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Bolstering Family Control: Evidence from Loyalty Shares

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Journal of Corporate Finance, Forthcoming

Abstract

We study the introduction of a new control-enhancing mechanism in Italy, a country still characterized by family-controlled firms but with increasing importance of institutional investors. Since 2014, Italian firms have been able to adopt loyalty shares, which allow a double voting right if shares are continuously held for at least two years. We find that about 20 percent of listed firms have introduced loyalty shares, and family-controlled firms are the most likely adopters. Loyalty shares neither anticipate acquisitions, nor equity issues by the adopting firm. Instead, they allow controlling shareholders to reduce their equity stake without losing control. We report no evidence of an adverse wealth effect both at the adoption and in the years following it. As expected, institutional investors vote against the introduction of loyalty shares. Yet, they do not reduce their holdings afterwards, as incremental governance costs are outweighed by the superior performance of adopting firms. Overall, our evidence suggests that bolstering family control is the main effect of the introduction of loyalty shares.

JEL classification: G32; G34.

Keywords: Loyalty shares; Family firms; Long-term shareholders; Control-enhancing mechanisms.

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1. Introduction

The dramatic increase in assets managed by institutional investors has heightened the short-term pressure exercised by the stock market on listed companies (Asker et al., 2015; Brochet et al., 2015; Edmans et al., 2017; Agarwal et al., 2018). This short-term pressure has led managers, regulators, and politicians to discuss and examine solutions aimed at promoting more extended holding periods and long-term behavior of shareholders. Among several proposals, the 2012 European Commission’s Action Plan on “*Modernising Company Law and Enhancing Corporate Governance in the European Union*” suggested the introduction of instruments, like loyalty shares, aimed at stimulating long-term investments by shareholders and counteracting short-termism (Bolton and Samama, 2013). Following this debate, several European countries like France, Italy, Belgium, and the Netherlands promulgated laws that either introduced or modified the discipline of loyalty shares.

Loyalty shares create deviations from the one-share one-vote principle recommended by several corporate governance codes around the world. Such deviations have been found to favor tunneling (Johnson et al., 2000), reduce market discipline in takeover contests (Grossman and Hart, 1988; Harris and Raviv, 1988), and generally be detrimental to shareholder value (Bebchuk et al., 2000; Adams and Ferreira, 2008). Corporate governance activists, proxy advisors, and institutional investors heavily promoted one-share one-vote in the 1990s and early 2000s, resulting in a wave of dual-class unifications (Hauser and Lauterbach, 2004; Lauterbach and Pajuste, 2015).^{1,2} While proponents of loyalty shares

¹ At the same time, an attempt to ban dual class firms at the European level (see the European Commission “*High Level Group of Company Law Experts*” report, also known as Winter report; HLG, 2002a, 2002b) was aborted, as mixed evidence on their effects on total shareholder value was reported by survey studies commissioned by the European Commission (Adams and Ferreira, 2008; Burkart and Lee, 2008).

² Dual class shares and control-enhancing mechanisms in general have recently gained new momentum. Famous tech giants such as Google, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Alibaba have adopted multiple voting shares to keep their

stress their bright side, i.e. the alleged ability to mitigate short-termism, a dark side exists as well. Controlling shareholders can use loyalty shares as a control-enhancing mechanism to insulate themselves from market pressures and weaken minority investors. This concern is particularly relevant in Continental Europe, where ownership is often concentrated, and family control is common (Faccio and Lang, 2002; Barontini and Caprio, 2006; Lins et al., 2013). Under this view, loyalty shares could serve as a replacement for mechanisms, like dual-class share structures, that were once common. Therefore, the costs from the increased separation between ownership and control may outweigh the benefits of favoring long-term investment.

