks in which extended family members are also included. Termed ‘network capitalism’ (Boisot & Child, 1988, 1996) or ‘East Asian capitalism’ (Hamilton & Biggart, 1988, 1991; Orru, Biggart, & Hamilton, 1997), some scholars argue that family-based kinship or *guanxi* networks are a factor behind the prosperity of entrepreneurial activities and China’s economic growth (Burt & Batjargal, 2019; Burt & Burzynska, 2017; Burt & Wang, 2021; Zhao & Burt, 2018).

Lastly, different from the Western family system, fictive kinship or pseudo-family relationships in China, defined as a form of kinship ties that are not based on either blood or marriage (Nelson, 2020), are often implicitly included in a family system. Strong fictive kinship can be formed via close friendship ties, close residence, school friends, workmates, or other reciprocal social or economic relationships. Fictive kinship is often conceptualized as a strong *guanxi* relationship in which mutual loyalty, long-term dedication, and reciprocal favors are assumed, with its most common form a brotherhood among males. In some cases, especially in China, fictive kin or pseudo-family members might be culturally accepted as family members actively participating in family business activities, which can also be seen in other parts of the world (Burt, Opper, & Zou, 2021).

In addition to these differences, we have also observed many new social trends aligned with the family system in China in recent years, such as the changing role of gender, new forms of marriage, and relationships across generations, among others. Today, China, a country that long had a strict ‘one-child policy’, now encourages couples to have more than one child and, in some cases, even more than two children. Referring to the United Nations’ report, China and other Asian countries and regions like Japan are also aging at an unprecedented pace (ESCAP, 2016). Also, the size of families is shrinking, with more DINK families (i.e., couples with double income but no kid). The number of individuals living in nuclear families is increasing in China, particularly relative to those living as part of extended families, while the instance of ‘three generations under one roof’ is becoming relatively rare.

The Chinese context is different from Western economies whose cultures imply some level of distance and independence even among family members, as most Chinese families traditionally adhere to a more collectivist culture characterized by strong family values (Fang, Singh, Kim, Marler, & Chrisman, 2022; Liu, Qian, & Au, 2022), and the importance of the family system manifests in all aspects of social life. In fact, it has been long recognized that inherited family-centered or family-related features in Asia, such as primogeniture and arranged marriage, might create economic, sociological, and psychological incentives to nurture or impede the family’s development as well as family-based individual and company entrepreneurial endeavors. Thus, the impact of emerging changes in the family system might be more substantial in China than the West.

Although recent studies have highlighted the significant but complex roles played by parent-child interactions (Huang, Chen, Xu, Lu, & Tam, 2020; Li & Piezunka, 2020), the field is still silent concerning how these emerging changes in Chinese families might create new business opportunities, revise existing opportunities, and/or affect individuals' and organizations' abilities in assessing and exploiting those opportunities. More importantly, the field needs to develop a prescriptive angle to explore how entrepreneurial activities at the individual, family, and corporate levels might positively facilitate, affect, and even guide family-centered or family-related changes in China. Those social trends and their influences could become even more complicated owing to the coronavirus pandemic that has caused substantial changes in how people interact with each other (Calabrò, Chrisman, & Kano, 2022), which in turn may challenge previous theorization and findings (Wang, Liu, Delios, & Qian, 2022). As the locomotive of the global economy, outward-oriented Chinese family firms and entrepreneurial enterprises may adjust their strategies and cause unexpected spillovers in the social domain as well as the business domain.

To encourage more systematic attention to these topic areas, we propose a special issue of *Management and Organization Review (MOR)* on '**Family Dynamics and Entrepreneurship: Interaction between Changes in Families and Changes in Entrepreneurial Activities in China.**' The purpose of this special issue is to bring the knowledge of the *family system* to the entrepreneurship field with a focus on the interactions between changing family systems and changing individual, family, and company entrepreneurial endeavors in China and beyond.

