Family-Type Entrepreneurship and Territorial Memory in Marginalised Rural Areas: A Qualitative Case Study from the Italian Natural Wine Sector

Mauro Rota[*], *Francesco D'Ausilio*[**], *Silvia Solimene*[***]

Received May 24, 2026 – Accepted July 17, 2026

Abstract

This paper examines how entrepreneurial actors mobilise territorial memory, socioemotional wealth, and stewardship orientations to generate entrepreneurial innovation in historically marginalised rural areas. Drawing on a qualitative single case study of *Fra i Monti* – an organic winery founded in 2018 in Terelle, a mountain village in the province of Frosinone, Italy – and applying the Gioia methodology, the paper develops a hybrid theoretical framework integrating socioemotional wealth, familiness, stewardship theory, and the business history perspective on Italian family enterprise. The analysis advances three theoretically grounded propositions: that territorial memory may function as the primary resource of socioemotional wealth in the absence of an existing family firm; that heritage knowledge may constitute a form of familiness that is territorially rather than genealogically constituted; and that stewardship orientation produces a business model compatible with the premium positioning logic of artisanal, place-based markets. The paper contributes to family business and rural entrepreneurship literatures by introducing territorial memory as an analytical concept bridging identity, idiosyncratic resources, and long-term stewardship in contexts of historical discontinuity.

Keywords: Territorial memory; socioemotional wealth; family-type entrepreneurship; stewardship theory; Gioia methodology; Italian internal rural areas

[*] Professor of Economic History, Department MEMOTEF. Sapienza University of Rome Email: mauro.rota@uniroma1.it ID ORCID: 0000-0002-5000-884X

[**] Adjunct Professor of Clean Tech, Food Systems, and Bioeconomy Department of Business and management Luiss, Libera Università Internazionale degli Studi Sociali Guido Carli. Email: fdausilio@luiss.it ID ORCID: 0000-0001-7578-2041

[***] Associate Professor Department of Management and Economics. Pegaso Digital University Email: silvia.solimene@unipegaso.it ID ORCID: 0000-0002-3635-7402

Corporate Governance and Research & Development Studies, n. 2/2026
(ISSNe 2723-9098, Doi: 10.3280/cgrds2-2026oa23976

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

Imprenditorialità di tipo familiare e memoria territoriale nelle aree rurali marginalizzate: lo studio qualitativo di un caso aziendale nel settore italiano del vino naturale

Sommario

Il presente articolo esamina come attori imprenditoriali mobilizzino la memoria territoriale, il socioemotional wealth e gli orientamenti alla stewardship per generare innovazione imprenditoriale nelle aree rurali interne storicamente marginalizzate. Attraverso un caso di studio qualitativo su *Fra i Monti* – una cantina di produzione biologica fondata nel 2018 a Terelle, in provincia di Frosinone – e applicando la Gioia methodology, il paper sviluppa un framework teorico ibrido che integra il socioemotional wealth, la familiness, la stewardship theory e la prospettiva della business history sull'impresa familiare italiana. L'analisi avanza tre proposizioni teoricamente fondate: che la memoria territoriale possa fungere da risorsa primaria del socioemotional wealth in assenza di un'impresa familiare preesistente; che la heritage knowledge possa costituire una forma di familiness di carattere territoriale piuttosto che genealogico; e che l'orientamento alla stewardship produca un business model compatibile con la logica di posizionamento premium dei mercati artigianali e place-based. Il paper contribuisce alle letterature sul family business e sull'imprenditorialità rurale introducendo la memoria territoriale come concetto analitico che connette identità, risorse idiosincratiche e orientamento di lungo periodo in contesti di discontinuità storica.

Parole chiave: Memoria territoriale; socioemotional wealth; imprenditorialità familiare; stewardship theory; metodologia Gioia; aree rurali interne italiane

1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the literature on family business has developed increasingly refined analytical tools for understanding how family-owned and family-managed firms behave, make decisions, and sustain themselves across generations. Concepts such as socioemotional wealth (Gómez-Mejía *et al*., 2007; Berrone *et al*., 2012), familiness (Habbershon and Williams, 1999), and stewardship orientation (Davis *et al*., 1997; Miller and Le Breton-Miller, 2005) have significantly advanced our capacity to explain why family firms often pursue goals that deviate from profit maximisation, privileging instead long-term continuity, territorial embeddedness, and the preservation of identity-laden resources. Yet this literature has been developed predominantly in reference to established firms, operating in institutionally stable environments, and studied through a largely synchronic lens (De Massis and Kotlar, 2014; Ramírez-Pasillas *et al*., 2021). We know a

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

great deal about how family businesses survive and transmit themselves across generations; we know considerably less about how they emerge – or re-emerge – in conditions of historical discontinuity, economic marginalisation, and the near-total erosion of prior entrepreneurial traditions.

This gap is not merely empirical but theoretical. The canonical models of family business assume the existence of a firm, a family, and a succession dynamic to be managed. They are ill-equipped to account for situations in which the entrepreneurial act itself consists in reconstructing what has been lost: recovering suppressed agricultural knowledge, reactivating abandoned land, and reconstituting a territorial identity that decades of rural exodus and industrial monoculture have all but destroyed. These are precisely the conditions that characterise large portions of Italy's internal rural areas – the so-called aree interne – where depopulation, de-agrarianisation, and infrastructural neglect have produced landscapes of both ecological and entrepreneurial abandonment (Barca *et al.*, 2012).

Understanding how entrepreneurship re-emerges in such contexts requires moving beyond standard models of opportunity recognition and resource mobilisation. The deeper question is how actors who share a biographical and affective connection to a marginalised territory transform that connection into an entrepreneurial resource – and how the historical rupture that emptied the place of people and practices becomes, paradoxically, the source of a distinctive competitive advantage.

It is in this context that the present paper examines the case of *Fra i Monti*, a natural winery founded in 2018 in Terelle, a small village in the province of Frosinone, approximately 90 kilometres southeast of Rome, at nearly one thousand metres above sea level. The winery was established by Rocco Toti and the brothers Benedetto and Francesco Leone – friends rooted in the same territory, sharing the same memory of a place progressively emptied of people, practices, and meaning. Their entrepreneurial project – recovering ancient indigenous grape varieties, practising high-altitude organic viticulture, and building international networks for natural wine – cannot be adequately understood through the lens of conventional entrepreneurship theory, nor through the standard framework of rural development policy. It is, we argue, most productively read as a case of family-type entrepreneurship: not in the strict genealogical sense, but in the deeper analytical sense developed by the family business literature – an enterprise animated by socioemotional wealth, stewardship orientations, and idiosyncratic resources whose distinctiveness derives precisely from their territorial and relational specificity.

