



Trajectory of a fourth-generation female entrepreneur as seen through a monomyth lens – Casa Ermelinda Freitas

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ABSTRACT

As family business research has expanded and evolved there has been a growing need to incorporate new methodological approaches in the field. This article introduces the use of Campbell's monomyth as a technique for narrative smoothing when structuring interview data, particularly that relating to entrepreneurial trajectories. The authors exemplify its use by applying it as a lens to characterize the trajectory of a fourth-generation woman entrepreneur, a wine producer in rural Portugal, and they discuss insights provided by this approach. The case analyzed is also presented as an exemplar of a narrative featuring a successful lifestyle entrepreneur as hero, one that demonstrates an alternative model to the common image of entrepreneur as a tech-savvy male would-be millionaire.

RÉSUMÉ

À mesure que la recherche sur les entreprises familiales s'est développée et a évolué, il est devenu de plus en plus nécessaire d'intégrer de nouvelles approches méthodologiques dans ce domaine. Cet article présente l'utilisation du monomythe de Campbell comme technique de lissage narratif au cours de la structuration des données d'entretiens, notamment celles relevant des trajectoires entrepreneuriales. Les auteurs illustrent cette utilisation en l'appliquant comme un prisme pour caractériser la trajectoire d'une femme entrepreneure de quatrième génération, productrice de vin dans le Portugal rural, et ils discutent des enseignements fournis par cette approche. Le cas analysé est également présenté comme un exemple de récit mettant en scène, en tant que héros, un entrepreneur de style de vie ayant réussi, qui démontre la possibilité d'un modèle alternatif à l'image courante de l'entrepreneur de sexe masculin, averti en technologie, qui voudrait devenir millionnaire.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 25 March 2020
Accepted 12 June 2020

KEYWORDS

Transgenerational entrepreneurship; female lifestyle entrepreneurs; rural family business; wine sector; monomyth

MOTS-CLÉS

entrepreneuriat trans-générationnel; entrepreneure de style de vie; entreprise familiale rurale; secteur viticole; monomythe

Introduction

Family business as a field of inquiry has seen a notable gathering of momentum over recent decades, going from 135 published articles in the 1970s to 5,654 in the 2000s

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(Sharma 2015). As the field has developed there has been progress towards more sophisticated theory-based conceptualizations (Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma 2005; Sharma 2004; Siebels and zu Knyphausen-Aufseß 2012) that have drawn upon concepts such as agency (Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma 2003), resource-based analysis and governance (Mustakallio 2002; Siebels and zu Knyphausen-Aufseß 2012; Camisón and Puig-Denia 2020) and socioemotional wealth (Gomez-Mejia et al. 2011). Nevertheless, there are areas that have received insufficient attention, despite being acknowledged as important, and we highlight some of these in the literature review below. This study responds to calls to address three such gaps:

- a lack of research on the role of female entrepreneurs in transgenerational family business and particularly in the case of rural entrepreneurship.
- a need for more innovative qualitative methodological approaches to research into female entrepreneurship.
- The potential importance of new stories presenting the lifestyle entrepreneur as hero, stories that can challenge the traditional narrative of the entrepreneur as a technology-savvy risk taker who makes it big.

This paper is structured as follows: first we set out five areas of prior research that were drawn upon to inform the study. Next we provide the thinking behind our choice of case and qualitative narrative methodology and why we opted to draw upon the monomyth, a lens from the field of literary and narrative inquiry. We go on to apply the monomyth coding to interview data and in the discussion section we set out the contributions to the field.

Literature review

Family business and female entrepreneurs

Although it has been generally accepted that the majority of firms in most countries are subject to a degree of family influence, due to the heterogeneity of these firms, as research in the domain has burgeoned there has been a considerable range of proposed definitions of family business and family firms (Sharma 2004, 2015). In an attempt to provide a comprehensive overview of these definitions Mustakallio (2002) has categorized them using 6 distinct themes: ownership, management, generational transfer, family intention, family goals and interaction between family and business

Astrachan and Shanker (2003) have classified family businesses under three progressively more stringent definitions: their broad definition uses the criterion of family retention of voting control over the strategic direction of a firm; the mid-range definition includes firms with direct family involvement in day-to-day operations; and, the most exacting of their definitions only classifies firms as family businesses if the family retains voting control of the business and if multiple generations of family members are involved in the day-to-day operations of the firm. For the authors' current research, Astrachan and Shanker's third definition, that of a family-controlled business is the most appropriate as will be seen later. 1). As the field has expanded, there have been critical voices who call attention to the fact that much of the early

research on women entrepreneurs tended to focus on documenting and attempting to explain the financial performance and growth of women's businesses (Ahl 2006; Carrington 2006; Jennings and Brush 2013) and comparing the achievements and characteristics of female and male entrepreneurs (Hughes 2006; Hughes et al. 2012; Ratten, Dana, and Ramadani 2018).

Transgenerational entrepreneurship

The transgenerational entrepreneurship paradigm is based on the resource-based view and focuses on “processes through which a family uses and develops entrepreneurial mindsets and family influenced capabilities to create new streams of entrepreneurial, financial and social value across generations” (Habbershon, Nordqvist, and Zellweger 2010, 1).

In a meta-study of 217 refereed articles, Sharma (2004, 22) drew attention to the fact that “founders and next generation members have received the most attention, with only some attention shown women and non-family employees” and this observation has served to guide the authors' research of which this study is a part. While prior research focused on founders and next generation to provide us a solid understanding about how family business begins and how proceed through the first level of succession, the studies about transgenerational orientation (3rd and 4th generation) are rare. The transgenerational dimension is particularly important because it is known (Suess-Reyes 2017), only small number of family businesses survive across generations.

