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# A contextualisation of entrepreneurship

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – To explore and critically analyse entrepreneurship theories and concepts within the context of the small family tourism business, and the extent to which owner-managers and their enterprises can be classified as entrepreneurial.

**Design/methodology/approach** – A model has been developed and applied to support a “drilling down” approach that moves from a surface understanding of entrepreneurship as a process through to an industry setting, to penetrate the organisational context and consequential entrepreneurial socio-economic outcomes.

**Findings** – It has been demonstrated that understanding of the entrepreneurial process, as it interplays with family business, is best served by reference to the cultural, industry setting and organisational context within which entrepreneurs are embedded.

**Originality/value** – The tourism industry has been deliberately selected as an illustrative context due to the low degree of entrepreneurial behaviour that it has traditionally exhibited. Through the application of the model explanations are provided for this, and conclusions are drawn that do classify small family tourism businesses as a manifestation of entrepreneurship as broadly conceived.

**Keywords** Entrepreneurialism, Family firms, Tourism

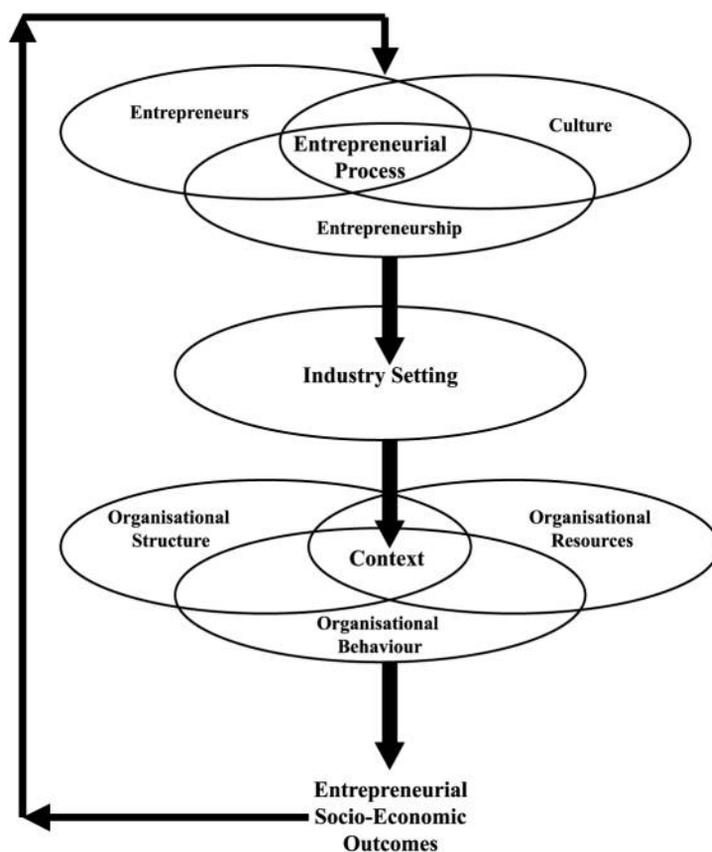
**Paper type** Research paper

## Introduction

The aim of this conceptual paper is to demonstrate that understanding entrepreneurship can be enhanced through deliberate contextualisation of associated theories and concepts within a specific industry sector. This is achieved through the application of a systematic framework (Figure 1) that commences with an investigation of entrepreneurship *per se* then progresses to consider the impact of culture, industry setting and organisational context. It is proposed that each of these levels of the system may act as “filters” that either intensify or dilute the entrepreneurial process resulting in consequential entrepreneurial socio-economic outcomes. Furthermore, it is argued that the value of such a model is in its explanatory power, as it serves to surface the more submerged factors within an industry context, and the structure of business therein, that influence the degree of entrepreneurial behaviour exhibited.

Thus, the tourism sector has been deliberately selected as an illustrative context for this paper due to the low degree of entrepreneurial behaviour that it has traditionally exhibited. While in the last decade small pockets of intensive entrepreneurial activity have been witnessed in, for example, internet enabled travel booking agencies and budget airlines, this is not reflective of the sector as a whole. Internationally, the tourism industry continues to typically lack entrepreneurial dynamism in comparison to other sectors (Page *et al.*, 1999; Andriotis, 2002; Morrison and Teixeira, 2003; Scottish Executive, 2001). Furthermore, within this sector the vast majority of firms globally belong to the indigenous population, are family run, and the smallness of physical, employee and market size is consciously preserved by owner-managers





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**Figure 1.**  
Family business  
entrepreneurship filter  
model

(Lockyer and Morrison, 1999; Getz and Carlsen, 2000). Moreover, these small family businesses are not renowned for exhibiting high degrees of entrepreneurial behaviour with many remaining micro in size (Lynch, 1999).

