The Business of Wearing Crowns: A Study of Family Communication
## Barbara Reda

Introduction

For most business families, succession has never been guaranteed to be successful past a few generations. More importantly, the family's history and legacy sometimes fail to be transferred. Although it is known that meanings and histories shared in a family are done through communication, what is not known is which meanings and stories are shared by the next generation.

Galvin and Brommel (2000) argue that families are built on a set of shared meanings and histories which are shared through communication. Thus, we will study succession by looking at imprinting, communication and its effects on transgenerational entrepreneurship.

Theoretical Framework

Imprinting: "a process whereby, during a brief period of susceptibility, a focal entity develops characteristics that reflect prominent features of the environment, and these characteristics continue to persist despite significant environmental changes in subsequent periods" (Marquis & Tilcsik, 2013, p. 8)
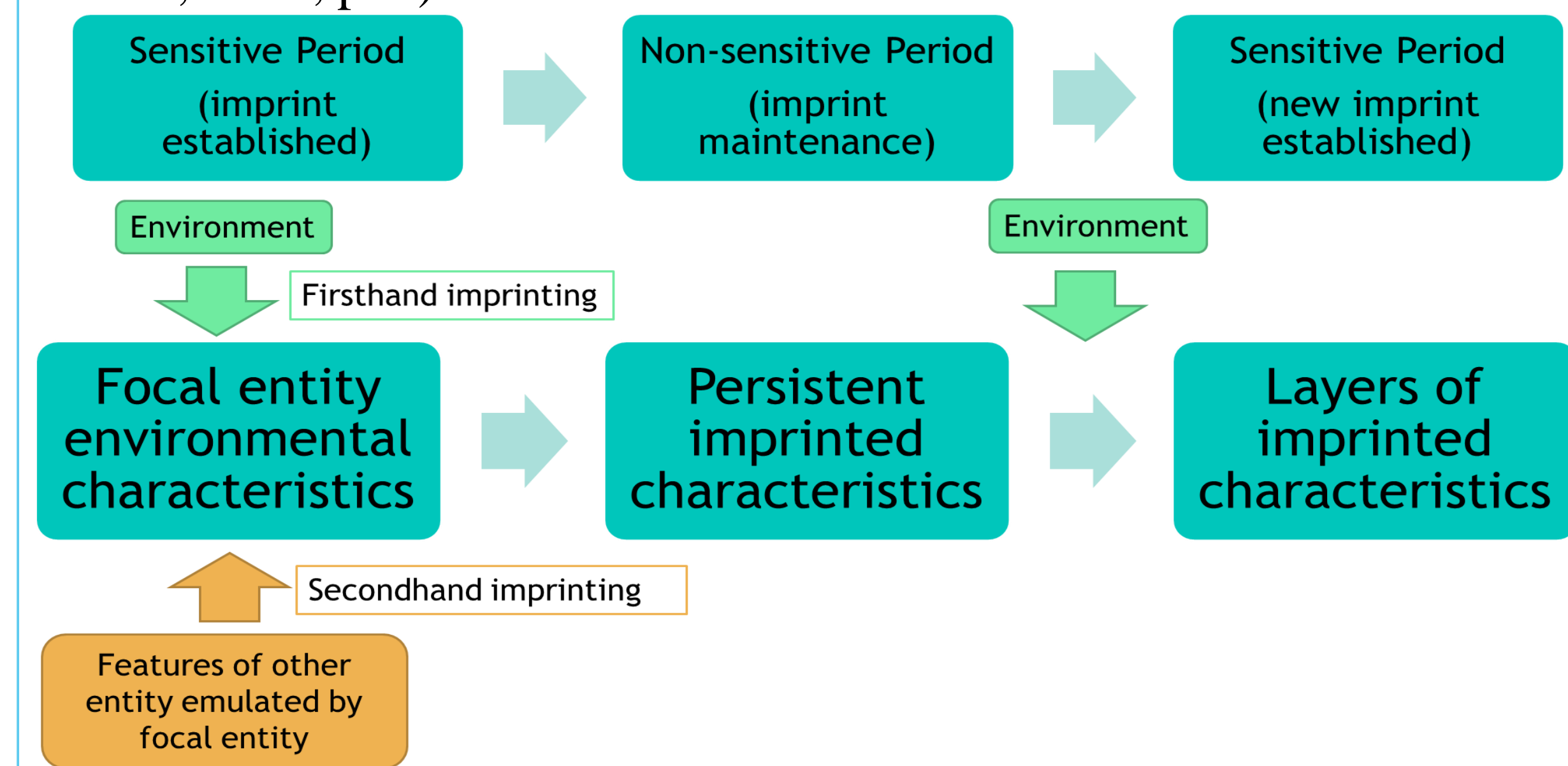
Communication: "a transactional process that includes the activities involved in managing the creation, sending, receiving, and interpretation of messages using symbols" (Sciascia et al, 2013).