10 years after the 2004 meta-study Sharma and colleagues continue to indicate a need for more, and more varied studies of the temporal dimension (Sharma, Salvato, et al. 2014) and note that women entrepreneurs in particular have received little attention (Sharma, De Massis, et al. 2014). A similar point was made by Campopiano et al. (2017) who surveyed recent literature and identified what they call the chronoccontext as one of the eight challenges for future research into women's involvement in family firms.

Rural entrepreneurship

While there is a need for more research into third and fourth generation entrepreneurs in family businesses in general, this is particularly acute within the sub-field of rural entrepreneurship: after surveying 20 years of publications in this area, Pato and Teixeira (2016) conclude that “the theoretical body of rural entrepreneurial is still incipient” and they note that the evolution of the relative weight of articles on rural intrapreneurship has lagged behind the evolution of articles on general entrepreneurship.

Pato and Teixeira (2016) point out that rural regions represent about 75% of the land and almost a quarter of the population in member countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD 2006). All the actors, OECD, European Commission and the UN, and public policy authorities in particular, agree on the urgent need to develop enterprises located in rural areas. So why are studies

of third and fourth generation female rural entrepreneurs rare in the literature? Possible explanations include the supposition that such cases are rare or that they exist but are not readily visible to researchers or perhaps are not seen as a priority.

Another possibility is that such cases are encountered but that there is a perceived lack of appropriate methodology to characterize such cases. In the 2017 study by Campopiano et al. mentioned above, it is relevant to note that they identify a need for new methodological approaches such as historical longitudinal studies of a single family business or various businesses as a way to offer novel insights to grasp the drivers of women's involvement in family firms. Likewise, Hughes et al. (2012, 432), have suggested that more research attention be given to "new sites of women's entrepreneurship, especially new regions, national contexts, and industries." The call for new methodological approaches is made even more forcefully by Yadav and Unni (2016) in an article on new research directions in women's entrepreneurship: after reviewing the literature they conclude that much published work has adopted a positivist approach and they argue that to capture heterogeneity in female intrapreneurship research and extend entrepreneurial theories there is a need to adopt innovation in research method choices and to embrace interpretive and constructionist methodologies.

Women in family business in the wine sector

Although wine production is known to have been carried out for at least 9000 years (McGovern et al. 2004), wine growing, production and consumption were all regarded as male-only activities until relatively recently (Matasar 2006; Bessièrè 2014; Bryant and Garnham 2014; Santos, Marques, and Ratten 2019) and it was only in 2000 that the oldest and most prestigious Bordeaux confréries in France, the Jurade de St Emilion, admitted its first two women members after 800 years of exclusion (Spencer 2001).

However since the mid-1970s as wine production worldwide has expanded from the Old World European wineries to include New World producers in South America, the US, Australia and South Africa, there has been a notable increase in the number of women in the industry and female winegrowers are now to be found in the major wine producing regions of the world although they still tend to be in the minority. Ann Matasar, in her book, *Women of Wine, The Rise of Women in the Global Wine Industry* (2006, 12–13), suggests that such women face three types of obstacle: social stereotypes, psychological factors and role conflicts. It is often thought, for example, that women would not be effective managers because men would refuse to work for them. Indeed, the major Medoc estates in France are reported to not hire woman as managers so as to avoid such conflicts (Lawther 1999). In addition, there is a wide-spread perception that women managers are more risk-averse than men which would be disadvantageous in the competitive and fast-changing world of winemaking (Browne 1995) nevertheless some more recent research highlight the positive effect of the women in the board of direction in the wine industry (Gallucci, D'Amato, and Santulli 2015).

As in other professions, ambitious women are likely to face challenges in reconciling their work commitments with their roles as wives and mothers and family obligations can conflict with career goals. Many of the women who have been successful in

the wine trade acknowledge that they have to push themselves to higher levels of achievement and to be better than men in their jobs so as to be considered equal (Matasar 2006, 13).

An indication of the ambivalence of women winemakers and producers regarding the perceived role of women in the sector is illustrated by the “frequent hesitant of many female wine-makers and proprietors to put their own names on their labels. This may stem from a lack of self-confidence or from a reluctance to seem self-promoting or conceited. Most men have no such qualms; they expect to be recognized for their accomplishments from the outset” (Matasar 2006, 13). The firm chosen for the present study is one of the rare exceptions to Matasar’s observation.

Nonetheless, in the nineteenth century a few women did succeed in establishing independent international reputations: Veuve Clicquot, Pommery, Penfolds and A.A. Ferreira are not just names on the labels of great wines but all were wines produced by women. The last of these, presided over by Antónia Adelaide Ferreira (known in Portugal as Ferreirinha), is a Portuguese firm which continues to be a leading port wine producer today. According to Matasar (2006, 25), these women were remarkably similar in that they were “strong, self-reliant risk-takers with demonstrable business acumen. Committed to quality and willing to venture overseas, they had an uncanny understanding of marketing, which enabled them not only to recognize new opportunities but also to capitalize on them (...) these women deserve to be remembered as skilled employers with an eye for good talent and as consummate entrepreneurs who led their firms from modest beginnings to international acclaim.”