Thus, the extent to which small family tourism businesses represent a manifestation of entrepreneurship could be an issue for debate. Indeed, Bolton and Thompson (2003) caution against the casual linkage of “small business” with “entrepreneurship” as it leads to a mistaken assumption that the terms are synonymous, however, Barrow (1998) agrees that the borderline between the two terms is not clear cut. The contribution of Carland *et al.* (1984) is helpful in their classification of what distinguishes an entrepreneurial venture, an entrepreneur, a small business venture, and a small business owner. With respect to the first two classifications, in keeping with the dominant academic conventional wisdom, definition focuses on facets of entrepreneurial behaviour, such as, innovation, opportunity exploitation and realisation, risk acceptance, new market creation, growth and profit motivations, and strategic management (Barrow, 1998; Burns, 2001; Beaver, 2002; Kaplan, 2003; Bolton and Thompson, 2003; McAdamJones-Evans *et al.*, 2004). The definitions pertaining to the latter two classifications are concerned with ownership structure, market position

and prioritisation of personal goals over those of economic optimisation. However, such a polarised approach may be disputed as it has been suggested that what constitutes an entrepreneur and entrepreneurship should be more broadly conceived (Siropolis, 1990). Bridge *et al.* (2003) support this stance, stressing that there are no objective benchmarks of what represents entrepreneurial activity; it will vary relative to societal and economic agency norms. This suggests a contingency approach to the “measurement” of entrepreneurial behaviour and the extent to which an entrepreneur can be classified as, for example, growth in creating a sustained high-growth business, growth in creating a significant business, or enterprising in creating small or micro businesses (Beaver, 2002).

Thus, the rationale underlying this paper is to explore and critically analyse entrepreneurship theories and concepts within the context of the small family tourism business, and the extent to which the owner-managers and their enterprises can be classified as entrepreneurial. The contribution to knowledge lies in the “drilling down” approach that moves from a surface understanding of entrepreneurship as a process, through to an industry sector setting, to penetrate the organisational context and consequential entrepreneurial socio-economic outcomes. The purpose is to expose the explanatory power, benefits and implications of such an approach for academics, policy-makers and practitioners.

### **Entrepreneurial process**

The entrepreneurial process represents the level one filter (Figure 1) and is an interaction of a complex, multi-dimensional and dynamic set of factors and circumstances. These arise from the characteristics and attitudes of individual entrepreneurs who are motivated to take part in entrepreneurship as a consequence of genetic make-up and their social development within their host community’s culture. Discussion surrounding entrepreneurship as related to family business, culture and entrepreneurs is now explored and understanding developed as to how they combine into an entrepreneurial process.

### *Entrepreneurship*

In common with many other academic fields of study, there exists little consensus as to a universally accepted definition of entrepreneurship, and the combination of the term with family business adds to the complexity. For example, according to Timmons (1994) entrepreneurship is about creating and building something of value from practically nothing. It is the process of creating or seizing an opportunity, and pursuing it regardless of the resources currently personally controlled. While Hisrich and Drnovsek (2002, p. 175) approach definition in the following manner: “the creation and management of new businesses, small businesses and family businesses, and the characteristics and special problems of entrepreneurs”. Hence, in these definitions the roots of family business may be taken to originate in the essence of entrepreneurship, with a focus on understanding the interaction of entrepreneur and organisational contexts, structure, behaviour and resources (Craig and Lindsay, 2002). It represents a multi-dimensional approach that takes into account economic and non-economic determinants of entrepreneurship (Morrison, 2000a; Greenbank, 2001; Pittaway, 2005) including ideology, legitimacy, social mobility and psychological factors (McKay, 2001). This is particularly significant within the context of family entrepreneurship,

