

CONATUS AND SUCCESSION PROCESS: Limits and Possibilities to Continue a Family Business

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to analyze how the conatus interferes in the perpetuity of the family business, considering aspects that may limit or enable its continuation. The research is applied and qualitative, being a multi-case study. The results point out that the conatus interferes in the continuity of the family businesses analyzed, insofar as there is in the predecessor a desire to perpetuate the 'project' and actions focused on its transmission to successors. The four studied businesses showed aspects associated with the limits and possibilities for continuity, and these aspects differed from one organization to another.

Keywords: *Conatus, Succession, Family Business*

1. INTRODUCTION

The society goes through changes in economic and social context, generating conditions associated with setting up a family based business. Economic transformations that lead to the generation of unemployment, promotes opportunities for opening family businesses. In social context, the family business is a source of employment and better income distribution. (Craide, 2005; Craide, Cavedon & Eccel, 2008).

The founder of the family business is the one who had an idea and put it into practice, involved with a desire to engage a dream, and / or to provide the family. The business is the realization of a project that involves the family members and also the need for survival, implying the familiar realization (Grzybowski & Tedesco, 1998). Davel and Colbari (2003) noted that in the family organizations, the social processes are in evidence, given that the familiar molds are responsible for designing roles and relationships, causing a dense association between political and symbolic aspects with emotional and symbolic aspects that were built throughout the life of the family. Complementing this perspective, Lescura, Moreira, Borges and Capelle (2010) found that family businesses are complex systems that require a view capable of providing a better understanding of the various forces present in this universe, composed simultaneously by the family and the business.

According to Grossi (2010), in the earlier stages of the family business, it is the owner who performs the administrative functions, often supported by the family. The business initiates its growth process and multiple factors appear that instigate and limit the continuity of the organization. The instigating factors may be competitiveness; innovation; favorable market demand, successful succession process. Factors that may limit can be the difficulty of the owner to delegate tasks; lack of trained personnel; absence of resources; lack of knowledge of the owner, and complications in the succession.

Among the aspects that impact the continuity of family organization, the succession has deserved discussions involving heritage, from the financial point of view, to the motivations related to emotions and family values (Leone, 1992; Sharma & Rao, 2000; Rossato Neto, 2003; Estol & Ferreira, 2006; Cater III & Justis, 2010; Lescura *et al.*, 2010; Lozano & Urbano, 2010).

The succession process is founded on the implementation of a dream, of a life project, that is familiar, in which the heir must accept to continue, given that the business is the family. This process leads to a network of emotions and actions that involve both father and son in the game of perpetuating the family project, continuing the family business. Thus, the succession process in family organizations involves a variety of factors, among them, those who understand the heritage, not only financial, but the familiar emotions.

There is an inheritance of the project of the father being transmitted to the son. This project is addressed by Bourdieu (1997) as *conatus*. According to the author, to inherit is to perpetuate the *conatus*, continuing the father's desires. The *conatus* can be used to designate the family "project", established by the founder of the family organization, seeking its continuity.

Knowing the factors that are possibilities and the factors that are limits to the development of the family business is fundamental so that the owners / managers and researchers can pursue a better understanding of organizational reality, in order to provide continuity to these businesses. With this in mind, the purpose of this article is to analyze how the *conatus* interferes in the continuity of the family business, considering the limits and possibilities for the business.

Besides this introduction, the present article consists of four more parts. The first part, which is the theoretical reference of the article, addresses the succession process, the *conatus* and the possibilities and limits to continue a family business; the second part presents the methodology. The third part performs an analysis and discussion of the data and finally, the conclusion.

2. THEORETICAL REFERENCE

2.1 Succession Process and the Continuity of the Family Business

The family organization is a composite of two dialectically defined institutions: the family and the business. It is a type of organization that has its origin in the family, with direct links of primary socialization, forming a complex system, where the actors involved develop relationships in which there is a rational presence, of conflicts, interests, affection, feelings (Lima, 1999; Davel & Colbari, 2000, 2003; Papa & Luz, 2008; Pimenta & Corrêa, 2008).

Thus, in a family business, family and work relations are in an ongoing game, whose conflicts reflect in its operation direction, in the sense of expanding or declining the organization. From these relations, arises a range of possibilities that can configure both cause and consequence of large affections or suffering to family members. The relations can promote gratifying advances for the actors in the company, depending on forward actions, including the resolution of conflicts (Campos & Mazzilli, 1998).

The social process presents a high specificity in family organization, to the extent that it not only competes with the process of secondary socialization, in other words, the transmission of knowledge only in relation to

organizational order, but, involves primary socialization patterns, knowledge with symbolic references and learning within the family, because in these organizations, both worlds are present (Lima, Pimentel & Soares, 1999).

