

Family members as hybrid owner-managers in family-owned newspaper companies: handling multiple institutional logics

Family members as hybrid owner-managers

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Abstract

Purpose – This article aims to increase the understanding of the role of individual actors and arenas in dealing with multiple institutional logics in family firms.

Design/methodology/approach – This study follows a case-study approach of two family-owned newspaper companies. Based on interviews and secondary sources, the empirical material was analysed focussing on three institutional logics, that is, family logic, management logic and journalistic logic.

Findings – First, the authors show how and in which arenas competing logics are balanced in family-owned newspaper companies. Second, the authors highlight that family owners are central actors in the process of balancing different institutional logics. Further, they analyse how family members can become hybrid owner-managers, meaning that they have access to all institutional logics and become central actors in the balancing process.

Originality/value – The authors reveal how multiple institutional logics are balanced in family firms by including formal actors and arenas as additional lenses. Therefore, owning family members, especially hybrid owner-managers, are the best-suited individual actors to balance competing logics. Hybrid owner-managers are members of the owner families who are also skilled in one or several professions.

Keywords Institutional logics, Family firms, Hybrid owner-managers, Formal arenas, Journalistic logic

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Family businesses have been described and analysed as hybrid organisations that combine the normative element of a family and the utilitarian element of a business (Arregle *et al.*, 2007; Boers and Nordqvist, 2012, 2020; Foreman and Whetten, 2002). Hybrid organisations place special demands on organisational members to handle tensions that arise from this hybrid character (Albert and Adams, 2002; Albert *et al.*, 1999; Blomgren and Waks, 2015; Foreman and Whetten, 2002; Jager and Schroer, 2014). Recently, researchers have argued that the hybrid character is based on multiple institutional logics (Pache and Santos, 2013; Perkmann *et al.*, 2019).

Research has been indecisive regarding the consequences of multiple logics (Besharov and Smith, 2014). However, institutional logics research has started to direct more attention



towards how individual actors make sense of and deal with multiple institutional logics (e.g. Andersson and Gadolin, 2020; Andersson and Liff, 2018; Bévort and Suddaby, 2016; McPherson and Sauder, 2013; Reay *et al.*, 2017), which make institutional logics more “inhabited” (Everitt, 2012) and ascribe more agency to individual actors (Alvehus and Andersson, 2018). It is only recently that the institutional logics perspective (Thornton *et al.*, 2012) has entered family business research (e.g. Basco, 2019; Miller *et al.*, 2011; Reay, 2009; Reay *et al.*, 2015). This perspective has started to build knowledge about the relationship between family firms and their institutional context (Soleimanof *et al.*, 2018). For example, Reay *et al.* (2015) directed attention to the importance of understanding family business beyond just business and family logic, as there can be additional logics that further increase complexity, such as community logics (Reay *et al.*, 2015), bureaucratic logics (Thornton *et al.*, 2012) and professional logics (Goodrick and Reay, 2011). However, although the institutional logics perspective has made important contributions to family business research, the above-mentioned turn towards individuals dealing with institutional logics is not yet salient in family business research.

From contexts other than family firms, hybrid managers (Currie *et al.*, 2015) and hybrid professionals (Blomgren and Waks, 2015) have proven important in terms of dealing with multiple institutional logics. In other contexts, however, hybrid mainly refers to managerial logic and different professional/occupational logics, whereas family logic is an important aspect of hybridity in family firms (e.g. Arregle *et al.*, 2007; Boers and Nordqvist, 2012).

The present article aims to connect this newer strand of institutional logics research, emphasising individual actors with family business research, in order to contribute to how individuals in family firms deal with multiple institutional logics. The purpose of the paper is to increase the understanding of the role of individual actors in dealing with multiple institutional logics in family firms.

The paper is based on an in-depth case study of two family firms in the newspaper industry. This industry combines several institutional logics, such as journalistic and management logic (Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009), as well as family logic in the two studied cases. In this paper, we intend to make the following contributions. First, we show how competing logics are dealt with in family-owned newspaper companies. Second, we highlight that family owners are central actors in the process of balancing different institutional logics. Further, we analyse how family members can become hybrid owner-managers, meaning that they have access to all institutional logics and become central actors in the balancing process. We begin with an overview of the literature and define our key concepts, before outlining the method and offering empirical illustrations and analysis. Finally, we offer a discussion and then some conclusions.

2. Theoretical framework

In this framework, we present and discuss the central concepts of our paper. Multiple institutional logics are used to understand the institutional setting of family business, and we aim to understand how individual actors within the business deal with these multiple institutional logics. Institutional logics are often used to understand individual behaviour (Thornton *et al.*, 2012); however, under conditions of institutional complexity (i.e. multiple institutional logics), individual actors exercise a remarkable degree of autonomy in their day-to-day practice (Hallett, 2010). It seems that their actions are not strongly determined by institutional logics. This is explained by the fact that different institutional logics provide diverging (but possibly also competing) prescriptions of individual behaviour and thereby also more autonomy (Martin *et al.*, 2017). It is this process of individuals dealing with multiple institutional logics in family business that the theoretical framework is designed to capture.