This leads to the specific question guiding the empirical analysis. We ask how family-type entrepreneurial actors mobilise territorial memory, socioemotional wealth, and stewardship orientations to generate entrepreneurial

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

innovation in historically marginalised rural areas, and what a long-term historical perspective adds to the understanding of this process that synchronic management frameworks cannot capture. We address this question through a qualitative single case study of *Fra i Monti*, analysed using the Gioia methodology (Gioia *et al*., 2013), which allows us to move systematically from the informant's own language to theoretical constructs.

Third, the paper demonstrates that a business history perspective – specifically the long-term perspective developed by Colli (2003) on Italian family entrepreneurship – is not merely contextual background but an analytically necessary component for understanding entrepreneurship from discontinuity: without the historical rupture of the 1960s–1970s industrialisation, the distinctive competitive advantage of *Fra i Monti* would be analytically invisible.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 develops the theoretical framework and elaborates the research questions introduced above. Section 3 describes the methodology. Section 4 presents and discusses the findings. Section 5 draws conclusions and identifies avenues for future research.

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 Family Business in Marginalised Rural Contexts: A Research Gap

While family firms constitute the dominant organisational form in rural agricultural settings (Nordqvist and Melin, 2010; Discua Cruz *et al*., 2013), the majority of this literature addresses firms that are already constituted — with an existing asset base, a recognisable succession dynamic, and an institutional environment that, however challenging, provides some degree of continuity.

Far less attention has been devoted to what might be called entrepreneurship from discontinuity: the process through which new entrepreneurial actors, in the absence of prior firm structures, family inheritance, or functioning local markets, reconstruct economic activity in contexts of deep historical rupture. This is the condition of Italy's internal rural areas, where industrialisation in the 1960s and 1970s produced a systematic abandonment of agricultural traditions, depopulation of mountain and hill communities, and the progressive disappearance of tacit knowledge accumulated over centuries of peasant farming (Barca *et al*., 2012; De Rossi, 2018).

Before proceeding, a definitional clarification is necessary. Throughout this paper we use the term family-type entrepreneurship to refer not to a structural category defined by ownership or biological kinship, but to a

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

behavioural one, following Chua, Chrisman and Sharma (1999), who propose that the family business is most productively defined by what it does rather than by who owns it. Specifically, family-type entrepreneurship is characterised by centralised decision-making among a small group of deeply aligned actors, a shared value system prioritising long-term continuity over short-term return, relational embeddedness in a specific social and territorial context, and a governance logic driven by stewardship rather than agency. *Fra i Monti* exhibits all four dimensions despite the absence of biological kinship among its founders – a qualification that makes the application of family business constructs analytically justified rather than merely analogical.

2.2 Socioemotional Wealth: Beyond the Profit Motive

The concept of socioemotional wealth (SEW), introduced by Gómez-Mejía *et al*. (2007) and subsequently elaborated by Berrone, Cruz and Gómez-Mejía (2012), refers to the non-financial aspects of a firm that meet the family's affective requirements, including family control and influence, identification of family members with the firm, binding social ties, emotional attachment to the firm, and the renewal of family bonds through dynastic succession – summarised in the FIBER acronym. The central argument is that family firms often make decisions that sacrifice financial performance in order to preserve SEW, particularly when the SEW reference point is threatened.

Applied to the case of *Fra i Monti*, the SEW framework generates immediate analytical purchase, but with an important extension: SEW is not inherited but constructed through the entrepreneurial act itself, with emotional attachment to a place – rather than to an existing firm – as its primary reference point. This extension is analytically justified rather than merely analogical: SEW and familiness are not constructs imported from a different domain but explanatory mechanisms that identify the motivational logic and resource configuration through which a territorial condition is translated into entrepreneurial action – something that the concept of territorial embeddedness alone, however powerful as a contextual descriptor, cannot capture. The empirical demonstration of this extension is developed in Section 4.2.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

2.3 Familiness and the Resources of Place

The concept of familiness, developed by Habbershon and Williams (1999) and subsequently refined by Habbershon, Williams and MacMillan (2003) and Zellweger, Eddleston and Kellermanns (2010), refers to the idiosyncratic bundle of resources and capabilities arising from the interaction of family, individual family members, and the firm. Familiness constitutes a potential source of competitive advantage precisely because it is non-replicable: it emerges from the specific history, relationships, and values of a particular family-firm system and cannot be straightforwardly transferred or imitated.

In the case of *Fra i Monti*, familiness operates in its extended, territory-anchored form through three resource clusters – heritage knowledge, relational legitimacy, and territorial embeddedness — each analysed empirically in Section 4.4.

2.4 Stewardship Theory and the Long-Term Horizon

Stewardship theory, introduced by Davis, Schoorman and Donaldson (1997) and applied to family business by Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2005), posits that in certain organisational configurations, actors behave as stewards rather than agents – motivated not by self-interest but by intrinsic satisfaction derived from achieving collective goals and by identification with the organisation and its mission. Steward behaviour is associated with long time horizons, community orientation, and a willingness to forgo short-term personal gain for the preservation and enhancement of the collective patrimony entrusted to their care.

Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2005) identify community-building, continuity, and connection as the three core dimensions of stewardship in family firms – all three demonstrably present in the *Fra i Monti* case, as Section 4.3 shows, with the qualification that community extends beyond the firm to encompass the territory.

2.5 The Business History Perspective: Colli and the Long View

Andrea Colli, in his foundational work on the history of family business (Colli, 2003; Colli and Rose, 2003), has argued that family firms cannot be adequately understood without attention to the institutional, cultural, and economic contexts that shape their emergence, persistence, and

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

transformation over time. The Italian case is particularly instructive: the predominance of family capitalism in Italy is not a deviation from a supposed Anglo-Saxon norm but an adaptive response to specific institutional conditions – fragmented financial markets, weak contractual enforcement, strong regional identities, and dense social networks that substitute for formal institutional infrastructure. In the Italian internal rural areas, these conditions have historically made family-based agricultural enterprise the default organisational form for managing collective resources, transmitting knowledge, and sustaining community cohesion.

The industrialisation of the 1960s and 1970s constituted a rupture in this long-standing pattern. The Fordist factory – in the case of Terelle, the Fiat/Stellantis automotive plant at Cassino – offered an economic alternative that was superior in the short term but culturally and ecologically destructive in the long term. What was lost was not merely the physical labour of farming but the entire ecosystem of tacit knowledge, intergenerational transmission, and territorial identity that family-based agricultural enterprise had sustained for centuries. The recovery attempted by *Fra i Monti* operates on two temporal scales: a start-up winery navigating the contemporary natural wine market that is an emerging niche, and simultaneously an attempt to reconnect with a tradition interrupted half a century ago.

