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HERITAGE WITHOUT AN HEIR: THE ISSUE OF EMBODIED INTENTIONALITY IN FAMILY BUSINESS KNOW-HOW TRANSMISSION

PATRIMÔNIO SEM HERDEIRO: A QUESTÃO DA INTENCIONALIDADE INCORPORADA NA TRANSMISSÃO DO SABER-FAZER EM UM NEGÓCIO FAMILIAR

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Abstract

Based on data from ethnographic research, this paper reports how the transmission of practical know-how results from embodied intentionality and perpetuates social, cultural, and historical structures. The studied family business context shows that the process of know-how transmission follows specific intentionality explained through traditional relations. Although such know-how guides a relatively simple production system, the fact that most people involved in it do not achieve complete mastery indicates that the transference of this embodied knowledge is more than the willingness or interest to teach and learn this practice.

Keywords: Embodied intentionality. Family business. Know-how transmission. Succession. Ethnography.

Resumo

Com base em dados de pesquisa etnográfica, este artigo relata como a transmissão de saberes práticos resulta da intencionalidade corporificada e perpetua estruturas sociais, culturais e históricas específicas. O contexto da empresa familiar estudado mostra que o processo de transmissão do saber-fazer segue uma intencionalidade específica explicada pelas relações tradicionais. Embora tal saber-fazer oriente um sistema de produção relativamente simples, o fato de a maioria das pessoas nele envolvidas não atingir o domínio completo indica que a transferência desse saber corporificado é mais do que a vontade ou o interesse em ensinar e aprender essa prática.
Palavras-chave: Intencionalidade incorporada. Empresa familiar. Transmissão do saber-fazer. Sucessão. Etnografia.

Introduction

The transfer of experiences and knowledge is a critical issue for family business research (Csizmadia, Makó, & Heidrich, 2016; Chirico & Nordqvist, 2010; Chirico, 2008; Cabrera-Suárez, Saá-Pérez & García-Almeida, 2001). Despite the importance of this process, relatively little is known about the specific practices predecessors, and successors use to harness and share essential knowledge and skills to maintain and improve organizational performance.

Theories of practice have guided an understanding of knowledge as a social construction that emerges from provisional contexts. According to this understanding, practice "is always the product of specific historical conditions resulting from past practices and processed in current practice" (Gherardi, 2000, p. 215). An essential contribution of this stream of research to the Organization Studies (OS) field is the acknowledgment that the process of knowing and transmitting knowledge is an embodied and socially engendered practice (Cook & Brown, 1999; Strati, 2003; 2007). The need to erode the mind/body distinction and the idea that the mind is the locus of knowledge is emphasized (Strati, 2007). It is also noteworthy that knowledge is not only cognitive but also consists of sensing elements, corporal expression, tacit skills, and aesthetic judgments of taste developed in the context of a community (Strati, 2003; Gherardi, 2009a).

Given the comprehension that family business research would greatly benefit from the advancements in OS and following the practice turn in this field of study, the argument that motivates this paper is that the transmission of practical know-how in a family business is not a rational choice of the founder. Still, it expresses intrinsic meanings to the structures and the structuring practices of the group or the community from where such knowledge originates.

Departing from the idea that knowledge is not something one can acquire but is an activity and process that leads to the person's transformation, this study theorizes and empirically examines the transmission of practical knowledge embedded in a family business founder. Specifically, I study a cultural practice that ensures its continuity through time, resting on particular embodied assumptions of its practitioners: the traditional candy-making of the city of Pelotas in Southern Brazil. Through an ethnographic research study in a candy factory, I identified that the transference of the expertise needed to produce traditional candies does not happen in any circumstances or to anybody. Consequently, the process of knowledge transmission, as I have seen in the empirical field, is conditional on certain kind of embodied predispositions that resembles the cultural and historical structures of the perpetuation of such cultural practice.

The paper's contribution is to show how the knowledge transmission process in a family business follows an embodied intentionality that arises from the structural features of practical performance. Embodied intentionality can be understood as a willingness to grasp the meaning of the world and as a constantly vigilant way of being in the world (Bourdieu, 2000). Embodied intentionality can be thought of as a body's predisposition to grasp meaning through practice as proficiency in action (O'Connor, 2005). It actively participates in the body's reproduction and the change or maintenance of social order. My exploration of this previously unanalyzed phenomenon illustrates how agencies in family business associate with rationalities or modes of action that are not strictly linked with the endurance of the business, even though they prove to be deeply committed to the continuance of the practice, according to its original features or the contemporary symbolic significations of it.

The paper is structured as follows. First, it brings different approaches toward knowledge transference in family business research. Then, it presents embodied intentionality, built from a phenomenological perspective. Following that, the research method is described, and ethnographic findings are presented. Finally, a discussion of the empirical findings follows, concluding that embodied intentionality contributes to perpetuating cultural and historical structures of practical knowledge.

Theoretical References

The issue of knowledge transmission in Family business: a practice-based approach

Family businesses' unique social system offers an interesting setting to examine the knowledge share practices, and several studies in family business literature have approached this topic from a knowledge-based view (KBV) perspective. It focuses on the strategic value of knowledge to family firms (Sirmon & Hirtt, 2003; Venter, Boshoff & Maas, 2005; Zahra, Neubaum & Larrañeta, 2007; Chirico & Salvato, 2008; Kammerlander & Holt, 2018; Duarte, Alonso, & Kok, 2021). Proponents of the KBV state that a firm's competitive advantage lies in the ability to collect accumulate, integrate, disseminate and exploit knowledge (Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nickerson & Zenger, 2004). However, such a definition of knowledge emphasizes "structural and organizational processes despite the underlying abilities of individuals to absorb knowledge" (Felin & Hesterly, 2007, p.197).