Apart from an important recent study of young women in the wine business in Portugal (Santos, Marques, and Ratten 2019) to which we will return later in Discussion section the authors have found relatively little research on women wine producers in scholarly journals. Searching the archives of the International Journal of Wine Business Research, for example, one finds many references to women as consumers of wine but only one study focusing on female wine producers (Galbreath 2015). Significantly, the study, which looked at women in Chief Executive Officer (CEO), winemaker, viticulturist and marketing roles in all Australian wineries between 2007 and 2012, concluded that with the exception of the marketing role, women are under-represented. The findings also suggest that where there is a woman CEO, women are more likely to be represented in winemaker, viticulturist and marketing roles.

Somewhat analogous findings in the US context were presented in a study by Gilbert and Gilbert (2015) which looked at over 3000 California wineries over a 25 year period and found that the percentage of wineries with lead women wine-makers was low but that their results showed some increase, 10% in 1999 to 14.7% in 2014 overall, and 20.5% when considering only available positions. Progress appears steady but slow and as Dr Lucy Gilbert commented “The future appears bright, but the glass ceiling is far from being smashed.”

Women in family business as lifestyle entrepreneurs

As researchers with an interest in this area we have had difficulty in encountering appropriate methodology to apply to the cases we encountered in rural Portugal due to the apparent unique context of each one. However, with the rise in interest in

lifestyle entrepreneurship research we have concluded that this represents an approach that can be fruitfully applied.

Lifestyle entrepreneurship has been defined as a scenario where the owner/proprietor either balances their economic and non-economic goals or is primarily motivated by a set of lifestyle aspirations which are a higher priority over economic objectives (Lynch 1998; Siemens 2014, 2010). Gomez-Breyse (2016) claims that lifestyle entrepreneurs bring a unique offering to the market rather than seizing an opportunity, and have more confidence in their ability to combine resources than in their ability to recognize an opportunity; they develop their business globally due to their positioning in mainly niche markets, placing egalitarian values at the heart of the project; and they reveal themselves to be rather resistant to growth through employment.

The lifestyle entrepreneurship lens has been applied to a range of contexts both urban and rural: Lynch (1998) provide insights into the activities of female micro-entrepreneurs in the host family sector while Dawson, Fountain, and Cohen (2011) identify wine and tourism industries as a particularly useful forum to explore entrepreneurial lifestyle motivations. When Marcketti, Niehm, and Fuloria (2006, 241) studied 12 cases in the US they concluded that “two common themes emerged from the data: enhancement of business owners’ quality of life as a result of the entrepreneurial venture and a perception of the entrepreneurial venture providing enhanced quality of life to employees, customers, and the community.” Neergaard and Christensen (2017) in a study of female lifestyle entrepreneurs identified a shift over the previous decade which was producing new models of female entrepreneurs and these authors employed religious sociology – a rather novel methodological lens in family business research – to analyze the emerging trends.

Within the lifestyle entrepreneurship literature there was one particular article that struck a chord with the authors and subsequently led us to the methodological construct we employ for this study. In a study titled “Re-Storying the Entrepreneurial Ideal: Lifestyle Entrepreneurs as Hero?” Claire (2012) presents the findings of a study on 187 nascent entrepreneurs in the U.S. and she concludes that “the data were consistent in rejecting the popular concept of an entrepreneur as the individual pursuing the fortune at all costs.” She found that nascent entrepreneurs have less in common in their values with corporate America and the media portrayal of entrepreneurs as tech savvy prospective millionaires than was previously believed and that the prospective model that yielded the most statistically significant results was the lifestyle perspective. She goes on to claim that her study suggests that the current model of the intrapreneurial hero will change as it reflects the values of the emerging generation: “In the end the stories we tell about intrapreneurship may challenge the assumption that economic growth is our desired goal.” There is some support for the importance of models for women entrepreneurs in a study from rural India (Porter and Nagarajan 2005), which notes that members of a pioneering group of successful women in a small town were inspired by the success of “internationally known women entrepreneurs in India such as Shahnaz Husain.”

Hero trajectory

The need for new stories and new models of the entrepreneur as hero resonated with our interest in the important but undervalued role of female entrepreneurs in rural

contexts and led us first to examine the notion of what constitutes a hero. Heroes have one obvious characteristic in common with entrepreneurs: in both cases they tend to be recognized retrospectively. Other characteristics of the hero include facing and triumphing over great adversity and there is usually some kind of narrative associated with their actions that retrospectively elevates them to hero status.

The authors had already published a case study of a third-generation female entrepreneur (Carvalho and Williams 2014) that on revisiting we recognized manifested characteristics of the hero trajectory. We will summarize that journey here to serve as a point of comparison for the case we will present later.

The Correia family business began 30 years ago with a cork factory in a rural region of the Algarve in Portugal. The factory produced champagne corks for many of the finest vintners in France and Spain and had been the life work of three generations of the Correia family, the most recent being Sandra Correia, granddaughter of the founder. In 1995, when she was 23 years old, she joined the family business after completing a degree in Communication Studies in Lisbon. Having identified an on-going problem in the family business: they had excess raw material that represented costs to the company, she began looking for ways to monetize the leftover cork by using it to manufacture completely different products. This quest assumed particular importance when the firm found itself facing serious challenges due to changes in the wine cork market and a crisis at the beginning of the new millennium as one of their biggest clients, Moët et Chandon, encountered lower demand for champagne than anticipated.