The existing particularity in the management process of family businesses is characterized by the interferences that the family representatives have in the management practices, in the same way that the history of the organization is intertwined with the history of the family (Davel & Colbari, 2003; Garcia & Moreira, 2008). Grzybovski (2007) arguments that each family business has its own management model, based on values of the owning family and the dynamics of the business's succession system.

The identification of the manager in the complex relationship business-family-property guides the conduction of the organization. In this sense, flexibility, the outcome of management and the succession process, are directly related to the ability of dialogue and trust of the family, observing the common goal between founder and successor, which is the business's success- in which one wants to pass on what he knows and has built so far, and the other wants to prepare for what is to come (Freire, Soares, Nakayama & Spanhol, 2010).

The family business has received growing interest in academic research, which seek to understand its dynamics-formation, existence and legacy (Fernandes, Oliveira, Rodrigues & Garcia, 2012). The attention given to this type of organization is supported by the complexity of the relations established, because family beliefs and values, organizational aspects (management), as well as the very continuance of the company as part of a family and life project, referring to its origin, are inserted in the same environment.

Among the studies about the topic, an aspect of analysis of family businesses is the succession and the triggered processes from this perspective, this being one of the topics discussed by several researchers (Davel & Colbari, 2001, 2003; Grzybovski, 2007; Machado, 2005; Aguilera & Crespi-Cladera, 2012; Brockhaus, 2004; Lam, 2011; Pyromalis & Vozikis, 2009).

In the context of family business, the succession process is an issue of great concern as it relates to the survival and continuity of the business. Gersick, Davis, Hampton and Lansberg (1997) and Duh, Tominc and Rebernik (2009) noted that such originated process, whether by the death of the founder, or by the transfer of power from the succeeded to the successor, is a quite peculiar process in the existence of a family organization, characterized by the transfer of power in the business from one family generation to another. According to Lodi (1987), succession can happen gradually, in a planned manner, or suddenly, as in cases of death, injury or illness of the founder.

The succession process requires analysis of managerial and familiar perspectives (Brockhaus, 2004), also implying a structural change in the power of the organization, generating new organizational arrangements. Apart from family subjects, the succession process involves employees who are not family (Lam, 2011). Furthermore, it is considered often an emotional issue that can cause serious conflicts in the business (Van Der Merwe, Venter & Ellis, 2009; Laakonen & Kansikas, 2011).

Aiming at better management of such conflicts, Van Der Merwe *et. al.* (2009), and Aguilera and Crespi-Cladera (2009) argue that it is necessary to plan the succession as soon as the youngest generation enters the business. In this sense, it is essential that issues related to the succession process are treated in the most rational and comfortable way possible, allowing a profitable administration that also considers your personal and emotional character.

The changes in the organizational environments, due to the increasing market dynamics, are also seen in family businesses, given the changes in family composition and distribution of power. The preparation for the succession process happens so much from father to son (s), such as father to daughter (s), mother to daughter (s) or son (s), not existing a rule representing the preparation of successors (Machado, 2005).

From a study conducted in Brazilian family organizations, Scheffer (2005) identified five difficulties in proceeding to the succession in these organizations, which are: 1. When the heir lacks qualification; 2. When family interactions are interposed in the process; 3. When the succeeded refuses to leave the organization; 4. When rejection comes from older employees of the organization; and 5. When the successor is not interested in assuming the organization.

Therefore, the survival of a family organization is directly related to its succession process, which not only reflects the continuity of management, but also the organizational effectiveness. For Miller, Steier and Le

Breton-Miller (2003), the lack of alignment between the past and future of the organization reflects the failure of many of these organizations. Thus, the succession process is fundamental to the life of the family organization, to the extent that it includes the transmission of management and the organizations patrimony, as well as the ideological aspects.

2.2 Succession Process and Conatus: the Familiar Presence and Transmission

For Bottino-Antonaccio (2007), the family is the first space in which individuals have the experience of being who they are, and belonging to the world. Its function is ensuring the physical survival of the members who are part of it and to socialize their children. The family teaches how to divide the physical space, time, physical objects and love, teaches to live with feelings of affection or disgust, and even with the simultaneous opposite feelings, teaches the meaning of belonging to a family.

The family also serves as a basic reference in conducting motivational and conditional processes for the integration of individuals in the universe of production (Davel & Colbari, 2000).

The family patrimony is propagated from generation to generation from the various elements that compose it, namely, “matrimonial exchanges, the transgression of organizing principles of the social order in terms of inheritance (how much, how, to whom and when), the use of ancient custom and the (dis)position of symbolic and economic capital” (Tedesco, 2008, p. 101).