To examine this question, we study the effect of adopting loyalty shares in Italy, a country dominated by large shareholders, but where the role and power of institutional shareholders have substantially increased over time. Italy has long been known as a country characterized by a strong prevalence of firms with concentrated ownership and poor investor protection (Zingales, 1994; La Porta et al., 2000). Here, the largest shareholder is typically a family owning more than 50 percent of the firm's equity (Faccio and Lang, 2002; Barontini and Caprio, 2006). While ownership is still concentrated and in the hands of families, investor protection has improved, thanks to several reforms that have given more power to minority shareholders and favored their activism (Belcredi and Enriques, 2015).³ This shareholder empowerment has also led to a drastic reduction of control-enhancing mechanisms like dual-class shares (Bigelli et al., 2011), on which controlling families have historically relied (Caprio and Croci, 2008). The introduction of loyalty shares in Italy allows us to investigate the response and incentives of

founders in control. In 2018, the Hong Kong Stock Exchange overturned rules barring the listing of companies with multiple voting rights in order not to lose tech companies in favor of US stock exchanges.

³ These reforms include, for example, a broader range of issues to be decided at the general meeting (from 1998), a say-on-pay vote (from 2012), the extension of slate voting to the board of directors of all listed firms (from 2005). See Belcredi and Enriques (2015) for a discussion of these reforms.

institutional investors to the adoption of a new control-enhancing mechanism, at a time when the importance of such investors is extremely high, and minority shareholders are more protected. Institutional investors face a two-stage decision when firms adopt loyalty shares. Prior to their adoption and at the shareholder meeting, institutional investors can choose to either support or oppose their introduction. Given the recommendations of proxy advisory firms and the widespread recognition of the one-share one-vote system as the best practice, the latter case seems far more likely (see, for example, [Becht et al., 2020](#)). However, once the firm has approved loyalty shares, it can be costly for institutional investors to vote with their feet and sell their shares, which a time-consistent strategy would entail. This is especially true if the adopting firms are performing well, and the additional governance costs associated with the loyalty shares are negligible.

The opportunity to adopt loyalty shares was given to Italian firms by a law passed in 2014, allowing them the option to reward “loyal” shareholders with an additional vote per share.⁴ Unlike in France, where loyalty shares already existed before the 2014 Florange Act,⁵ this legal mechanism was not available to Italian listed firms before 2014, and it represented a remarkable novelty. Forty-nine Italian listed firms in our sample (approximately, one-fifth of all firms listed on the main segment of Borsa Italiana) introduced this device between 2015 and 2019. The peak of adoptions was reached in 2015, with 18 instances. After that, the number of adoptions has stabilized at around 9 per year.

By contrasting the sample of Italian listed firms adopting loyalty shares to the universe of Italian listed firms, we document that family status increases the likelihood of implementing the new voting system. We classify a firm as a family firm if its largest shareholder is a family owning at least 10 percent

⁴ Registration in a special register and a continuous holding period of at least two years are required.

⁵ According to this law, already-existing loyalty shares were transformed from optional to mandatory for all listed companies, unless they chose to opt out.

of the firm's equity capital.⁶ This result is economically sizeable, as the family status increases the annual probability to opt for loyalty shares by more than 8 percentage points, considering an annual likelihood of about 4 percent (as 20 percent of Italian listed companies adopted loyalty shares in a 5-year period). At first sight, this additional control-enhancing mechanism may appear not to be markedly valuable to family controlling shareholders, given their already substantial ownership stake. However, we document that these families exploit the new device even to strengthen their grip on the firm. We also report that majority shareholders use loyalty shares to decrease their holdings without losing their control. Since the controlling family is usually under-diversified, loyalty shares may allow for idiosyncratic risk to be reduced. Family firms may also be prone to adopt loyalty shares in preparation for an expected equity-diluting operation, such as a merger or an equity issue. Our evidence does not support this conjecture, as the decrease in their controlling stakes is not correlated with ownership-diluting events, like acquisitions and seasoned equity offerings. Hence, loyalty shares seem to be adopted for reasons other than preserving family control in times of external growth or financing. Overall, we interpret these findings as evidence that families exploit loyalty shares to reduce their exposure to firm-specific investment while preserving control, but not to foster external growth.