which Cromie *et al.* (1999) suggest differs from economic entrepreneurship in that it incorporates a domestic dimension. Furthermore, a traditional role of entrepreneurship has been to offer alternative paths to “success” concerned with pursuing lifestyle preferences, and/or an “opt-out” route antidote to modern living (Scase, 2000). This introduces the concept of lifestyle entrepreneurship, where individual’s: align entrepreneurial activity to fit with personal circumstances and style of life (Kaplan, 2003); prioritise personal over business goals (Bolton and Thompson, 2003); and are not growth motivated (Burns, 2001). Bridge *et al.* (2003) consider this to be a form of social entrepreneurship that challenges the traditional division of organisational activity into separate categories of economic or social purpose. Thus, within this context businesses are established for social purposes and not, or not primarily, to maximise financial returns to investors. Thus, within the context of entrepreneurship, family businesses may be established for social and economic purposes, and mesh domestic and business dimensions towards the attainment of lifestyle goals. Often, these businesses make a key contribution in the form of social capital that is central to the sustenance of many, especially rural, communities (Bridge *et al.*, 2003; Irvine and Anderson, 2004).

### *Culture*

Interpretation of what represents entrepreneurship is likely to vary cross-nationally according to the distinctive patterning of social values and norms of behaviour rooted in the host culture (Omar and Davison, 2001). Culture represents a complex and largely ethereal phenomenon. It is a shared and collective way that groups of people understand and interpret the world (Hall, 1959; Trompenaars, 1993). Tayeb (1988, p. 42) presents a definition of culture and its scope as:

[...] a set of historically evolved learned values, attitudes and meanings shared by the members of a given community that influence the material and non-material way of life. Members of the community learn these shared characteristics through different stages of socialization processes of their lives in institutions, such as family, religion, formal education, and society as a whole.

However, Garrison (1996) suggests that such attempts at definition are problematic due to culture’s amorphous shifting nature. This is further compounded by its multiple representation within such elements as: different levels (national, regional, business, individual); layers of society (gender, age, social class, occupation, family, religion); and varying context of life (individual, group, community). What is evident is that societies can be distinguished from each other by the differences in the shared meanings they expect and attribute to their environment as is evident in the oft cited work of Hofstede (1991).

Issues of definition and complexity are further compounded as the combination of the terms “entrepreneurial” and “culture” has become popular, widely accepted internationally (Bateman, 1997). This expression can be described as an attitude towards commerce at a business level, in which a positive social attitude towards personal enterprise is prevalent, enabling and supporting entrepreneurial activity (Timmons, 1994; Vernon-Wortzel and Wortzel, 1997). The existence of an entrepreneurial culture represents societal support for an enterprising spirit that will flourish within certain communities in response to uncertainty and competition (Kirzner, 1979). However, it has been argued that there exists no such thing as one identifiable and universal entrepreneurial culture (Morrison, 2000b).

Morrison (1998a) illustrates the role of host culture plays in her cross-country research, the findings from which are presented in Figure 2. As advocated by McClelland (1961) it recognizes that culture is not a static, but a dynamic variable. The “inputs” are at the “grass root” level where a range of influences commences the mental and social conditioning of the populace. The “social constructs” are of a social, economic, and institutional, nature that surround the socially developed entrepreneur. Within these constructs entrepreneurs may assess the degree to which they are sufficiently robust to support the initiation of entrepreneurship. The inputs and social constructs combine to provide the evidence, negative and/or positive, of entrepreneurial behaviour. These will in turn impact on the extent to which a society values the behaviour and will nurture or stifle it in the future.

Thus, having an understanding of cultural values, motivations, and aspirations of various cultural sub-groups within populations is critical to increasing the knowledge base about factors that contribute to entrepreneurial behaviour (Morrison, 1998a; Collins, 2002). However, Tayeb (1988) and Van der Horst (1996) astutely point out that no one is a slave to the culture in which one lives. There will be those persons who are moved to deviate or escape from accepted cultural norms.

*Entrepreneurs*

From the foregoing discussion emerges the notion of an individual’s evaluation of social legitimacy, desirability and feasibility influenced by cultural values, economic factors, and the relationship between the entrepreneur and their host environment (Jones, 2000). Pearce (1980) believes that, in most respects, entrepreneurs are ordinary human beings, seeking to do good for themselves in terms of material gain and social status. That said, over centuries their endeavours have significantly contributed to change and growth in the business world, and they are also credited with most of the material progress in society (Hurley, 1999). Within the tourism industry, for example, mention can be made of the likes of the internationally renowned Walt Disney, Conrad Hilton and Thomas Cook, and the more recent examples of Richard Branson and Stelios Haji-Ioannou, all of whom have radically innovated within their respective