2.6 Synthesising the Framework: Territorial Memory as the Analytical Bridge

The four theoretical pillars converge on a concept that is not explicitly developed in any single one of them but that the case of *Fra i Monti* places at the centre of the analysis: territorial memory as an entrepreneurial resource. Before defining it, we situate it in relation to three constructs with which it shares important features but from which it differs in analytically significant ways. The first is collective memory in the Halbwachsian sense (Halbwachs, 1992): socially shared recollections that are always selective and reconstructed in the present by groups whose current interests shape what is remembered and what is forgotten. Territorial memory shares this collective and reconstructive character, but is more specifically anchored to productive and ecological practices – the knowledge of how to cultivate a specific variety, the memory of how a particular terrace was managed – rather than to narrative or symbolic traditions alone. The second is place attachment (Scannell and Gifford, 2010; Lewicka, 2011): the affective, cognitive, and behavioural bond between individuals and specific spatial settings. Where place attachment explains motivation at the individual-psychological

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

level, territorial memory operates at the intergenerational and community level – it is less about how Rocco Toti feels about Terelle and more about what Terelle has accumulated across generations of farming practice. The third is territorial capital (Camagni, 2008): the stock of tangible and intangible localised assets constituting a territory's development potential. Territorial memory differs from territorial capital in a crucial respect: it captures the dimension of loss and recovery that a stock concept cannot accommodate. Where historical rupture has degraded or fragmented the asset base, territorial memory is precisely the partially surviving residue that can be remobilised through deliberate entrepreneurial effort. Territorial memory, then, is the accumulated stock of place-specific productive knowledge, ecological practices, affective attachments, and identity narratives associated with a particular geographical and ecological context, which persists in degraded, fragmented, and often tacit form after the economic and social activities that originally produced it have been discontinued, and which can be selectively reconstructed and mobilised as a strategic resource by entrepreneurial actors who share a sufficient affective and biographical connection to the territory.

A note on the relationship between these constructs and the broader concept of territorial embeddedness is warranted here. Territorial embeddedness – as developed in economic sociology and regional studies – describes the relational and locational anchoring of economic actors in a specific place. It is a powerful contextual descriptor but operates primarily at the level of condition: it tells us that actors are embedded, but does not explain the motivational logic that drives their choices, the specific character of the resources they mobilise, or the governance orientation that shapes their enterprise. SEW, familiness, and stewardship theory do precisely this: they identify the mechanisms through which a territorial condition is translated into distinctive entrepreneurial motivations, idiosyncratic resource configurations, and long-term governance orientations.

In the *Fra i Monti* case, territorial memory functions as the primary entrepreneurial resource, motivating the initial project, guiding the technical choices, legitimising the social positioning, and orienting the long-term vision – as Sections 4.2 to 4.5 demonstrate.

These considerations generate the research questions guiding the empirical analysis. The main question asks how family-type entrepreneurial actors mobilise territorial memory, socioemotional wealth, and stewardship orientations to generate entrepreneurial innovation in historically marginalised rural areas, and what a long-term historical perspective adds to this understanding. Two subsidiary questions address, respectively, the idiosyncratic resources that entrepreneurial actors draw upon when reconstructing economic activity in peripheral contexts, and the extent to which non-economic

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

motivations drive entrepreneurial choices when conventional economic incentives are absent or insufficient.

In Section 4.6, these four dimensions are integrated through the lens of Teece's (2010) value creation / value capture / value delivery framework, which we apply to show how the stewardship orientation shapes all three dimensions of the *Fra i Monti* business model in ways that are inseparable from its identity and territorial logic – and that cannot be explained by conventional models of entrepreneurial value generation.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Epistemological Positioning

This paper adopts an interpretive epistemological stance, treating organisational and entrepreneurial phenomena – particularly those pertaining identity, memory, and place – as best understood through their meanings and contexts rather than by standardised indicators (Johnson *et al*., 2006; Cornelissen, 2017). Additionally, It takes a historical-processual orientation (Colli, 2003; Suddaby *et al*., 2014), considering the entrepreneurial configuration under investigation as a moment in a longer trajectory of rupture, loss, and partial recovery – a temporal depth that synchronic frameworks are unable to provide.

3.2 Case Study Design: Rationale and Justification

The primary research method is the qualitative single case study, in the tradition established by Yin (2014) and theoretically elaborated by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007). The case study is widely recognised as the method of choice when the research questions are of the 'how' and 'why' type; when the investigator has little or no control over events; and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2014).

The choice of a single rather than multiple case design reflects both theoretical and practical considerations. Theoretically, the *Fra i Monti* case is what Yin (2014) calls a revelatory case: it offers access to a phenomenon – the re-emergence of family-type entrepreneurship in a context of deep historical rupture and territorial marginalisation – that has not previously been systematically documented or theorised in the family business literature. A revelatory case justifies single-case analysis because its value lies precisely

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

in the depth of insight it can generate, not in its typicality relative to a broader population.

This paper claims analytical rather than statistical generalisation (Yin, 2014; Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007): the mechanisms identified – territorial memory as SEW resource, familiness of place, stewardship orientation, and the long-term historical perspective developed by Colli (2003) – are theoretically transferable to other contexts sharing the same structural conditions of historical discontinuity and identity-based entrepreneurship, independently of empirical representativeness. The boundary conditions governing this transferability are discussed in Section 5.2.

3.3 Case Selection

The *Fra i Monti* winery was selected through a combination of purposive and criterion-based sampling (Patton and Appelbaum, 2003). Four criteria guided the selection. First, theoretical relevance: the case had to exhibit the theoretical constructs under examination while simultaneously challenging their conventional formulations. Second, contextual specificity: the case had to be embedded in a documented context of historical marginalisation and rural depopulation. Third, empirical accessibility: the case had to be accessible through direct fieldwork. Fourth, information richness: in Patton's (2002) terms, the case had to be an information-rich case from which a great deal can be learned about the research questions. The combination of an articulate, reflexive protagonist, a well-documented territorial context, and a distinctive entrepreneurial trajectory makes *Fra i Monti* exceptionally information-rich for the purposes of this study.