While controlling shareholders have welcomed loyalty shares, institutional investors in Italian listed companies have voiced their opposition at the shareholder meetings calling for their adoption. As in France ([Belot et al., 2019](#); [Becht et al., 2020](#)), we document that institutional investors vote against the introduction of loyalty shares at the shareholder meeting. However, they do not vote with their feet by decreasing their stake in adopting firms. On the contrary, institutional investors even increase their

⁶ All results in our paper are qualitatively similar if we use a 20 percent threshold to identify family firms.

holdings in the post-adoption years. Thus, our evidence differs from [Bourveau et al. \(2019\)](#), who show a decrease in institutional ownership, especially foreign investors. Besides, we do not observe a negative market reaction either at the announcement or at the adoption. We interpret this apparent contradiction in institutional investors' behavior as supporting evidence for the time-inconsistent incentives they face. Like in [Becht et al. \(2020\)](#), institutional investors vote against the introduction of loyalty shares by Italian firms to comply with their stated preference for the one-share-one-vote principle, and also accepting the suggestions of proxy advisor firms. However, they are aware that their vote carries limited weight, as it does not alter their relative position compared to that of the controlling shareholder.⁷ Once the firm has approved loyalty shares, institutional investors even partially increase their investments. In fact, adopting firms are significantly more profitable, cash-generating, dividend-paying, and faster-growing than their peers. Moreover, the additional governance costs are limited, as adopting firms were and still are family-controlled. The increased investment of institutional investors may be explained by the controlling family partially reducing its stake and increasing the free float.⁸ Also, the positive performance of adopting firms triggered an increased weight of these stocks in market indexes, and this may have attracted additional investments by passive index funds.⁹

Our paper extends and complements previous works on loyalty shares. We add to this literature by examining the introduction of loyalty shares in Italy. Italy is an ideal venue for this type of study

⁷ Institutional investors can appoint directors through the so-called “slate voting.” Directors appointed by minorities have no connections with the controlling shareholder and serve as a monitoring device. In line with this contention, we document that the presence of minority-appointed directors significantly reduces the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares.

⁸ For example, we find that in four cases the controlling shareholder sold a relevant stake directly to institutional investors through an accelerated book building.

⁹ Three firms that adopted loyalty shares were also added to the main index of Borsa Italiana (FTSE MIB) in the post-adoption period.

because of the contemporaneous presence of both dominant controlling shareholders and, after the improvement in shareholder protection, more empowered institutional investors. While introduced in 2014 to foster institutional investors' long-term investments, loyalty shares have the potential to strengthen the power of controlling shareholders. We provide evidence suggesting that loyalty shares mainly serve the latter purpose. Previous literature has mostly focused on France, where the Florange Act of 2014 made loyalty shares mandatory for all listed companies unless they opt out.¹⁰ [Becht et al. \(2020\)](#) analyze the 120 largest French companies included in the SBF120 index and report that 70 percent of them opted out after the 2014 forced adoption. [Belot et al. \(2019\)](#) document that loyalty shares were already popular in France before 2014, especially among family firms. They primarily focus on the choice of opting out, finding that it harms a firm's value. However, the shareholders' favorable view of loyalty shares found by [Belot et al. \(2019\)](#) is not confirmed by [Bourveau et al. \(2019\)](#), who report a positive reaction to successful opt-out votes. Our results suggest that family firms are also eager to introduce loyalty shares in Italy, but there is no evidence of a wealth effect at their adoption. The different results for these two countries, characterized by relatively similar institutions and legal origin ([La Porta et al., 1998](#)), suggest that investors behave differently depending on the situation they face. Unlike the 2014 French law, which automatically introduced loyalty shares in all listed firms, unless shareholders decide to opt out, Italian firms must voluntarily adopt loyalty shares.

The remainder of the paper continues as follows. In the next section, we describe the institutional background, the data we use in our study and the descriptive statistics of our sample. Section 3 reports and discusses the empirical results. Section 4 concludes.

¹⁰ In a study on loyalty shares in France in the pre-Florange Act era, [Ginglinger and Hamon \(2012\)](#) find that loyalty shares cause the liquidity of small-cap companies to increase.