In the literature on family business, the issue of knowledge transmission is frequently associated with the taken-for-granted aim of the company's endurance over time. As family businesses are essential to the economic systems of most countries, the pursuit of long-term sustainability seems logical and imperative. Many family businesses fail over time due to inaction and reluctance to seek new opportunities (Ward, 1997), and conservatism relates to a lack of growth (Zahra, 2005). Nevertheless, the extant literature suggests that at least part of the reason for ineffective succession – which is vital to the continuity of the business – is because of an unwillingness of predecessors and successors to change (Hall, Melin & Nordqvist, 2001; Kellermanns & Eddleston, 2006; Vago, 2004). There is particularly a gap in the issue of transmitting and transferring knowledge across generations (Boyd et al., 2015; Giovannoni et al., 2011).

Contradictions between old and new practitioners that eventually spoil or disrupt knowledge transmission between generations may go through a functional logic that seeks to eliminate inconsistencies between the guiding rationale of practice and its expected outcome. A cognitive orientation is often prevalent in the study of the unwillingness to change (Sardeshmuk & Corbet, 2011), which puts too much emphasis on an objectified (Zahra, Neubaum & Larrañeta, 2007) relation of knowledge described as an "epistemology of possession" (Cook & Brown, 1999).

That includes analyzing the micro-level logic that may support or hinder the transmission of knowledge between generations and how this logic might shift dynamically, in context, and over time. Alternative analytic endeavor calls for new ways to conceive and study knowledge transmission processes in family business not simply as a direct outcome of strategies but as a process that is an ongoing, constantly challenged, and complex accomplishment. It shall include unexplainable imponderables and hazards according to strategic management as an organizing framework in family business research (Sharma, Chrisman & Chua, 1997).

In knowledge transmission in a family business, such an idea of intentionality should be seen under the perspective that knowledge is a strategic resource. Knowledge can be a potential family business competitive advantage (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018). Nevertheless, knowledge does not always flow easily within the organization; its tacit elements hinder its mobility (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018). Understanding the dynamics of knowledge transfer in the succession process may help develop and maintain a competitive advantage in family firms. The idea of familiness is defined as "the unique bundle of resources and capabilities a particular organization possesses because of the family firm system's interaction among the family, its individual members, and the business" (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018:38) is particularly relevant for the understanding know-how transmission in a family business (Cabrera-Suárez, García-Almeida, & De Saá-Pérez, 2018).

The idea that the generational transmission of knowledge in a family business is dependable on a traditional transmission logic appears in previous research findings. Chirico (2008) identifies emotional factors, including trust between family members, face-to-face interactions, commitment to the business,

and psychological ownership of the family firm. All of them can enhance affection between family members and employees. It also goes along with the findings of Chirico and Nordqvist (2010) that knowledge was mainly enhanced by a high level of emotional involvement and social capital, with implications for creating value across generations of the family firm. Nevertheless, "the information about the familiness bundle is frequently embedded in certain individuals, generally, the entrepreneur/family business founder" (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018:39). Such embeddedness can be associated with some tacit dimension of knowledge that one can understand as deeply associated or even incorporated by some individuals.

Understanding such embeddedness as an embodiment dynamics leads the field of family business research to non-positivist perspectives over epistemologies and methodologies. Regarding epistemology, the practice-based approaches to the process of knowing and transmitting knowledge as embodied and socially engendered practice have already advanced within the field of Organization Studies (Cook & Brown, 1999; Gherardi, 2000; Strati, 2007). That perspective can add complexity to understanding the creation, sharing and transfer of knowledge in a family business (Chirico, 2008) and knowledge transmission in a family business through generations (Alonso, & Kok, 2021; Csizmadia, Makó & Heidrich, 2016). Concerning method, Fletcher et al. (2016) contend that, despite calls for use and improvements, the potential of qualitative research has not been fully developed in family business research. Ethnographic approaches are scarce in the area, even though they are apropos for examining complex social phenomena (Nordstrom & Jennings, 2018).

Embodied intentionality and knowledge transmission

When discussing agency in gender studies, Martin (2001, 2003) raises the question of the intentionality of practices concerning diversity. She assumes that people can engage in gender practices while either intending to or without intending to and that others often perceive them as doing so irrespective of their intentions (Martin, 2003). This definition asserts the instrumentality of agency, but intentionality and awareness cast the questions. For Martin (2003, p. 355), "defining agency independently of intention leaves us free to assume that individuals and groups practice masculinities and femininities at work without consciously intending to, although they may consciously intend to do".

One shall think of intentionality from a practical perspective on knowledge transmission. The idea of tacit knowledge (Strati, 2003) has shown that learning is not the acquisition of an objectified asset. It is a dynamic process of knowing without an entire rational domain (Strati, 2007). One can also see how society provides forms of inculcation of cultural meanings that, under the appearance of spontaneity, constitute a multitude of structural exercises aimed to transmit certain types of experience and specific provisions for action (Figueiredo & Cavedon, 2015). Martin (2003) suggests that leaving questions open about intention and awareness relative to agency avoids assuming that the practicing of gender subsumes these qualities. She puts forward the concept of liminal consciousness, indicating that people (especially men) cannot understand the effects of their gender practices.