3.4 Data Collection

Data collection proceeded through three complementary sources, all gathered during a single field visit to Terelle on 17 February 2026. The primary source was a semi-structured interview conducted with Rocco Toti, co-founder and head of production at *Fra i Monti*. The interview followed a thematic guide organised around: the origins and motivations of the entrepreneurial project; the role of territorial memory and personal biography; the technical and ecological choices in viticulture and winemaking; the construction of commercial networks and international positioning; and the relationship between the winery and the broader territorial community. The interview was conducted in Italian, recorded with the interviewee's consent,

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

transcribed, and translated. The secondary source was field observation conducted during an on-site visit to the winery and vineyards in Terelle. The tertiary source comprised documentary and contextual data including demographic data on the municipality of Terelle (ISTAT), publicly available information on the winery's commercial activities, and secondary literature on the natural wine market and the agrifood economy of Italy's internal rural areas.

A note on limitations is appropriate. The empirical foundation of this paper rests primarily on a single interview with one of the three co-founders. Triangulation through interviews with Benedetto and Francesco Leone would strengthen the analytical robustness of the findings. These limitations, and their theoretical implications, are discussed more fully in Section 5.2.

3.5 Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the three-stage approach proposed by Gioia, Corley and Hamilton (2013) for qualitative inductive research, guided by an abductive logic (Alvesson and Kärreman, 2011) and sensitising concepts (Blumer, 1954). In the first stage, the interview transcript was read in its entirety and annotated to identify recurrent themes in the informant's own language – first-order codes staying close to the empirical material without imposing theoretical categories. In the second stage, first-order codes were aggregated into eight second-order themes through iterative movement between the empirical material and the theoretical framework (see Table 1). In the third stage, second-order themes were aggregated into four overarching dimensions – territorial memory as entrepreneurial resource; socioemotional wealth without a family firm; stewardship orientation; and historical rupture and path dependence – that correspond to the theoretical pillars of the framework while reflecting the specific configuration of the case. It is at this stage that the concept of territorial memory emerged as the organising construct that bridges the other three dimensions: not as a pre-existing category brought to the data, but as an analytical response to the empirical material's insistence on a dimension of historical rupture and recovery that the pre-existing constructs were unable to support on their own.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

Table 1: Data structure: from first-order codes to aggregate dimensions (Gioia et al.*, 2013)*

First-order codes (in informant's language)	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions
• *"We wanted to bring that place back to life" [the Cerquella]* • *"We wanted to try making wine to leave a mark on our territory"* • *"In Terelle you cannot not do something — it is a mission"*	Place as affective and moral imperative	TERRITORIAL MEMORY AS ENTREPRE-NEURIAL RE-SOURCE
• *"The seed of the historical potato variety of Terelle has been lost. Incredible"* • *"Terelle once had over 100 hectares of chest-nut grove. All of this has disappeared"* • *"The metal-mezzadro abandons the land both physically and mentally"*	Historical rupture and loss of productive knowledge	
• *"Semillon and Maturano: two varieties that speak of our territory"* • *"A historical variety (150/200 years old) — it was a local vinegrape"* • *"Four indigenous varieties of the Valle di Comino: Lecinaro, Pampanaro, Semillon and Maturano"*	Recovery of sup-pressed heritage knowledge through indigenous varieties	
• *"Terroir... must be extended to what is made with one's hands, to the entire tradition of a community"* • *"It serves to preserve the place, the identity of the territory"*	Territorial identity as productive and com-mercial asset	
• *"Around 2008 we decided to do something... we organised painting festivals, readings"* • *"We were driven by a desire for discovery"* • *"We were both born in 1984. We have always shared a passion for food and wine"*	Shared biographical and affective bond preceding the enter-prise	SOCIOEMO-TIONAL WEALTH WITHOUT A FAMILY FIRM
• *"The trace was La Cerquella, a venue built by Benedetto's father, who then died"* • *"We wanted to bring that place back to life"*	Emotional attachment to a specific place as SEW reference point	
• *"We had no prior experience: we were just bottle-openers"* • *"We started travelling and learning. From the very beginning interested in wines that express the territory"* • *"We wanted to open up, to learn. Not to re-main closed"*	Identity construction through entrepreneurial act ra-ther than inheritance	

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

First-order codes (in informant's language)	Second-order themes	Aggregate dimensions
• *"Madame Leroy: my wines do not taste of Pinot Noir but of Burgundy. It is a priority to carry the place forward"* • *"Ciociaria Naturale: a network to attract visitors and consumers for the product. You give something that brings you a return"* • *"It is necessary to learn to taste your neighbour's wine"*	Community stewardship: collective territorial promotion over individual competition	STEWARDSHIP ORIENTATION
• *"In 2017 we chose to make wine in amphorae when stainless steel was dominant"* • *"We rejected the DOC Atina-Cabernet with our label Rivoluzione Cabernicana"* • *"This approach does not contemplate industrial methods: the highest quality"*	Deliberate rejection of industrial and standardised production norms	
• *"Through wine production, we try to bring people back to Terelle"* • *"Agricultural sustainability, wine tourism, producing for proximity but also for the world"* • *"Good and beautiful have an ethical value"*	Long-term territorial revitalisation as strategic goal	
• *"The Cassino automotive plant in 1972 had 12,000 employees. 80% moved to the city"* • *"The metal-mezzadro without a VAT number roams the woods but cannot sell the product"* • *"Those who worked in the factory grew their own vegetables, oil, tomatoes. That knowledge has been dispersed"*	Industrial rupture and destruction of agricultural identity	HISTORICAL RUPTURE AND PATH DEPENDENCE
• *"Semillon and Maturano: DNA reconstruction analysis of the 2000s, replicable plants"* • *"Semillon blanc was planted by Count Visocchi... minister of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies"* • *"First traces of Bordeaux varieties in Italy"*	Recovery of biological and historical heritage through agronomy and viticulture	
• *"Nobody has built a truffle grove... you have to go to market. There has been no entrepreneurial culture"* • *"There are closed wine areas, wonderful terroirs and stories, and operators who do not evolve"* • *"Irpinia still today cannot find its own dimension"*	Absence of entrepreneurial culture as structural constraint and counter-examples	

Source: interview with Rocco Toti, 17 February 2026.
First-order codes translated from Italian by the authors.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