2. Institutional background to loyalty shares and data

2.1 Institutional background

Until mid-1990s, Italy was one of the European countries where the ownership-control separation was more severe, thanks to extensive use of control-enhancing mechanisms (CEMs), such as shareholder agreements, pyramidal groups, non-voting shares, and often a combination of these (Faccio and Lang, 2002). Over time, these CEMs have lost their appeal, and Italian companies have relied progressively less on them for several reasons. A stricter discipline on related-party transactions was passed in 2010 (CONSOB regulation 17221/2010), limiting the private benefits potentially delivered by shareholder agreements. Besides, the 2017 change in the tax regime of dividends paid to controlling companies reduced the appeal of pyramidal groups. Even more importantly, non-voting shares have almost completely disappeared for two main reasons. First, institutional investors and hedge funds have gradually directed their investments to one-share one-vote companies. Second, the dramatic decrease in interest rates made the mandatory dividend privilege offered to such shareholders extremely expensive for the issuing firms (Bigelli and Croci, 2013). As a consequence, many companies decided to return to a one-share one-vote equity structure through a dual-class unification (Bigelli et al., 2011), and listed firms using non-voting shares dropped from 31.9 percent in 1998 to a modest 7.4 percent in 2017 (CONSOB, 2018).

Inspired by the regulation discussed at the European level, a new CEM was made available to Italian firms in 2014 (Law 116/2014 and art. 127 quinquies of the Consolidated Law on Finance, TUF). Listed firms can now introduce loyalty shares, allowing “loyal” shareholders an extra vote per share after

a continuous holding period of at least two years.¹¹ The Italian legislator implemented an opt-in regime, leaving firms the choice on the adoption of loyalty shares. This solution differs from that which was chosen by French legislators in the contemporaneous Florange Act, enforcing an opt-out regime.

2.2 Mechanics of loyalty shares

Under the Italian regulation, the granting of enhanced voting rights does not create any new special category of shares. All shares meeting the requirements set forth by the law and the issuer's bylaws can have their votes increased. This increase is up to two votes, and it is applicable only to shares continuously held by the same shareholder for at least two consecutive years. The transfer of the shares automatically terminates the enhanced voting rights (unless they are inherited). Shareholders opting for enhanced voting rights must be registered with the issuer. The double vote then comes into effect two years from this date for shareholders of already-listed companies, and immediately for newly listed firms. Introducing loyalty shares requires an amendment of the company's bylaws, which has to be approved by the extraordinary general meeting with a two-thirds majority resolution.¹²

Loyalty shares enhance shareholders' voting rights only in particular circumstances. They carry up to two votes only at the shareholder meetings, but not when exercising some minority rights, such as calling a meeting, suing directors, etc. Finally, loyalty shares may affect control contests. Shareholders can exceed the threshold triggering a totalitarian takeover in compliance with the equal opportunity rule because of the double voting power of their shares. However, when a takeover attempt is pending, loyalty shares do not allow the extra vote.

¹¹ The same law allowed unlisted companies to issue multiple voting shares, carrying up to three votes each.

¹² The required majority was only 50 percent plus one vote in the first six months after the introduction of the law.

2.3 Data

Our analysis covers the period from 2015 to the end of 2019. The sample period begins in 2015 because loyalty shares were introduced in Italy on August 11, 2014 (Development Decree, Act 116/2014 converted in Law 116/2014), and companies have started to adopt the new voting system since January 2015.¹³ For our analysis, we create a sample of Italian listed companies (including those adopting loyalty shares) available in the Thomson Reuters Worldscope database (now Refinitiv).¹⁴ This initial list contains 343 firms, including firms that carried out their IPO between 2015 and 2019. For all these companies, we verify the availability of stock prices and financial data from Thomson Reuters Datastream and Worldscope, respectively, as well as corporate governance, ownership, and CEMs information. Corporate governance data on the composition of the boards are gathered from the Association of Italian Joint Stock Companies (Assonime) annual report “*Corporate Governance in Italy: Compliance, Remunerations and Quality of the Comply-or-Explain*”. Ownership data for the largest blockholders are from the Italian market regulator (CONSOB) website, while data for institutional investor ownership are taken from the Thomson Reuters Eikon database. This allows the inclusion of institutional investor holdings below the threshold of 3 percent that do not require a filing with the regulator. Data for non-voting shares and pyramidal group from 2008 to 2019 are from the CONSOB. Finally, data on acquisitions and equity issuance are from Thomson Reuters’ Thomson One Banker M&A and Equity issues databases, respectively. The final sample includes 260 firms.