2.1 Multiple institutional logics in family business

In this study, we define a family business as *a company that has lasted over generations, with significant involvement of a single family, or several families, as owner(s) and manager(s)* (Astrachan *et al.*, 2002; Chua *et al.*, 1999). In other words, owning families control the business and have considerations towards it other than just financial wealth (see Boers *et al.*, 2017; Gómez-Mejía *et al.*, 2011; Nordqvist, 2016). Specifically, the owning family members influence the business through decision-making and become central actors (Brundin *et al.*, 2014).

Family business is not only a matter of business logic; it combines the two institutions of the family and the business into a single organisation (Boers and Nordqvist, 2012; Leaptrott, 2005; Melin and Nordqvist, 2007; Nordqvist and Melin, 2002; Parada *et al.*, 2010, 2020; Zaman *et al.*, 2021). Nevertheless, scholars disagree as to whether or not family and business logics are competing or complementary (Reay *et al.*, 2015).

The institutions of family and business can be connected to specific institutional logics, such as family, market and bureaucratic logics (see Reay *et al.*, 2015). Because the family businesses in this study are newspapers, the journalistic logic is also present. These logics encompass different characteristics that create complexity within the family business. We argue that in order to understand family business, we need to understand the coexistence of different competing logics and the complexity these competing logics create. Balancing the different expectations and requirements that emanate from different logics may be a key competence for family businesses (Reay, 2009), and the institutional logics framework is useful for understanding this situation (Thornton *et al.*, 2012).

Thornton and Ocasio (2008, p. 101) defined an institutional logic as “the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality.” Institutional logics guide social actions (Greenwood *et al.*, 2010) by providing assumptions and values on how to interpret organisational reality (Thornton, 2004). The many different (and often competing) institutional logics that are at play simultaneously in family business create institutional complexity (Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016; Miller *et al.*, 2011), as different institutional logics provide different interpretations of reality. Table 1 presents the ideal types of management, family and journalistic logics essential for this study.

The two first logics in particular have often been described and analysed in previous family business research (e.g. Aparicio *et al.*, 2017; Basco, 2019; Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016; Reay *et al.*, 2015). Less focus has been directed towards the different professional/occupational logics that may also exist in a firm, such as journalistic logic in our case of newspaper companies (e.g. Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009). The more logics that are in play, the higher the institutional complexity will be (Greenwood *et al.*, 2011), as long as none of them is dominant (Andersson and Gadolin, 2020).

Journalistic logic encompasses the meeting point between two ideal types of logic: professional and artistic. Professional logic is based on professional expertise grounded in scientific knowledge and capabilities that generates different degrees of autonomy (Freidson, 2001). For journalists, artistic knowledge and capabilities (Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009) may be just as strong, or even stronger, than reliance on science. Professions generally strive for autonomy to act and make decisions according to professional knowledge and ethics, rather than organisational belonging (Gadolin and Andersson, 2017). To uphold this jurisdiction to a knowledge domain (Abbott, 1988), and the right of autonomy, professionals must prove that they are acting according to a service ideal (Liff and Andersson, 2011). In the case of journalists, this means acting towards members of society who rely on them to represent public interest (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). Conflicts between journalistic logic and more commercial logics (management logic) are typically handled by a dual organisational structure with an editor-in-chief, who is formally in

Table 1.

Ideal types of family, management and journalistic logics

Logic	Key values	Firm behaviour in ideal type
Family (adapted from Reay et al., 2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconditional loyalty to family underlies business practices • Firm identity relies on family reputation • Family membership determines status within firm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm is organized to benefit family members • Family members make all key decisions • Family tradition guides decision-making
Management (market and bureaucracy) (derived from Thornton et al., 2012 ; Jaskiewicz et al., 2016 ; Reay et al., 2015 ; Andersson and Liff, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving maximum value from transactions determines business value • Success in the market and professional management establishes firm reputation • Efficiency underlies profitability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm is hierarchical, based on positions to focus on profitability • Firm competes to increase sales • Firm processes are developed by managers to maximize efficiency
Journalistic (artistic and professional) (derived from Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009 ; Andersson and Liff, 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artistic and professional values underlie business practice • Artistic and professional competence and autonomy is central 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm is organized to guarantee artistic and professional freedom • Decisions are based on artistic and professional values • Firm competes based on artistic and professional contribution

charge of the artistic/journalistic product, and a publisher, who is the product manager for the commercial side.