3.6 Rigor, Validity, and Reflexivity

Qualitative research of this kind requires explicit attention to rigor, transparency, reflexivity, validity, and generalizability (Johnson *et al*., 2006; Cunliffe, 2003). We address each one separately. Rigor in qualitative research refers to the consistency and care with which the analytical process is conducted and documented (Johnson *et al*., 2006). In this study, rigor is ensured through the systematic three-stage Gioia methodology, the explicit mapping of first-order codes to second-order themes and aggregate dimensions presented in Table 1, and the iterative movement between empirical material and theoretical framework described in Section 3.5. This approach has been successfully applied in qualitative family business research, including case studies of Italian family firms (Dalpiaz, Tracey and Phillips, 2014), confirming its appropriateness for the type of analysis conducted here. Transparency is achieved through the data structure figure itself, which makes the analytical pathway from informant language to theoretical constructs visible and traceable by the reader. Regarding validity, we differentiate between two types. Internal validity – the coherence between evidence and interpretation – is addressed through the systematic use of direct quotations anchored to specific analytical claims throughout Sections 4.2–4.5. External validity is not claimed in the statistical sense; rather, we pursue analytical generalisation (Yin, 2014), whereby the theoretical mechanisms identified – territorial memory as SEW resource, familiness of place, stewardship-driven business model – are theoretically transferable to other contexts sharing the structural conditions of historical discontinuity and territorial marginalisation, independently of empirical representativeness. On generalizability, the boundary conditions of the three propositions are discussed explicitly in Section 5.2. Reflexivity concerns the systematic reflection on how the researchers' positionality shapes the research process and its outputs (Cunliffe, 2003). Both authors approach the case from an academic position external to the territory, with no prior acquaintance with the protagonists. This exteriority enables theoretical distance while precluding the depth of contextual understanding that insider knowledge can provide – a trade-off we acknowledge as constitutive of the study's epistemological stance. One author approaches the case as an economic historian, bringing a long-term contextual perspective that is unusual in management studies but theoretically generative for the purposes of this paper; the other brings expertise in qualitative business research and corporate governance. This disciplinary complementarity is reflected in the hybrid framework: the business history perspective provides temporal depth, while the management studies perspective ensures analytical rigour in the application of family business constructs. The interview was conducted with

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

the full and informed consent of the participant, who reviewed and approved the use of direct quotations.

3.7 Comparable Cases in the Literature

The emerging scholarship on family business, natural wine, and rural entrepreneurship provides a useful comparative horizon for situating the *Fra i Monti* case. Three convergent findings from this literature are particularly relevant.

The first concerns the relationship between long-term family orientation and ecological commitment. Delmas and Gergaud (2014), studying 281 US wineries, demonstrate that family firms with strong transgenerational succession intentions are significantly more likely to adopt sustainable and organic practices – not because of regulatory pressure or market premium, but because the family's time horizon extends beyond the current generation's economic interests. The *Fra i Monti* case allows us to observe this motivational logic qualitatively and in its generative moment: the choice of organic viticulture, the recovery of indigenous varieties, and the construction of Ciociaria Naturale all reflect a temporality oriented toward what the territory might become in twenty or thirty years. The present case extends this argument to a context where the 'transgenerational' orientation operates without biological succession, directed instead toward a territorial community as the relevant future generation.

The third strand concerns the social capital function of small rural family wineries. Alonso and Bressan (2013), studying producers in the Brazilian Serra Gaúcha cluster, document how small family-owned wineries act not only as economic enterprises but as providers, guardians, and promoters of community welfare – investing in social capital well beyond their commercial interests. The founding of Ciociaria Naturale maps closely onto this community stewardship function. The theoretical contribution of the present case is to show that this function is constitutive of the business model itself: the community investment is inseparable from value creation, because the authenticity of the product depends on the vitality of the territory.

Taken together, these two cases confirm that *Fra i Monti* belongs to a theoretically recognisable type – the territorially embedded, stewardship-oriented, family-type natural winery – while simultaneously exhibiting characteristics that push the boundaries of existing frameworks: the absence of prior family firm structure, the centrality of historical rupture, and the role of territorial memory as the primary entrepreneurial resource.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overview

The empirical analysis is organised around four thematic clusters derived from the Gioia data structure: the origin of the entrepreneurial project (territorial memory as trigger); the strategic vision (stewardship orientation); the resource base (familiness of place); and the market trajectory (conversion of peripherality into premium positioning). Each cluster is read through the relevant theoretical constructs identified in Section 2, with attention to both confirmatory evidence and moments of analytical extension. The section concludes with an integrated discussion of *Fra i Monti* as a prototype of a territorially embedded family-type business model.

4.2 Theme 1 – The Origin: Territorial Memory as Entrepreneurial Trigger

The founding of *Fra i Monti* does not follow the canonical logic of entrepreneurial opportunity recognition. It follows, instead, the logic of territorial memory: an affective, identity-laden impulse rooted in the specific history of a place. The starting point is 2008, ten years before the first harvest. Rocco Toti and Benedetto Leone open a tasting space in the Terelle town hall, combining wine, food, painting exhibitions, and readings – an act of cultural investment with no immediate commercial logic.

"We were just bottle-openers, not even expert ones. Little by little, we became passionate about natural wine, driven by the desire to produce, to try to leave a mark on our territory".

"The seed of the historical potato variety of Terelle has been lost. Incredibly. Terelle once had over 100 hectares of chestnut grove converted into flour. All of this has disappeared".

The entrepreneurial trigger proper arrives through La Cerquella – a farmhouse built by Benedetto and Francesco's father, who died shortly afterwards. The place carries a weight of personal memory and territorial attachment that cannot be reduced to an asset valuation.

"We intensely wanted to bring that place back to life. We rented some vineyards and made our first harvest in 2018, in a garage. It all started as a game".

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

Read through the SEW framework, this founding moment is analytically transparent: the Cerquella materialises the identification and emotional attachment dimensions of socioemotional wealth – the affective reference point around which an entrepreneurial identity crystallises. What makes the case theoretically distinctive is that this SEW is not inherited from an existing firm but constructed through the entrepreneurial act itself, with territorial memory as the primary anchor. The second trigger is the encounter with the international natural wine circuit at Malmö, Sweden, which transforms a cultural project into a viable enterprise. This sequence – cultural roots first, commercial development second – is characteristic of stewardship-oriented entrepreneurship, in which legitimacy precedes and enables market positioning.

4.3 Theme 2 – The Vision: Stewardship of Territory as Strategic Horizon

The strategic orientation of *Fra i Monti* is structured by what Miller and Le Breton-Miller (2005) identify as the three dimensions of stewardship: community, continuity, and connection. Community is expressed through the founding of Ciociaria Naturale. Rocco Toti articulates the logic explicitly:

"In inland areas, jealousy or individualism are useless. Madame Lalou Bize-Leroy used to say: 'My wines do not taste of Pinot Noir but of Burgundy.' This teaches us all a great lesson. Yes, we must promote the territory; but a union of forces is necessary to break the isolation and marginality".

