

S Y M P O S I U M

GOVERNANCE IMPLICATIONS OF ATTRACTING EXTERNAL EQUITY INVESTORS IN PRIVATE FAMILY FIRMS

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While research has commonly assumed that business-owning families are concerned about the preservation of control, families are increasingly seeking cooperation with external investors to accomplish firm- or family-level goals. In this paper, we provide a conceptual configuration of the different governance scenarios that may arise when family owners attract outside capital. Combining two important family objectives—(a) to provide liquidity either to the family or to the firm, and (b) to cede or to retain long-term family control—we identify four scenarios with different governance implications and preferred types of external investors. Our analysis increases understanding of the evolving structures of ownership in private family firms, the effectiveness and efficiency of governance arrangements in family firm–external investor cooperation, and the increasingly heterogeneous private equity funding landscape.

While it is commonly assumed that family firms are reluctant to hand over control to outside investors (La Porta, Lopez-De-Silanes, & Shleifer, 1999; Mahérault, 2004; Poutziouris, 2001; Wu, Chua, & Chrisman, 2007), an increasing number of private family firms are opening their capital to external investors (Battistin, Bortoluzzi, Buttignon, & Vedovato, 2017; Dawson, 2011; Wessel, Decker, Lange, & Hack, 2014). This evolution is driven by trends in both the demand and supply of capital. Family firms increasingly consider equity investments because more stringent capital and liquidity regulations, such as Basel III, have made longer-term bank lending to these firms, which are often smaller, less attractive (OECD, 2012). Furthermore, many business owners

who are reaching retirement age seek investors to diversify their wealth or to accomplish transgenerational successions. At the same time, new “players,” such as family offices and high net worth individuals (HNWIs), are increasingly investing in private family firms (Rottke & Thiele, 2017), supplementing financing from established investors such as private equity (PE) firms.¹ For example, European family offices nearly doubled their direct investments in private companies between 2008 and 2014 (Campden Research & UBS, 2015).

The role of external investors in private family firms has received limited attention in the academic literature. Some studies have examined PE buyouts

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¹ PE is defined as risk capital provided by professional investors to mature, unquoted private businesses (Invest Europe, 2017). PE involves medium- to long-term investments (generally three to seven years), characterized by active ownership. Investors in PE funds are principally institutional investors, such as insurance companies and pension funds.

of family firms (Howorth, Westhead, & Wright, 2004; Scholes, Wright, Westhead, & Bruining, 2010) or external ownership transitions of family firms more generally (Wennberg, Wiklund, Hellerstedt, & Nordqvist, 2011; Wiklund, Nordqvist, Hellerstedt, & Bird, 2013), whereby the family fully exits the firm and control is ceded to new owners. However, few studies have examined scenarios in which families do not cede full control but instead seek cooperation and thereby share control with investors to accomplish their goals. Similarly, the PE literature has mainly focused on PE-backed buyouts, often of public firms, with much less attention paid to investments in private firms, including minority investments. Additionally, the important role of alternative investors, such as family offices, in ownership transitions of private family firms has largely been neglected.

The question of how investors can contribute to private family firms is not only empirically relevant but also theoretically intriguing. Following the management and finance literatures, investors and family owners may not be the best partners as they are assumed to hold considerably different objectives. Parties such as PE firms invest in a portfolio of firms and focus on the maximization of economic value in the medium term (Kaplan & Strömberg, 2009; Wood & Wright, 2009). Family owners, in contrast, typically have their wealth concentrated in one firm and have long-term objectives that are not always economic in nature (Berrone, Cruz, & Gómez-Mejía, 2012; Chrisman, Chua, Pearson, & Barnett, 2012). These different objectives might lead to principal-principal conflicts (Young, Peng, Ahlstrom, Bruton, & Jiang, 2008). Therefore, more insights into ownership transitions and related governance mechanisms in private family firms are needed to better understand transitions or cooperation between families and equity investors (Uhlener, Wright, & Huse, 2007).

To enrich our understanding of the role of different investor types for private family firms, this paper provides a conceptual configuration of the governance scenarios that may arise when a family decides to attract external shareholders alongside family shareholders. We propose that two family objectives will strongly govern such transactions: the family's motivation to provide liquidity either to the firm or to the family, and the family's degree of transgenerational intent. The first objective distinguishes transactions that increase the equity capital of the firm and in which family shareholders keep their equity and transactions that involve a transfer

of some, but not all, shares from the family to an external equity investor. The second objective distinguishes between scenarios in which the family aims to exit the firm in the foreseeable future, versus the family aiming to keep the firm within the family over generations. Combining these two objectives, we configure external investments in family firms into four scenarios. For each scenario, we provide examples and discuss governance implications for firm ownership and the level of fit with different types of investors. Regarding governance implications, we discuss the wealth concentration and investment time horizon of the remaining family, the family's focus on socioemotional wealth (SEW), the focus on efficiency or growth as drivers of firm performance, the use of debt to structure the transaction, family involvement in management, and the importance of relational governance. We thereby take a configurational perspective, proposing that these governance attributes and the type of investor (such as independent PE, government-funded PE, or family offices) interact in complementary ways as part of unique configurations to facilitate successful ownership transitions (Meyer, Tsui, & Hinings, 1993). The notion of configuration is used to theorize which governance mechanisms are likely to lead to the fulfillment of desired objectives of family owners on the one hand, and investors on the other.

We make several contributions to the literature. First, our configurational model increases understanding about the evolving structures of ownership in private family firms. Ownership in private firms is theoretically intriguing because it is relatively illiquid and owners tend to be deeply involved in and identify with their firms. The insights also call for research that takes new theoretical perspectives to study owner dynamics in private firms. While research in this area is largely dominated by agency theory (Battistin et al., 2017; Chrisman, Chua, Steier, Wright, & McKee, 2012; Daily, Dalton, & Cannella, 2003), our model calls for better integrations with alternative theoretical perspectives. Second, our study contributes to the family business literature by examining gradual transitions from a family to a nonfamily firm. To date, scholars have paid substantially more attention to the minority of family firms that transition to another generation of family members than to the majority of family firms that do not (Wennberg et al., 2011), leaving substantial gaps in our understanding of ownership transition in family firms (Wiklund et al., 2013). Third, our framework increases understanding about the increasing heterogeneity among PE investors and the

role of alternative investors, such as family offices and HNWI's. Despite their practical relevance, these investors have received limited attention in research to date (Neckebrouck, Manigart, & Meuleman, 2017; Wessel et al., 2014).

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Family Firm Objectives and Decision-Making

Family firms are characterized by the existence of individuals, related by family ties, who exert substantial influence on the company, via either ownership stakes or important management positions (König, Kammerlander, & Enders, 2013). Although exact numbers for the prevalence of family firms vary, research has consistently shown that family firms dominate economies around the world (La Porta et al., 1999).