Martin (2003) agrees with Bourdieu (2013) that reflection rarely guides practice. Still, she does not delve into the body and embodied aspects of intentionality that could emerge from practice. Other research on gender practices (Gherardi & Poggio, 2001; Mathieu, 2009) approach embodied intentionality as a point of convergence between discourse and practice from a phenomenological standpoint of the knowledge experience.

According to the phenomenological perspective, subjectivity emerges from the immediate bodily existence, which has a cultural antecedent. Bourdieu (2000) proposes that the agent's cognitive structures come from the embodiment of structures of the world in which the agent acts. That is like saying that the agent is never entirely the subject of his/her practices because embodied dispositions introduce themselves even in the seemingly more rational intentions. Embodied intentionality can be understood not only as a willingness to grasp the meaning of the world but as a constantly vigilant way of being in

the world (Bourdieu, 1998, 2000). It can be an embodied way of classifying the world, a classification that turns people and social classes into objects that become guiding principles for embodied practices.

What happens concerning embodied intentionality, the reflexivity necessary to distinguish the meaning of objects and actions, happens in the body via embodied dispositions for understanding. The embodied intentionality is a predisposition of the body to grasp meaning through practice and features proficiency in action (O'Connor, 2005; Bourdieu, 1998, 2000). It is ultimately pre-reflective but not in any way pre-cultural. Culture plays a fundamental role in shaping perception (Merleau-Ponty, 2005), which is why perception—although it is the first experience of the world— requires a context of meaning. That is why comprehending cultural context is crucial to understanding embodied intentionality entangled in the know-how transmission.

Research Methods and Research Context

This ethnography study is based on practice-based perspectives, particularly the embodiment paradigm. Such an approach is proper for analyzing culture attending to the embodied person's modes of action and perception (Csordas, 1990). It focuses on the comprehension of the person as an individual, constituted by physical attributes and bodily behaviors, simultaneously psychological and moral. It is a kind of research that flashes out a methodological standpoint for analyzing culture and self by paying attention to body attitudes that have not rationally elaborated through representational modes of knowledge, such as language.

The object under my investigation was the transmission process of the embodied know-how of candy-making. Specifically, I studied the candy-making tradition of the city of Pelotas, located in the extreme south of Brazil, and performed according to a set of cultural practices transmitted through generations. The research demanded that I paid attention to the dynamics shaping the traditional candy-making know-how transmission process.

The work of unveiling the logic of practice implies the examination of a net of social and symbolic relations connecting the conditions of production and reproduction of such practice. I shall approach the candy-making tradition's social, historical, and structural dynamics to understand how it has become a business activity. Most of the candy factories in Pelotas turned up from domestic kitchens, where family production turned into a commercial enterprise. The candy factory was the *locus* where practitioners of traditional candy-making embodied the conflict of conciliating the ancient logic of know-how transmission and contemporary business logic. Besides the physical dimension, a candy factory is an organization that highlights changes in the candy-making practice, from a motivation to share the table to a motivation to make profits.

The art of candy-making flourished in Pelotas at the end of the XIX century when the city had its heyday during the economic cycle of dried beef (*charque*) production. The traditional receipts were inherited from Portuguese colonizers at the Pelotas, in the XVIII century, who developed a vibrant cuisine using three basic ingredients: egg yolk, sugar, and wheat flour. As sugar was rare and expensive in the extreme south of Brazil by that time, the consumption of those candies was a luxury only available in the wealthiest houses, where aristocratic women reproduced the receipts they inherited from Portuguese ancestors, looking for distinction (Bourdieu, 1984). The natural transmission was between older women and young girls, especially from mother to daughter or grandmother to granddaughter. In this society, the candy receipts were a family inheritance, but the notion of family here goes beyond strict biological links. In the candy-making tradition, they were breeding within a particular culture of relatedness, defined as familism (Freyre, 1955, p. 625), that expands the limits of the family by including households. Familism is an effect of the centrality of a small domestic world in and around the aristocratic house and the institutions that supported it: the slavery system, the plantation, and the Roman Catholic devotion (Freyre, 1955, p. 626). This brief story helps to explain why the *habitus* of the candy-making tradition is aristocratic, female, and familistic and why transmission follows a cultural logic.

I entered the research field, willing to absorb the practices that sustain the perception and thoughts of people who embody this knowledge. My research was based on participant observation, and I was attempting to reach "moral and sensual conversion to the cosmos under investigation" (Wacquant, 2004, p. vii). My original intention was to become one apprentice of a candy-making chef so that I could describe the embodiment of candy-making know-how from my own experience. As time passed, I realized that such know-how is surrounded by secrecy and cultural taboos. As the "ethnographer is a being of flesh and blood endowed with embodied skills and visceral knowledge that are a resource for, and not a hindrance to, social analysis" (Wacquant, 2006, p. 443), my own body became a subject/object for the perception of people around me. My corporeality restricted the possibilities for my participation, and I could not choose to take the apprentice role but to integrate myself into the cultural logic of the candy-making tradition with its peculiar power division.