"Terroir cannot be only soil and climate – it must be extended to what is made with one's hands, to the entire tradition of a community. It serves to preserve the place, the identity of the territory. This is the journey that natural wine must make".

"In 2017 we chose to make wine in amphorae when stainless steel was dominant. We had clear ideas. We were looking ahead".

This is stewardship of the territorial brand: by investing in collective promotion, the founders accept the risk that competitors benefit from the reputational infrastructure they help construct – irrational in competitive strategy terms, entirely coherent within a stewardship logic. Continuity is revealed in the long-term horizon: the recovery of nearly extinct indigenous varieties is an investment with no short-term payoff. The choice of high-altitude viticulture is explicitly a response to climate change – at nearly one thousand metres, temperature extremes are attenuated and conditions remain favourable for the complex, slow-ripening varieties the natural wine market prizes.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

Connection appears in the explicit articulation of the winery's territorial role: "Through wine production, we try to bring people back to Terelle".

4.4 Theme 3 – The Resources: Familiness Without Biological Family

The third thematic cluster examines the resource base of *Fra i Monti*, providing empirical grounding for Proposition 2. Read through the familiness framework, three idiosyncratic resource clusters constitute the distinctiveness of the enterprise in its extended, territory-anchored form. Heritage knowledge: the recovery of Semillon and Maturano – "grape varieties of an Italian peasant world that no longer exists" – is an act of heritage knowledge mobilisation. These varieties survived in degraded, fragmented form because no commercial producer had found them viable. Rocco and Benedetto, working with agronomists and botanists, contributed to reconstructing their genetic heritage, enabling re-entry into commercial viticulture. Relational legitimacy: the decade of cultural initiatives in Terelle before the first commercial harvest establishes a form of social capital – rooted in the community and legible to outsiders as authenticity – that cannot be purchased and is, in Habbershon and Williams's (1999) terms, non-replicable. Territorial embeddedness: high-altitude viticulture at nearly one thousand metres requires tacit, place-specific knowledge – denser vine planting, Guyot pruning, soil management to prevent erosion – that is accumulated through direct experience and constitutes simultaneously a barrier to entry and a source of product distinctiveness. The following quotations illustrate the second and third resource clusters; the second refers to the figure of the 'metal-mezzadro' ('metalworker-sharecropper': the part-time factory worker who held industrial employment during the week while still cultivating a family plot, emblematic of Italy's incomplete rural-industrial transition of the 1960s–1970s).

"A historical variety, 150 to 200 years old – it was a local vinegrape. Until the 1990s it was crafted alongside other plants. Semillon blanc was planted by Count Visocchi in Atina and Cassino, an agronomist and minister of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. From there he brought Merlot, Cabernet and Semillon – the first traces of Bordeaux varieties in Italy".

"The metal-mezzadro not holding a VAT number roams the woods, but is stripped of the product to sell it and unable to imagine technological and social development. His agricultural know-how is of no use to anyone".

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

4.5 Theme 4 – The Market: From Peripheral Authenticity to International Premium

The fourth thematic cluster addresses the market trajectory of *Fra i Monti*, providing empirical grounding for Proposition 3. The commercial trajectory illustrates the conversion of peripheral marginality into a premium market position through the stewardship-driven business model. The natural wine market assigns specific value to provenance from obscure, non-canonical territories: a winery in Terelle, producing indigenous varieties that most oenologists have never heard of, carries a distinct authenticity signal that is highly legible within the international natural wine community. The Malmö fair episode is the hinge point of this conversion. By 2026, *Fra i Monti* – together with the related but autonomous initiative Fattore Umano, established in 2021 through a partnership between Rocco, Benedetto, and the oenologist and agronomist Gennaro Reale – produces approximately 30,000 bottles per year: a significant volume for a high-altitude, fully organic, artisanal producer operating in what was, eight years ago, a viticultural vacuum.

"There are closed wine areas, wonderful terroirs and stories, and producers who do not evolve. Irpinia, for example, still today cannot find its own dimension. Roccamonfina in the province of Caserta has a biodiversity comparable to Etna, yet no noteworthy winery comes to mind".

4.6 Fra i Monti *as a Prototype of a Territorially Embedded Family-Type Business Model*

Fra i Monti constitutes a prototype of a territorially embedded family-type business model whose three constitutive dimensions – value creation, value capture, and value delivery (Teece, 2010) – are inseparable from the identity and stewardship logic of the enterprise.

4.6.1 Value Creation: What *Fra i Monti* Produces and Why

The value proposition of *Fra i Monti* is simultaneously a product proposition and a territorial proposition. *Fra i Monti* started in 2018 with a total production of 3,000 bottles across three labels, growing steadily to a peak of 15,000 bottles in 2021 and 2022. Production then declined to 12,000 bottles in 2023 across seven labels, a contraction linked to adverse climatic conditions in that vintage year – an episode that is itself analytically significant: it

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

illustrates the ecological vulnerability that is the structural counterpart of the stewardship model's commitment to fully organic viticulture, which foregoes the chemical interventions that would partially hedge such exposure. The production trajectory is detailed in Table 1 below, which covers *Fra i Monti*'s own production. Combined with Fattore Umano, established in 2021, total production across both labels reached approximately 30,000 bottles by 2026, following expanded vineyard surface and the addition of new labels in 2024 and 2025. Pricing is positioned at a medium level for the natural wine standard, with the deliberate purpose of setting an accessible entry point in international markets without sacrificing the quality and authenticity signals on which the value proposition depends.

Table 2: Fra i Monti*: yearly labels and production volumes (2018–2023)*

Year	No. Labels	Labels	Bottles/Label	Total Bottles
2018	3	Sempre in due / Bianco di Civita / Alavolee	1,000 each	3,000
2019	4	+ Più una al giorno	1,500 each	6,000
2020	5	+ Rivoluzione Cabernicana	2,000–2,500 each	12,000
2021	6	+ Tinto di rosso	2,500 each	15,000
2022	6	Same as 2021	2,500 each	15,000
2023	7	+ Sous Voile	1,000–2,000 each	12,000

Source: Fra i Monti *Srl*

This value creation logic is supply-constrained by design: the choice of high-altitude production and fully manual, organic viticulture places absolute limits on scalable expansion. It is also temporally deep, drawing value from a viticultural history that precedes the founding of the firm by centuries. The labels themselves – Sempre in due, Bianco di Civita, Alavolee, Rivoluzione Cabernicana, Sous Voile – carry an aesthetic and narrative identity inseparable from the territorial and biographical story of the enterprise.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

4.6.2 Value Capture: How the Model is Financially Sustained

Fra i Monti is a limited liability company founded on equal terms by three partners – Rocco, Benedetto, and Francesco – financed through a combination of personal investment and a grant from the Rural Development Plan (PSR) of the Lazio Region, which provided support for the purchase of equipment and the construction of the winery. This financing structure is itself theoretically significant: it illustrates how the territorially embedded family-type business model can be co-enabled by public rural development policy without losing its identity logic – the PSR grant fills a capital gap but does not alter the motivational, relational, or stewardship orientation of the enterprise.