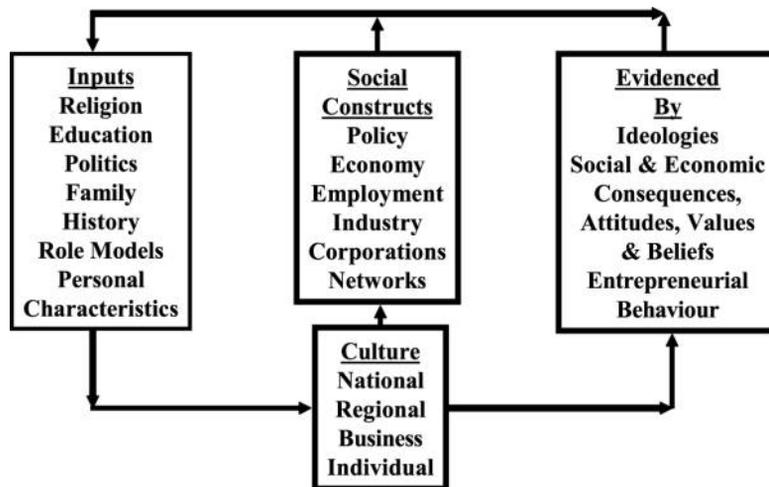


Figure 2.  
Dynamic entrepreneurial  
culture

sectors, significantly redefining the nature of products, services and markets that have contributed to the growth of the tourism industry. In this respect, Day (2000) likens the entrepreneurial process to bush fires. Just as they are natural occurrences that raze forests to the ground, and in the very process engender new life, so do entrepreneurs transform industry and society through their energized and radiating endeavour.

Within academic circles debate continues as to whether entrepreneurs are reactive or proactive individuals in this process. According to Kuratko and Hodgetts (1998, p. 97): “every person has the potential and free choice to pursue a career as an entrepreneur”. However, this underplays the complex and multi-dimensional interaction of entrepreneurial behaviour “cues” that are embedded in the contemporary world of the individual, society and economy (Naffziger *et al.*, 1994). These are not necessarily driven by factors, such as, maximisation of a return on investment, or exploitation of a marketing opportunity. Instead, they may be prompted by the following examples that have acted as entrepreneurial behaviour cues:

- “buy” themselves and/or family members a job (Harper, 1984);
- avoid unemployment and respond to economic necessity (Cameron and Massey, 1999);
- earn enough money to allow them to leave their host community to search for a better life (Dahles and Bras, 1999);
- be a solution to adversity (Dahles, 1998);
- pursue intrinsic goals such as independence, gain control over life, and flexible lifestyle (Middleton and Clarke, 2001); and
- overcome blocked upward mobility within the corporate arena (Smith, 2000).

Table I summarises a range of examples of entrepreneurial behaviour cues. Clearly, they represent a complex and somewhat ethereal weave of positive and negative social and economic factors, and those of a psychological nature that may be categorised either as negative or positive dependent on interpretative stance (Morrison, 2001). Such an approach recognises that entrepreneurs do not emerge from a vacuum, but that the

	Positive	Negative
Social	Role of the family and intergenerational role models Conducive culture Supportive networks	Political/religious displacement Political unrest Discrimination
Economic	Move towards services Reversal highly vertically integrated company structures Phenomenon of “dot.com” business	Unhappy with position in society Corporate downsizing and redundancy Dissatisfaction with/blocked employment opportunities Discriminatory legislation No other way to make money
Psychological	Entrepreneurial aspirations of independence, wealth, need to achieve, social mobility etc.	

**Sources:** Hurley (1999); Collins (2002); Scase and Goffee (1989); Storey (1994); Morrison *et al.* (1999); Morrison (2000b)

**Table I.**  
Entrepreneurial  
behaviour cues

entrepreneurial process is influenced by the social and business systems within which they are located and conditioned (Carson *et al.*, 1995).

Therefore, it is understandable that existing and emergent entrepreneurs navigate through their respective social and business systems to present themselves in many different guises. These are summarised in Table II where tourism industry examples are provided. Consequently, there is evolving recognition of the need for understanding of different variants, behaviours and dynamics of entrepreneurs (DTI, 2001; Hurley, 1999).