The research field was a candy factory, Lolita Dias Traditional Candies (pseudonym), which bears the name of the business founder. Lolita (pseudonym) was a white woman around 60 years old who started to produce sweets in her house kitchen for selling purposes in 2000 from receipts she inherited from her aunt. The domestic business has grown to include 15 employees (two black men, three black women, and ten white women) directly involved in artisanal candy production. The family of the candy-making chef – her husband, daughter, and son - also worked at the business in charge of administrative issues. I worked for 22 weeks in this candy factory during January and August of 2011 and negotiated my access through personal contact. The empirical field was a candy factory in Pelotas, in Rio Grande do Sul in Southern Brazil.

Before starting to work, I introduced myself to the workers in a brief meeting and explained my research. On the first day of fieldwork, I received the uniform I should wear on the shop floor (a white apron, disposable hat, and gloves). During the first six weeks, I worked 4 hours on the morning shift, and employees did not accept my presence as part of everyday shopfloor life. It was a liminal period when they constantly reminded my identity as a researcher, and the credibility of my work was under test. Despite admitting me in the candy factory, Lolita and her family were suspicious I was a spy trying to steal their business secrets. By that time, I could explore different activities and spaces of the candy factory while trying to accommodate myself into a job according to my skills and the possibilities of acceptance of my colleagues. Still, I was not trained in any specific job, meaning I could not learn any part of the candy-making know-how. In the end of the second month of research, one worker was dismissed, and I offered to replace her while another person was not hired. It was a busy time in the candy factory, and Lolita had no option but to teach me the basics of candy-making. After that, I fulfilled a full 8–10-hour work day, undertaking the position of a regular factory worker, and my job was shaping and icing the dough of a specific kind of candy (the *camafeu*).

At first, I had some liberty to walk around the shop floor, talk with people beyond the immediate milieu of my worktable, and write up notes on a notepad at any time. Then, I had more responsibilities at work and could not find time or place to scribble notes during my shifts. Additionally, my work colleagues started making fun of me whenever I pulled my notepad, indicating they perceived me as a regular worker and not as a researcher. Under such a situation, I could just scrawl some words while in the toilet. At the end of each day, I used these notes in typing my research diary, and this digital document had approximately 120,000 words at the end of the research. I also conducted nine formal interviews with staff members and two with family members (husband and daughter). Lolita was interviewed twice during the second and the 20th weeks of research. The transcribed data were then coded using Word software.

Findings

This section is structured as follows. First, there is a brief overview of the life story of the candy-making chef Lolita and a description of her overall family background regarding the candy-making tradition culture. Then, the findings regarding rules for knowledge transmission in the labor process, peer relations, and control relations are outlined. There are overlaps between knowledge transmission in these three

contexts, but this organization of the findings matches the analytical focus used to structure the literature review above.

Family background

To capture the influence of relatedness and its rules in the candy-making know-how transmission process, I draw from the family relations that explain the involvement of the candy-making chef Lolita with such tradition. Her memories invoke the consumption and the making of sweets from a very early age in the atmosphere of her paternal grandmother's house. During her childhood, candies were made only for celebrations for domestic consumption, and such occasions involved all women of Dias family. Nina (pseudonym), an aunt from the paternal side and Lolita's godmother, particularly liked making traditional sweets. She sought to deepen the knowledge acquired in the family, exchanging receipts with friends from other Portuguese families. Lolita says, "Aunt Nina learned how to make all types of traditional sweets, and she mastered the technique of the ones we usually did at home and also of the ones that were not usually made in our house" (interview on 30 March, 2011).

In 1955, Nina started accepting orders to make sweets for acquaintances and then for people outside the family circle. In the beginning, she worked alone in her own kitchen house to make some money to buy gifts for her only daughter, who is about the same age as Lolita. As the business spontaneously grew into a candy factory, Nina invited her sisters-in-law (including Lolita's mother) to help, but without sharing with them the tricks of the new receipts. The way Nina held onto the know-how highlights some introspective features of its cultural transmission dynamic, as women who mastered the secrets of candy-making were considered influential in aristocratic Portuguese tradition (Freyre, 1986). Lolita's memories of these times tell (with some bitterness) how Nina avoided sharing the candy-making know-how knowledge with her mother

My mother really wanted to learn more, because she also wanted to have some extra money to buy me things. But Aunt Nina didn't want my mother around, learning too much, because that was her business (interview on 27 July 2011).

Until her death in 2003, Nina was ahead of the candy factory, meaning relatives and even people outside the family could help her but never replace her entirely. According to Lolita, Nina had divided the production of candies on the shopfloor as follows: staff was organized primarily around processes so that workers could specialize in a small part of the entire know-how, and secondarily around types of sweets, so they would learn how to make only one or two receipts out of 30 varieties produced in the candy factory. Nobody but Nina knew how to make all the sweets.

As the natural logic of transmission of candy-making know-how is familial (Freyre, 1955), Nina has chosen to teach the candy-making tradition to her direct heir, her daughter Silvia (pseudonym), who worked in the candy factory during her adolescence, helping the mother in the busiest times of the candy-making business. However, when the time of succession came in the 1980s, Silvia gave up on assuming a stable position in the candy factory to study Medicine. As Silvia had no interest in following what would have been the regular flux of know-how transmission, Nina continued to lead the factory while looking for a successor. Lolita explains,

On two different occasions, Aunt Nina has tried to train trusted employees to replace her, as the work was exhaustive, and she has never taken a single month of vacation in all those years. But it didn't work out because this business… You know, it has to be someone from the family (interview on 27 July, 2011).