In 2003 when Ms Correia received an invitation to participate in a trade fair in Spain she arrived there with a novel new product, an umbrella made from cork. This accessory was so well received that she decided to launch Pelcor a new brand of cork-based products. She created a range of cork articles which had previously existed as fashion items in other materials: umbrellas, handbags, wallets, portable computer cases. The firm marketed its products as high-end accessories and art objects made from a sustainable eco-friendly material. Their most successful marketing coup was an exhibition called Cork Your Style at MOMA (New York Museum of Modern Art). The products were also offered as gifts to visiting celebrities such as the Obamas, Angela Merkel and Madonna. This enabled them to expand in the US market and subsequently to Middle Eastern and Asian markets. Up to 2015 their total turnover was in the region of five million euros and in 2016 Pelcor was acquired by an Angolan investor.

Methodology

The monomyth or hero's journey

The authors had been collecting data on the trajectory of Leonor Freitas, a fourth-generation female entrepreneur in a wine-producing family business, and we initially employed critical incident analysis to structuralize a chronological narrative of the firm's evolution. However, this approach did not seem to capture the richness of the data generated from our case study and so, guided by recommendations from Claire (2012) mentioned above, we sought a methodological framing that would better characterize the lifestyle entrepreneur as hero. As a result, we adopted a coding and structuralizing scheme we believe to be novel in the family business field but that has been applied in fields such as literature, narrative inquiry, engineering education and

diversity studies: that of Campbell's monomyth. Joseph Campbell was a North American professor of literature whose 1949 book *Hero with 1000 Faces* (Campbell 1949), introduces the monomyth, a theory claiming that all epic myths, regardless of when or where they were written, follow a universal structure (Leeming 2010). He describes over 100 stories from different cultures and eras, showing that all stories follow generally the same trajectory. Ultimately, for Campbell, stories can be broken into 17 different stages, which we might refer to as an archetypal trajectory.

The monomyth scheme has been applied as a technique to smooth out narrative analysis (Cruz and Kellam 2017), to analyze the trajectories of 21 engineering students (Cruz and Kellam 2018), to capture the experiences of 3 faculty adopting new pedagogical approaches (Boklage, Coley, and Kellam 2019) and to structure a single case study of female engineering student (Williams, Chance, and Direito 2019) (Figure 1).

Purpose and research questions

Before setting out on a wide scale study of multigeneration women entrepreneurs it was decided to carry out a single case study of one such firm so as to establish promising lines of inquiry and insight for later studies and this paper presents the study. The choice of a single-case study at this juncture was guided by the work of

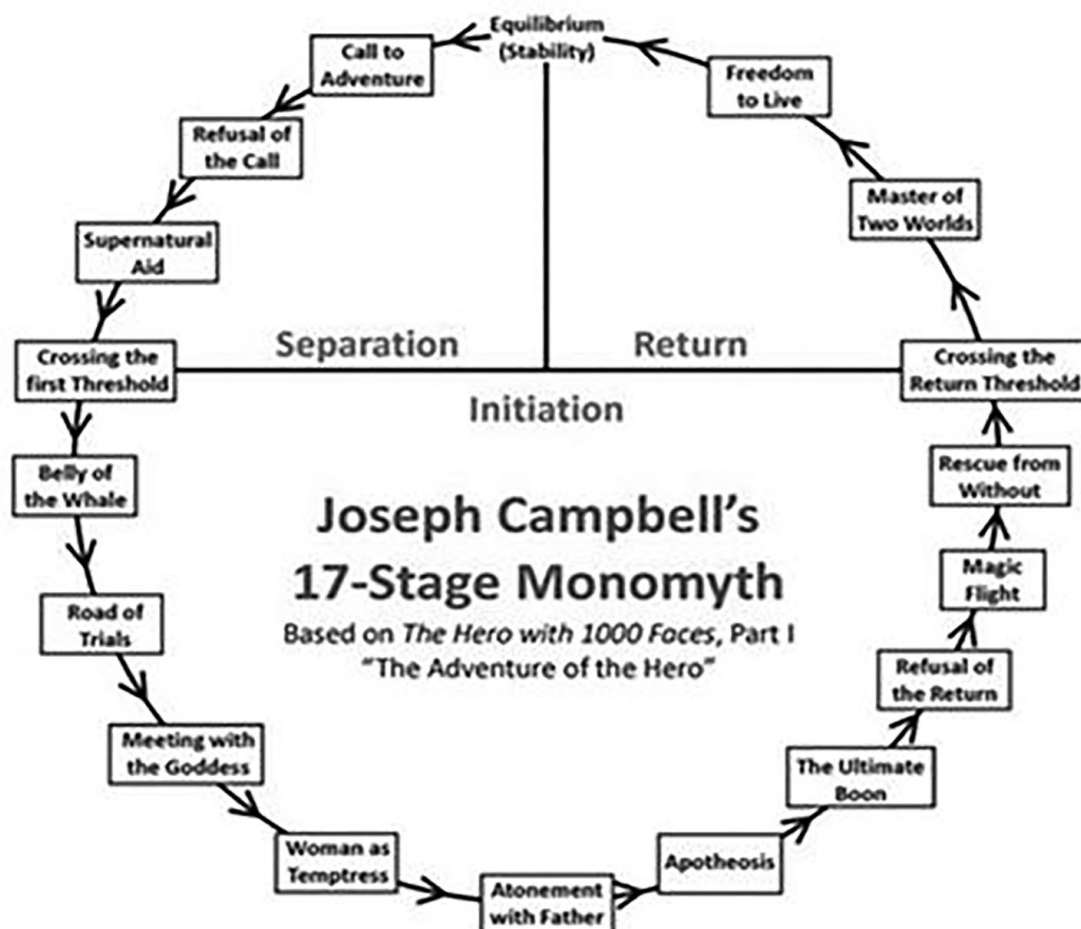


Figure 1. Seventeen stages of the monomyth (adapted from Campbell 1949).