According to Davel and Colbari (2000) and Lopes (2008) the family is a disseminator of the roles and tasks of each member, while building the life of individuals within the family sphere. For Sarti (2004), Machado (2005) and Bottino-Antonaccio (2007), it is within the family that the individual develops the first conceptions on how to make sense of lived experiences. These experiences also consider the roles to be played in the family business, as they are transferred to the sphere of the family business. The succession process is the implementation of a dream, of a life project, which the heir must accept to continue, since the project is of the family (Lescura *et al.*, 2010).

The participation of the founder’s children is natural in the organizations day to day, because usually they are involved since childhood in business activities (Lescura *et al.*, 2010; Cater III & Justis, 2010). Thus, the start of constructing the identification with the business and the transmission of the life project also occur at this stage. The company influences the formation of values and identity of family members. In this sense, the founder fulfills, consciously or not, the function of perpetuating the family project, while seeking to arouse interest in his child towards business continuity. The children, on the other hand, are encouraged during childhood to know and learn about the business, even though they do not have maturity, or consciousness, to understand which career to follow (Leone, 1992; Lescura *et al.*, 2010; Cater III; & Justis, 2010).

To understand the processes that the family business experiences, one must consider the complexity of the elements that permeate and intertwine in this type of organization, which are: family values, emotional, and business, which also involves the succession.

The succession process in family businesses requires questioning concerning the perpetuation of the family project, in the continuity of the company, in the perspectives of inheritance or of the founders legacy to be succeeded- the father / predecessor- and the successor- the son. Therefore, there are a variety of factors related to the succession process that vary from those who understand the inheritance from the financial point of view, to the family reasons that involve emotions and family values, that should, or should not be transmitted.

The literature makes clear the importance of monitoring the succession process in organizations, since the succession is fundamental and complex for companies guided by the family, which may be successful or lead to trauma, according to the way in which it is conducted and accepted by those involved (Estol & Ferreira, 2006).

As mentioned by Leone (1992) there is an expectation of the directors that their business be subsequently managed by family members, specifically by direct descendants, resting on the founder the task of arousing interest in the children, future successors who must learn to accept the responsibility on continuing what is of the family.

The succession process starts even before the successor is in management positions, and the feeling of belonging is improved when the successor fulfills a full time job within the organization (Lozano & Urbano, 2010). It is in the sense of belonging that one has the first indications if the successor will fulfill the succession process or not, because, if in this stage he shows himself satisfied and responsibly performs his duties, he will most likely continue in the company.

In the transmission of the family legacy and perpetuating the family project that triggers the succession, the father transmits to the children his beliefs and values. In this sense, there is a transmission that is performed by means of a 'project' from father to son. This 'project' is addressed by Bourdieu (1997) as *conatus*. According to the author, to inherit is to perpetuate the *conatus*, "accept to become a gentle instrument of this reproducing 'project'" (Bourdieu, 1997, p. 9). Thus, the *conatus* can be used to designate the family project established by the founder of the organization seeking its perpetuation, being transferred to the heirs since childhood (Lescura *et al.*, 2010).

There is in the father, the predecessor, the desire to transmit a 'project' to the son, his successor, heir who will continue what his father built. The father transmits "unconsciously in his manner and by his manner of being, and also, explicitly, by educational actions oriented to perpetuate the bloodline (Bordieu, 1997, p. 9). This occurs insofar as the child reproduces and accepts the perpetuation of that which is pertaining to the family business.

The perpetuation of *conatus* arises from the interest of the successor in continuing the family business, which is the 'project' of the parents, given that in initial contact with the business and the professional lives of his parents, he is motivated to do so. The preparation takes place when individuals are still children, as part of a "joke", and remains during adolescence and adulthood. According to Lescura *et al.* (2010) the perpetuation of *conatus* means not only the continuity of the organization, but the continuity of family values.

Rossato Neto (2003) found that it is natural that pressure occurs on the heir to choose the same career developed by the father. Remaining a long period of time with the father emerges and develops a sense of following what is already determined, as a mission. But these heirs may feel frustrated by not having a different option other than to follow the family 'project' (Lodi, 1987; Rossato Neto, 2003).

If on one hand there is the desire of the succeeded in perpetuating the family project in the company, another aspect regards the heir. To analyze the succession process from the point of view of the heir is critical because he is the key element for the continuation or not of the family organization, and so that the succession transition is successful. Therefore, one has to examine the issues involving technical and managerial skills of the successor, his willingness to continue the business, his relationship with the succeeded and his position in family and organizational contexts (Bernhoeft, 1989; Sharma & Rao, 2000). One must understand how the acceptance and belonging occur by the heir of the *conatus*.