Family business research often uses professional management as a concept ([Hall and Nordqvist, 2008](#); [Songini, 2006](#); [Songini and Vola, 2014, 2015](#)) when referring to what we call *management logic*. Professional management then means the formalisation and professionalisation of the management function, organisation and managers ([Hall and Nordqvist, 2008](#)), but it can also refer to the relationship between management and family ([Polat, 2021](#)). Previous family business research, applying an institutional-logics perspective, mainly focussed on marketing and commercialisation logic, which often conflicted with family logic (e.g. [Basco, 2019](#); [Jaskiewicz et al., 2016](#); [Reay et al., 2015](#)). While market logic is important, management logic also contains bureaucratic logic ([Andersson and Liff, 2018](#)) because managers and formalisation become the visible hand that dealt with the market ([Chandler, 1990](#)). Therefore, the bureaucratisation of family business creates arenas (such as board meetings) and actors (such as managers) to deal with different institutional logics and competing interpretations of reality (cf. [Polat, 2021](#)).

Family logic differs from market logic in several ways. Whereas family logic emphasises concepts such as distance to capital markets, a long-term orientation or multiple goals ([Brundin et al., 2014](#)), market logic emphasises shareholder value and a short-term orientation ([Thornton et al., 2012](#)). Family logic entails multiple goals, but the shareholder-value approach sees the primary goal as maximising value for shareholders; in other words, profit maximisation. Owning families usually have goals other than profit maximisation, which is not necessarily primary. For example, long-term orientation, longevity and organisational survival may be more important goals ([Sharma et al., 2014](#)). We argue that managers, especially owner-managers with “full access” to different worlds, play important roles in balancing these different logics. Formalisation provides different arenas in which to do that, but there might also be arenas that only family members can access ([Matias and Franco, 2021](#)).

2.2 Individual actors dealing with institutional logics in family business

A family business contains multiple institutional logics that are sometimes competing and sometimes complementary ([Jaskiewicz et al., 2016](#)). An under-studied area in institutional-

logics research regards individual actors and arenas that are important for dealing with these logics (Nordqvist, 2012). In general, researchers claim that the individual actor level has been under-studied in institutional-logics research (Andersson and Liff, 2018; Bévort and Suddaby, 2016; McPherson and Sauder, 2013; Reay *et al.*, 2017).

Several researchers (e.g. James *et al.*, 2021) have argued that there is a need to focus more on cultural competence, which can be defined as “an understanding of the unique sociocultural patterns originating from the family’s influence on a business” (Hall and Nordqvist, 2008, p. 62). This understanding is difficult to achieve and is sometimes only accessible for family members. Furthermore, it implies that there are different strategic arenas, based on family and firm contexts on the one hand and informal (culturally based) and formal (structurally based) on the other hand (Matias and Franco, 2021; Nordqvist, 2012). These different arenas are not necessarily accessible for all actors. Hybrid arenas containing both formal and informal elements are especially important in the process of balancing institutional logics. These hybrid arenas contain both formal and informal elements. Such a hybrid mix of formality and informality adds to complexity (Nordqvist, 2012) but enables family businesses’ strategic work to combine both family and managerial logics (see Brundin and Melin, 2012; Miller *et al.*, 2011). Based on the understanding that family businesses need formal (management) and cultural competences, Stewart and Hitt (2012) emphasised that family business owners can balance the tensions that result from acting managerially and being a family business.

Family business research has already noted that family members often occupy multiple roles to deal with multiple demands (Gersick *et al.*, 1997; Tagiuri and Davis, 1996) because of their particular suitability for addressing and mediating the different demands from family and business, which might sometimes appear paradoxical (Ingram *et al.*, 2016). Family members might constitute hybrid owner-managers who are central in responding to demands resulting from different logics, ensuring the continuity of the family firm (see Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016; Konopaski *et al.*, 2015; Salvato *et al.*, 2010; Steinerowska-Streb and Wziatek-Stasko, 2020). While “Hybrid then refers to managers who are skilled in an alternative profession” (Currie *et al.*, 2015), the term has not been used in the family business context. In healthcare, it means a person with a medical education background who takes on a management position (Andersson, 2015; Currie and Spyridonidis, 2016), which can result in high demands and need to separate roles with the help of different mechanisms (Reay and Hinings, 2009). However, research in other contexts has shown how individual actors working in conditions with multiple institutional logics often adhere mainly to one institutional logic, called their “home” logic (McPherson and Sauder, 2013). By adhering mainly to one logic, they reduce the institutional complexity (Andersson and Gadolin, 2020), but do not really deal with the multiple institutional logics. As a result, while hybrids may not be taken for granted, they require a lot of the individual actors to take on such a role.

An often-mentioned mechanism in family business is the separation between the family and the management roles (Bjursell and Bäckvall, 2011). This is often combined with a demand to include non-family members in professional roles (Dyer, 1989). However, this mechanism runs the risk of missing important knowledge regarding the owning families’ goals and vision or the cultural competence (Hall and Nordqvist, 2008).

In family firms, arenas can be formal or informal (Nordqvist, 2012). In principle, these arenas are available to both family and non-family members. Accessing informal arenas of family firms requires trust and competence, which is more difficult for non-family members to obtain (Hall and Nordqvist, 2008).