Kathleen Eisenhardt who points out that such studies can have a valuable role in exploring little-studied areas of investigation (as is the case of 3rd and 4th generation women entrepreneurs in rural family businesses) in that they can point the way to larger, more wide-ranging research project which can generate useful theory (Eisenhardt 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner 2003). Accordingly, the practice-focused research questions for this analysis are of an exploratory and descriptive nature and aimed to provide answers to “how” questions (Feuer, Towne, and Shavelson 2002).

RQ1: How can the Campbell monomyth construct be employed to structure and characterize the experience of a female lifestyle entrepreneur in a rural family business.

RQ2: In what ways, if any, does this account of entrepreneurial success illuminate contextual and individual factors that contribute to this process?

Method

Data were gathered by interviewing the CEO and cross-referencing the information gathered from interviews with her published in the Portuguese press. The interview was conducted in Portuguese by one of the authors using a narrative interview approach (Wengraf 2001). During the interview the CEO was requested to relate how she came to leave her profession as a social worker and take over the family firm in 1989 and to describe how the firm evolved up to the present. She was encouraged to describe challenges and victories encountered and also to share her perceptions of the role of her family during the process. In addition, plans for the future involving globalization of the firm and the role of the next generation of the family were discussed.

The interview quotes in the following sections were translated to English by the authors.

Thematic coding

Following the procedure of Cruz and Kellam (2017) the first stage of analysis involved our familiarization with the interview transcripts (our own and eight published in the Portuguese press) and general thematic pre-coding using QSR N-Vivo 10 to organize the selected quotations. A first draft of the article including all interview quotations was sent to the CEO, Ms Freitas for checking which led to some minor updating regarding the number of international prizes won by the firm’s wines.

This was followed by the development of the coding scheme based on the monomyth framework and the application of the new coding.

It is important to note that the terminology of the 17 elements of the hero’s journey in Campbell’s work is dated in that it contains sexist and ethnocentric language. In addition, not all of the 17 elements are clearly relevant to the case under study and as will be seen a considerable degree of interpretation was applied in the choice of elements and application of the coding. This does not detract from the broader

idea of the monomyth itself, and we believe it does not reduce the potential of the monomyth for building participant narrative.

Application of the monomyth lens

Call to adventure

When the Freitas family business first started, wines was produced in relatively small quantities and sold wholesale and unbranded to larger firms who would bottle it and sell under their own brands. The winery located in Fernando Pó in the region of Palmela to the south of Lisbon, had 60 hectares and cultivated just two varieties of grape: Castellão for red and Fernão Pires for white wine. Unusually for Portuguese wineries, the firm was founded by a woman, Deonilde Freitas, in 1920 and continued by her daughter Germana Freitas and later by her grandson Manuel de Freitas in partnership with his wife Ermelinda.

When Leonor Freitas, daughter of Manuel and Ermelinda, was a child she saw the everyday life of a wine growing family at first hand.

I have vivid memories of tramping the fields as a little girl watching my grandmother Germana or my father going about their daily tasks. My grandmother was widowed at 38 and she never remarried but she didn't sell up and she managed to keep the business going. She has been a great reference for me: she never stopped working, brought up 4 children and used to look after me too as I followed her around. She was a strong woman, a force of nature, who never backed down. She didn't take time off at weekends or have holidays. She would confront the male workers whenever necessary. All of that made a really vivid impression on me as a little girl.

When I was growing up in the 1950s this area, Fernando Po, was very isolated, there was an enormous asymmetry between rural and urban worlds and the different roles of men and women were quite accentuated. Although my grandmother Germana could neither read nor write, her brother was a doctor – and that tells you it all! This was a handicap that she felt very keenly all her life (she died at the age of 92) and I remember when I was young her asking for my help when she was learning to sign documents.

Refusal of the call

Although the 3 previous generations of her family had worked in the family business and Leonor was an only child, she left the family estate in her teens and moved to study in Lisbon. She completed a degree in sociology and went on to secure a social work position in the National Health Service. She married an engineer, the couple settled in the city of Setúbal and had two children.

I was the first one from my family who had the benefit of higher education. I am a country person and proud of it but I had the opportunity to leave and then come back later. This was really important for me as was the fact that I did a different kind of course when I chose sociology. I'm convinced that if I had just stayed down the country my horizons would have been narrower and that makes all the difference.

Crossing the first threshold

In 1989, Ms Freitas was pursuing her career as a healthcare social worker, her husband was an engineer in a major cellulose firm and their two children João and Joana were 10 and 4 respectively, when her father Manuel died after a brief illness.

My father died in a hospital in Lisbon and that evening I told my husband “collect the children and some clothes – we’re going to my parents’ house.” And so we moved back here.

Initially everybody expected me to sell up. My mother couldn’t run the business on her own – she had never entered a bank in her life or signed a cheque as my father handled all of that. And many people turned up offering to buy us out. But I thought “sell off what was so loved by my family? No, I’m going to do all I can to keep this going.”

Belly of the whale

Leonor and her family found themselves in an environment that was very different from the urban life they were accustomed to:

In fact living down the country on the quinta in those early days was quite a struggle. My husband supported me all the way and was always on hand to encourage me if I had a difficult day. But domestically it was complicated as we were living in my mother’s house and she was quite set in her ways. Living and working in the same space wasn’t always easy.