As Nina grew old, she insisted on transmitting it to her direct lineage, first teaching her son-in-law and then trying to teach her grandson. That aligns with the previous finding of Kammerlander & Holt (2018), who state that the training of the founder's sons and daughters is critical and that the generational transfer process, preserving the familiness bundle, is the basis for the competitive distinctiveness of the family business. In both cases, Nina did not succeed in forming her successor. Her son-in-law specialized in

producing a single type of sweet and opened his own business, becoming a competitor. Her grandson did not even reach the domain of any receipt because, as Lolita says,

Aunt Nina wanted to teach him everything, but he didn't take her seriously (day 57).

While Nina still had descendants (daughter, son-in-law, and grandson), Lolita was not considered a possible heir of the candy-making know-how her aunt had kept and improved over time. Nevertheless, she was allowed to work in the candy factory in her teenagerhood, accompany her cousin, and have access to the direct process of knowledge transmission by that time. As Lolita was bodily predisposed to learn candy-making knowledge – as she has had contact with the candy-making tradition since childhood – she could learn from her senses, and through being exposed to the context of the candy factory, she started developing the skills to be the candy-making chef she would become in the future.

Silvia and I used to work in the factory to make some pocket money in the summertime, and of course, we both have learned a lot from that experience. My aunt was always around us, teaching us something or just telling us her stories because she wanted us to learn – especially Silvia. As I was very attentive, I learned a lot from watching her, which was the beginning of my apprenticeship. However, I had already mastered some receipts before that because I learned something at home (interview on 27 July 2011).

After those three attempts, Nina did not look for any specific apprentice until Lolita approached her at the beginning of 2000. Lolita wanted to start the candy-making trade to help her household after her spouse lost his job. When Lolita finally assumed the position of an apprentice of Aunt Nina's knowledge, she was more than 40 years old, had no qualifications for the job market, and needed to embody the candy-making know-how for a particular purpose: starting a business in the candy-making trade. She did not fit the archetype of the candy-making tradition's apprentice, a young girl. However, she was initiated into such a tradition at an earlier age, along with other women in her family. Lolita had to wait until all previous eligible legitimate apprentices (daughter, son-in-law, and grandson) declined in the logic of transmission of candy-making know-how to direct descendants. She could finally be "the next in line" for the candy-making legacy of her aunt.

When I asked Aunt Nina to teach me her receipts… she was very old by that time, she died right after that, and I think she was hopeless of transmitting her knowledge to someone. She was glad to have me around, and I could feel she was happy to have me as an apprentice of her art. But I was the only one around to learn that! She had failed in transmitting her knowledge to anybody else, and I was, I must say, the next in line. If she had not taught me then, all that knowledge would have died with her (interview on 27 July, 2011).

Traditional candy-making is a work-intensive enterprise that requires constant knowledge reinforcement. That places knowledge as a strategic value that runs through generations in family firms (Duarte Alonso, & Kok, 2021), and follows specific logics of transmission. In the candy shop, it was not linked to the company's property, but to the need to continue tradition, according to some sense of belonging to the family.

In 2000, Lolita was in Nina's candy factory, as her apprentice. Besides receiving practical instructions, Lolita also had access to Nina's written receipts, and she could copy them to Lolita's receipt notebook (the original one was given to Silvia). After the learning tenure, Lolita started a candy production in her house kitchen, as I have mentioned before, while Nina was still running her business. However, when Nina died at the age of 74, her candy factory quickly dismantled itself so that the material and the immaterial inheritance of her lifetime work ended up in Lolita's hands even though she was not Nina's legal successor.

Following the argument that the embodied intentionality (Martin, 2003; 2006; Bourdieu, 1998) is a driver of the inheritance behind traditional know-how (Figueiredo & Cavedon, 2015), the reasoning for Nina to avoid the transference of knowledge to the niece ended up when the very knowledge was threatened

of disappearance. The original family business, founded by Nina, ended after her death, but the candy-making knowledge she embodied could follow in Lolita.

You see this funnel, it is very old. It was my aunt's. It is very precious to me because the new ones are not good for making the "fios de ovos" (egg threads). *I have some things here that are very old, like this funnel, because my cousin gave them to me. After my aunt's death, Silvia was living in another city, living a life that had nothing to do with her mother's business. The employees there felt she could not run the candy factory, and some knocked on my door asking for a new job. Her candy factory closed just a few months after her death, and some kitchen utensils ended up here, because Silvia gave them to me* (Lolita, field note, day 19).

Lolita owns a factory named after her, as her aunt did while she was alive, demonstrating how the embodied know-how of candy-making merges with the very organization of the business. Following Nina's death, her candy factory was quickly dismantled, and the heirs of such a property could not sell the business because it had little commercial value without the presence of the candy-making chef. The knowledge sharing among legal successors and trusted employees failed, and Nina's candy factory was boiled down to some old kitchen utensils, which were only valuable for someone who knew how to use them to perform the candy-making practice.