The governance and conduct of family firms have been studied from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including mainstream management theories such as agency theory, stewardship theory, and the resource-based view.² Agency theory implies that family firms have higher performance because they have lower agency costs related to the separation of ownership and control (Demsetz & Lehn, 1985; Fama & Jensen, 1983). Yet, agency theory also asserts that family owners are risk-averse because they typically hold concentrated wealth positions (La Porta et al., 1999; Morck & Yeung, 2003), misuse their power to expropriate minority shareholders (Claessens, Djankov, & Lang, 2000), and are prone to nepotism (Chrisman, Sharma, Steier, & Chua, 2013), executive entrenchment (Volpin, 2002), and intrafamily conflict (Schulze, Lubatkin, Dino, & Buchholtz, 2001). Stewardship, in contrast, suggests that family owners act as far-sighted stewards of their business (Le Breton-Miller, Miller, & Lester, 2011; Neckebrouck, Schulze, & Zellweger, 2018) and care about the long-term well-being of all stakeholders (Davis, Allen, & Hayes, 2010). The resource-based view maintains that family firms possess unique resources, which they leverage to benefit performance (Nordqvist, 2005; Sirmon & Hitt, 2003).

Next to these mainstream theories, over the last decade the SEW perspective developed as a dominant

theoretical paradigm in the family business field. Profit generation is rarely the exclusive goal for controlling-ownership families. Meeting the nonfinancial social and emotional needs also is an inherent goal of family firms. This unique family firm phenomena has been referred to as SEW. SEW encompasses a variety of aspects, including the employment of family members (Firfiray, Cruz, Neacsu, & Gomez-Mejia, 2017; Gómez-Mejía, Cruz, Berrone, & De Castro, 2011), enjoyment of family influence over the business (Gómez-Mejía, Haynes, Núñez-Nickel, Jacobson, & Moyano-Fuentes, 2007), reputational advantages from being associated with the firm (Deephouse & Jaskiewicz, 2013), and the preservation of benevolent ties among family members (Cruz, Gómez-Mejia, & Becerra, 2010).

The key assumption of the SEW perspective is that the preservation of SEW represents a primary driver of family firm decision-making (Gómez-Mejía, Makri, & Kintana, 2010). For example, family firms invest less in research and development (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2011) and engage less in corporate diversification (Anderson & Reeb, 2003; Gómez-Mejía et al., 2010) because such decisions entail losses of SEW—for instance, because they require the family to attract outside managerial talent, thereby reducing family control over the enterprise. More recent refinements have nuanced the view that family firms are foremost concerned with SEW goals, arguing that family owners weigh implications of their decisions on financial wealth and SEW in tandem (Gómez-Mejía, Patel, & Zellweger, 2018; Kotlar, Signori, De Massis, & Vismara, 2018).

Importantly, family firms are heterogeneous in the extent to which they pursue SEW objectives. Conceptually, SEW is inherently linked to the extent of family control over the firm and the degree of familial identification with the firm (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007). Smaller, privately held family firms focus more on SEW than do larger, publicly listed family firms because familial identification, influence, and personal investment are generally higher in the former (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2011). Control of the firm is critical because it is this that allows the family to pursue its interests through the firm (Carney, 2005).

Family Firms and Financial Decision-Making

Early studies on family firm financing have drawn from normative capital structure theories such as the pecking order theory and trade-off theory (King & Santor, 2008; López-Gracia & Sánchez-Andújar, 2007). When applied to family firms, however,

² Other theoretical perspectives include transaction cost theory (Gedajlovic & Carney, 2010; Verbeke & Kano, 2012), identity theory (Cannella, Jones, & Withers, 2015; Miller, Le Breton-Miller, & Lester, 2011), and embeddedness (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Steier, Chua, & Chrisman, 2009).

traditional capital structure theories have often led to inconclusive results because their assumptions about rational economic behavior may not apply to family firms in which decision-making is frequently influenced by noneconomic family goals (e.g., Koropp, Grichnik, & Kellermanns, 2013).

Studies with a background in the strategic management literature have suggested that capital structures may reflect the diverse personal goals of decision-makers (Barton & Gordon, 1987, 1988). Several studies have found that the financial logic in family firms is influenced by personal preferences of family decision-makers, leading to differences between family firm financing and nonfamily firm financing (Gallo, Tàpies, & Cappuyns, 2004; Romano, Tanewski, & Smyrniotis, 2001). Family firms, for instance, are less likely than nonfamily firms to relinquish control to outside investors because families derive not only financial but also socioemotional value from their firms (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007).

While informative, analysis of differences between family and nonfamily firm financing policies has ignored the heterogeneity of financing decisions within the population of family firms. More recent research has shown that a family firm's usage of debt is influenced by family governance characteristics such as ownership dispersion (Schulze, Lubatkin, & Dino, 2003a), generational stage (Molly, Laveren, & Jorissen, 2012), managerial succession (Amore, Minichilli, & Corbetta, 2011), and owner-manager attitudes (Koropp et al., 2013). However, these studies have primarily focused on the usage of debt and largely neglected equity as a form of financing. This is surprising, as raising equity from nonfamily members has significant implications for control and governance.

Research on the role of PE to provide financing for family firms is in its infancy. PE investments have traditionally been viewed from an agency perspective, with emphasis on obtaining efficiency improvements (Renneboog, Simons, & Wright, 2007); however, PE can also be a vehicle for strategic renewal that fosters upside entrepreneurial growth (Wright, Hoskisson, Busenitz, & Dial, 2000).

Studies on the role of PE in family firms have mostly examined buyouts of family firms, wherein the family sells its full ownership stake to PE firms (Howorth et al., 2004; Scholes et al., 2010). Some studies have analyzed the selection criteria used by PE firms when investing in family firms (Dawson, 2011) or valuation particularities of family firms (Ahlers, Hack, & Kellermanns, 2014). Other studies have examined the process of professionalization of

family firms post-buyout (Howorth, Wright, Westhead, & Allcock, 2016), and the resulting impact of PE buyouts on the performance and growth of former family firms (Battistin et al., 2017; Croce & Martí, 2016; Scholes et al., 2010).

Limited attention, however, has been given to scenarios in which private family firms do not cede full control to investors but instead seek cooperation with investors to accomplish their goals (Neckebrouck, Manigart, & Meuleman, 2016). Investors may then acquire a minority stake in the family business, while the family remains the majority shareholder. This is in contrast with full buyouts, where PE investors typically acquire a controlling majority stake. A key question in this scenario is how potentially divergent goals may lead to principal–principal conflicts (Martin, Gómez-Mejía, Berrone, & Makri, 2017; Young et al., 2008). Villanueva and Sapienza (2009) suggested that the identity of formal, financially oriented investors, such as PE firms, is unlikely to fit well with family firms. Because family owners often value the preservation of SEW alongside the maximization of financial wealth, conflicts between PE investors and the family may arise. Such conflicts might be limited when the firms perform well, but can be especially prevalent when the firm underperforms (Martin et al., 2017).