Being a woman in what was seen as a man’s world also had its challenges:

Back in the beginning, I remember the workers saying “let’s wait until your husband comes to tell us what to do.” However, they quickly adapted. At that time, wine production was a man’s world and often I was the only woman present at regional meetings. It was a bit difficult initially as I was aware of certain smirks and stares. For some events I used to make a point of attending wearing trousers. But I made it very clear what I wouldn’t accept and that came to be respected.

We women need to be assertive ... considerate but also reserved when necessary. Many times I had to say to myself “you’re not going to give up just because you’re a woman, you’re not going to fail just because you’re a woman and they are just going to have to respect you.” I felt all the time that I couldn’t make mistakes as the men were watching and waiting for me to fail. Thankfully, nowadays I have more leeway to take risks and perhaps fail but back then it seemed like I couldn’t afford to put a foot wrong.

Leonor Freitas was keen to examine new ideas and was willing to venture abroad to seek out other perspectives:

I’ll admit that at that time all wines were the same to me. So, in the early years it was a fight for survival; I didn’t know where to turn but I spoke to everybody I could and took a lot of courses. I wasn’t afraid to say I didn’t know something or to ask questions.

When I first took over we continued as the family had always done, providing wine to sell in bulk to larger producers who would bottle and sell it. Then I heard about a wine fair in Bordeaux. People said it wasn’t relevant for us because we didn’t bottle our wine but I was curious. So my husband got a few days off work and we drove all the way up there in a Renault Clio with no air conditioning but when I got there it was a complete eye opener for me: I saw the way that they treasured their wines like jewellery, as objects of prestige. And their chateaus were often just around 60 hectares which at the time was the size of our quinta back home.

Meeting with the goddess

In modern versions of the monomyth, this stage is often interpreted as meeting the all-knower - typically a wise elderly man who shares his wisdom with the hero. In this case, however, it was a then-unknown, recent enology graduate who emerged as a key figure:

As well as providing inspiration, that visit to Bordeaux was also where I met a young Portuguese enologist Jaime Quendera and that proved fortuitous – I was the first to invest in his services and that has been extremely rewarding for all concerned.

Jaime Quendera recalls *Mrs Freitas was quite innovative – I was very young when I first came here but she accepted all my recommendations* (Diário Económico, 2012). Quendera himself later became an award-winning wine producer in his own right with his Pegões winery.

Road of trials

Leonor Freitas recalls that her biggest adaptation was to learn to live with the economic instability which is very much characteristic of today's rural world. The crisis the family firm faced in 2002 when her major client firms announced they would not buy her production was a major setback:

That night I couldn't sleep, I thought we would go bankrupt, but that situation was what catapulted us into striking out on our own. I decided to go to battle, develop more brands and work out a marketing and commercial strategy to sell the wine stocks we had been left with.

Together, Freitas and Quendera mapped out a new strategy for the business where it would compete directly on the market with its own brand and initially putting their faith in then-emerging bag-in-box packaging.

Although it is relatively rare in the sector for female winery proprietors to adopt women's name in their branding (Matasar 2006, 13), once Ms. Freitas had decided to move from the relative security of the previous policy of supplying unbranded wine to larger producers to one of selling their wine directly to customers, she opted to use the name of her mother in naming the firm *Casa Ermelinda Freitas*. She recalls being originally rather hesitant about putting her faith in bag-in-box sales as she was concerned they would be seen as a cheap mass-market brand so she decided to go all out to ensure that their wine sold in this way was of really good quality.

Thankfully it all worked out well in the end. At times a crisis can also teach us something new.

Supernatural aid

It seemed like I heard one thing and then something different and by logic I knew which one was correct. I can't explain it, but it was like I was being pushed by something beyond me that made me take the correct decisions. Even today, there are many occasions when I handle something a certain way because I think that is what my father would do.

Atonement with father

In modern versions of the monomyth this is interpreted as a confrontation with a parent figure and in this case it involved her mother Ermelinda.

My mother didn't want the business sold but at the same time she didn't have much faith in me as I had left so long ago and she thought I would be better off following my profession as a social worker in the city. "Oh, daughter" she used to say "your father

and I struggled for so long so that you would have a better life and now you're ending up with a life even worse than ours.”

She also was rather fearful that my lack of experience was going to cause problems as I began to introduce new varieties of grape and invest our takings in buying up parcels of land as they became available in the area. When I first started to plant Touriga grapes, for example, the local people used to say to her “your daughter is throwing away money.”

However, with time she came around and became extremely proud of what we had achieved.

Leonor Freitas's mother Ermelinda died in 2009 at the age of 81.

Apotheosis

Ms Freitas presided over a considerable expansion of production of the winery from 1 million to 12.5 million litres per annum, extended the land from 60 to 440 hectares and has achieved a strong national and increasingly visible international presence in the sector. The new spacious and completely redesigned winery premises are equipped with custom-built fermenters which enable the use of Ganimede fermentation techniques.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas has aimed to satisfy a variety of segments in the wine market and has diversified considerably from the time when it grew only 2 varieties of grape to produce red wine. Jaime Quendera points out that they aim to present a new product every year. The first champagne DOC and Reserve DOC of the Setubal Peninsula were produced by the firm they now also have a late-harvest wine and they won two medals in England for their fortified Moscatel in 2012.