¹³ The first company opting for loyalty shares was Campari on January 29, 2015, date of the general meeting.

¹⁴ We use the companies included in the list WSCOPEIT.

We collect information on the introduction of loyalty shares from the CONSOB website, which maintains an updated list of companies adopting loyalty shares.¹⁵ Forty-nine companies in our sample adopted loyalty shares between 2015 and 2019, six of which announced the adoption at the time of their IPO.¹⁶ We manually collect information on the announcement date using internet searches. Data on the outcome of the general meeting vote and the percentage of voting capital are obtained from the companies' official filings.

3. Results

3.1 Introduction of loyalty shares

Table 1 shows that 49 companies adopted loyalty shares between 2015 and 2019. Considering that there are 260 unique firms in our sample, almost one-fifth of the sample companies have introduced loyalty shares, confirming the relevance of the phenomenon.¹⁷ The breakup by year in Table 1, panel A, shows that 18 companies (37 percent of all the firms adopting loyalty shares) amended their bylaws in 2015, as soon as the Development Decree allowed them to opt for the new voting system. The same panel suggests that, out of these 49 companies, six have chosen to adopt loyalty shares in preparation of their IPO. Panel B of the same table provides, for each sample-year, details on the number of firms entering or exiting our sample, as well as the number of companies with CEMs in place (dual-class shares and

¹⁵ The list is available at the following URL:

http://www.consob.it/web/area-pubblica/quotate/main/emittenti/societa_quotate/voto_maggiorato_plurimo_lnk.htm?nav=true.

¹⁶ The CONSOB list reports 55 firms adopting loyalty shares between 2015 and 2019. Six of these firms are not in our sample because of lack of data.

¹⁷ The total number of listed companies in Italy at the end of 2019 (as reported by the Italian Stock Exchange) was 375, 65 percent of them (242 companies) belonging to the main market segment, the remainder being listed on the AIM Italia. This confirms the representativity of the sample used in the paper.

pyramidal structures). Depending on the year, 7 to 9.4 (17.8 to 21) percent of the companies had dual-class shares (pyramidal structures) in place, confirming the decline in the use of such devices.

Please insert Table 1 here

Table 2 provides some information on the voting results of the extraordinary general meeting in which loyalty shares were introduced, as reported by the minutes of the meetings. The number of companies goes down from 49 to 43 in Table 2. Six companies introduced loyalty shares at the time of their IPO, and they were private companies at the date of the shareholder meeting, making the minutes of the meetings publicly unavailable. From reading the minutes of the board of directors' proposals to the shareholder meetings on the adoption of loyalty shares, we find that the main official reason for their introduction is to build shareholder loyalty and favor their long-term involvement in the firm. On average, companies introducing loyalty shares are characterized by a controlling shareholder holding 55 percent of the equity capital at the extraordinary general meeting, while the second-largest shareholder has a stake of about 6 percent. Table 2 also reports that, on average, 68 percent of the capital was represented at the meeting, and 60.5 percent voted in favor of the introduction of loyalty shares. Interestingly, 7.4 percent of the capital voted against, and 0.1 percent chose to abstain. This preliminary evidence suggests that it is mainly the controlling shareholder's votes that drive the results of the extraordinary general meeting. According to the Italian legislation, resolutions at that meeting are passed with the favorable vote of at least two-thirds of the voting capital represented. Due to the presence of the controlling shareholder, loyalty shares were adopted by a large majority, i.e. 88 percent on average (= 60.5 percent over 68 percent).

Please insert Table 2 here

Institutional investors consistently voted against the introduction of loyalty shares. If it had not been for the controlling shareholder, the resolution would have been largely rejected by more than 60 percent of the remaining capital represented at the meeting ($= 7.8/(68.0 - 55.4)$). The “against” vote by institutional investors is aligned to their preference for the one-share one-vote principle, and the recommendation of proxy advisors.¹⁸

The Development Decree allowed companies to adopt loyalty shares with a simple majority vote until January 31, 2015. Only three companies chose to call the extraordinary general meeting before this date, i.e. Campari, Astaldi, and Amplifon. Table 2 also reports descriptive statistics for these three companies. Despite the limited statistical inference, we notice that shareholders voting against the adoption of loyalty shares represent a much larger percentage in these cases relative to the other loyalty share adopters (21.8 percent against 7.4 percent). This may suggest that these firms likely took advantage of this opportunity because they were concerned about failing to reach the 66.67 percent voting quorum required after January 31, 2015, amid the expected opposition of attending institutional investors.