Even if partnering between private family firms and financial investors involves a risk of conflict, recent evidence has indicated that an increasing number of private family firms are opening their capital to investors (Battistin et al., 2017). Key questions, therefore, pertain to the governance implications of transitions from a fully owned family business to a multiple ownership structure involving outside equity investors (Uhlener et al., 2007), and what types of investors are most likely to provide a good fit. Using a configurational approach to corporate governance (Meyer et al., 1993; Miles & Snow, 1978), we propose that “bundles” of governance practices exist that are consistent with family preferences, firm needs, and types of investors (Misangyi & Acharya, 2014; Rediker & Seth, 1995). Each configuration is a gestalt of multiple, interlinked, and mutually reinforcing organizational and structural characteristics that are complementary (i.e., mutually reinforce the effectiveness of one another [Schiehl, Lewellyn, & Muller-Kahle, 2017]) and commonly occur together (Meyer et al., 1993; Miller, Friesen, & Mintzberg, 1984). In the remainder of this paper we use the notion of configurations to reflect on the effectiveness and efficiency of different governance constellations in collaborations between family firms and investors.

CONFIGURATION MODEL

We now focus on transactions in which a traditional PE investor or an alternative investor, such as a family office or HNWI, acquires a shareholding next to the family. Figure 1 illustrates our configurational framework. The horizontal axis differentiates between transactions in which an investor increases a firm’s capital while family owners retain their shareholdings (liquidity for the firm) and transactions in which investors replace family equity and, therefore, some family members decide to sell all or a proportion of their shares (liquidity for the family). The vertical axis differentiates between families who are looking to cede ownership in the medium term (ceding family ownership) and families who aim to retain ownership (enduring family ownership). The evolution of a firm’s equity structure over time is illustrated for each quadrant. The entry (time t_1) and exit (t_2) time of the investor are marked. In Quadrants 3 and 4, the family remains the shareholder after the investor exits at t_2 ; in Quadrants 1 and 2, the family exits at t_2 , often together with the investor.

In the subsections that follow, we describe different transaction types related to these four quadrants, provide examples, and discuss governance implications. We use the notion of configuration to theorize about the ideal constellation of governance characteristics in each quadrant. Specifically, for each quadrant, we reflect on the combination of

formal and informal governance mechanisms that will be most efficient and effective in fulfilling the specific economic or noneconomic objectives of the family and the investor. Following a configurational approach, governance mechanisms in such “ideal deals” must show high levels of fit with the overarching goals and resources of the family and with each other.

Most configurational research has defined governance performance solely in terms of efficiency—typically firm profitability (e.g., Misangyi & Acharya, 2014). In our context, however, it is critical to also assess performance in terms of effectiveness. While efficiency focuses on the relationship between inputs and outputs, effectiveness in our context relates to the extent to which an investment helps a family to achieve its idiosyncratic economic and noneconomic goals. Assessing performance as achievement of goals is particularly important in family firms because of the noneconomic goals family firms possess (Chua, 2018).

Our framework is shown in Table 1. In terms of governance implications, we include different factors highlighted in the literature. From a *family perspective*, we consider the wealth concentration of the remaining family, the family’s investment time horizon and the extent to which family owners focus on SEW objectives. First, the wealth concentration of the remaining family is important because owning families, due to their relatively undiversified wealth

FIGURE 1
Configurational Model for External Equity Investments in Family Firms

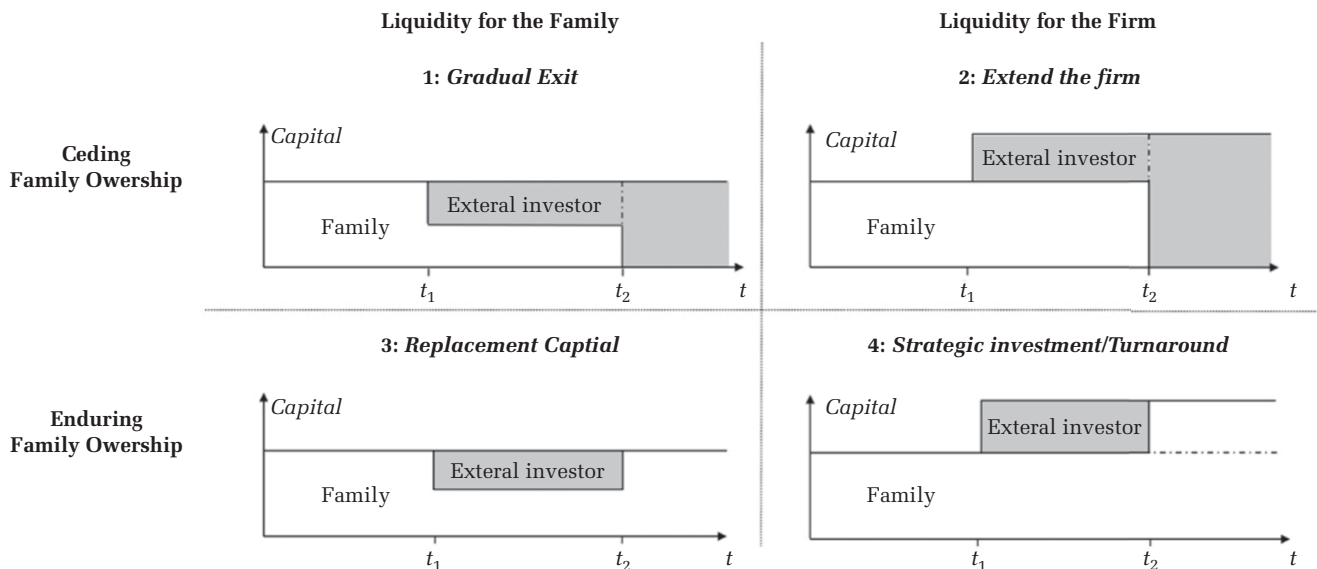


TABLE 1
Governance Implications and Investor Type

	Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2	Quadrant 3	Quadrant 4a	Quadrant 4b
	Gradual exit	Firm extension	Replacement capital	Strategic investment	Turnaround
Governance implications					
<i>Family perspective</i>					
Wealth concentration remaining in the family	Constant or decrease	Constant	Constant or increase	Constant	Constant or increase
Investment time horizon	Medium term	Medium term	Long term	Long term	Medium term
Family's focus on socioemotional wealth	Low	Low	High	Medium	Low
<i>Firm perspective</i>					
Focus on efficiency	High	Medium	Low	Low	High
Focus on growth	Low	High	Low	High	Low
Use of debt	Medium	Low	High	Low	Low
Reduced family involvement in management	Possibly	Possibly	Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely
Focus on relational governance	Low	Low	Medium	High	Low
Investor type	Independent PE, bank-affiliated PE	Independent PE, evergreen PE	Mezzanine PE, bank-affiliated PE, government PE, family office	Evergreen PE, long-term PE, government PE, family office	Turnaround PE

position, are generally more risk averse toward growth (La Porta et al., 1999). This risk aversion might be a source of conflict with investors who typically have more diversified portfolios and, therefore, a higher risk propensity. Second, owners might have differing time horizons concerning their involvement in a firm, potentially causing conflicts of interest (Arthurs, Hoskisson, Busenitz, & Johnson, 2008). For example, traditional independent PE investors generally seek an exit after three to five years, whereas family owners might have a long-term horizon without clear exit intentions. Third, the focus on SEW may direct the family to prioritize noneconomic objectives over the objective of wealth maximization that is commonly prioritized by investors (Zellweger, Nason, Nordqvist, & Brush, 2013). SEW considerations will influence the family's preference for certain investor types and governance arrangements.