The trained employees who knew only some parts of the candy-making production were also demobilized if the candy-making chef could not coordinate their work. It is opposite to the idea that family firms show a high degree of members' commitment and dedication (Chirico & Nordqvist, 2010). One can notice how the organizational process of such a business based on traditional knowledge relies on the embodiment of its founder, urging the understanding of the process of practical know-how transmission to ensure its possible endurance. It also suggests that regardless of any rational transmission logic, the knowledge that arises from practice is intrinsically associated with the person embodying it (Bourdieu, 1998).

When Lolita started her business in the candy-making trade, she did not have the support of her family, and she worked all alone for the first two years. However, as the business grew, Husband Paulo, son Michel, and daughter Christine started helping Lolita with bookkeeping orders and deliveries. Those operational functions quickly developed into more complex administrative issues. Christine sometimes used to help her mother in the kitchen, but Lolita quickly found out that "the life ahead of the candy factory would be lonely, just like Aunt Nina's" (interview on 27 July 2011).

Considering the linear logic of candy-making know-how, Christine would have been the most likely successor, just like cousin Silvia had been Aunt Nina's heir, but Lolita did not seem to expect or even desire Christine to follow her steps. Lolita expected her daughter could engage in a professional career related to candy-making production but not directly associated with it. At the research time, Christine – that was 31 years old – had just been accepted by the Faculty of Food Chemistry, and she had the approval of her mother to complete the higher education that could enable her to contribute to the professionalization process of the family business. Her brother Michel, who went to the Business School a few years before, also chose his career with the same motivation.

The involvement of Lolita's siblings in managing the family goes along with the modernization and professionalization of the candy-making trade. It also corresponds to the comprehension that knowledge is a strategic resource for the family business (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018). However, the logic of modernization and professionalization broke the chains of embodied inheritance and let Lolita, without heirs to, follow the linear system of candy-making know-how, jeopardizing the continuity of such knowledge.

The continuity of the business within a modern and professional perspective depended on transmitting the candy-making know-how to people outside the family that should be trained according to technical procedures. Nevertheless, the findings I bring up in the next section shows how the transmission of such

knowledge is mediated by embodied intentionality. In the candy factory, candy-making practices customarily associated with the genealogic inheritance of a particular social group (white and aristocratic women) (Figueiredo & Cavedon, 2015) became part of a larger domain. They thus lost the direct link to their putative heirs. The historical contextualization and observation of the candy factory's everyday routines indicate that the candy-making practice is involved in interests that go in the direction of their privatization by a particular type of person – which, in the research field, was the owner of the factory.

The embodied dynamic of practical knowledge transmission

Although candy-making knowledge results from practice and seemingly simple skills, one should not assume that all people involved with production at the candy factory knew what they were doing. Though not precisely representative of a lack of practical mastery, this lack of cognitive domain over the activity brought direct consequences for individuals' autonomy and the group's productivity in general. Thus, the integral transmission of knowledge was restricted only in some specific contexts of relationships between certain individuals. I shall now analyze the embodied reasons for the candy factory's knowledge transmission process from these contexts.

As my observations and experiences in the field may confirm, shopfloor workers could achieve skill or technical expertise depending on how their position conditions different body experiences. The distinction between these two forms of practical mastery was related to how people would incorporate the practice, whether as embodiment (Csordas, 1990). For example, the candy-making chef and the two male workers showed the perfection of movements, allied to cognitive control over the activities they performed in the candy-making. They could do their job in an apparent carefree way, making it seems easy to do because they could improvise, mend mistakes and use their embodied talent to create new ways of making the same things. On the contrary, the female workers – black or white, including me – were trained in kneading the dough, pastry sweets, or any other candy shop activities only in a cursory mechanical way. That reflects a logic of power distribution within the cultural schemes of the candy-making tradition (Freyre, 1955) that tend to privilege men over women regardless of racial issues. That means white women without family bonds with Lolita were less suited for a candy-making apprenticeship than black men.

During the research period, I noticed that among all the factory employees, only two – the black men I mentioned before – received special attention from the candy-making chef. According to her perception, they were "dedicated and hardworking" and, therefore, more able to learn the candy-making know-how than the others. Personal affinities seemed to unite Lolita with these people, and the contact established between her and each of them individually showed a relationship of camaraderie and affection that extended beyond the workplace. She revealed to them the production process details through oral instructions and practices of successive statements that could last for months or even years and affective memories that relied on the embodiment process of practical know-how by Lolita herself. As I could observe, she used to tell them tales about her childhood and show them information about her "story in the candy-making", as she described it. This type of intimate contact, almost a revelation, was mostly restricted to these two people.

The transmission process of the candy-making know-how to these two employees seemed to be entirely different from the process of acceptance I experienced in the field, and it was also different from what I could notice among the other female employees. Throughout my work in the factory, Lolita assisted me often, but I noticed that the stages of production that were obstacles to the complete assimilation of a recipe were exposed to me in an oblique and elusive way through demonstrations that were too fast to be fully understood or descriptions that were too laconic. The following research diary extract may exemplify this:

Lolita was teaching Ed the right moment to turn off the heat when egg dough (used to fill the bem-casados) was ready. "Can you feel how smooth it is?", she asked. He laughed and said, "I don't know what smooth is. How am I supposed to feel

that!". She took a deep breath (like she was trying to find patience) and explained: "smooth is something even, soft, without pits". "Hum, perfect, you mean?", he added, and so she said: "Yeah, I think you got it". As I watched the action as a whole, I felt comfortable participating. "I think you can identify the smoothness when the dough is plain and uniform, right Lolita?". Thus, she said: "I don't know", and turned her back to me (day 43).