It is possible to verify that in some cases, the successor disowns his values, relegates his freedom and aspirations, so that he is accepted within the group (Bourdieu, 1997). This occurs because the heir understands the need to continue the family 'project', feeling obligated to succeed victoriously the legacy built by his family. It might also occur that the founder considers himself irreplaceable in the organization (Vozikis, Weaver & Gibson, 2009), disregarding the successor, making him believe that he is incompetent to take over the management. Not accepting the heir as being capable of perpetuating the *conatus*. These are situations capable of compromising the perpetuation of the 'project' and so, the continuity of the family organization.

Still, when the heir does not identify the 'project' of the parents, to inherit this family 'project' can lead to contradictions and suffering from both sides. And in this case, when the heir does not share the same aspirations, one sees a situation where the *conatus* cannot perpetuate.

Lescura *et al.* (2010, pp. 10-11) considers that the perpetuation of the *conatus* not only means the continuity of the organization, but also the continuity of family values. "Being responsible for a project built by the father means to comply, within the rules of kinship, an established obligation in the family environment." Thus, denying the *conatus*, the child is accountable for losses (in the view of the father) that go beyond the end of the organization, but also imply the death of the values and traditions cultivated throughout the existence of the family.

All these aspects portray how the "contradictions of inheritance" can result in a multitude of conflicts throughout the succession process in family organizations (Lescura *et al.*, 2010).

2.3 *Conatus: limits and possibilities to continue a family business*

The transmission of *conatus* in family businesses and its succession can trigger feelings of belonging, commitment, obligation, frustration or rejection. These feelings interfere with the continuity of the family organization, which corresponds to the 'project' of the family.

The succession process is the implementation of a dream, of a life project built by the founder, who deposits in the future heir the responsibility of perpetuating the *conatus* (Lescura *et al.*, 2010). However, it may happen that the heir has different interests and perspectives other than this project, capable of interfering in the continuation of the organization. According to Bourdieu (1997), many people suffer because there is an imbalance between their achievements and parental expectations that can neither satisfy nor repudiate.

On one hand, the involvement of the individual within the business space can generate and intensify the desire to continue what the family has built. On the other hand, remaining in business may not be associated to the sense of belonging in the universe of the family business. Pressure may occur from the father on the son to assume his position and follow the 'project', and the lack of an alternative, unemployment, for example, can disguise a desire against the wishes of the father.

As mentioned by Rossato Neto (2003), pressure on the heir to accept the 'project' is natural, and at the same time, feelings against the father's wishes can be triggered. In this condition, Bourdieu (1997) understands that the process of accepting the inheritance may tend to contradictions and sufferings. These feelings are experienced by both father and son, as they represent different choices and can generate conflicts. Denying the business also implies denying the family, intensifying conflicts.

The conflict, depending on the reason for which it manifests, may result in the failure of the *conatus*. The child that does not foresee the father's 'project', that does not identify with it and chooses not to follow the teachings of his predecessor, tends to not recognize their role in accordance with the desire of his father, and causes the *conatus* not to perpetuate.

Conflicts originated from the succession process are not uncommon, since this process is delicate. Organizations constantly face differences in management model between the successor and the succeeded (Grzybovski, 2007). The fact that the reflection of unresolved emotional issues within the family is transmitted to the succession process in the form of vanities, blackmail and disputes is a recurring event (Bernhoeft, 1989).

For Lescura *et al.* (2010), these disputes are related to the different characteristics between the successor and succeeded. At times, the founder is characterized by a less professionalized and more entrepreneurial figure, while the successor has a more enterprising, professional, flexible and decentralized identity (GRZYBOVSKI, 2007).

The successful transmission of *conatus*, whether or not occurred, reflects the success in the succession process, and the possibilities or limits to the continuity of family businesses. Handler (1989) identified two fundamental dimensions of the succession process to identify its effectiveness: the satisfaction with the succession process and the effectiveness itself.

Pyromalis, Vozikis, Kalkanderas, Rogdaki and Sigalas (2006) developed a proposal that synthesizes the existing literature concerning these two dimensions. For the authors, there are five critical success factors that can influence the success of the succession process in family organizations: (1) the propensity of the founder to step away from the organization; (2) the availability of the successor to take over the organization; (3) the good family relations and communication; (4) succession planning, and (5) the preparation and adaptation of the successor.

Thus, this task starts from a different approach, other than the functionalist, to discuss the limits and possibilities to continue the family business, identified in Table 1, related to the succession process. A set of interveners that emerge in this process are considered, linked to the transmission of the *conatus* by the founder and the heir identifying himself with the *conatus*, as fundamental conditions for the success of the succession process in family organizations.

3. METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

This is a research of applied nature, because, according to Barros and Leheld (2000) it aims to contribute in a practical way to the solution of concrete problems. As to the form, it is a qualitative research study (Minayo & Sanches, 1993).

The multi-case study was used as a strategy to achieve the proposed objective. Triviños (1987, p. 133) conceptualizes that "the case study is a category of research in which the object is a *unit* that is deeply analyzed", in which neither the assumptions nor inquisition schemes are initially established, which makes the

analysis more complex to the extent that the matter deepens. The multi-case study (Triviños, 1987, p. 136) is "to study two or more subjects, organizations [...] without the need to pursue goals of a comparative nature."

The data was collected through in-depth interviews, semi-structured, in four small businesses in the city of Uberlândia, Minas Gerais, Brazil, including a restaurant (Business A), a tire repair industry and trade (Business B), a motorcycle dealership (Business C) and a factory of office furniture (Business D). The interviews, conducted between February and July 2012 were recorded and transcribed.

In Business A, the interviews were obtained from the statements of six people: eldest son, middle son, son's wife, a waiter and two cooks. The business was founded by the parents in 1990, who already owned another restaurant since 1983. The parents left the business in 2000 to dedicate to the activities of the family farm, and the restaurant is now managed by the eldest and the youngest child. The parents also have a younger daughter who does not act in the business. Today the mother goes to the restaurant more frequently than the father, but both do not participate in the decision making.

In Business B, the interviews were obtained from the statements of four people: youngest child, middle son, account manager and financial manager. The business was founded in 1949 by a businessman who worked together with his two children. In mid-1985 the business went in difficulty and two members, who have no kinship, entered the business aimed at recovering the organization. The founder left the company and the partnership in 1995, remaining the two partners who joined in 1985. Currently the partners do not act directly in the business and they passed on the partnership to the children, although only the middle son works in the business. There was no involvement of the children as kids in the organization, since they began to participate in the activities when the founder left, at which time they were in there teens/adulthood.

The youngest Son is graduated in Economics and acted in the business from 1998 to 2002. He took over the business in request and need of the father, who had a farm in Mato Grosso and felt difficulties in managing the two businesses due to distance. The youngest son had no intention of remaining in the business because he was involved in other activities. Thus, in 2003 the eldest son took over the business, remaining from 2003 to 2005. He was not very interested by the activity and left to work with his brother (younger son). The middle son, having completed high school, took over the business in 2005, position he holds today. Although the father does not act directly in the business, he is always present and continues to influence in the decisions.

In Business C, the interviews were obtained from the statements of four individuals: father, son, daughter and an employee of the business. The father founded the business in 1977 and after 35 years in management, decided it was time to stop. He still frequently attends the business and eventually participates in decision making. The oldest daughter graduated in journalism and, at first, had followed the profession. However, she started her activities in the business in 2007 after her father threatened to sell it if the children did not take over the family business. The son was present at the business since his youth, beginning his work as a laborer in the workshop. Currently, both act in the management of the dealership, being the daughter responsible for supervising the sales area and the son for training and the administration of personnel.

In Business D, three individuals were interviewed: the father, the son and an employee. The business was founded in 1975 and, just like in the dealership, the succession process was not something planned. The founder has three children (two engineers and a daughter who works in advertising), however it was the middle child who spontaneously took over the business. Today, he is the one who is under full control of the organization.

The interpretation of the collected data was performed by the technique of content analysis. Bauer (2002) noted that the analysis of content seeks to reduce the complexity of texts and speeches, working to filter the systematic classification and the counting of large volumes of texts, in a short description of representative characteristics of what is intended to discover.

Therefore, two categories of analysis were defined, from the literature review, aiming to focus the gaze of the researcher to specific points that are better able to reveal about the objective that is intended to meet, namely: limits to continue the family business and; possibilities to continue the family business.

4. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Based on the literature review and on the collection of data, it was possible to know how the *conatus*, according to Bourdieu (1997), interferes with the continuity of the family businesses analyzed. According to the author, there is in the father the desire to transmit a 'project' to his son, which should give continuity to what was built.

This occurs to the extent that the child reproduces and accepts the perpetuation of that which is associated with the family business.