Nordqvist (2012) argued that there are several hybrid arenas in family firms (see Table 2). These arenas can combine formal and informal, as well as family and firm contexts, and thereby increase complexity. The present study focusses on formal arenas, as we argue that

different logics are more salient there. Nevertheless, due to the nature of family firms, even the formal arenas contain informal elements (Matias and Franco, 2021; Nordqvist, 2012).

3. Method

3.1 Case selection

This study is based on two family-owned newspaper companies, and purposive sampling was applied (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007). The study follows an in-depth, case-study approach (Nordqvist *et al.*, 2009). A qualitative approach is both suitable and common for studying institutional logics, as it allows us to capture the socially constructed nature of the logics (Reay and Jones, 2016) and has been called for (Aparicio *et al.*, 2017). This approach also allows us to acknowledge the particularities of the studied context (Gadolin, 2018).

Family ownership and involvement were the necessary conditions for company selection, along with having at least one succession, in order to account for family dynamics (Chua *et al.*, 1999). Furthermore, the newspaper industry was chosen because it is known for its family ownership (Djankov *et al.*, 2003; Picard, 2004). Additionally, the size of the selected companies was similar in terms of turnover. Access to the studied companies was another essential reason for selection (Nordqvist *et al.*, 2009; Siggelkow, 2007).

3.2 Collecting data

We used several different sources for data collection, which is recommended as it increases trustworthiness (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014).

Interviews are useful for understanding complex issues, not least in family firms (Reay and Jones, 2015). The recorded and transcribed interviews lasted between 60 and 180 min. As part of the procedure, an interview guide was used that covered aspects such as the company, owning family, board of directors and the relationship between the newspaper and its owners; in other words, issues of governance and family involvement in management and editorial work.

A total of 16 interviews were conducted with 14 people at *City News* [1], meaning that two respondents were interviewed twice. As the business is already in its fourth generation of ownership, the interviews were complemented by a literature study using autobiographies and portraits about the first and second generations and information from other media sources. Thirty-six interviews were conducted at *River News* [2]. Following Leonard-Barton's (1990) methodology for reporting longitudinal case studies, Table 3 shows our timeline of data collection and use of data sources.

3.3 Background to the studied companies

River News is active in Germany, the Czech Republic, Poland and the Netherlands. In 2011, the organisation's turnover was approximately €500m, and it had 4,700 employees. It is owned by four families and Company C, a competing publishing house with interlocking

Logics	Formal arenas	Informal arenas
Family	Shareholders' meetings, family councils, other formal family meetings	Ad-hoc meetings at home, family meetings, casual conversations
Management	Management board, board of directors	Ad-hoc meetings, casual conversations
Journalistic	Editorial conference, publishers conference	Ad-hoc meetings, casual conversations

Source(s): Inspired by Nordqvist (2012)

Table 2.
Arenas and
institutional logics

shareholdings. Three of the families are founding families and now in the third generation of owning the firm, and one family owns the company in the second generation. Moreover, *River News* and Company C compete and collaborate in several markets.

River News is organised into nine business segments, divided into domestic (German) and international. The holding company has three managing directors, who have responsibility for the business segments. Until recently, only non-family managers held executive positions. However, the son of the chairman of the supervisory board (family G1) became managing director and is the designated chairman of the management board. The four owning families are the publishers of *River News*.

City News portrays itself as a growing media group and one of the biggest newspaper owners in Sweden. In 2009, the group had annual turnover exceeding €500m. The firm is controlled by an owning family in the third generation.

City News has six business areas, which correspond to different businesses, including the founding newspaper East-News, the printing section, local newspapers in central Sweden, newspapers on the Swedish East coast and free weekly advertising newspapers in and around Stockholm. The last business area contains different acquired units in the field of new media.

3.4 Analysing information

It is reasonable that researchers reveal how they analysed their findings and reached their conclusions in order to ensure rigor and trustworthiness (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007; Fletcher *et al.*, 2016). This also helps trace the process of capturing the different logics (Reay and Jones, 2015).

The interviews were transcribed and the texts were analysed by searching for patterns and themes relating to the three ideal typical logics (Reay and Jones, 2016). Section 3.5 provides context to the study, Section 4 shows empirical illustrations, based on three formal arenas (cf. Nordqvist, 2012), and Section 5 discusses the empirical findings. We displayed the themes in the form of tables (Tables 4–6), which contain illustrative quotes from the material, in addition to the respondents, interpretation of the quotes and their implication for balancing the different logics. The tables represent the three identified arenas in which the different logics meet (Nordqvist, 2012).

We analysed the information with management, family and journalistic logics in mind. The empirical material was grouped into themes that were deemed relevant for understanding how individual actors dealt with the different logics. The owning families were the focal actors.

To understand how these logics were handled, we identified arenas (Nordqvist, 2012) in which the logics typically interacted. These arenas were the board of directors, the management board and the editorial and publishers' conference.