Note that such a theme has a specific focus on changes in the family system, as we are interested in emerging trends aligned with family systems in China, including but not limited to aging, shrinking family size, and DINK families as mentioned above. Also, we welcome studies focusing on how changes in the family system might affect the entrepreneurial activities of individuals, families, and companies, and how the changing pattern of entrepreneurial activities at the societal level might contribute to changes in the family system. Put differently, we are curious about reciprocal causality between changing families and changing entrepreneurial activities in the Chinese context.

Sample Topics

The MOR Special Issue seeks to provide an assessment of social changes and their potential impact on entrepreneurial activities. New theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, novel case studies, and replication studies can help identify the driving and inhibiting forces behind strategic responses in the new business landscape, and how firms and industries can adapt to and benefit from this dynamic environment.

We welcome both theoretical and empirical contributions and papers that address entrepreneurial activities relating to the changing of the family system. We also welcome studies at the regional level, network level, business level, and personal level, as well as those adopting multiple levels in their research designs. This special issue welcomes all type of entrepreneurial activities, including but not limited to entrepreneurial endeavours initiated and/or implemented by individuals, families, companies, government agencies, or others. We offer a few questions below to provide a sense of what the SI seeks to address. These questions are illustrative and not intended to set boundaries in terms of the key themes of interest.

Within the scope of the special issue, potential themes for individual submissions include, but are not limited to:

1. How do changes to the family affect the creation, exploration, and exploitation of opportunities, effectuation, and habitual entrepreneurship?
2. How do changes to the family affect entrepreneurial intention, cognition, and emotions, as well as other psychological factors behind individual, family, and corporate entrepreneurial activities?
3. What is the underlying interaction between family dynamics and social change? How do social changes affect family-based entrepreneurial activities? How do family-based entrepreneurial activities contribute to the rise and fall of social changes?
4. How do changes to the family affect innovation and corporate entrepreneurship in family-owned or -managed business? How do firm activities in family-owned or -managed business contribute to the dynamics and evolution of the owning family?
5. How does the changing pattern of inheritance in the family system affect the nascent entrepreneur's intention to start a new business as well as his/her ability to mobilize resources?
6. How do changes (legal and/or cultural) to the scope and boundaries of the family system influence individual, family, corporate, or other types of entrepreneurial activities?
7. How do changes to the family system affect the nature and the use of family and/or kinship networks in individual, family, corporate, or other types of entrepreneurial activities? Papers using network analytical techniques are particularly welcome.
8. How do changes to the family system affect the inclusion of fictive and pseudo-family relationships in individual, family, corporate, or other types of entrepreneurial activities?
9. How can historical, sociological, and anthropological perspectives enrich the study of the origin and evolution of entrepreneurial and business families, family business groups, and family elites?
10. How does the variation of family-based or -related social changes across subnational regions affect business strategies and decisions concerning CSR, internationalization, succession, etc.?
11. How do the family-based or -related social changes alter relationships that were found in previous studies about entrepreneurship in China? Do we need new theories and frameworks?
12. Taking the perspective of either Chinese or foreign-owned enterprises, how do family-based or -related social changes affect inter-firm cooperation, inter-country cooperation, and internationalization strategies such as foreign direct investment, joint ventures, and exporting? What are the 'micro-foundations' behind these impacts?

We invite empirical, conceptual, and literature review papers for submission. All papers will be subject to MOR's usual review process and must meet the publication standards of the journal. Final acceptance of papers will be contingent on incorporating reviewers' feedback to the satisfaction of the editors.

Submission Process and Deadlines

Questions about the special issue may be directed to any of the guest editors. Papers for the special issue should be submitted electronically through MOR's ScholarOne Manuscripts site at <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mor> and identified as submission to the 'Family Dynamics and Entrepreneurship' special issue. Manuscripts must be submitted by Sept 15, 2023.