This desire could be verified in the 4 businesses analyzed. The statements of one of the sons of Business B and of the founder of Business C for example, shows how the desire to perpetuate the business is a 'project' of the father that needs to be transmitted: "[...] so, of course, he always wanted someone, he wanted a succession"

(Son 2 – Business B)

My sons still would not give me a grandchild. Neither would my daughter. So it's a concern I have, I even joked with them, I said "You can begin to choose a cousin, uncle, which you have more sympathy for, so that you can leave it to the relatives"... I spoke jokingly to see if they would take the initiative (Founder- Business C)

The aspects associated to the limits and possibilities of the family business, associated with conatus, which were gathered from the literature review, were observed in all the analyzed businesses.

Limits in Business A were found, such as, Family interactions interposed to the succession process; Lack of interest of the successor to take over the organization; Divergence of ideas between successor and succeeded; and Family pressure on the son to assume the business.

Such limits are exemplified in the following statements: "Then, on a fine day, it was literally that, they came and said that as of tomorrow you will continue with the restaurant [...]" (Son 2). The employee 3 says: "[...] I am only a partner, right, of the business, but I do not take initiative. [...] Does not have affinity with the area, never had" [referring to Son 1, who is not actively involved in the family business].

The Employee 4 puts it: "[...] there are many things that he [the father] did not agree ... [the father] he is very, you know ... I don't think that they got along well "[employee referring to the relationship between the father and the spouse of one of the heirs].

As for the possibilities, the speech alludes to the capacity of the succeeded to dialogue and having the confidence of the family; Succession planning; Participation of the children in the organization since childhood; the heir's Satisfaction and willingness to assume; Propensity of the founder to step away from the organization; and Qualification of the successor.

Son 2 declares: "[...] I was five and helped my parents in some activities, and that started as a joke right,.. Like I told you, it wasn't something imposed, but a joke, a desire that we had sometimes to play around with food."

[...] it was already something I wanted to do... [...] Exactly, because the... I always liked working with this. So much that, even in my childhood and teen years I helped out my parents. That was a characteristic of mine. So I guess I joined the hunger with the desire to eat. I guess that's it (Son 2).

Son 2 also states: "[...] my father, for example, after he left, continued with the business on the farm". And Employee 3 says: "Son 2 has that affinity, he always had. [...] so he has a lot of affinity with the line of business [competence, capacity], that's why it stayed with him".

In Business B the following limits were found: Lack of interest of the successor to assume the organization; Family pressure on the son to assume the business; Divergence of ideas between successor and succeeded; Rejection of the successor by the older employees.

The statements of the Sons 1 and 2 exemplify these limits: "[...] he [the father] returned to stay here [in the business] and I saw that I could leave...I never expected to stay, it wasn't my thing (Son 1)" "Conflicts of view. He [the father] had a very conservative view that was his style, and I have a more aggressive view" (Son 1). And he [the father] said "no, you are getting very far away from me, this will not work, what he is paying you there I pay you here, you can come work with me." (Son 2). "[...] was a problem with our manager today, they [one of the sons and the manager] did not coincide (Son 2)".

In terms of possibilities, the statements refer to the Qualification of the successor; Transmission of management, patrimony and ideology; Propensity of the founder to step away from the organization; and the heir's Satisfaction and willingness to assume.

The Employee states: "Son 1 possessed a refined knowledge of management." Son 1 says "[...] Son 3 was already well prepared when he arrived, and my father was with him at the time. So my father made a transition of base with him and to this day my father goes there. And Son 2 adds "No, he only gives assistance to us here, he has nothing else here in the social contract, nothing, although today he signs checks when I'm traveling [...]"

In Business C the following limits were found: Divergence of ideas between successor and succeeded; Family interactions interposed to the succession process; Family pressure on the son to assume the business; Lack of interest of the successor to assume the organization; Refusal of the succeeded to leave the organization; sense of being irreplaceable.

As stated by the Employee: "For example, some things that needed to be changed in the business, the management, for example...the sons did not agree with the management that was and had to be placed, that the management and processes needed to be changed." She even says the following "[...] but we do realize this type of conflict...something personal that was brought by them to the business".

Son 1 states the following: "So it was very difficult. When I made the decision it was kind of because of the family pressure, but it was a safer thing. So, I came upset because I was leaving what I was building there for awhile".

Son 2 reveals: "Plus the speeches of having to take over the business, working in the family business...then I was harassed by this kind of thing and I stayed, ended up staying".

In turn, the founder puts it: "My son [Son 1] has a concept that I do not support, he lives in Rio and thinks he can run the business on the internet. He has this point of view and I do not agree with it". He further says: "The human nature of my children worry me very much, if they will or will not understand each other when I'm not here...I believe that they understand each other today because I'm here to appease, you know, but it is a concern I have".

As for the possibilities, the statements refer to the Propensity of the founder to step away from the organization; the Capacity of the succeeded in establishing a dialogue and having the confidence of the family; Qualification of the successor; and Participation of the children in the organization since childhood.