From a *firm perspective*, we consider a focus on efficiency or growth as a main driver of value creation post-investment, the use of debt to structure the transaction, and the likelihood that the family will reduce its involvement in firm management. First, increasing efficiency has been one of the central mechanisms for investors such as traditional PE firms to create value (Cumming, Siegel, & Wright, 2007). However, efficiency-enhancing interventions

might involve restructuring activities, such as reducing the workforce or replacing family employees, that might be detrimental to the family's reputation or SEW and, therefore, be a source of owner conflict. Second, traditional PE investors increasingly focus on growth to generate returns (Hoskisson, Shi, Yi, & Jin, 2013; Wright, Hoskisson, & Busenitz, 2001). However, family firms might be reluctant to pursue risky growth strategies, which could lead to conflicting objectives and, therefore, requires appropriate governance. Third, a key element of PE governance is the use of debt instruments versus equity (Wright, Amess, Weir, & Girma, 2009). While all transaction types discussed in Table 1 will generally involve the use of equity instruments, some investors might combine traditional equity with debt and debt-like instruments to structure the transaction. Debt instruments typically have few rights of control unless the firm becomes insolvent (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). From a family perspective, debt-like instruments have the advantage that they require less involvement from investors. However, an excessive use of debt will also increase the likelihood of financial distress and endanger the family's SEW. Fourth, we discuss the likelihood that the family will reduce its involvement in firm management as part of the deal, for instance by giving up the CEO

position. The decision to decrease involvement in management may relate to structural family-level considerations (for instance when a family-member CEO is reaching retirement age) but may also relate to economic considerations. The willingness to give up control over management is important because it may influence the type of investor that can be attracted, and the extent to which family owners can derive SEW from their firm following the transaction.

Finally, we discuss the type of investor that is most likely to provide a good fit, and how important relational governance will be in driving the family–investor relationship. Different types of investors clearly have different objectives, including investment time horizon, preferred risk profile, the pursuit of noneconomic goals (such as investor reputation), active involvement in portfolio firms, and so forth (Cumming, Schmidt, & Walz, 2010; Drover, Busenitz, Matusik, Townsend, Anglin, & Dushnitsky, 2017; Hoskisson, Shi, et al., 2013; Manigart & Wright, 2013). Following a configurational approach, the performance of outside investments in private family firms will be highest when investor objectives are consistent with the family and firm-level governance factors discussed earlier. A key question that arises in this respect is what type of governance will drive the investor–family collaboration. Given the embeddedness of family relationships in family firms, many scholars have depicted family firms as a context in which relational governance based on mutual trust, a shared vision, and identity dominates over contractual governance as stipulated in shareholder agreements, incentives, and monitoring systems (Arregle, Hitt, Sirmon, & Very, 2007; Chrisman, Chua, Le Breton-Miller, Miller, & Steier, 2018; Eddleston, Chrisman, Steier, & Chua, 2010; Steier, 2001). Compared to non-family firms, family firms may be more inclined to establish trusting relationships because they are concerned about long-term stability and the preservation of a favorable reputation (Eddleston & Morgan, 2014; Stanley & McDowell, 2014). In contrast, PE investors traditionally rely on formal shareholder agreements to create alignment on economic objectives and to regulate the execution of voting rights or the transfer of shares (Chemla, Habib, & Ljungqvist, 2007). Even though contractual governance will be essential in all transaction types, contractual governance is ill-suited to address questions that are of managerial and noneconomic nature (such as a firm’s strategic position or growth aspirations, as well as preservation of the family’s SEW) (Schulze et al., 2001). Overall, relational governance may be key for investors and family owners to work

together successfully and, therefore, is a core element of firm governance.

Quadrant 1: Gradual Exit

Families in Quadrant 1 (Figure 1) seek a gradual exit from their family business. Therefore, they may engage in cooperation with an external investor to diversify some of their wealth in the short term (t_1), while aiming to simultaneously maximize firm value before a final exit (t_2). We define these transactions as *gradual exits*. Families in this quadrant have no transgenerational intent. The equity investment only involves a partial change in ownership and does not provide extra capital to the firm.

An example of a gradual exit is the 2003 buyout of La Buvette, a French agricultural equipment manufacturer owned by the fifth generation of the Gustin family (Schmohl, 2010). The family felt that their firm still had value-creation potential, but they needed a partner to professionalize further. Because there were no successors in the family and because they were concerned about the long-term independence of the firm, the family started negotiations with external investors. The family retained Alliance Entreprendre, a local mid-market bank-affiliated buyout fund, as an investor given its value-adding potential, cultural fit, and attractiveness of the financial offer. Following the deal, the family gave up the CEO position and retained a minority stake. Alliance Entreprendre monitored the cash flows of the business closely, introduced more systematic management processes, and prepared the business for a joint exit with the family.

Table 1 summarizes key governance implications of transactions in this quadrant and the potential fit with different investor types. From a family perspective, next to family owners who sell all their shares in the transaction, remaining family owners may decide to diversify their wealth by selling some of their shares. This reduces their wealth concentration in the firm and increases the likelihood that the risk profile matches that of investors, thereby reducing agency conflicts. Additionally, before investing, investors typically verify which family members want to remain involved in the firm and which want to quit. Investors will buy out family members who do not commit to a joint strategic plan. This reduces the likelihood of principal–principal conflicts between remaining family members (Schulze, Lubatkin, & Dino, 2003b). Second, remaining family owners often seek an exit in the medium term when the business has been professionalized. While

remaining family owners may have concerns about the preservation of SEW, family owners who do not have intentions for transgenerational control generally have reduced SEW perceptions (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson, et al., 2012; Zellweger, Kellermanns, Chrisman, & Chua, 2012). Reduced expectations about future SEW increase the disposition of family owners toward the maximization of financial wealth (Kotlar et al., 2018). The maximization of firm value becomes the dominant goal and should lead to a climate in which investors and family owners find a common ground (Villanueva & Sapienza, 2009). Family owners also become more likely to prioritize economic considerations in their selection of an investor. They may, for instance, prefer an investor who has great value-adding skills or a strong reputation, but who does not have a strong familial identity (Cannella et al., 2015).