Data sources	Company	Number
Authors' interviews	City News (2008–2014)	16
	River News (2009–2013)	36
Archival data: including annual reports, business magazine interviews, and general press clips	City News (2008–2014)	15
	River News (2009–2013)	29
Autobiographies covering owners' personal viewpoints	City News	2
	River News	1
Field-level data from German and Swedish family firms	Germany (2009–2013)	5
	Sweden (2008–2014)	9

Table 3.
Data sources

Table 4.
Arena 1: Board of directors

Arena 1: Board of directors Illustrative quote	Who	What	Consequences for logics
<i>When my father asked me if I wanted a position on the board of directors, the obvious answer was yes. I have been interested in doing so for a long time, and this has been reinforced during discussions with my father and grandfather. But I also feel that I have to earn my place on the board. [...] I have studied media and communication at universities in the US and Sweden, and I worked in recruitment, primarily in the media sector before I took parental leave . . . it's more about a genuine interest in developing the family business, and the fact that the media industry is fascinating and a great area to work in</i>	Fourth-generation owner at <i>City News</i> and board member	Owner/family member becoming part of this arena	Emphasizing family logic and accessing management logic
<i>I am the vice chairman and my role is to be active, take a long-term approach and provide a driving force. I must also work in close partnership with the chairman of the board and with the CEO, as well as with the other members of the board. Neither of them would be happy for me to use my ownership in a heavy-handed manner. They would simply say thank you and goodbye! We have a very clear structure and rules, according to which the chairman of the supervisory board and the shareholders' meetings is also the contact for the managing board. As chairman of the managing board, I communicate with the chairman of the supervisory board regularly, usually twice a week on anything and everything [that takes place]</i>	Fourth-generation owner at <i>City News</i> and board member	Justifying appointment with formal qualification	Balancing family, journalistic, and management logics
<i>The charter states that any shareholder group may nominate a supervisory board member from among their group, and this cannot be prevented by the others. Looking at River News, they made it easier and let the sessions take place simultaneously, in other words, the boards of directors and the shareholders' meeting</i>	Majority third-generation family owner at <i>City News</i>	Balancing family and management logics	Downplaying family logic and emphasizing management logic
	Nonfamily managing director and chairman of management board at <i>River News</i>	Close cooperation between the management board and supervisory board	Management logic constrains family logic
	Nonfamily head of finance at <i>River News</i>	Nominating board members	Family logic dominates management logic
	Third-generation family owner <i>River News</i>	Parallel board and owner meeting	Integrated family and management logic

Arena 2: Management board Illustrative quote	Who	What	Consequences for logics
<i>Dr. Meier, who is the son of our chairman, was appointed managing director, because, well, he brings good qualifications and because it was a necessary decision due to retirement and the like in the previous management. Succession had to be regulated, and Dr Meier was mentioned, which from our viewpoint I actually think was a good decision, because he worked for many years in international publishing houses and he also has media experience</i>	Nonfamily head of finance at <i>River News</i>	Justifying appointment with experience and formal qualification	Downplaying family logic: Legitimated by management logic and journalistic logic
<i>Dr. Meier actually behaves exactly as you would expect from any other external manager</i>	Nonfamily head of finance at <i>River News</i>	Emphasizing accordance with managerial expectations and avoiding owner role to others	Downplaying family logic by emphasizing managerial code of conduct, or management logic
<i>There has to be a certain qualification. This is required in our charter. You can imagine that we would have hard times if we appointed a naval engineer as technical director, someone who has no idea of printing and printing presses</i>	Nonfamily CFO at <i>River News</i>	Referring to formal rules that are valid for all	Using management logic to support journalistic logic
<i>[...] in the early 1990s when the third generation was CEO, before becoming editor in chief of the newspaper. In the beginning when he arrived as editor in chief there were many who mixed up roles. I think it was inconvenient for him. It was difficult for many around him</i>	Vice-Editor-in-Chief at <i>City News</i>	Role conflicts	Family and managerial logic interferes with journalistic logic

Table 5.
Arena 2:
Management board

3.5 Context: family-owned newspaper companies

The media industry, particularly newspapers (Djankov *et al.*, 2003; Picard and van Weezel, 2008; Sundin, 2009), is an example of where family ownership dominates (Andersson *et al.*, 2018). Newspaper organisations are characterised by the duality of an artistic and a business mission (Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009; Raviola, 2012). Consequently, many newspaper organisations have a dual organisational structure, with one editor-in-chief managing the journalistic product and a CEO managing the business (Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009; Djerf-Pierre and Weibull, 2011; Raviola, 2012). Some have argued that this is part of newspapers' development towards a more management-influenced endeavour (Djerf-Pierre and Weibull, 2011), and a step toward a business orientation, particularly if family-owned (Dyer, 1989).