3.2 Comparative analysis of companies with loyalty shares

Table 3 describes the characteristics of the companies adopting loyalty shares and compares them with the universe of Italian listed firms. Variables are defined in Appendix A. Firms with loyalty shares

¹⁸ As an example, a public letter against the departure from the one-share one-vote system in Italy, undersigned by several investment institutions (as well as by advisors, consultants, academics, and other individuals), and sent to the Italian Prime Minister, the Ministry of Economy and Finance, and the Chair of CONSOB, among others, is available at: <https://www.eumedion.nl/en/public/knowledgenetwork/letters/2015-02---statement-on-italian-multiple-voting-rights.pdf>.

are significantly smaller on average, considering total assets and sales. However, when looking at medians, differences narrow considerably, and loyalty share companies do not appear significantly different from the others. This is because size is largely skewed to the right. For example, in terms of sales, the largest 17 companies in our sample account for about 72 percent of the total 2018 figure, and none of them adopted loyalty shares. Firms adopting loyalty shares are valued more by the market (median Tobin's Q equal to 1.2x v. 1.1x) and are more profitable (median ROA is 3.2 percent v. 1.1 percent). Also, they are cash-richer (median cash over total assets equal to 12.0 percent v. 8.4 percent), more able to pay dividends (68.2 percent v. 60.8 percent), and they invest more (the differential median CAPEX is 0.6 percent of total assets). Regarding their liquidity, no differences are observed (the differential annual share turnover is only -0.7 percent). In a nutshell, companies with loyalty shares are more profitable, generate more cash, pay more dividends, invest more, and are more valued by the market.

Please insert Table 3 here

The second set of variables in Table 3 represents the ownership structure and governance characteristics of the two subsamples of firms adopting loyalty shares and non-adopters. The table presents firm-year observations. Companies adopting loyalty shares have a more concentrated ownership structure, as the first shareholder's average (median) equity capital is 52.1 (53.1) percent, against 46.7 (51.0) percent for the complementary subsample. Also, 91 percent of the companies opting for the new voting system are controlled by a family, against a smaller 58.5 percent for companies with no loyalty shares. Following the literature ([Faccio and Lang, 2002](#); [Barontini and Caprio, 2006](#)), we classify a firm as a family firm if its largest shareholder is a family that owns at least 10 percent of the firm's equity

capital. The involvement of the controlling families is also larger in the subsample of firms adopting loyalty shares. In this subsample, which is almost completely composed of family firms, we find that family members are present on the board in 84.8 percent of the observations. Also, controlling families are often represented in the top positions of the firm, with a family member being either the CEO or the chair of the board in 78.1 percent of the observations. In particular, while a family chair is found in about 70 percent of the observations, the family firms sample splits almost equally when we look only at the CEO position. Families' engagement in their companies is also widespread in non-adopters, but to a lower extent. The equity capital held by institutional investors is higher for loyalty share companies (15.6 percent v. 13.4 percent). This is likely the consequence of the higher profitability, cash richness, and larger growth opportunities suggested by the previous descriptive analysis.

When we look at the corporate governance characteristics of the two subsamples, we find some differences in terms of board independence. In particular, 32 percent of companies with loyalty shares have a minority director, against 48 percent for the complementary subsample. Also, a smaller share of independent directors is observed in the subsample of firms with loyalty shares (43 v. 48 percent). Both these differences are highly significant.

Regarding future transactions that could dilute the ownership of the controlling shareholders, like equity issues and acquisitions, we do not find a statistically significant difference between the two subsamples. The table also reports information on the past (from 2008 to 2013) and more recent (from 2014 to 2019) use of alternative control-enhancing mechanisms (dual-class shares and pyramidal groups). Companies without loyalty shares made more extensive use of such devices, both in the past and during the investigation period, with more clear-cut evidence for pyramidal structures. A decrease in the use of dual-class shares and pyramids over time is also evident for both subsamples, but more marked within non-adopters.