From a firm perspective, because these investments do not bring new money to the firm, value will be created primarily by focusing on efficiency gains rather than on growth. Opportunities to increase efficiency are likely present because private family firms frequently base decision-making on noneconomic personal motives (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007; Gómez-Mejía, Nuñez-Nickel, & Gutierrez, 2001) and are vulnerable to poor leadership (Schulze et al., 2001). Investors can help family owners professionalize the governance and financial management of the firm, optimize the business model, cut costs, and prepare the business for sale by streamlining organizational processes. We anticipate that families may go a long way in supporting such governance and operational engineering. Nevertheless, when investors do not acquire dominant control over the firm, they might still need to make compromises. Compromises, for instance, may be needed when an investor wants to divest a historically important business division or dismiss underperforming employees who have close emotional ties with the family. Debt financing can be used in these transactions, as efficiency improvements should free up cash that can be used to pay off debt and boost returns for the remaining shareholders. Debt provides incentives to implement efficiency-enhancing initiatives (Jensen, 1989).

Because family owners have a lower focus on SEW, reducing family involvement in management by attracting an external CEO is a viable option in this scenario. Whether the family brings in an external CEO will depend on the balance of SEW and economic objectives they wish to pursue after the investment. On one hand, attracting an external CEO

implies accepting a greater loss in SEW (Chrisman, Chua, Pearson, et al., 2012). On the other hand, external CEOs will bring external experience and may be more willing to make changes in the firm. In addition, family owners who hire an external CEO send a strong signal to investors that they will direct resources toward financial performance rather than toward the preservation of SEW (Jaskiewicz, Combs, Shanine, & Kacmar, 2017; Naldi, Cennamo, Corbetta, & Gomez-Mejia, 2013). Accordingly, the appointment of an external CEO may further reduce principal–principal problems and allow the family to attract a high-quality investor (Bertrand & Schoar, 2006).

Overall, deals in Quadrant 1 fit relatively well with the traditional PE model that includes independent PE firms and bank-affiliated PE firms. In the traditional model, PE firms enhance value because they increase the managerial focus on the realization of efficiency gains (Jensen, 1993), and bring financial engineering skills that lead to increased leverage (Kaplan, 1989). Independent PE firms have a medium-term investment horizon of three to five years (Wright et al., 2009), which should provide sufficient time to professionalize the firm and implement efficiency-enhancing initiatives. Bank-affiliated PE firms might have an advantage in conducting these types of transactions as they could have obtained private information about their clients through previous banking relationships that may give them an opportunity to extend more leverage. An important benefit a PE firm could bring to remaining family owners is to provide “cover” for efficiency-enhancing actions that might break longstanding implicit contracts with, for example, incompetent employees or suppliers (Villalonga, 2012). By monitoring the underlying target and implementing sound corporate governance practices, PE firms will help family firms to transition and ultimately facilitate a successful exit (Di Toma & Montanari, 2012). We anticipate that transactions in this quadrant will be mainly managed via contractual governance, and that relational governance will be relatively less important. Because of the family owners’ objective to maximize firm economic value, and the relatively low focus on SEW, most value the family and the investor will expect to generate from the cooperation will be of a contractable nature.

Quadrant 2: Firm Extension

In Quadrant 2, families seek cooperation with an investor to provide capital to the firm (t_1) which

enables jointly maximization of firm value before an exit in the medium term (t_2). At t_2 , the family and the investor may jointly exit the firm, the investor can take over the family's stake, or the family may simply sell its stake to another third party. We define these transactions as *firm extension* deals. Families are looking to prepare their firm for sale but realize that more resources can help to fully develop their firm. While deals are somewhat like those in Quadrant 1 because family members plan a medium-term exit, family members retain their shareholding and the investment provides extra capital to the firm.

An example of a transaction in this quadrant is the 2014 investment of the Business Growth Fund (BGF) in Molecular Products Group, a U.K.-based manufacturer of advanced chemistry-based products (Private Equity Wire, 2017). At that time, the second-generation family firm had just started to internationalize. BGF helped the family to realize the firm's growth potential by providing additional capital, strengthening the management team and appointing a chairman with relevant experience in acquisitions and major growth initiatives. After the operating profits had almost doubled, the family and the investor successfully exited the business with a sale to another PE player in 2017.

Table 1 lists key governance implications. From a family governance perspective, because all family members retain their shareholding, the wealth concentration of family owners remains constant. As such, the family and the investor will differ more in their willingness to take risk than in Quadrant 1. However, like in Quadrant 1, family owners should have somewhat reduced concerns about SEW preservation and will therefore be aligned with investors in their objective to maximize firm value in the medium term. From a firm perspective, because investments in this quadrant bring new money to the firm, investors can create value by focusing on growth alongside the realization of efficiency gains and professionalization. To support growth, investors can provide family owners with industry expertise, international relationships, expertise regarding mergers and acquisitions, and so forth (Meuleman, Amess, Wright, & Scholes, 2009). We anticipate that conflicts between family shareholders and investors will be relatively rare because a focus on growth (rather than efficiency gains) will require fewer changes to existing operations. Nevertheless, investors may need to make compromises when growth-related initiatives involve significant risks. Family owners will generally have higher levels of wealth concentration and therefore lower

risk tolerance. The use of significant debt financing is less likely as the financial obligations associated with debt limit the flexibility needed to pursue growth. Compared to Quadrant 1, families may be somewhat more likely to appoint an external CEO. Because the investor provides extra capital to the firm, value creation will depend on the achievement of profitable growth. Rather than continuing the business "as usual" and building on traditional mechanisms, such as financial engineering, to improve performance, value creation should depend more on strategic revitalization (Berg & Gottschalg, 2005). Family owners may look for a new CEO with an entrepreneurial orientation and an attitude toward innovation if the existing family-member CEO does not have the required skill set (Wright et al., 2000).

Overall, deals in this quadrant fit relatively well with the traditional PE model that includes independent PE firms and evergreen PE firms. Evergreen PE firms involve funds in which realized investment returns are recycled back into the fund rather than distributed to limited partners and, therefore, the capital committed is permanent. The key benefit of this structure is that it allows for more long-term holding periods compared to traditional PE (Brown & Kraeussl, 2012). As such, evergreen PE may be especially relevant for families whose exit horizon extends beyond the three- to five-year horizon of traditional PE. A longer investment horizon will help to reap the full benefits of the growth scenario, which typically takes longer to achieve compared with efficiency gains as in Quadrant 1. Like in Quadrant 1, family owners and investors will largely align with each other using contractual governance. Relational governance, including trust, may be somewhat more important, however, because ownership and shareholder agreements are ill-suited to ensure alignment on growth-related objectives.

Quadrant 3: Replacement Capital

Families in Quadrant 3 want to cash in (some of) their investment, but also have transgenerational intents. Family owners, for instance, may seek investors to solve intergenerational transfers with several siblings or other family members. Parents often want to treat their children equally when passing on their firm. However, when some family members want to become or remain owners and others do not, investors may help to overcome stalemates by buying the shares of the latter. In this scenario, the succeeding generation has a long time horizon that likely extends beyond the time horizon of the investor (t_2).