Arena 3: Editorial Board

Illustrative quote	Who	What	Consequences for logics
<i>The newspapers in Germany have a public function by law. I am very aware of it. A newspaper company or a radio broadcaster is something special. It is a public duty. If you open a shoe factory, you do not have a public duty. This results in special obligations for the press</i>	Second-generation owner, chairman of the board and the editorial conference at <i>River News</i>	Owner/family member justifies the journalistic mission	Emphasizing journalistic logic
<i>Newspapers have an important role, not least from a societal perspective, and therefore we have that motive also in our interest that we contribute to the continued development of good society</i>	Nonfamily CEO, <i>City News</i>	Underlining the journalistic mission	Emphasizing journalistic logic
<i>Our managers are not just "flown in" people who have worked at a soap factory, and the next day at a car supplier, but they are people who come from the media, who have already spent a relatively long time here, they fit in with us</i>	Editor-in-chief at <i>River News</i>	Relevance of media affinity	Journalistic logic as part of the organizational culture
<i>The power is clear. You know who takes the final decision. Decision lines are shorter. And it is not just profitability that is our driving force, but there are journalistic goals</i>	Third-generation owner/manager at <i>City News</i>	Owners decide management and journalistic goals	Owner families combine journalistic logic and management logic
<i>I believe that just such products . . . Media-culture products . . . which are also sold in a journalistic quality, are more important in an industry. Perhaps they can even be done rational at one point or another. Who judges editorial quality?</i>	Third-generation owner/manager at <i>River News</i>	Owner families protect the journalistic quality	Owner families as guardians of journalistic logic
<i>I am chairman of the publisher's conference. This is a meeting with the publishers and the senior editors which takes place at irregular intervals. There, we discuss all the topics that I choose in advance, which are of interest for the newspaper, and have an open debate about them. There are no protocols for the results. It always ends so that we reach a fundamental agreement on the questions between publishers and senior editors</i>	Second-generation owner/chairman of the board and the editorial conference at <i>River News</i>	Owner families control and moderate the discussions	Family logic mediates management logic and journalistic logic
<i>I know that I must be careful that the figures are in order. As long as this is the case, I can determine relatively freely, so to speak, about journalism</i>	Editor-in-chief at <i>River News</i>	Balancing business and journalism	Management logic supports journalistic logic
<i>If you have good relations with your owners, publishers, directors and explain why you take your position, then this is also accepted</i>	Editor in chief at <i>River News</i>	Anchoring journalistic decisions with management and family logics	Securing journalistic logic by relating to management logic and family logic

Table 6.
Arena 3:
Editorial board

(continued)

Arena 3: Editorial Board

Illustrative quote	Who	What	Consequences for logics
<i>We feel part of this family, and accept their values and their rules and are happy to join in, so to speak, because that's our common family. This is now independent of whether they [the publishers] are with us in the imprint or not</i>	Editor-in-chief at online edition, <i>River News</i>	Journalism adapt family values	Family logic determines journalistic logic
<i>Responsible yes, it is clear, since a large majority of Swedes still get some of their information from the morning paper, the group, we all have a great responsibility</i>	Third-generation owner, <i>City News</i>	Being responsible owners	Emphasizing journalistic logic
<i>Newspapers have an important role, not least from a societal perspective, and therefore we have that motive also in our interest that we contribute to the continued development of good society</i>	Nonfamily CEO, <i>City News</i>	Manager emphasizes the public interest	Emphasizing journalistic logic
<i>The digital age creates a transparency in almost all relationships. It fits the <i>City News</i> who always defends the open and free society in which, not in the least, the newspaper has an important journalistic task</i>	Third-generation owner, <i>City News</i>	Family mission is a societal mission	Emphasizing journalistic logic
<i>We do discuss editorial issues, questions, and structures pretty often. Because, especially in the phase where we are right now, it's a challenge. We actually discuss what their role is, because the role is changing</i>	Nonfamily CEO, <i>City News</i>	Changing roles	Management and journalistic logics interact

Table 6.

Media businesses, particularly newspapers, are facing a dilemma. On the one hand, they play a central role in democratic societies by freely expressing opinions and serving the public interest, which is legally codified in some countries (Hallin and Mancini, 2004). On the other hand, newspapers are mostly commercial enterprises that serve the (commercial) interests of their owners. For example, Dybski *et al.* (2010) found that the economic self-interest of publishers can affect reporting issues, potentially conflicting with the subscribed public task connected to journalistic logic.

4. Results, analysis and discussion

We present empirical illustrations of three formal arenas (Nordqvist, 2012) in which multiple logics are created. As described in Section 3, the formal arenas are the places where multiple institutional logics are most likely to conflict. The notion of informal arenas can be seen in supporting the respective logics. Moreover, we illustrate how family owners and other actors become hybrid managers.

4.1 Arena 1: board of directors

This formal arena clearly shows how family actors must legitimise their access to this arena. It seems that the owners balance or even downplay the family logic in favour of the

management logic in their comments. However, family logic is also appealing from an outsider perspective. With regard to ownership, we found that family logic was balanced and reconciled with management logic in both companies. This is in line with prior studies (cf. Boers and Nordqvist, 2012; Brundin *et al.*, 2014; Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016; Zellweger *et al.*, 2013). However, even journalistic logic plays a role at the ownership level, highlighting the multiple roles of owning family members. Both organisations emphasise management logic with regard to being an owner. Nevertheless, family logic can take over or pave the way for management logic. In other words, it is not unidirectional; instead, context and circumstances decide which logic takes over (Soleimanof *et al.*, 2018; Wright *et al.*, 2014).