The ultimate boon

Casa Ermelinda Freitas today produces 12 main wines. The top of the range is the premium Leo d'Honor, a red varietal produced in exceptionally good years (1999, 2001, 2003 and 2008) from Castelão grapes grown on 50-year-old vines originally planted by Leonor's father.

Having now won 900 prizes over the last six years, Ms Freitas suggests that the principal reason for their market success has been the quality to price ratio of their wines. She has aimed to supply all segments of the market as she believes this gives more guarantees for the future.

At present we are strongest in the mid-market segment but we aim to have better quality product at lower prices. Considering our dimension, we need to diversify to supply wines for all occasions and all price-ranges – that is the best way to grow even in time of crisis.

Crossing the return threshold

Casa Ermelinda Freitas has not been content to achieve recognition nationally and has significantly invested in export. The company currently exports about 40 percent of production. This was quite a challenge initially because Portuguese wines tended to be associated with the lower end of the market. Casa Ermelinda Freitas has made competing in wine tasting competitions a priority and has been gathering medals globally from Europe to China. They have benefited enormously from international blind-tasting competitions,

given that Portuguese wines didn't have the kind of reputation associated with the more well-known wine producing countries.

The winery mainly follows a dual strategy of direct export and export through an intermediary. The principal international markets are European, such as, Finland, Norway, France, Luxemburg, Germany, Sweden, Netherlands and Ukraine. The internationalization strategy began with entry in culturally close markets in Europe, where the mainly costumers are Portuguese emigrants. The market distance from the domestic market was classified in groups based on cultural and geographical distance from the domestic market, which is consistent with the concept of "psychic" distance (Carvalho 2014; Johanson and Vahlne 1990).

At present the company also aims to gain a foothold in other emerging markets, such as Brazil, China, Angola and Mozambique and strategies to enter in these markets have been coordinated together with other wineries from the same region and with governmental support.

The labels of the wines and bottle labels have been adapted to each country and the company has endeavored to develop grapes and wines that will be more suitable to the tastes of international markets. In addition, it has promoted its products through participating in international fairs and events promoted by the Portuguese government to encourage internationalization.

Master of two worlds

My parents had only completed up to fourth year in secondary school and I'm certain if I hadn't had access to an education I wouldn't be here where I am today. It's funny, the rural life which I left quite early on and to which I initially didn't want to return, is now something I take a delight in, it's where I re-found myself. Planting a vine and watching it grow to maturity is a bit like seeing your children grow.

Leonor Freitas received the Order of Agricultural Merit from the Portuguese President in 2009, and the President inaugurated the new modern Casa Ermelinda winery in 2015. She was voted National Female Entrepreneur of the Year in 2018 and has been interviewed by magazines like Wine Republic (2014) and Forbes (2017) as an international entrepreneurial leader.

Casa Ermelinda Freitas was awarded the 2019 European Producer of the Year title by the UK Sommelier Wine Awards, a first for a Continental Portuguese producer.

Freedom to live

Looking to the future, the winery has opened a wine museum to cater for school parties and for wine-tourists.

But it worries me that when I go to give talks in rural school or talk to recent graduates, most of them don't want to work on the land – they think its better to work in an office. This is very worrying for the future.

However, both of the Freitas children returned to the family winery on completion of their degrees and it seems likely that the next generation of the Freitas family will continue the trajectory traced by their mother Leonor.

My daughter Joana looks like she will head up the business when I step down. She chose to do a management degree with that in mind and when she had completed her course I

wanted her to build up experience working elsewhere but she insisted on coming here directly, saying that this is what she had been preparing for right from the start.

My son João has always been interested in computer science and when he finished his engineering course at IST Lisbon he came to work in the firm to handle the online and IT end of our work.

Nowadays, while I take care of our export business in Lusophone countries like Brazil and Angola, Joana does all our dealings with the Asian markets like Japan and China where English is important. So eventually, Joana looks likely to be the fifth generation of women in the firm.

Discussion

Given that interview data are typically disjointed, narrative smoothing has been described as a “necessary method” used to make a “participants story coherent, engaging, and interesting to the reader” (Kim 2016) The previous section presented the trajectory of Leonor Freitas as a lifestyle entrepreneur, mainly as recounted by herself in interviews with the narrative smoothed via the monomyth. The monomyth coding created a simple-to-follow structure to reconstruct the trajectory of the entrepreneur and the firm. We did take some liberties in the interpretive application of the lens in that we omitted elements of the monomyth that were not obviously applicable, we included Supernatural Aid at a later stage in the trajectory than Campbell does and we interpreted the Call to Adventure in a slightly different fashion to that in the original work.

Let us now consider the insights afforded by this narrative trajectory. Firstly, we can better understand why there is little information available on early female entrepreneurs in multigeneration rural firms. Leonor Freitas describes her grandmother as a “strong woman, a force of nature” but handicapped and frustrated by illiteracy. Her mother, Ermelinda, had never entered a bank or signed a cheque. For most of the 20th century Portugal had much in common with the low-income developing countries of the OECD today having a largely agricultural economy, low levels of literacy particularly for women and widespread poverty. This began to change after the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship in 1974 and later entry to the European Community. Whereas in the UK, Germany or US the successful male industrialists of the 18th to 20th centuries left considerable documentary evidence of their entrepreneurial trajectories, female rural entrepreneurs left little documentary footprint and had little visibility. A rare exception was the 19th century port wine pioneer Ferreirinha mentioned earlier – interestingly Leonor Freitas is often referred to in the Portuguese press as a modern Ferreirinha (Wine Republic 2014). We can understand from the account of Germana and Ermelinda Freitas how in a male-dominated sector, women entrepreneurs faced many challenges and even when they were exceptional and overcame the challenges to achieve business success, they still tended to be invisible.