An example that illustrates this scenario is the 2014 buyout of Market Basket, a New England-based supermarket chain owned by the Demoulas family. The deal settled a life-long conflict between two cousins that almost led to the demise of the company. In the deal, one branch of the Demoulas family acquired the 50.5% stake they did not already own from the other branch using funding from the Blackstone Group and significant amounts of debt (Forbes, 2014).

From a family governance perspective, the wealth concentration of the remaining family in this scenario will either stay constant or increase. It may increase if the remaining family invests some of its personal wealth to acquire a stake of the selling party. A higher level of wealth concentration might limit the willingness to take risk. Additionally, because family owners may seek to regain full control over their firm in the long term, they are likely to hold positive expectations about future SEW. Such positive expectations increase the disposition of family owners toward the minimization of SEW losses when considering an investor and related governance arrangements (Kotlar et al., 2018). Family owners will prefer an investor who increases the probability for the family to recover SEW in the long-term (Kotlar et al., 2018).

Because there is no extra capital in the firm, investors need to focus on the realization of efficiency gains to create value. However, because cost reductions often require changing old habits, and since the family may be more focused on continuity (Allio, 2004), the potential to realize such cost efficiencies may be limited. Given the limited value-creation potential, investors will often limit their risk by using a financial structure that emphasizes debt over equity and that guarantees a minimum required return (e.g., mezzanine financing). As family owners will seek to minimize SEW losses when ceding partial ownership, they will be unlikely to appoint an external CEO as part of the transaction.

Overall, deals in this quadrant do not fit well with the traditional independent PE model with a closed-end fund. Traditional PE investors and remaining family owners will differ with respect to their concern about SEW, the investment time horizon, and their willingness to take risk. Families will likely prefer investors with a longer time horizon who allow the remaining family to retain the driving seat and regain control. As highlighted above, mezzanine investors may be a good fit, as they will typically not take an active position on the board and will employ financial covenants that tend to be less strict

compared to those of banks (Torpey & Viscione, 1987).³ Initial owners frequently buy out mezzanine investors through the accumulated profits generated by the business or a recapitalization via inexpensive senior debt. Alternatively, bank-affiliated PE funds or government-backed funds might also be well-positioned to invest in this quadrant. Bank-affiliated PE investors might provide funding alongside traditional senior loans provided by the affiliated banks. As bank-related PE investors have lower return expectations compared to independent PE investors (Manigart et al., 2002), they will also be more willing to provide a debt-like structure. Government-funded PE might sponsor these types of transactions to anchor companies in the local economy and to preserve regional employment.

Lastly, in recent years family offices and private investors with a family firm background have increasingly sought direct investments in private family firms (Rottke & Thiele, 2017). These investors might fit well with transactions in this quadrant as they possess values and identities consistent with those of a family firm. Family offices, just like family firms, are affected by family influence. While the main objective of a family office is to preserve the family's wealth and maintain its legacy, many family offices also prioritize objectives such as family harmony, cohesion, and general continuity (Rivo-López, Villanueva-Villar, Vaquero-García, & Lago-Peñas, 2017). As such, they take a long-term view on investment and understand the importance of the continuation of family legacy and values. Furthermore, family offices that are not professionalized may have less formal control mechanisms (Wessel et al., 2014). This will resonate well with family owners who are concerned about the preservation of family influence over the firm as a source of SEW (Rottke & Thiele, 2017). Overall, family offices might be the preferred choice for family firms seeking replacement capital as they have a more consistent business philosophy and similar understanding of the needs of the family business (Brueckner, 2014).

The importance of relational governance in the family-investor relationship will vary depending on the type of investor. For mezzanine investors, who face lower risks compared to equity investors, contractual agreements rather than relational

³ To protect their interests, mezzanine investors will typically restrict the family's latitude to execute capital reductions, alter dividend policies, increase CEO compensation, or attract more debt (Thompson & Cusmano, 2013).

governance will guide relationships. Alternatively, for pure equity investors, relational governance with a focus on trust will play a key role (Rottke & Thiele, 2017). Given the family owners' focus on trans-generational succession and preservation of SEW, a large part of the value the family will expect to generate from the cooperation will be of a noncontractible nature. The long-term horizon of family owners, and their concern regarding the protection of family reputation, provide increased incentives and ability to establish long-term trusting relationships (Arregle et al., 2007; Eddleston & Morgan, 2014).

Quadrant 4: Strategic Investment or Turn-Around

In Quadrant 4, families are looking to strengthen the firm's capital and have a long-term investment time horizon. We distinguish between two scenarios. In one scenario, families seek a strategic partner to realize growth ambitions. We define these deals as strategic investments. In a second scenario, families may seek an investor to strengthen the firm's financial structure in a distress situation. We define these deals as turnarounds.

Strategic investments. In this scenario, families collaborate with an external investor to raise capital for the firm (t_1 in Figure 1) and have no immediate intention to exit. Transactions in this scenario take place when the firm perceives strategic investment opportunities that go beyond its immediate financing capacity. At the same time, the family has no wish to exit the firm, so typically the family will seek to buy out the external investor when the growth has been realized.

A recent deal illustrating this scenario is the 2015 investment of LNK Partners (a New York-based PE firm) in Dogfish Head (a family-owned and -managed craft brewery in Delaware) (Whipp & Daneshkhu, 2016). Dogfish Head needed money and expertise to continue growing in an increasingly competitive market. Initially, however, the family owners were very skeptical about giving up control. The deal crystallized only after LNK agreed they would treasure Dogfish Head's culture, the company would pursue "smart growth over fast growth," and the deal would not be a path to taking the company public. LNK acquired a 15% stake and one seat on Dogfish Head's four-member board of directors.

From a family governance perspective, deals in this quadrant do not alter the family's level of wealth concentration. Furthermore, while investors and family owners will be aligned on the objective to pursue growth, conflicts may still occur because investors will generally be less concerned about SEW, be more willing to take risks, and have shorter time

horizons. Because families are concerned about the retention of long-term family control, deals will typically involve minority investments.

From a firm perspective, investors will focus on realizing the firm's growth potential. The use of significant debt financing is less likely as the financial obligations associated with debt will limit the flexibility needed to pursue growth. Like in Quadrant 3, family owners will be unlikely to appoint a new external CEO. Family owners are in a strong position to negotiate and will prioritize the preservation of SEW, including the continuation of family control over decision-making.

Deals in this quadrant have limited fit with the traditional PE model because families will generally prefer an investor with a long time horizon. However, in recent years some PE firms have set up dedicated long-term funds for 20 years that can invest in companies for up to 10 years. PE firms are rethinking old structures, giving themselves more time, and targeting returns of 10–12% that are well below the 20% returns usually aimed at by 10-year funds (The Economist, 2016). Some of these long-term-oriented funds might be well-suited for this type of transaction. Evergreen funds may also prove to be a good partner. Alternatively, if SEW objectives are particularly pertinent, family offices and private investors with a family business background could provide a good fit. We anticipate that relational governance will be important in these transactions that involve long-term partnerships. The monetary incentives that come from equity ownership will not guarantee the alignment of family owners and investors on growth- and SEW-related objectives.