Guise	Description	Example
Copreneur (McKay, 2001; Smith, 2000)	Marital and business partners managing work and family responsibilities more effectively	Husband and wife contribute complimentary skills and resources to the management of a winery visitor attraction
Ethnic (Ram <i>et al.</i> , 2000; Collins, 2002; Basu, 2004)	Entrepreneurs drawn from ethnic minority groups often operating in ethnic niche markets	Chinese, Greek, Italian restaurants in Europe, Australia and North America
Family (Cromie <i>et al.</i> , 1999; Carter <i>et al.</i> , 2002)	Meshing together social and business systems	Multi-generations servicing the tourism market as a means of generating family employment to maintain the family unit
Female (Hurley, 1999; Collins, 2002; Brindley, 2005)	Using business as a vehicle for greater flexibility in managing family responsibilities	Homestay accommodation that enables the combination of commercial, domestic and child-caring responsibilities
Intrapreneur (Carrier, 1990; Antoncic and Hisrich, 2001)	A family member, other than the founding-entrepreneur adopts and applies entrepreneurial characteristics with the existing business	Second generation family member working within a traditional hotel adopts a business reengineering strategy transforming it into serviced accommodation
Lifestyle (Kuratko and Hodgetts, 1998; Andrews <i>et al.</i> , 2001)	Primary concern is to provide a sufficient and comfortable living to maintain a selected way of life	A ski instructor operates the business for a four-month season to earn enough to live all year round in a mountain retreat
Micro (Lynch, 1999; Greenbank, 2000)	Employing less than ten persons deliberately constraining size	Extension of a family home to offer B&B accommodation
Portfolio (Carter, 2001; Morrison and Teixeira, 2002)	Concurrently own more than one business that may bring additional benefits for the entrepreneur and enterprise	Farm diversification into tourism-related businesses such as accommodation and activity
Serial (Day, 2000; Carter, 2001)	Entrepreneur will own a consecutive series of businesses with entry and exit coinciding with market opportunities	With ICT redefining travel marketing a traditional high street retailer may move into travel consultancy, then a dot.com business
Social (Shaw <i>et al.</i> , 2002; Smallbone <i>et al.</i> , 2001)	Entrepreneur combines commercial skills with social aims and objectives	Rurally located tour guides that are primarily concerned with environmental preservation and community values

**Table II.**  
Entrepreneur guises

What is particularly significant within the context of family tourism business is the permeation of “family” throughout all the entrepreneur guises with the exception of “serial”. For example, it would appear that: it is a means to flexibly integrate work and family responsibilities; family act as a business asset through the “voluntary” contribution of work; traditional family domestic gender roles transfer to the workplace; and the pursuit and continuity of the family unit and lifestyle is facilitated. Furthermore, it is clear that these typology entrepreneur guises should not be regarded as sterile, static and divorced from each other as many overlap and will change and alternate according to family and business lifecycles.

### Industry setting

The tourism industry acts as a second-level filter in the family business entrepreneurial model presented in Figure 1. It presents itself to entrepreneurs as a potential site for them to apply the entrepreneurial process with the added attraction of low legal and professional barriers to entry (Morrison, 1998b; Szivas, 2001). Entrepreneurs will evaluate the feasibility and desirability of entry into this industry sector against opportunities elsewhere. What is unique about the tourism industry is that it has held consistently solid appeal to those individuals seeking to combine domestic and commercial activity (Lockyer and Morrison, 1999). Furthermore, as Blackburn (1999) notes, although the family has ceased to be a productive unit in the market economy, it remains one in the domestic economy, such as represented by the tourist accommodation sector. This suggests a dominant lifestyle business entry motivation and is reflected in the traditional image presented of small tourism businesses (Buick *et al.*, 2000). For many, particularly in rural and peripheral locations, maintenance and protection of a certain lifestyle will be prioritized over commercial focus on profit-maximisation (Getz and Carlsen, 2000; Sherwood *et al.*, 2000; Thomas *et al.*, 2001). For example, Andrews, Baum and Morrison (2001) summarize the following range of industry specific lifestyle entrepreneurial behaviour cues associated with entrepreneurs providing tourist accommodation:

- a desire to meet people and act in a host capacity while still maintaining a relatively unencumbered lifestyle;
- an aspiration to live in a place that has natural scenic beauty;
- a wish to inhabit in an accommodation and/or location that might be outside of the normal price bracket of the proprietors assets and income;
- the rejection of a perceived “rat race” of modern urban living while having built up sufficient assets/capital in previous living to move to a peripheral location without significant debt burden; and/or
- have the objective to operate a commercial concern, which does not demand 12-month attention but benefits from the effects of seasonality.