	Conformity: the degree to which family climate encourages homogeneity of family attitudes, values and beliefs	
Conversation: the degree to which the family climate encourages participation and acceptance of different ideas	High	Low
High	Consensual: encourage conversation but not disagreement	Pluralistic: open, supportive communication
Low	Protective: emphasize obedience and conformity	Laissez-faire: are disconnected and independent

Research Question

How does the imprinting and communication process of the British Royal family affect the next generation's ability and willingness to continue the family business.

Imprinting ➕ Communication ➡ Transgenerational Entrepreneurship

Is the British Royal Family a Real Family Business?

Definition of a family business: "a business governed and/or managed with the intention to shape and pursue the vision of the business held by a dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family or a small number of families in a manner that is potentially sustainable across generations of the family or families" (Chua et al, 1999).

Aspects of a Family Business	Aspects of the British Royal Family (https://www.royal.uk/role-royal-family)
Dominant coalition controlled by members of the same family	Members of the House of Winsor
Intention to shape a vision	"To strengthen national unity and stability"
Intention to pursue the vision	Carry out 2000 official engagements per year. Entertain 70 000 people per year at the Royal residences. Receive and answer 100 000 letters per year. Either a patron or president of 3000 various organizations.
Intention for succession	The line of succession has already been established to 3 generations (Prince Charles → Prince William → Prince George)

Methods

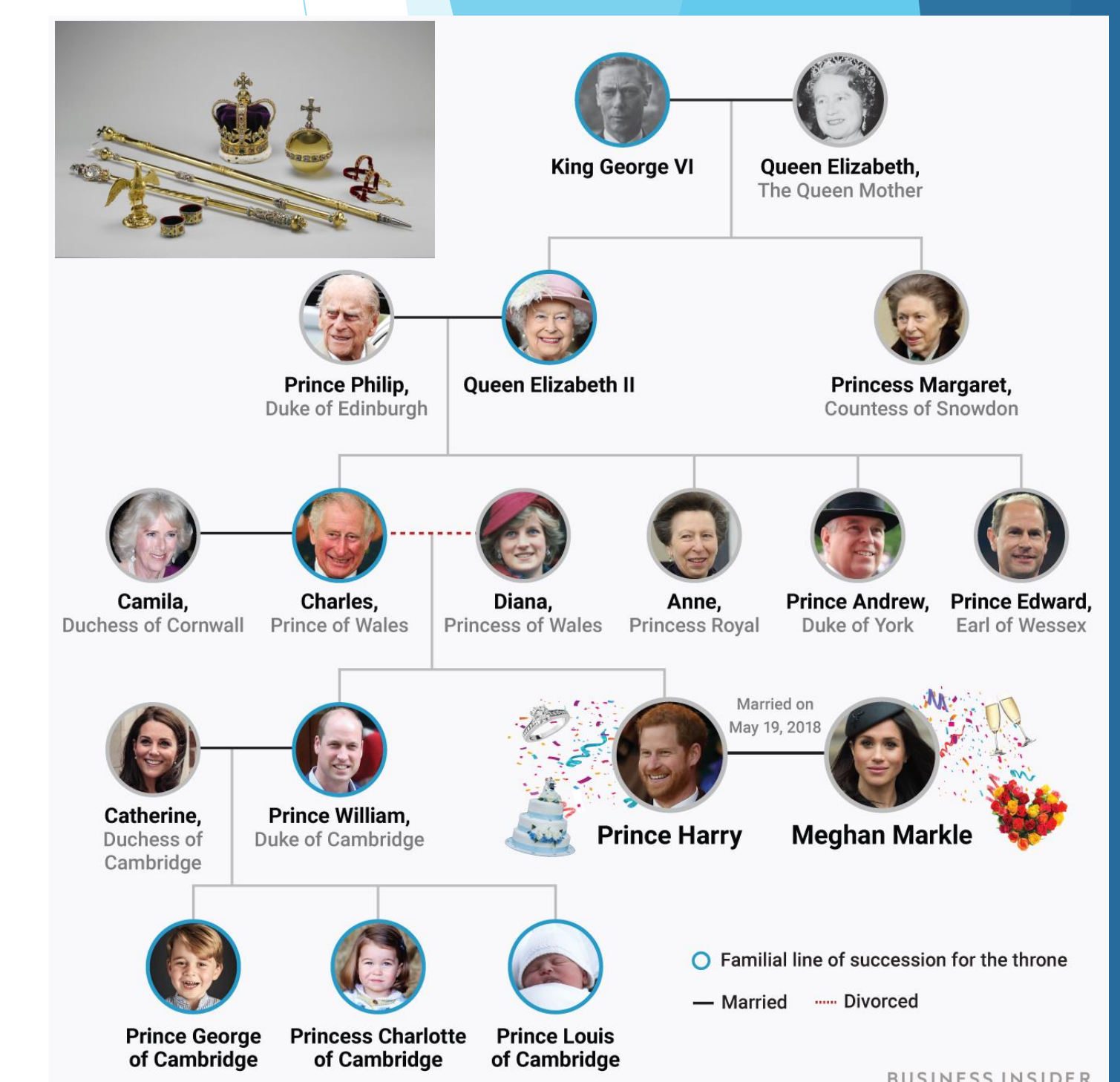This study will be done through a case study on the British Royal family.