Turnaround. Lastly, business-owning families may seek an equity investment because their firm is facing financial difficulties. Given the unpredictable outcome and the time and effort that might be needed to rescue the company, an exit will not be foreseen in the short term.

An example of a turnaround is the 2009 investment of Gimv (a quoted evergreen European PE firm) in Vandemoortele (a Belgian producer of bakery products). The investment strengthened the balance sheet of Vandemoortele, which had suffered from a failed acquisition and lower revenues after the financial crisis. Supported by the investment, which involved subordinated debt with warrants, and after the divestment of an important business division, the fourth generation of the Vandemoortele family turned the tide. After seven successful years of growth and increased profitability, Gimv executed its warrants and sold its share to the Vandemoortele family, who had preemption rights.

In turnarounds, the wealth concentration of family owners will remain constant or increase if they invest some of their private wealth along with the investor. Following the tenets of the behavioral agency model (Wiseman & Gómez-Mejía, 1998), the likelihood of conflicts between outside investors and family shareholders may depend on the performance evolution of the firm. When the firm is in distress, investors and family owners will be aligned on a common objective—to increase the firm’s profitability. Indeed, as the economic risks facing a family firm increase, the likelihood that economic considerations precede SEW considerations increases (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007).⁴ Nevertheless, family owners and investors may still disagree about strategic alternatives, such as laying off employees (Neckebrouck et al., 2016; Sraer & Thesmar, 2007) or selling a division. Furthermore, conflicts between investors and the family will become more likely when firm performance improves. Relieved from financial distress, families may want to regain control over their firm and, if investors do not hold sufficient control rights, the latter will become vulnerable to expropriation. Concerning CEO replacement, attracting a new external CEO is a likely option and might be a condition imposed by the investor. Family owners are in a weak position and are forced to accept losses in SEW to guarantee firm survival. When selecting a new CEO, skills and experience with turnarounds will be most important.

PE investors specialized in distress will provide a good fit with this type of transaction. Their focus on efficiency improvements and cost-cutting initiatives, combined with experience in divestments, can help to solve financial distress (Hotchkiss, Strömberg, & Smith, 2014). For family offices with a focus on the preservation of family wealth, turnaround transactions might pose too much risk (Rottke & Thiele, 2017). Relative to shareholder agreements and the monetary incentives that stem from ownership, relational governance mechanisms will only have a subordinate role. Given the focus on firm survival, most value of the cooperation will be of an economic nature.

CONFIGURATIONS AS IDEAL TYPES

While we focused our analysis on four distinct configurations, hybrid forms of transactions that cross the boundaries of individual quadrants may

also occur in practice. Family owners, for instance, may seek external equity to provide liquidity for both the firm and the family. Following the foundations of configurational theory (Miles & Snow, 1978), a real transaction does not need to be classified into a single quadrant. Configurations should be interpreted as ideal-type organizations rather than as nominal categories. The ideal-type organization is an important theory-building device that can serve as “an abstract model so that deviation from the type can be noted and explained” (Blalock, 1969: 32). In our context, the degree of deviation between a real transaction and each ideal-type configuration can be used to predict governance performance. The performance of a particular configuration should decrease the more that configuration deviates from the ideal types (Drazin & Van de Ven, 1985).

Most configurational research in governance has examined how different governance constellations lead to the same overarching objective of maximizing financial performance (e.g., Bell, Filatotchev, & Aguilera, 2014). In such an approach, configurations have often been derived empirically and scholars have expended a lot of effort on inductively reasoning about the origin of the boundaries between configurations. Our approach, in contrast, creates configurations that are more detached from each other. Each configuration originates from different, rather than one common, performance objectives: aiming for the continuation of family control rather than a family exit, and providing liquidity for the family or for the firm. This implies that deals that overlap with multiple quadrants involve transactions in which the family has mixed objectives. For instance, family owners may wish to buy out other family members (as in Quadrant 3), while at the same time increasing the firm’s capital (as in Quadrant 4). In such a scenario, high-performing governance constellations will need to combine characteristics of different scenarios: an ideal investor should not only have high value-adding skills that support the realization of profitable growth (as in Quadrant 4) but also allow the family to regain firm control over time (as in Quadrant 3).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

To study the investment cycle involving private family firms and external equity investors, including the selection of investors, screening, deal structuring, deal management, and deal performance, a wide variety of theoretical perspectives seem relevant. Given the heterogeneity in family-level objectives

⁴ Financial peril ultimately threatens the survival of the firm, which is the source of both the family’s financial wealth and SEW (Chrisman & Patel, 2012; Gómez-Mejía et al., 2018).

and resources, these investments are best understood by applying a multi-theoretic approach. Agency theory, stewardship theory, and SEW perspectives may be complemented with multiple agency, resource-dependence, strategic entrepreneurship, social identity, and trust-based perspectives. The configurational approach represents an ideal opportunity to bring to bear these perspectives while paying attention to organizational variations and the rich characterization of types and processes (Chrisman et al., 2018). Our configurational analysis shows how the relevance of individual governance perspectives varies across the different configurations. Below, we briefly discuss agency theory, multiple agency theory, resource dependence, strategic entrepreneurship, stewardship, social identity, SEW, and trust-based perspectives. Table 2 depicts the most relevant theoretical perspectives for each quadrant.

First, traditional *agency theory* will be relevant for different types of transactions as it focuses on the role of agency costs in family-owned firms and how investors implement governance structures to reduce those costs (Uhlener et al., 2007). In most academic research on value creation in PE deals, researchers have focused on agency-based explanations, arguing that PE firms increase efficiency by limiting managerial discretion (Jensen, 1989). While this view may be less relevant to private firms in which owners have strong incentives and ability to monitor management (Chung, 2011), the pursuit of SEW objectives and associated inefficiencies likely increase the potential for efficiency gains in private family firms (Chrisman, Chua, Steier, et al., 2012). We anticipate that external investors will be able to focus most on the realization of efficiency gains in gradual exits in Quadrant 1.

Next to traditional agency theory, we lack applications of *multiple agency theory*, including principal–principal agency theory. Multiple agency

theory moves beyond a simplistic principal–agent dichotomy and considers multiple governance roles as agents and principals of the same participants in a transaction (Allcock & Filatotchev, 2010; Arthurs et al., 2008; Deutsch, Keil, & Laamanen, 2011). This may cause ambiguity in terms of whose interests are served (Hoskisson, Arthurs, White, & Wyatt, 2013; Peng & Sauerwald, 2013). For example, principal–principal conflicts might be prevalent when investors take a minority position in a family firm, which will be common in Quadrant 4a (Villalonga & Amit, 2006). Additionally, in family firms involving outside investments, family members may play multiple roles as owner (principal), manager (agent), and potentially governor of the overall family wealth (agent and principal), which may lead to conflicting incentives. Overall, further research is needed to examine the extent, heterogeneity, and impact of principal–principal relationships in family firms involving outside investors. For example, what is the impact of the type of investor on the extent of principal–principal conflict, and how will certain governance arrangements (e.g. CEO incentives) moderate this relationship?