We also found representative quotes of balancing family and management logic in both firms. In part, the board represents the formal arena (management logic), which represents owner interests (family logic) (cf. Nordqvist, 2012). However, the relationship is neither fixed nor predetermined. Rather, the relationship changes and requires active balancing of work for owning family members, illustrating its hybrid character (Nordqvist, 2012).

4.2 Arena 2: management board

The management board is a formal arena with high, formal entry requirements. *River News* emphasises management logic to downplay family logic, which is explicitly expressed in *City News*. The underlying reasons are presumably due to the different types of appointment. *River News* appoints a managing director, while *City News* appoints a board member. Nevertheless, the family logic is clearly present in both companies, which means that balance is required.

4.3 Arena 3: editorial board

In journalistic arenas, journalistic logic is balanced with both management and family logics. Again, the multiple roles of owning family members necessitate a balance between potentially conflicting logics (Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009; Raviola and Norbäck, 2013). However, the nature of this conflict is different in family firms due to the added family logic.

4.4 Individual actors balancing three different logics

Family-owned newspaper businesses represent a complex example, with their own specific overlapping institutional logics. Considering the industrial context, we have shown that family logic meets two further logics: management logic (Andersson and Liff, 2018) and journalistic logic (Achtenhagen and Raviola, 2009; Raviola, 2012). Previous research (e.g. Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016; Reay *et al.*, 2015) has estimably described the tension between market/commercialisation logic and family logic. Our focus on management logic means that, in addition to market/commercialisation logic, we also consider bureaucratic logic, as management logic consists of both (Andersson and Liff, 2018). The bureaucratic logic was an important addition because it created formal arenas (cf. Nordqvist, 2012) that were important for individual actors when dealing with different institutional logics. Other research (Parada *et al.*, 2020) has suggested that such structures may only be a matter of ceremonial adoption that do not really provide functionality, although in our cases they served important roles in balancing different logics. While it can be challenging to handle tensions arising from the interaction of these three logics, this is a typical task for family businesses. Owning family members who are active in their organisation are the most important link between the family and the business (Basco, 2019). Individual actors, such as family or non-family members, must handle the resulting tensions of competing logics. Previous research from other fields has emphasised that hybrid managers (Currie *et al.*, 2015) and hybrid professionals (Blomgren and Waks, 2015) are important in terms of dealing with

conflicting management and professional logics (which resembles journalistic logic in our study). Still, this is not sufficient in the family business context, as it particularly requires cultural competence (Hall and Nordqvist, 2008), in which family logic is an essential part. Therefore, these hybrid managers must adapt to these particular requirements, which are much more difficult for non-family members than for family members, particularly when family members act as gatekeepers for different logics and arenas (cf. Nordqvist, 2012). Instead, we propose that it is more natural for the individual actor who balances these multiple logics to be a member of the owning family; a hybrid owner-manager who possesses the necessary formal qualifications and, by belonging to the owning family, can access the formal and informal arenas (cf. Table 2; Figure 1) that are usually restricted to family members (Hall and Nordqvist, 2008; Nordqvist, 2012). An owner-manager embodies both family and management logics (see 1 in Figure 1). If the owner-manager can balance the two logics, they could be considered a hybrid. However, considering the third logic, a hybrid owner-manager should understand, interpret and act in accordance with all three logics and deal with their inherent conflicts (confer 4 in Figure 1). In our case, hybrid owner-managers are essential for dealing with such conflicts and using different strategies, depending on the formal arena (cf. Nordqvist, 2012) and situation. Sometimes they downplay one logic, emphasise another or use one logic to justify another. Hybrid managers who are not owner-managers (see 3 in Figure 1) may lack an important dimension to which they have little or no access – family logic (Hall and Nordqvist, 2008; Nordqvist, 2012). Therefore, hybrid owner-managers have better conditions for balancing logics in family businesses.

This study describes how the relationships and balance between logics are neither stable nor constant, but are context-dependent (Reay and Hinings, 2009; Reay and Jones, 2015). This sheds light on the individual actors who deal with them (Currie *et al.* 2015; Bevort and Suddaby, 2016). However, the study also describes how the firm can create better conditions for dealing with competing logics by creating and providing formal arenas (Nordqvist, 2012) that can balance different institutional logics. Unsurprisingly, owning family members are the most active in this task. Being a member of an owning family does not mean that family logic is always prioritised. Earlier findings show how family logic dominates another logic (Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016), but the present study emphasises that even if family logic could dominate, family owners actively work to balance it with other logics, often by downplaying family logics in favour of other logics. Family members even ensure that other logics are strengthened to avoid destructive dominance of family logic.