Such possibilities are illustrated by the following statements: "He really is in this succession process, with the children taking over more" (Employee); "So I would leave school and go by foot to the business and stay there all afternoon, I enjoyed staying there. So I learned how to ride a motorcycle with a company employee, I learned a lot from the staff at that time" (Son 2). "Yes, if it is necessary to make a decision they meet" [to talk] (Employee).

In Business D, limits associated to the Rejection of the successor by the older employees were found.

[...] we had a certain difficulty, when we started working in the business because there were employees who had seen us as children and then maybe thought "wow, that boy used to stay in the business as a child and now is already starting to work, maybe even giving orders, you know, stuff like that.. (Son 1)

Regarding the possibilities, the statements are associated with The Capacity of the succeeded in establishing a dialogue and having the confidence of the family; The heir's satisfaction and willingness to assume; Qualification of the successor; Transmission of management, patrimony and ideology; Participation of the children in the organization since childhood; and Succession planning.

The Son 1 makes the following statements related to the possibilities: "[...] we always talk, my father and I, I always tried to learn from him, we always had a very good relationship, and this exchange has always helped me to sum up knowledge"; "[...]And then I really started working in the business, and it's been about 12 to 13 years that we are here, and this is a period that I'm really focused on the business "; "Yes, I had a gradual preparation, you know, and so I always had the responsibility of taking over myself".

The Table 2 shows the limits and possibilities that were found in the analyzed businesses, and those not found, according to the consulted literature.

One can see that in Table 2 the only aspect identified in all businesses, regarding the possibilities, was qualification of the successor, in which the statements of the interviewee showed that the successors, once

inserted in the business, developed their professional knowledge and skills, allowing a performance capable of contributing to the success of the business and its continuity.

It is necessary that the successor has sufficient experience, skills and knowledge to not make the succession a failure, generating trauma to the business and family. Other than that, qualification is important not to potentiate other limits, such as Rejection of the successor by the older employees (Scheffer, 2005) who depreciate the Son, given his inability compared to the father.

In none of the statements of the interviewee and in none of the analyzed businesses, it became evident that there is an understanding of the succession process by those who experienced the succession as an emotional issue. Although the literature understands that this is a limit to the continuity of the family business (Bernhoeft, 1989; Grzybovski, 2007; Van Der Merwe *et. al.*, 2009; Laakonen & Kansikas, 2011), this understanding could represent a possibility, since understanding the emotional aspects involving the succession process is fundamental in trying to overcome its limits (Lescura *et al.*, 2010).

In the same manner, statements referring to Perpetuation of family values could not be found, which is fundamental in the transmission of the father's 'project' (Lescura *et al.*, 2010), and should also be considered by those involved as a way to search for possibilities for succession.

For Sudden succession, as in cases of death of the succeeded, despite not representing any of the cases analyzed, should be considered as a situation possible to occur, and capable of preventing the transmission of the *conatus*, situation that must be conceived by Succession planning, which is an aspect of possibility for the family business (Pyromalis *et. al.*, 2006; Van Der Merwe *et. al.*, 2009; Aguilera & Crespi-Cladera, 2009).

5. CONCLUSION

Parents have the desire to perpetuate the *conatus*, proposed by Bourdieu (1997), manifested sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously. The *conatus*, according to the conducted research, is translated in the intention of transmitting the family 'project' that is directly associated to perpetuate, continue the family business. This feeling was verified in the analyzed cases and is present in all of them.

The *conatus* interferes in the continuity of the family businesses, insofar as it manifests actions associated with the succession process, capable of leading to limits and possibilities to perpetuate the business. The four businesses presented aspects that are limits and possibilities for continuity, and both the limits and possibilities differed from one organization to another. Only the possibility Qualification of the successor was found in all businesses.

It is important to note that there are limits to continuity in all analyzed companies, experienced throughout the succession process, incurring in difficulties that remain today. But those involved in the activities of these businesses seek to overcome these problems. What can happen is that, not knowing the aspects that interfere in this process, ends up not permitting decisions and actions that can contribute to improve the harmony of the whole architecture of the family and business system. The transmission of *conatus* occurs gradually, confronting feelings of not belonging or rejection.

Another important point, is that the possibilities, also present in the analyzed cases, allow us to understand the ability of such businesses to perpetuate itself, overcoming the failure and collapse of the family business, that could result in the not transmission of the 'project'. But they are actions that occur without the awareness of the aspects that can potentialize these possibilities, and knowing them would indicate ways to work a better planning of all actions that involve individuals of the family since childhood, as well as the company's employees.