The value capture logic rests on premium positioning rather than volume. *Fra i Monti* operates through two commercial channels: the wholesale and HoReCa channel (€10–12 per unit) and the direct-to-consumer channel at the winery, fairs, and online (€17–19). Export markets include Japan, the United States, South Korea, and Switzerland. In the past twelve months, US exports have declined in response to anticipated tariffs, compensated by growth in domestic wine tourism to Terelle – a dynamic consistent with the stewardship model's territorial rootedness. *Fra i Monti*'s growing reputation rests on word-of-mouth within the natural wine community and direct promotional activity through networks such as Renaissance des Appellations and Demeter, rather than on mainstream guide reviews. In 2026, the enterprise was awarded the Eco-Tourism Oscar by Legambiente – a recognition that reinforces both its domestic positioning and its narrative of territorial stewardship.

4.6.3 Value Delivery: The Organisational Architecture

The organisational architecture of *Fra i Monti* can be characterised as a dyadic partnership with territorial extension. The operative core of the enterprise is the working relationship between Rocco and Benedetto. Rocco manages the winery and the commercial and distribution network; Benedetto supports winery operations and takes primary responsibility for field work and vineyard management. Francesco holds a representative role in the company structure but is principally engaged elsewhere. *Fra i Monti* employs one permanent employee, supplemented by subcontracted seasonal workers during harvest and other labour-intensive periods.

This structure functions as a family governance form without biological kinship (Chua *et al.*, 1999): decision-making is concentrated, values are

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

aligned, and the orientation is long-term. The lean architecture – minimal fixed labour costs, maximum flexibility, direct founder involvement at every stage – is structurally consistent with the artisanal value proposition. The territorial extension of this core operates through Ciociaria Naturale, broadening the organisational perimeter to create shared infrastructure for territorial promotion, knowledge exchange, and collective legitimacy. Fattore Umano – established in 2021 with Gennaro Reale – represents a further territorial extension without integrating into the *Fra i Monti* legal and financial structure.

4.7 Three Theoretical Propositions

On the basis of the foregoing analysis, we advance three theoretical propositions. These are presented as analytically grounded hypotheses derived from the case – consistent with the logic of theory building from cases (Eisenhardt and Graebner, 2007) – rather than as empirically confirmed generalisations. Each proposition identifies a mechanism that the *Fra i Monti* case illuminates and that future research, including multi-case comparison, should further examine and test.

Proposition 1: Territorial memory may function as the primary carrier of socioemotional wealth in the absence of an existing family firm, activating the motivational, identity, and relational dynamics associated with family-type entrepreneurship through shared attachment to a place rather than shared biological kinship. The boundary condition is that a sufficient stock of territorial memory – in the form of surviving ecological, cultural, and relational traces – must exist for this mechanism to operate.

Proposition 2: In contexts of deep historical discontinuity, the recovery of suppressed productive knowledge may constitute a form of familiness that is territorially rather than genealogically constituted, generating idiosyncratic competitive resources precisely because of the rupture it addresses. The boundary condition is that the relevant market must assign a premium to authenticity and place-based identity; in commodity markets, heritage knowledge would generate no competitive advantage.

Proposition 3: The stewardship orientation of territorially embedded family-type entrepreneurship may produce a business model structurally incompatible with volume growth but structurally compatible with the premium positioning logic of artisanal, place-based markets. The boundary condition is market access: the conversion of peripherality into a differentiator requires the existence of international networks capable of mediating between marginal producers and distant premium consumers.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

5. Conclusions

5.1 Summary of Findings and Theoretical Contributions

This paper examined how entrepreneurial actors mobilise territorial memory, socioemotional wealth, and stewardship orientations to generate entrepreneurial innovation in historically marginalised rural areas. The case of *Fra i Monti*, an organic winery founded in 2018 in Terelle, in the province of Frosinone, offers a clear illustration of this dynamic. *Fra i Monti* does not fit the conventional profile of a family firm: there is no inherited business, no biological succession, no prior entrepreneurial tradition to build on. What its founders share is something different – a deep attachment to a place, a commitment to recovering what industrial monoculture had nearly destroyed, and a long-term orientation that consistently overrides short-term economic logic. We have called this territorial memory: the stock of place-specific knowledge, practices, and identity narratives that survives historical rupture in degraded form and can be remobilised as the founding resource of a new entrepreneurial act.

The paper makes three theoretical contributions to what the literature might call entrepreneurship from discontinuity – the reconstruction of economic activity in contexts of deep historical rupture. First, it shows that socioemotional wealth – typically associated with established family firms – can emerge in the absence of a pre-existing firm, activated by shared attachment to a place rather than shared biological kinship. Second, it proposes that familiness, understood as an idiosyncratic bundle of non-replicable resources, can be territorially rather than genealogically constituted: what makes *Fra i Monti* distinctive is not a family heritage but a territorial one. Third, following Colli (2003), it argues that a business history perspective is not merely useful context but a theoretical necessity in cases like this one – because the rupture of the 1960s–1970s industrialisation in internal rural areas is not the backdrop of the story; it is what makes the story possible.

These findings carry implications for rural development policy. The co-financing of the enterprise through the PSR of the Lazio Region illustrates that public instruments can play a catalytic role in enabling territorially embedded entrepreneurship – but only when they accompany motivational, relational, and stewardship orientations that are already present. Policy instruments that reward heritage knowledge recovery, territorial producer networks, and place-based tourism are likely to generate more durable results than those focused exclusively on productive capacity.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

5.2 Limitations, Boundary Conditions, and Future Research

The paper carries several acknowledged limitations that also constitute the most productive directions for future research. At the empirical level, the principal limitation is the reliance on a single interview with one of the three co-founders; triangulation through interviews with Benedetto and Francesco Leone and longitudinal follow-up are identified as priorities. At the theoretical level, the boundary conditions stated in Section 4.7 – the need for surviving territorial traces, authenticity-premium markets, and mediating international networks – define the limits of transferability and should guide future multi-case research. Most acutely, the transgenerational dimension of SEW remains empirically unresolved: *Fra i Monti* is eight years old and at the founder stage. Whether the founders will transmit the enterprise to biological descendants, trusted collaborators, or through a community-oriented mechanism remains open – and will determine whether the territorial memory that animates the enterprise survives beyond the founding generation. This is, in our view, the most theoretically significant direction for longitudinal follow-up.