Through individual actors (mainly hybrid owner-managers) acting on formal arenas, interpretation of family logic becomes context-sensitive, as it interacts with competing logics in different ways. The interaction can be based on active balancing by family owners, such as

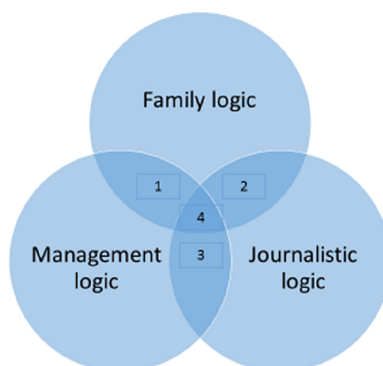


Figure 1. Institutional logics' overlap and actors

taking management structure and competence seriously, or by creating structures that ensure journalistic influence. However, the interaction can also be more subtle and more informal, as when family owners reconcile logics in situations in which conflicts of interests could appear. Nevertheless, it is mainly the owning family members who balance logics and decide which one dominates. This brings the logics into closeness, proximity to the individual actors (Bevort and Suddaby, 2016). Empirically, we categorised different types of formal arenas with different underlying logics (Reay and Jones, 2016) that are balanced with other logics in different ways (Tables 4–6; Figure 1). Figure 1 illustrates the overlap of the three logics. There are four possible overlaps that require hybrid managers.

Overall, we show that there are more than two logics at work. These logics influence decision-making and the general discourse in family businesses, and owning families moderate the logics by balancing or reconciling them.

5. Conclusions

In line with recent calls for additional research (Jaskiewicz *et al.*, 2016; Reay *et al.*, 2015; Soleimanof *et al.*, 2018; Wright *et al.*, 2014), we argue that a more fine-grained perspective on multiple institutional logics in family firms is adequate. We describe how individual actors deal with multiple institutional logics in family firms. The purpose of the present paper is to increase the understanding of the role of individual actors in balancing competing logics in family firms. The paper reveals the following contributions.

In family firms with strong occupations/professions, such as the newspaper industry, where journalists have strong positions, professional logic (journalistic logic) must be considered. Family business research has not paid much attention to this institutional logic when studying family firms. Identifying this institutional logic is important in order to understand the competing institutional logics in family business.

Another contribution relates to identifying owning family members – especially hybrid owner-managers – as the individual actors who are best suited to balance competing logics. It is often these individual actors who carry and balance the logics, such as being a member of the owning family but also an educated journalist. Moreover, these logics not only have a personal dimension but are also relevant for the organisation in a family-firm context. Trained family members become central as the only ones who can access all logics. Anyone can become a manager and relate to management structures. Similarly, anyone can become a journalist by education and/or experience. However, not just anyone can become a family member. This explains the important position of family members, especially hybrid owner-managers, in balancing different logics and choosing to balance family logic with other logics. Similar explanations have been presented in healthcare research in which it has proved very important to balance physicians' approaches to competing logics, as physicians can become managers, but managers cannot easily become physicians (e.g. Andersson, 2015). Similarly, another question looks at the field or industry levels.

Finally, our results also contribute to the diversity or heterogeneity of family firms (Reay *et al.*, 2015) because there appears to be a clear difference in how owning families approach logics, which means that there is no single prescribed way of handling multiple logics. We agree with Reay *et al.* (2015) that future research should look at generational differences. Different logics may dominate at different points of the organisational life. However, the role of non-family members, such as CEOs or other top managers, can equally influence the direction and balance of multiple logics.

There are also important practical contributions for family businesses from this research. Currently, there is a strong stream of research that emphasises that family businesses must professionalise management. The present study nuances this line of reasoning. Management and professional logics that are relevant to a particular industry can contribute to a

successful family business, but these should not replace family logic. Making management logic superior to family logic could be devastating for family firms. However, adding/allowing different logics increases complexity; therefore, balancing different logics should be a key competence in running family businesses. With regard to the next generation of family owners, socialisation and education become even more central, as they influence how challenging multiple logics are handled.

5.1 Limitations and future research

This study draws on two family-owned newspaper companies. However, more research is required to investigate other professions and industries in family firms, such as the medical or legal profession (Albert and Adams, 2002; Freidson, 2001; Scott, 2008) or even the arts (Litz, 2010), as family firms play a significant role there as well. The importance of family firms varies across industries (Andersson *et al.*, 2018) and can be more prominent in certain industries (Carcano *et al.*, 2011; Ljungkvist and Boers, 2017); this is a potential topic for future research. Furthermore, the recent COVID-19 pandemic has affected many family firms (Boers and Henschel, 2021); it can be assumed that social distancing has led to more meetings being held virtually rather than in person, which could further decrease accessibility to different arenas.

Future research could investigate further and other combinations of institutional logics, as well as how other actors such as non-family members handle these logics, in non-family firms or public organisations.

Notes

1. The name of the company and those of interviewees were anonymised.
2. The name of the company and those of interviewees were anonymised.

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