Evelyn Micelotta : My co-author and I recently published a book in the Element Series, the Cambridge Organization Theory Series. The title of the book is "A Family Firm: A Unique Form of Organization." And so the origin of the element was really a puzzling question that I've been asking myself for a while now, which is why do we see so few papers in organization theory that look at family businesses and the papers in family business research and that engage with organization theories? So I wanted to understand why there is such a reluctance on both these fields to engage with one another and provide an opportunity for dialogue and conversation. We know that family businesses represent more than 60 percent of all the business in the world, and right now, many family businesses are at a crucial point in their lives because the next generation is taking over.

So I think it's very timely to use the answer that organization studies have been able to provide to help family businesses cope with these challenges. There are many, many topics that I could have picked, that we could have picked, me and my co-authors, for this element, but we decided to focus on the three main topics that we think are very relevant. The first one is managing hybridity. We know that family firms are hybrid organizations, and they combine the family and business system, and we have theories of hybridity in organizational studies that have rarely been applied in family businesses.

The second one is the idea that family firms are really, really challenged by paradoxes and contradictions and tensions. But I have rarely seen in the family business literature the use of theories about paradoxes, about contradictions, which is unfortunate. So we really need to push a little bit more on that. And finally, we looked at managing time and temporality. The past and the present and the future are really important for family firms because those are companies that want to survive in the long run. We really hope that both organization theory and family business scholars will look at our research question and find them inspiring to go and continue this conversation.