Secondly, employing a clear narrative structure to describe an entrepreneurial woman’s path allows us to compare trajectories and to identify enabling elements. In Ms Freitas case it would appear that it was her loyalty to the family tradition that motivated her to change her lifestyle and take over the business. Two enabling elements that emerged were her higher education and acquiring an appropriate mentor. Comparing her trajectory with that of third-generation entrepreneur Sandra Correia

in the family cork business described earlier (Carvalho and Williams 2014) we note that when both women were faced with a major crisis which could have permanently damaged their firm, they each came up with an innovative response (cork fashion items and female-branded bag in box wine respectively) that later was the foundation for entrepreneurial success at national and international level. Another aspect they had in common is that they were the first women in their immediate families to access higher education. Although their degrees were not in business or entrepreneurship (Ms Correia graduated in Communication Studies, Ms Freitas in Sociology) it seems likely that this contributed to their later entrepreneurial vision and Leonor Freitas's words certainly suggest this hypothesis. This is in line with findings that access to higher education is one of the factors known to affect entrepreneurship at country level (Bates 1990) and in the case of female entrepreneurs it can be an important factor (FEI 2015, 2, 37). The role of formal education (as distinct from learning via the Internet, Thomas and Moisey 2006) in affecting the options and success of women entrepreneurs in rural contexts would merit further study.

It would be interesting to contrast the history of Leonor Freitas in transforming a small local wine supplier into a global brand with the trajectory of the younger generation of women who comprise the D'Uva – Portugal Wine Girls network (Santos, Marques, and Ratten 2019). All 7 members of the network are daughters or granddaughters of men who effectively built up the businesses in which these young women play a part today, and we could surmise they had rather different pathways to that of the entrepreneur in the present study.

Considering other contributions of this study, the authors believe that the monomyth lens employed here in a single case study (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007) can be a valuable tool to include in the repertoire of qualitative researchers interested in decisive moments in entrepreneur trajectories as illustrated, for example, in the study cited earlier that analyzed changes in the trajectories of 21 engineering students (Cruz and Kellam 2018). As a narrative structuring and smoothing device the monomyth is particularly suitable for tracing entrepreneur trajectories and the key decisions along the way, the *call to adventure* being a key element in entrepreneurial narratives. As the fundamental role of the monomyth is to assist the interpretive process it is not essential to include all the 17 elements from Campbell's formulation. While the authors have applied 13 of the 17 elements in this article, other studies have used 10 (Williams, Chance, and Direito 2019), 6 (Boklage, Coley, and Kellam 2019) and 4 (Cruz and Kellam 2018).

Finally, returning to Claire's (2012) call for new models of the entrepreneur as hero to inspire future entrepreneurs, we believe that this is of particular importance to attract potential entrepreneurs to bring creativity and innovation to rural businesses and we contend that the hero's journey presented here is a worthy candidate for use in entrepreneurial training programs.

Limitations

The study has two significant limitations. Firstly, much of the data presented are self-reported from the CEO of the company under study. We were able to cross-check from different interview sources and publicly available information about the firm

but due to the 2020 pandemic were unable to go further and draw upon more stakeholder data to triangulate the data.

Secondly, the findings of a single-case study are always of limited transferability. Nevertheless, we believe that this work can be valuable in pointing the way to larger, more wide-ranging analysis of women lifestyle entrepreneurs in rural contexts that can generate useful theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007).

Conclusions

This study proposes that the monomyth, an analysis tool derived from literary and narrative analysis, can be usefully applied to smooth narrative data such as that used to study the trajectories of entrepreneurs in family business. Thus it can provide an easy-to-understand narrative structure to facilitate analysis and comparison between entrepreneurial trajectories. The authors exemplify the process by examining the trajectory of a fourth-generation female lifestyle entrepreneur in the wine producing sector in Portugal and proceed to demonstrate insights arising from this approach within this single case study. We contend that this methodological lens is a potentially valuable addition to the repertoire of qualitative research instruments used in the field of family business.

Finally, responding to calls for alternative hero stories, we believe that the case presented here could serve to inspire future lifestyle entrepreneurs and to illustrate that lifestyle entrepreneurship is not incompatible with business success and wealth generation.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

Funding

This paper is financed by National Funds of the FCT – Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology within the project “UIDB/04007/2020”.

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Appendix

Portuguese language press interviews analyzed

- Leonor Freitas - Produtora e Gerente da Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Correio da Manhã newspaper, 8/12/2011
- Mais do que de família, vinho é assunto de mulheres, Diario de Noticias newspaper, 27/12/2011
- A tradição feminina da Casa Ermelinda Freitas, Diário Económico newspaper, December 2012, p. 4.
- Casa Ermelinda Freitas, em nome da mãe, Revista de Vinhos, magazine, October 2013, p. 28
- Ermelinda Freitas, A Ferreirinha dos Tempos Modernos, Wine Republic Portugal blog, 9/8/2014
- A outra Dona Ermelinda, Forbes Magazine, Portugal Edition, March 2017
- Casa Ermelinda Freitas: as mulheres do vinho, GQ magazine, 2/8/2017
- Casa Ermelinda Freitas eleita produtor europeu do ano, Setubalense newspaper, 25/6/2019