

While Cruz, Larraza-Kintana, Garcés-Galdeano, and Berrone demonstrate how SEW can simultaneously elicit good and bad behavior in regard to corporate social responsibility, their findings also give rise to the idea that maintaining control and influence over day-to-day operations (internal socioemotional wealth [SEW]) and maintaining positive assessments of the firm's reputation (external SEW) may at times be in conflict. This commentary builds upon this notion by highlighting the need to explicitly examine SEW conflict, as well as offering initial theorizing on how family firms will pursue SEW preservation in these situations. Drawing on image theory, we theorize a process where preserving internal SEW is generally used as the guiding script in family firms because it is more salient on an everyday basis. However, we propose that if its preservation threatens the organization's identity and reputation, the script will be disrupted, precipitating a shift to preserving external SEW. The article concludes by discussing the broader theoretical implications of SEW conflict for family firms.

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