3.3 Likelihood of introducing loyalty shares

We now extend the previous univariate analysis studying the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares in a multivariate setting. Table 4 presents the results of a pooled logistic regression for the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares. For each firm, the dependent variable takes the value of 1 at the end of the year preceding the adoption of loyalty shares. We report average marginal effects, i.e. the average increase in the probability of adopting loyalty shares in response to a marginal increase in each covariate.

Please insert Table 4 here

Model 1 represents our baseline specification, where the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares is explained by the *Family control* dummy, firm-specific profitability, liquidity, leverage, and payout variables. In model 2 we add ownership variables, such as the equity stake of the first shareholder and that of institutional investors, while in model 3 we also add corporate governance variables, such as the size of the board of directors, the fraction of independent directors, the dummy for a CEO also serving as chair, and the presence of minority directors. Interestingly, *Family control* is strongly significant in all of our models. The family status increases the annual likelihood of adopting loyalty shares by 8 to 9 percentage points, depending on the model. Looking at model 1, we estimate an annual average predicted probability of about 4 percent in our sample, making the 8.8 percentage points increase generated by the family status very relevant also from an economic point of view. This is consistent with the univariate analysis reported in the previous Table 3. As the controlling family is generally under-diversified and bears significant idiosyncratic risk, adopting loyalty shares in such companies would be compatible with a strategy of liquidating a portion of their shares without impairing their control.

Finally, model 4 and 5 augment model 3 with two dummies for the contemporaneous (model 4) or past (model 5) presence of other control-enhancing devices, i.e. dual-class shares and pyramidal structures, respectively. The table provides consistent evidence that loyalty share adopters are less likely to be associated with the use of pyramidal structures. The effect of the two variables is relevant, as the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares is about 5 percentage points lower for companies using pyramidal structures. This evidence corroborates the idea that loyalty shares might be substitutes for other control-enhancing devices, i.e. pyramidal structures, rather than an incentive for long-term shareholders. On the contrary, we do not find any statistically significant evidence of a relationship between the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares and past or present presence of dual-class shares.¹⁹

Other firm-specific variables do not significantly affect the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares, except for *Cash* (which is positive) and the presence of directors appointed by minority shareholders (which is negative). The latter effect may be explained by the greater opposition exercised by such directors to the introduction of loyalty shares at the board level decision.

Previous analyses document that the family firm status is highly associated with the likelihood to adopt loyalty shares, as 45 out of 49 adopting firms are family-owned. However, not all family firms have chosen to do so. To further explore the motivations behind the loyalty share adoption, we add some variables aimed at measuring the family involvement in family firms. Specifically, we use dummy variables taking a value of 1 if a family member is on the board (*Family board*), if a family member is

¹⁹ While there are obvious points of contact between dual-class shares (DCS) and loyalty shares as control-enhancing mechanisms, a clear link connecting the two is difficult to prove. Firms that had DCS and renounced to them took this decision almost 15-20 years ago, making it hardly relevant for the loyalty adoption. The changed composition of the listed firms (many companies that adopted DCS are no longer listed for various reasons) and the overall small number of firms still using DCS (only 29 in 2013) contributes to explaining the lack of significance for the *Dual-class firm* dummy.

in the top positions of the firm (either the CEO and/or the chair, *Family CEO/chair*), and if a family member is the CEO (*Family CEO*) or the chair (*Family chair*). Table 5 documents that the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares is significantly higher when the family is involved in the firm's board, and when a family member is either the CEO or the chair of the firm. This interpretation follows from the significant coefficients of *Family board* and *Family CEO/chair* when compared to the insignificant coefficients of *Family no Board* and *Family no CEO/chair*, respectively. However, when testing for the equality of the respective coefficients, the Wald test rejects the hypothesis only when considering *Family CEO/chair* v. *Family no CEO/chair* ($\chi^2 = 4.22$, and $p = 0.0400$), but not when comparing *Family board* to *Family no board* ($\chi^2 = 1.97$, $p = 0.1606$). This is probably due to the fact that family firms appointing no family members in their board are very few (6 percent and 8 percent in the two subsamples of firms adopting loyalty shares and non-adopters, respectively, from Table 3). It is also worth noting that *Family CEO* does not appear to be associated with a higher probability of adopting loyalty shares when compared to *Family no CEO* (the two coefficients are indistinguishable, as Wald test yields $\chi^2 = 0.00$, and $p = 0.9599$), whilst *Family chair* significantly increases such probability relative to *Family no chair* ($\chi^2 = 2.79$, and $p = 0.0948$). This is in line with family firms usually delegating the CEO position to an external manager (for example, Sergio Marchionne in the FIAT group from 2005 to 2018), while keeping the chair position within the board. Overall, the findings in Table 5 suggest some heterogeneity in the effect of family control on the probability of adopting loyalty shares.