However, the range of possible entrepreneurial behaviour cues is infinite and it is proposed that any attempt at fashioning a comprehensive list would be a futile exercise. Simplistically they may be categories as “opportunity entrepreneurship” taking advantage of a market or lifestyle opportunity, or “necessity entrepreneurship” pursuing the best and often only option available (Ram, 1992; Harding, 2002). However, it can be observed that the entrepreneurial process will filter through the tourism

industry setting as the entrepreneurs in their various guises assess the feasibility and desirability of it as a site for social and economic investment. Evaluatory criteria may include:

- economic feasibility of combining domestic and commercial domains;
- aesthetic appeal of a particular geographic location;
- compatibility with an aspired lifestyle;
- potential for psychological gratification through the likes of hosting and visitor satisfaction; and/or
- fulfilment of social and moral obligations such as sustaining the natural environment or adding value to local communities.

### **Organisational context**

Should the entrepreneurial motivation survive through the second-level filter of the tourism industry setting, attention then turns to the organisational context of the small family tourism business. This represents the third and final level filter in the family business entrepreneurial model (Figure 1), and can be analysed relative to the components of organisational structure, behaviour and resources. This approach addresses holistically the multi-dimensional milieu of entrepreneurship and family business that will ultimately impact on entrepreneurial socio-economic outcomes.

#### *Organisational structure*

Kets de Vries (1996) logically points out that every family business starts somewhere, usually with a founder-entrepreneur who has not only a business concept but also the will and persistence to bring that concept to fruition. They are instrumental in structuring the organization. Carter *et al.* (2002) found that the majority of small tourism businesses take the form of partnership shared among spouses, and immediate and extended family members. Family members are active in the businesses, taking on roles such as general management, supervision, accounting, cleaning and catering. In many cases it is a husband and wife team, or copreneurs, that take all decisions and deal with most of the work assisted by very few staff, many of whom are part-time. This reflects one of the paramount organising principles in many societies, that of gender, and just as it is a dominant factor in families, it is also reflected in the organisational structure of family business (Cromie and O'Sullivan, 1999; Omar and Davidson, 2001). Consequently, Goffee and Scase (1995) refer to it as an "entrepreneurial family" that functions quite differently from the normal Western pattern of business. The inextricable linkage of social and business systems cannot be divorced from each other, and will inevitably influence the entrepreneurial process as family values and emotional attachments interact and compete with commercial market driven values (Cromie *et al.*, 1999; Basu, 2004). This is intensified within the context of the small family tourism business where frequently the domestic and enterprise physical facilities are one in the same.

Other than ownership, organisational structure also manifests itself through the characteristic of "smallness", which can be regarded as either an asset or a constraint dependent on perspective. The question why is it that the majority of the small tourism businesses remain micro in size has occupied academics and policy makers over the decades. Explanation can work from a number of different angles as was identified by

Morrison and Teixeira (2002) in relation to small tourism accommodation providers as follows: A contextualisation of entrepreneurship

- emotional attachment associated with the physical space, in that it is often also the family home, constrains business growth;
- concern about market potential and that growth may mean a resultant loss of the distinctive differentiating features associated with “smallness”;
- managerial capacity is sufficient to cope with existing size, but growth would bring with it the need to employ from out with the family circle which is not perceived as desirable; and
- financial poverty in that while it is relatively easy to raise additional funds for expansion securing an adequate return on investment to pay back loans was problematic.

In combination these physical, human and financially derived factors stunt growth and protect the status quo of smallness. Thus, it can be summarised that:

- the heart of the organisational structure contains the founding-entrepreneur, the entrepreneurial family;
- their respective value set within which social and economic goals are contested;
- emotional attachment to predominately family values may dilute the entrepreneurial process, deliberately preserving the “micro”;
- alternatively, the family structure could provide the business with a significant entrepreneurial advantage that the corporate organisations may find extremely difficult to mimic.