References

Alonso A.D. and Bressan A. (2013). Small rural family wineries as contributors to social capital and socioeconomic development. *Community Development*, 44: 503–519. DOI: 10.1080/15575330.2012.683616

Alvesson M. and Kärreman D. (2011). *Qualitative research and theory development: Mystery as method*. London: Sage.

Barca F., McCann P. and Rodríguez-Pose A. (2012). The case for regional development intervention: Place-based versus place-neutral approaches. *Journal of Regional Science*, 52: 134–152. DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9787.2011.00756.x

Berrone P., Cruz C. and Gómez-Mejía L.R. (2012). Socioemotional wealth in family firms: Theoretical dimensions, assessment approaches, and agenda for future research. *Family Business Review*, 25: 258–279. DOI: 10.1177/0894486511435355

Blumer H. (1954). What is wrong with social theory? *American Sociological Review*, 19: 3–10. DOI: 10.2307/2088165

Camagni R. (2008). Regional competitiveness: Towards a theory of territorial capital. In: Capello R., Camagni R., Chizzolini B. and Fratesi U. (eds.) *Modelling Regional Scenarios for the Enlarged Europe*. Berlin: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-540-74737-6_3

Chua J.H., Chrisman J.J. and Sharma P. (1999). Defining the family business by behavior. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 23: 19–39. DOI: 10.1177/104225879902300302

Colli A. (2003). *The History of Family Business, 1850–2000*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

Colli A. and Rose M. (2003). Family business. In: Amatori F. and Jones G. (eds.) *Business History around the World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Cornelissen J.P. (2017). Preserving theoretical divergence in management research: Why the explanatory potential of qualitative research should be harnessed rather than suppressed. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54: 368–383. DOI: 10.1111/joms.12210
Cunliffe A.L. (2003). Reflexive inquiry in organizational research: Questions and possibilities. *Human Relations*, 56: 983–1003. DOI: 10.1177/00187267035568004
Dalpiaz E., Tracey P. and Phillips N. (2014). Succession narratives in family business: The case of Alessi. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 38: 1375–1394. DOI: 10.1111/etap.12129
Davis J.H., Schoorman F.D. and Donaldson L. (1997). Toward a stewardship theory of management. *Academy of Management Review*, 22: 20–47. DOI: 10.2307/259223
De Massis A. and Kotlar J. (2014). The case study method in family business research: Guidelines for qualitative scholarship. *Journal of Family Business Strategy*, 5: 15–29. DOI: 10.1016/j.jfbs.2014.01.007
De Rossi A. (ed.) (2018). *Riabitare l'Italia. Le aree interne tra abbandoni e riconquiste.* Rome: Donzelli.
Delmas M.A. and Gergaud O. (2014). Sustainable certification for future generations: The case of family business. *Family Business Review*, 27: 228–243. DOI: 10.1177/0894486514543820
Discua Cruz A., Howorth C. and Hamilton E. (2013). Intrafamily entrepreneurship: The formation and membership of family entrepreneurial teams. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 37: 17–46. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-6520.2012.00534.x
Eisenhardt K.M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 532–550. DOI: 10.2307/258557
Eisenhardt K.M. and Graebner M.E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, 50: 25–32. DOI: 10.5465/amj.2007.24160888
Gioia D.A., Corley K.G. and Hamilton A.L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16: 15–31. DOI: 10.1177/1094428112452151
Gómez-Mejía L.R., Haynes K., Núñez-Nickel M., Jacobson K.J.L. and Moyano-Fuentes J. (2007). Socioemotional wealth and business risks in family-controlled firms: Evidence from Spanish olive oil mills. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 52: 106–137. DOI: 10.2189/asqu.52.1.106
Habbershon T.G. and Williams M.L. (1999). A resource-based framework for assessing the strategic advantages of family firms. Family Business Review, 12: 1–25. DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-6248.1999.00001.x
Habbershon T.G., Williams M. and MacMillan I.C. (2003). A unified systems perspective of family firm performance. *Journal of Business Venturing*, 18: 451–465. DOI: 10.1016/S0883-9026(03)00053-3
Halbwachs M. (1992). *On Collective Memory* (Coser L.A., ed. and trans.). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org

Johnson P., Buehring A., Cassell C. and Symon G. (2006). Evaluating qualitative management research: Towards a contingent criteriology. *International Journal of Management Reviews,* 8: 131–156. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2370.2006.00124.x

Lewicka M. (2011). Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years? *Journal of Environmental Psychology,* 31: 207–230. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2010.10.001

Miller D. and Le Breton-Miller I. (2005). *Managing for the Long Run: Lessons in Competitive Advantage from Great Family Businesses.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Nordqvist M. and Melin L. (2010). Entrepreneurial families and family firms. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development,* 22: 211–239. DOI: 10.1080/08985621003726119

Patton M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Patton E. and Appelbaum S.H. (2003). The case for case studies in management research. *Management Research News,* 26: 60–71. DOI: 10.1108/01409170310783484

Ramírez-Pasillas M., Brundin E. and Markowska M. (eds.) (2021). *Contextualizing Entrepreneurship in Emerging Economies and Developing Countries*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Scannell L. and Gifford R. (2010). Defining place attachment: A tripartite organizing framework. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 30: 1–10. DOI: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2009.09.006

Suddaby R., Foster W.M. and Mills A.J. (2014). Historical institutionalism. In: Bucheli M. and Wadhwani R.D. (eds.) *Organizations in Time: History, Theory, Methods.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Teece D.J. (2010). Business models, business strategy and innovation. *Long Range Planning,* 43: 172–194. DOI: 10.1016/j.lrp.2009.07.003

Yin R.K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Zellweger T., Eddleston K. and Kellermanns F.W. (2010). Exploring the concept of familiness: Introducing family firm identity. *Journal of Family Business Strategy,* 1: 54–63. DOI: 10.1016/j.jfbs.2009.12.003

Copyright © FrancoAngeli This work is released under Creative Commons Attribution - Non-Commercial - NoDerivatives License. For terms and conditions of usage please see: http://creativecommons.org