Looking through the symbolic dimension, the aspects formed from the 'project' lead to limits and possibilities that emerge and develop throughout the transmission of *conatus*, insofar as lessons, preparation, identification, feelings of belonging, obligation and rejection flourish. These elements are conductors of a successful *conatus*, therefore, the continuity of the family business, 'project'.

As limits of this research it is considered that the case study is capable of revealing a particular object of analysis, to the extent that it allows a keen eye on the reality analyzed, but cannot generalize the universe of family businesses.

The results of the content analysis may incur interpretive biases, in the sense that data analysis is performed based on the interpretation of the researchers on what the interviewee is saying, which in turn, is also an interpretation of those surveyed on the reality lived by them.

It is suggested for future research, to analyze the succession process from the *conatus* considering its limits and possibilities for continuity in family businesses that are located in other cities and regions, as a comparative study, in the intention of searching for differences and /or similarities, deepening the result of this research. Also search for companies of different sizes and / or activity time, or even the number of successions, to determine how these factors may affect the continuity of businesses, from the perspective of *conatus*.

Another suggestion is to compare data from businesses that have perpetuated with information of businesses that have failed to overcome the succession process, leading to the end of its activities, knowing the aspects that interfere in the not transmission of the *conatus*.

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Table 1- Limits and possibilities to continue the family business

LIMITS	AUTHORS	POSSIBILITIES	AUTHORS
Lack of alignment between the past and the future of the organization	Miller <i>et al.</i> (2003)	The capacity of the succeeded in establishing a dialogue and having the confidence of the family	Pyromalis <i>et al.</i> (2006) Freire <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Understand the succession as an emotional issue	Bernhoeft (1989) Grzybovski (2007) Van Der Merwe <i>et al.</i> (2009) Laakonen and Kansikas (2011)	Succession planning	Pyromalis <i>et al.</i> (2006) Van Der Merwe <i>et al.</i> (2009) Aguillera and Crespi-Cladera (2009)
Sudden succession, as in cases of death of the succeeded	Lodi (1987)	Transmission of management, patrimony and ideology	Lescura <i>et al.</i> (2010)
Lack of qualification of the heir	Scheffer (2005)	Attention to personal interest, relations with the succeeded and the occupation of the successor within the family and the organization	Bernhoeft (1989) Sharma and Rao (2000)
Family interactions interposed to the succession process	Scheffer (2005)	Participation of the children in the organization since childhood	Lescura <i>et al.</i> (2010) Cater III and Justis (2010)
Refusal of the succeeded to leave the organization; sense of being irreplaceable	Bourdieu (1997) Scheffer (2005) Vozikis <i>et al.</i> (2009) Lescura <i>et al.</i> (2010)	Perpetuation of family values	Bourdieu (1997) Lescura <i>et al.</i> (2010) Fernandes <i>et al.</i> (2012)
Rejection of the successor by the older employees	Scheffer (2005)	The heir's satisfaction and willingness to assume	Handler (1989) Pyromalis <i>et al.</i> (2006)
Lack of interest of the successor to assume the organization	Lodi (1987) Scheffer (2005)	Propensity of the founder to step away from the organization	Pyromalis <i>et al.</i> (2006)
Family pressure on the son to assume the business	Lodi (1987) Rossato Neto (2003)	Qualification of the successor	Pyromalis <i>et al.</i> (2006)
Divergence of ideas between successor and succeeded	Grzybovski (2007) Lescura <i>et al.</i> (2010)		

Table 2 - Limits and Possibilities whether or not found in the researched businesses

	Found in researched businesses	Business	Not found in researched businesses
Limits	Family interactions interposed to the succession process	A and C	- Understand the succession as an emotional issue;
	Lack of interest of the successor to assume the organization	A, B, and C	- Sudden succession, as in cases of death of the succeeded;
	Divergence of ideas between successor and succeeded	A, B and C	Lack of qualification of the heir;
	Family pressure on the son to assume the business	A, B and C	- Lack of alignment between the past and the future of the organization
	Refusal of the succeeded to leave the organization; sense of being irreplaceable	C	
	Rejection of the successor by the older employees	B and D	
Possibilities	The Capacity of the succeeded in establishing a dialogue and having the confidence of the family	A	Attention to personal interest, relations with the succeeded and the occupation of the successor within the family and the organization
	Succession planning	A and D	
	Participation of the children in the organization since childhood	A, C and D	
	The heir's satisfaction and willingness to assume	A, B and D	
	Propensity of the founder to step away from the organization	A, B and C	
	Qualification of the successor	A, B, C and D	
	The Capacity of the succeeded in establishing a dialogue and having the confidence of the family	C and D	
Transmission of management, patrimony and ideology	B and D		