#### *Organisational behaviour*

Brockhaus (1994) defines family business in terms of organizational behavioural characteristics, in that it is represented as an enterprise in which family members influence the direction of the business through the exercise of kinship ties, ownership rights or management roles. Ram and Halliday (1993) and Chua *et al.* (1999) support this definitional stance. Kets de Vries (1996, p. 56) succinctly summarises the spirit and challenge of organisational behaviour in family businesses as follows: “Founder-entrepreneurs and owners of family firms and their employees are like partners in a dance: the experience can be very exhilarating, but the dancers sometimes fall over each other’s feet . . . making the organisational “dance” gracefully – is the real challenge for all concerned”.

Goffee (1996) cautions against assuming that all family businesses exhibit similar behavioural characteristics. Differences will derive from varying structures, cultures and life cycle stages of entrepreneurial families. This was apparent in a study of small family tourism accommodation providers in Scotland and Brazil, where Morrison and Teixeira (2003) analysed organisational behaviour through the application of a three-category framework of founding-entrepreneur, business and external environment. This revealed that:

- low entry barriers attract entrepreneurs with both limited formal education or experience directly relating to the industry sector and those with professional qualifications;

- the extent of managerial competences is extremely variable as many perceive the operation of such service operations as to be simple with a low skill requirement;
- the material and immaterial needs of the family tend to dictate the amount of income to which involved family members aspire; and
- many businesses are content to operate to sub-optimal levels in terms of profit and growth provided their lifestyle is satisfactory.

Thus, it can be seen that sets of factors such as level of education, extent of management competence, family needs, and profit-earning objectives, and the general exercise of kinship ties will be unique to specific family businesses and will permeate organisational behaviour.

#### *Organisational resources*

Habbershon and Williams (1999) adopt a resource-based definitional approach in describing family business resources as the “familiness” of a given business. More specifically, they define “familiness” as the unique bundle of resources a particular business has because of the systems interaction between the family, its individual members and the business. This provides a unified systems perspective on family business performance capabilities and entrepreneurial advantage. Such a definitional approach has advantages in that it may focus attention on the largely hidden contribution of family members, and in particular female entrepreneurs, in enterprise management and development (Carter *et al.*, 2001; Orhan and Scott, 2001; Warren-Smith and Jackson, 2004). From an organisational resource perspective a family business’s founding and on-going goals can act as both a bonus and a constraint to business, are instrumental in the making and shaping of the business’s resources (Craig and Lindsay, 2002), and can provide a distinct entrepreneurial resource advantage (Cameron and Massey, 1999). For example, Habbershon and Williams (1999) summarise elements of such a resource base as follows:

- a unique working environment which fosters a family oriented workplace and inspires greater employee care and loyalty;
- more flexible work practices;
- family members are more productive than non-family employees;
- a shared “family language” allows more effective communication;
- family relationships generate unusual motivation, cement loyalties, and increase trust;
- transaction costs are lowered; and
- decision-making is informal and efficient.

This emphasises the significant resource base that an entrepreneurial family has the potential to contribute to a business. Furthermore, the deployment of family members in “voluntary”, “unpaid”, or “unwaged” employment, is particularly prevalent in domestic gender division of labour as if often evidenced in the tourism industry. This is a traditional, important and differentiating feature of the entrepreneurial family in comparison to corporations (Gorton, 2000). Indeed, Scase and Goffee (1989) make reference to small hotels, in that they are often only profitable because the overheads

are subsidized by unpaid services of family members and by the use of domestic facilities to accommodate business. As a result it is often difficult to differentiate clearly between profit as return on investment and the emoluments of the owners in the form of cash and non-cash benefits (Medlik and Ingram, 2000). This suggests that many tourism family businesses are operated by social entrepreneurs as identified in Table II in a form of “domestic-economy” as opposed to a “market-economy” and may represent an economically efficient mode of enterprise with special entrepreneurial advantages (Blackburn, 1999). Thus, it can be summarized that the organizational resources within small family tourism businesses are composed of economic, market and socially derived capital (Thompson *et al.*, 2000).

### Entrepreneurial socio-economic outcomes

Finally, after a journey through the three-level filtering system the entrepreneurial process reaches the resultant socio-economic outcomes as evidenced within the tourism industry. The actual contribution of small family businesses is difficult to gauge accurately (Kovassy and Hutton, 2001), however, Middleton and Clarke (2001, p. 39) summarises them in economic, social and environmental terms in the following manner:

They are embedded in local communities, so the money earned tends to be retained within the community and they provide a vital source of employment. For the guests, they can add value socially in that they may reflect the special values of “place” and “host encounters”, allowing a glimpse into local life. In expressing the local character of place, entrepreneurs could be more committed than, for example, a corporate group, to sustaining the environment for a range of moral, lifestyle and commercial motivations.