Because it is a form of tacit knowledge, the candy-making chef's pedagogy included the demonstration of the task once or twice and the production of a model that would serve as a guide for me and other new employees, as I observed:

When I arrived at my work position today, I asked Lolita what I should do. She didn't say a word to me, but she grabbed a small portion of camafeu *dough in the palm of her hand and modeled a perfect sweet. After finishing (incredibly fast), she said: "that is what you have to do". Thus, I spent the rest of the morning staring at the model and kneading small pieces of dough until I had modeled over 100* camafeus. *They were not all perfect, but some were so good thatat a certain point, I lost Lolita's model amidst my* camafeus (day 52).

During the research, the work in the candy factory was organized around the divergent criteria of productive specialization and loss of control of the production process, reflecting the hierarchy distribution of knowledge in the context of candy-making. The training of workers continued in this manner for each function. The two black male workers I mentioned earlier – Ed and Richard (pseudonyms) – did not seem to have been trained to acquire technical expertise in the performance of fractional parts of candy-making practice; they were instead getting a special kind of instruction. It follows the interpretation that they were learning to master the production process of most sweets made in the factory. It is worth pointing out that Ed and Richard were considered more apt to learn the candy-making know-how, according to Lolita's opinion, is not entirely logical or rational if we analyze it from a functionalist perspective. After all, if the candy-making chef could *train* all workers to perform *the same*, she would ensure an increasingly standardized quality for candy shop production. However, the critical issue about this situation is that differences between people would change her evaluation of their competencies and potential.

The -called "dedication" that Lolita perceived in Ed and Richard can be understood based on the discussions of Lave and Wangler (1991), highlighting the tension between old and new practitioners in the reproduction of a community of practice. It also expresses how relations with employees are specific in a family business (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018). However, the idea that learning involves a deepening process of participation in a community of practice is challenged by the property over the knowledge that some practitioners may claim for themselves as a result of embodied cultural assets that supports and gives meaning to the practice.

One may say the same regarding training employees as a rational process *versus* the simulation of family relations that are crucial for know-how transmission. Thus, the candy-making chef, the most legitimate practitioner among the candy factory group, could decide who would have her special treatment to achieve mastery and who would perish trying to learn the practice through itself. That means that knowledge was not managed as a strategic asset that could ensure the competitiveness of the business; it is a powerful resource to specific individuals.

The closeness between the candy-making chef and the two preferred employees enables understanding that the relationship between them is, therefore, the relationship with culture as the mechanism capable of instilling the practical know-how in these two persons and not in any others. That is because, apart from pure affection, links and personal affinities are objectified as assumptions of a relationship necessary for transmitting knowledge. I understand, through field observations, that the transmission process of embodied candy-making knowledge only occurs when it contributes to the perpetuation of the cultural *habitus* related to it. As field notes may exemplify:

The difference between the boys and the other employees is that they understand what I am asking them. When I order something, they can understand. It is not easy to describe what has to be done, the person has to understand it, and they can understand. They like making those sweets and eating them, and I think it is essential, you know. I do not know what happens that other people here cannot understand, but they can, and we can get along well because of that (day 57).

While working in the candy factory, I saw Lolita recruiting some young female employees to take them as apprentices. However, the person who indeed seemed to fit this place was the young male employee called Ed. He was 17 years old by that time, and before starting to work in the factory, he was a playmate of Lolita's grandson, the 12-years-old Peter, Christine's son. As Ed says:

One day I was there, playing football with Peter, when Mrs. Lolita asked me if I wanted to help her in the kitchen I said 'yes'. After that, I started following Mrs. Lolita anywhere she went on the shopfloor (Interview on 26 July 2011).

During the research, I noticed that Lolita and Ed had a very special relationship, which assured him some privileges. For example, Ed did not have a fixed position, and he could walk around every sector of the shopfloor, experiencing with some freedom the production processes of different receipts. Besides that, he was always around Lolita, helping her or just observing what she was doing. Ed indirectly related to Lolita but as a member of an extended family, in an expression of familism (Freyre, 1995). Richard did not have the same privileges as an almost family member, but he was the second person after Lolita ahead of the shopfloor because he knew more than any other worker. A few years ago, he was also invited to work in the candy factory, just like what happened to Ed, and became Lolita's apprentice for a while. However, lousy behavior forced Lolita to fire him, and he stayed out of the factory for a couple of years. Recently, Richard apologized for his mistake, asked for his job back, and got a second chance. While I was in the research field, Richard was not treated the same as Ed, but he still had a higher status than all female workers. The following field diary extract can illustrate that:

Lolita was going to a food exposition and asked Richard to go with her. Richard said: "what about Ed?", and Lolita answered: "he can't go". "And why don't you call one of the girls to go with you?", he asked. "Come on, Richard! They can't handle such a job", she stated (day 23).