Qualitative study through archival data such as the Royal archives and journals, documentaries, interview transcripts, and books.

https://www.kisspng.com/png-crown-jewels-of-the-united-kingdom-koh-i-noor-cull-1639826/preview.html

https://www.businessinsider.com/how-meghan-markle-fits-into-britain-royal-family-tree-2018-5; Picture: https://www.hrp.org.uk/tower-of-london/history-and-stories/the-crown-jewels/#gs.Ew=AvGw

Contributions

Theoretically: Simultaneously contributing to the imprinting, communication, and family business literatures by following the imprinting process longitudinally.

Practically: Discover if the imprinting process can be generalized to other family businesses to improve succession outcomes and transgenerational entrepreneurship.

References
Barbato, C. A., Graham, E. E., & Perse, E. M. (2003). Communicating in the Family: An Examination of the Relationship of Family Communication Climate and Interpersonal Communication Motives. *Journal of Family Communication*, *3*(3), 123–148.
Chua, J. H., Chrisman, J. J., & Sharma, P. (1999). Defining the Family Business by Behavior. *Entrepreneurship: Theory & Practice*, *23*, 19–39.
Fitzpatrick, M. A., & Ritchie, L. D. (1994). Communication Schemata Within the Family: Multiple Perspectives on Family Interaction. *Human Communication Research*, *20*(3), 275–301.
Galvin, K. M., & Brommel, B. J. (2000). *Family Communication: Cohesion and change* (Fifth). New York: Addison Wesley Longman Inc.
Koerner, A. F., & Fitzpatrick, M. A. (2002). Toward a Theory of Family Communication. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, *12*(1), 70–91.
Marquis, C., & Tilcsik, A. (2013). Imprinting: Toward a multilevel theory. *Academy of Management Annals*, *7*(1), 193–243.
Ritchie, L. D. (1991). Family communication patterns: An epistemic analysis and conceptual reinterpretation. *Communication Research*, *18*(4), 548–565.
Sciascia, S., Clinton, E., Nason, R., James, A.E., & Rivera-Algarin, J.O. (2013). Family communication and innovativeness in family firms. *Family Relations*, *62 (July 2013), 429-442.*