Again, this corresponds to the social entrepreneur guise identified in Table II. Furthermore, as Morrison (2002) and Burnett and Danson (2004) have identified small family tourism businesses have the potential to contribute social, economic and environmental outcomes to rural and peripheral communities in which they are located by:

- offering sustainable solutions to economic and social challenges in terms of providing employment and services, purchasing goods and services from local suppliers and trades at community level;
- preserving the natural environment in which they locate;
- attracting inward investment from those persons seeking a lifestyle change; and
- adding value to the community as a whole.

However, Middleton and Clarke (2001, p. 41) counter these positive entrepreneurial outcomes in stating that: “at the leading edge, they [small tourism businesses] embody the entrepreneurial spirit and vitality of places. . . at the trailing edge many exist on the fringes of the industry damaging the environment of the destinations in which they are located, reducing visitor satisfaction and perceived quality of the overall visitor experience”.

### Conclusions

It has been demonstrated that understanding of the entrepreneurial process, as it interplays with family business, is best served by reference to the cultural, industry

setting and organisational context within which entrepreneurs are embedded. These combine to filter the perceptions and behaviours of entrepreneurs as to the potential to achieve their aspired material and/or social gain. At full intensity this process will result in outcomes that radically infuse and energise economies, society and industries, creating long term and sustainable benefits for society as a whole. However, this proposition needs to be treated carefully as it contains an implicit bias towards an idealist vision of entrepreneurship. As has been illustrated within the context of the small family business in the tourism industry setting, the intensity of the entrepreneurial process has been significantly diluted by the time it has flowed through all three levels of filters (Figure 1). Industry setting modifiers and the family-business organizational nexus interact to produce entrepreneurial outcomes of small family business endeavour that lack entrepreneurial intensity.

In particular, this has served to surface the domestic/social and business/economics nexus that permeates the small family tourism business context. Specifically, the following complex and humanistic dimensions have been identified:

- It is characterized by relatively low professional, skill and financial barriers to entry, that readily accommodates a family/lifestyle business model.
- It is perceived as an attractive mode for those individuals seeking life change away from the corporate career ladder.
- The commercial pursuit of enterprise is a necessary sustenance for, but subordinated to, the pursuit of socially driven lifestyle aspirations.
- Many of the entrepreneurs can be classed as social, operating primarily in a domestic-market economy.
- Locational decisions are heavily influenced by personal preferences and the aesthetic appeal of particular geographical locations rather than rational economic assessment.
- Businesses are dominated by the entrepreneurial family that can act either as a valuable competitive human asset or a detrimental drain on the efficiency and quality of the operation.

Taken in combination, it is little wonder that the small family business endures in the tourism industry. Limited career ambition, a merging of family and business, quality of life aspirations, and low motivation for commercial pursuit other than lifestyle sustenance converge to conspire against growth, innovation and intense entrepreneurial behaviour. That said, in their own distinct way small entrepreneurial families do act as catalysts in the wealth creation process, positively contributing social and financial capital to rural and peripheral communities and local economies. In doing so, they often engender new life and economic activity that enables the sustenance of natural environments, crafts and traditions that might otherwise disappear. However, their creation of small businesses is unlikely to transform industry sectors and societies. Nevertheless, it is argued that they can provide a valuable contribution in embodying an entrepreneurial spirit that has the potential to significantly contribute to the vitality of place and experience within tourism destinations. Thus, it is concluded that small family tourism businesses do represent a manifestation of entrepreneurship as a broadly conceived term, albeit an alternative interpretation from that generally associated with entrepreneurship as defined by

economic theory. Of the entrepreneur guises identified in Table II, the founding entrepreneur(s) are most prevalent in those of copreneur, family, female, lifestyle, micro and social.

The content of this paper has demonstrated benefits to be gained from “drilling down” from the generally accepted conventional wisdom concerned with entrepreneurship as generically conceived, to the specifics of industry and organizational context. The outcome has been to develop a more intense and holistic understanding of the entrepreneurs, and their values and attitudes, cues, guises and behaviours. For policy makers this understanding has the potential to contribute to refining their interventions to be more exactly aligned to industry context and dynamics, and thereby enhance their effectiveness.

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