While agency theory focuses on the efficiency of governance arrangements, *resource-dependence theory* assumes that power dependencies will take precedence in establishing governance arrangements (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). From this perspective, investors in turnaround deals will have significant power in establishing government arrangements because firm survival depends on their provision of financial capital. Alternatively, when family owners are in a stronger position to negotiate, they will consider the resource dependencies investors impose on the family business when selecting a preferred investor. Families who prioritize the retention of long-term family control (as in Quadrant 3) might pick investors who exercise the least power, irrespective of the value-creation potential. In this

TABLE 2
Most Relevant Theoretical Perspectives

	Quadrant 1	Quadrant 2	Quadrant 3	Quadrant 4a	Quadrant 4b
	Gradual exit	Spruce-up the firm	Replacement capital	Strategic investment	Turnaround
Most relevant theoretical perspectives	Agency theory	Strategic entrepreneurship	Stewardship, socioemotional wealth, social identity, trust	Strategic entrepreneurship, multiple agency, socioemotional wealth, social identity, trust	Resource dependence theory, agency theory, multiple agency theory

scenario, independent PE firms will probably be less preferred as potential partners given their typical use of formal control mechanisms, including specific contracts and board representation.

A *strategic entrepreneurship perspective* recognizes that access to resources and capabilities are important drivers for family firms' success (Ireland, Hitt, & Sirmon, 2003). From this perspective, investors will help to address the dual challenges of sustaining current competitive advantage while pursuing new opportunities to contribute to the longevity of the family firm. Investors may provide complementary resources and capabilities that are missing in the family business (Zahra & Filatotchev, 2004). A key question is how investors impact the unique resource and resource-orchestration advantages of private family firms (Habbershon & Williams, 1999; Sirmon, Hitt, Ireland, & Gilbert, 2011). Overall, we anticipate that strategic entrepreneurship will be most relevant for Quadrants 2 and 4—that is, deals with growth perspectives.

In contrast to agency theory, which assumes that owners and managers are motivated by self-interest, *stewardship theory* describes owners and managers as stewards who act in trustworthy, collectivistic, and pro-organizational ways (Davis, Schoorman, & Donaldson, 1997). Stewardship theory has been frequently applied to family firms (Corbetta & Salvato, 2004; Le Breton-Miller et al., 2011), and implies that the family agenda includes the satisfaction of the goals of investors as a source of personal satisfaction (Davis et al., 1997). An intriguing question is how stewardship behavior may arise in the relationship between family owners and investors. Villanueva and Sapienza (2009) anticipated that stewardship behavior is more likely to arise when both family owners and investors have a broad agenda including both economic and noneconomic objectives. In that case, principles of reciprocity may govern the relationship and family owners and investors may tolerate each other's noneconomic goals for common benefit (Villanueva & Sapienza, 2009). These ideas suggest the need to examine how deal-making between family owners and investors may support the mediation of competing objectives.⁵ Overall, stewardship theory may be most relevant for deals that build on relational governance and that involve long-term partnerships such as strategic investments (Quadrant 4a).

Research has recently applied *social identity theory* and *organizational identification* concepts to family firm decision-making (Cannella et al., 2015;

Zellweger et al., 2013). Due to the role of the family business for the family's biography, and the difficulty faced by the family in leaving the firm, family members typically maintain a deep identification with their organizations (Dyer, 2006). Organizational identification may provide a relevant framework to examine the investment cycle involving family firms and outside investors. Family owners who strongly identify with their firm prefer family offices or private investors with a family business background as investors rather than PE sponsors because the former are less likely to disrupt the identity of the family (Neckebrouck et al., 2017). Social identity theory might be most relevant when families derive high levels of SEW from their identification with the firm, as in replacement capital investments (Quadrant 3) and strategic investments (Quadrant 4a).

The SEW perspective has gained great traction among family business scholars in the last decade, with recent studies providing deep insights to how family firms balance economic and SEW objectives in their decision-making (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2018; Kotlar et al., 2018). While family firm research has traditionally assumed that ceding control involves strong losses in SEW (Gómez-Mejía et al., 2007), an intriguing question is whether replacement-capital deals that enable transgenerational successions (Quadrant 3) may actually increase SEW expectations (Kotlar et al., 2018). Overall, while SEW considerations may be prevalent across all quadrants, we anticipate that they will be particularly influential when families have transgenerational intentions, as in Quadrants 3 and 4 (Zellweger et al., 2012). We especially encourage research that disentangles the role of the different dimensions of SEW (Berrone et al., 2012) and examines the relationship between specific family structures and SEW (Jaskiewicz et al., 2017).

Lastly, we agree with Eddleston et al. (2010) and others (Arregle et al., 2007; Cruz et al., 2010) about the value of *trust* as a promising theoretical construct to advance understanding of family business governance. Trust represents the confidence that one party will refrain from exploiting the other's vulnerabilities even though the other has no control over it (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995). Cruz et al. (2010: 71) argued that trust provides "a middle ground where agency theory and others-oriented theories can meet." Trust scholars have not assumed that selfish opportunistic behavior is an ever-present danger, as conventional agency theory suggests, but "neither do they assume that opportunism is negligible, as stewardship theory proponents and other scholars suggest" (Cruz et al., 2010: 71). While research has

⁵ We thank an anonymous reviewer for this suggestion.

examined the unique value of trust *within* family firms (Steier, 2001), few studies have focused on the role of trust in relationships of family firms with external stakeholders such as investors (Eddleston & Morgan, 2014). Some studies have implied that family firms have an advantage in establishing trusting relationships because they have higher standards of maintaining a favorable reputation (Craig, Dibrell, & Davis, 2008). Intriguing questions are whether and how trust-based governance mechanisms may interact with contractual governance mechanisms in family owner–investor relationships (Poppo & Zenger, 2002). Overall, trust-based perspectives may be particularly relevant in deals characterized by long-term horizons and noneconomic goals, such as in replacement capital investments (Quadrant 3) and strategic investments (Quadrant 4a).

CONCLUSION

Scholars examining the role of external investors for family firms have mostly examined PE buyouts of family firms, paying limited attention to scenarios in which private family firms cooperate with investors to accomplish their goals. Recognizing the diversity in objectives that may lead family firms to cede ownership to external investors, we developed a conceptual configuration model of four governance scenarios that may arise when family owners attract an external investor. In doing so, our model improves understanding about the evolving structures of ownership of private family firms, the increasingly heterogeneous PE funding landscape, and the role of alternative investors such as family offices. Our model also supports calls to take a more holistic configurational approach to research on family firm governance (Chrisman et al., 2018). To understand the consequences of external equity investments in private family firms, scholars may need to integrate multiple theoretical perspectives and direct attention to how various governance mechanisms combine effectively with each other, rather than merely considering governance mechanisms in isolation. We hope our insights stimulate future research on how external investors can contribute to private family firms, which constitute the world's most dominant form of organization.

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