MOR Special Issue Workshop

All authors who are invited to revise and resubmit their manuscripts are expected to present their papers at an MOR Special Issue workshop to be held at Xiamen University, China, in December 2023. The special issue editors and MOR editorial board members will provide developmental feedback to paper presentations during the workshop to enhance the quality and contribution of papers in order to maximize the impact of the SI. But presentation at the workshop does not guarantee acceptance of a paper for publication in MOR and attending the workshop is not a precondition for acceptance into the Special Issue.

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Special Issue Editors:

David Ahlstrom (The Chinese University of Hong Kong, ahlstrom@baf.cuhk.edu.hk)
Prof. David Ahlstrom is a Professor in Department of Management at The Chinese University of Hong Kong. He received a PhD in Management and International Business at from New York University after working in government and the computer industry. His research includes managing in Asia, and innovation and entrepreneurship. He has published over 170 peer-reviewed articles in journals such as the *Academy of Management Review*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *Management and Organization Review*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Strategic Management Journal*, the *Brown Journal of World Affairs* and *The Wall Street Journal*. He was Senior Editor of *Asia Pacific Journal of Management* (APJM) from 2007–2009, Editor-in-Chief from 2010–2012, and is currently Consulting Editor there, as well as a former Senior Editor of *Journal of World Business* (2013–2020). Prof. Ahlstrom also was recognized with the Highly Cited Researcher Award in 2017, 2018, and 2019, from Clarivate Analytics (previously Thomson-Reuters).

James Chrisman (Mississippi State University, jchrisman@business.msstate.edu)
James J. Chrisman is the Julia Bennett Rouse Professor of Management at Mississippi State. He received a PhD in Strategic Management from University of Georgia. His research interests include corporate governance and strategy of family business. He has published very widely in peer reviewed academic journals including *Academy of Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Family Business Review*, *Journal of Business Venturing*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of Management*, *Organization Science*. He is also a Senior Editor of *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*.

Hanqing (Chevy) Fang (Missouri University of Science and Technology, fangha@mst.edu)
Prof. Hanqing (Chevy) Fang is an Associate Professor in the Department of Business and Information Technology, Missouri University of Science and Technology. He received a PhD in Management from Mississippi State University. His research interests include family firms, entrepreneurship, and strategic management. He has published widely in peer reviewed academic journals including *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Global Strategy Journal*, *Journal of Management Studies*, and *Journal of Product Innovation Management*. He received the Family Firm Institute (FFI) Best Dissertation Award in 2017, and the Outstanding Reviewer Award for *Family Business Review* journal in 2018. He was the Family Owned Business Institute (FOBI) scholar-in-residence in 2019–2020. In 2019, he was also recognized as the 5th most productive and cited scholar in the area of family business innovation. He serves on the Editorial Review Board for *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, *Family Business Review*, and *Journal of Family Business Strategy*.

Bin Liu (Xiamen University, binliu@xmu.edu.cn)
Prof. Bin Liu is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Business Management, Xiamen University. He received a PhD in Management from The Chinese University of Hong Kong. His research interests are international business, corporate governance, and family business with a focus on emerging economies. He is one of the leading pioneers in investigating China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). He has published widely in peer reviewed academic journals

including *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, *Management and Organizational Review*, *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Journal of International Business Policy*, and the *Journal of World Business*. He received the Best Paper Award at 2019 Asia Pacific Regional Conference Meeting of Academy of International Business, Winner of the first runner up for the Best Phenomenon-based Paper Award at *Journal of World Business* in 2019, IACMR-GSJ Global Strategy Best Paper Award at the Ninth Biennial International Association for Chinese Management Research Conference, Best Paper Award for *Quarterly Journal of Management* in 2021, Best Reviewer Award for *Quarterly Journal of Management* in 2018, 2020, and 2021. He serves on the Editorial Review Board for *Asian Business and Management*, *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, and the *Quarterly Journal of Management*.