In the candy factory, the issue of race was logically articulated in a speech that mainly positioned the black woman as a supporting character in the story of traditional candy-making (Figueiredo & Cavedon, 2015). Communing Brazilian racial myth (Freyre, 1986), the mythologized conventional candy-making story refers to a mixed ethnic origin for this social practice. Lolita used to say on different occasions that she probably had black ancestors, justifying her proximity with the racial myth tied to the story of Pelotas' candy shop tradition. Like the Northeast part of Brazil that I have mentioned before, the far south of the country – where Pelotas is located – was also an area of intensive use of slave labor in farmlands until the late 19th century. In such a social background, black people, especially black women, lived near white aristocratic families, sometimes sharing the same house with them, taking responsibility for raising their children, and being victims of violence and sexual abuse by the owner of the farmland and his male siblings. The role that black women played in the story of the traditional candy shop of Pelotas is essential, but it is also part of a dynamic of subservience and exploitation.

This inequality acquires specific nuances, both in the field of research and in society. After all, even if all black people were housed in dirty places and performed physically demanding labor, black women had less freedom of movement in the factory space and performed more alienating activities. The men employees, who accidentally or not were exclusively black, experienced the status of preferred learners of the candy-making expertise, which was not taught to any woman, black or white. Having analyzed this fact, I believe that there is an overlap of body and embodied features that drive the subjection of black women to the humble condition (still below the white women), a more prominent and inescapable reality than the subjection of the black man. In the case of the employees of the candy factory, gender and color combined to reproduce the structures of power and domination in the patriarchal system in an order that

seems to favor the established difference between men and women more than the difference between blacks and whites.

Despite being the apprentices of candy-making know-how in the context of the candy factory, it is worth noticing that the black male employees could not be the heirs of the candy-making tradition. In the previous section, I explained how the candy-making business's organizational process relies on its founder's embodiment. In the symbolic universe of the candy-making tradition, the idea that a black man could become a business owner is subversive to the order in which such tradition is rooted. The legacy of the practice is embodied, but its practitioner's embodied features are essential to the business's continuity. Those embodied features have to confirm and reinforce the *habitus* of the candy-making tradition. Otherwise, the embodied intentionality mechanism stops it from going on. One situation in the field can demonstrate that. It happened right after Richard was fired, in his first passage on the candy factory:

When I had to fire Richard, I tried to allow him to start his own business because he is a good man, and I didn't want to see him in a bad situation. I lent him an oven, and I said he could use the money he had earned as compensation to buy ingredients and start his production. But he failed. I know it is not easy, I know it is more comfortable to be an employee than a business owner. By the time Richard was out, I had given him all the opportunity to start his business, but he returned asking for a job just a few later. It is not easy, I know (Interview on 30 march, 2011).

The analysis of this situation shows that even a well-intended help is not enough to transpose the mechanisms that produce and legitimate the unequal distribution of power beyond the candy-making trade in such a cultural context. Investing in cultural capital (practical knowledge) was not enough to diminish the existential gap between the person deeply connected with the tradition's habitus and one who tries to take place in such an order. The know-how transmission to black male workers was an embodied strategy to multiply the candy-making chef's work capacity in the candy factory context. However, it was also an efficient mechanism to keep the candy-making knowledge associated with a particular power structure that distinguishes the white aristocratic woman. Nevertheless, as black men cannot embody all features of the candy-making tradition, it is assumed that such know-how will still be restricted to its natural heirs. The problem with the candy factory that I have studied is that no one would fit in this place.

Conclusion

The issue of knowledge transmission in a family business is well-acknowledged and studied in family business literature. The idea that knowledge is a strategic resource for the family business from a resource-based view is prevalent, but the dynamics of creation, sharing, and transfer of knowledge in the family business (Chirico, 2008) is still a gap. This paper addressed such a gap from an ethnographic and interpretative standpoint, based on the embodiment perspective (Csordas, 1990; Wacquant, 2004, 2006), adding the concept of embodied intentionality to explain the dynamics of knowledge transference on Family business. However, one shall mention that this study featured the specific dynamics of traditional knowledge and family business based on that.

The present research also ratifies the idea of familiness, defined as a special kind of interaction among the family, its individual members, and the business (Kammerlander & Holt, 2018). This study's findings suggest that the idea of family is conditional to cultural context, and family bounds can be elaborated from culturally embodied values of tradition. The concept of familiness can be compared, contrasted, and enriched by the idea of familism (Freyre, 1955), referring to an extended family based on cultural bounds that can eventually include employees and make them symbolically become family members.

Through the research in the candy factory, I observed how embodied intentionality drove the process of transmission of the candy-making know-how and that the access to the knowledge underlying this specific expertise depended on culturally embodied differentiating criteria. This research sought to clarify

how the knowledge-sharing and transferring of a family business follows a dynamic of embodied constraints that question the rational processes of valuing knowledge and turning it into a strategic organizational resource. The heirs of the embodied knowledge under the candy-making tradition could build a successful business. However, this research pointed out that the endurance of those businesses is an excellent challenge once the organization members cannot fully understand the logic of know-how transmission. In candy-making based on traditional knowledge, success and continuity may involve deeply understanding the reasoning underlying culture. That is probably valid, as well as in other contemporary family businesses relying on traditional knowledge.

For the traditional candy-making studied in this paper, the primary resources of the practice are not material or economical; it is the social power relations that such a candy production culturally engenders. The current research findings enable further investigation of hidden power elements not described strictly in terms of strategic resources to the family business. Further research on family business would benefit from a deeper understanding of this social-cultural-historical background, as it can help to clarify the limits of rational logic imposed on this kind of organization.

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