Please insert Table 5 here

3.4 Wealth effect

Loyalty shares contribute to increasing the wedge between ownership and control, and hence may generate incremental agency costs. If this is the case, their adoption may trigger an adverse market reaction. On the other hand, if loyalty shares encourage value-increasing decisions of the controlling shareholder and long-term investments of institutional investors, these could have a positive impact on the firm's value. To empirically test the wealth effect following the adoption of loyalty shares, we propose two approaches. Table 6 shows the results of an event study at the announcement and the approval of loyalty shares. Furthermore, in Table 7 we regress the firm value (as measured by Tobin's Q) on a dummy variable that identifies the loyalty shares adopting companies (and controls).

As for the event study, we have computed CARs using three event windows, i.e. $[-1; +1]$, $[-2; +2]$, and $[-5; +5]$, centered on both the announcement date and the date of the extraordinary general meeting approving loyalty shares. CARs are small, and none of them are statistically distinguishable from zero. On the one hand, in several cases, the press release announcing the proposal of the board to introduce loyalty shares also discloses other price-sensitive financial information. On the other hand, the probability of rejecting the resolution during the shareholder meeting is very low. Looking at the ownership structure of companies introducing loyalty shares as in Table 2, the first shareholder holds on average 55 percent of total votes, making the incremental informational content at the date of the meeting very limited. In any case, Table 6 does not provide any evidence of a tangible effect on prices from the introduction of loyalty shares.

Please insert Table 6 here

The motivations for adopting loyalty shares may significantly differ between family and non-family firms. For this reason, we also look at the breakdown of CARs for the subsamples of family and

non-family firms. With the caveat of the latter being only composed of three companies,²⁰ we find some confirmation of a different market reaction between family and non-family firms. While for the first subsample the average market reaction is positive (approximately 1 percent in the 3 days around the announcement date), for the three non-family firms the average abnormal returns is equal to -1.12 and -1.98 percent in the 3 and 5 days around the announcement date, respectively. The sample size, however, prevents the detection of any significantly different market reaction between family and non-family firms.

As for the effect on a firm's value, we regress Tobin's Q for company i on year t against the cross-sectional *Loyalty* dummy variable (which takes the value of 1 if company i has adopted loyalty shares) and the time-varying variable *Post loyalty* (which takes the value of 1 from the year of adoption onwards), along with a set of controls. Similarly to a difference-in-difference (DiD) approach, the former variable identifies the treated group (i.e., firms adopting loyalty shares) against the control group (i.e., firms not adopting loyalty shares), and captures the observable and unobservable characteristics common to the two groups. Instead, the latter can be interpreted as the effect of adopting loyalty shares on firm value, i.e. the change in Tobin's Q from the year of the adoption onwards, after controlling for the observable and unobservable differences between the two groups. Table 7 shows that *Post Loyalty* is insignificant. This supports the results of the event study on the absence of any significant wealth effect from the adoption of loyalty shares.²¹

²⁰ As Table 1 shows, six firms introduced loyalty shares when they were private, in preparation of their IPO (of which, one is family-controlled). These six companies are not included in this event study.

²¹ In an unreported table, we have also run a similar analysis using ROA as opposed to Tobin's Q. Likewise, we find no effect of loyalty firm adoption on a firm's profitability.

Please insert Table 7 here

3.5 First shareholder and institutional investors

We further investigate the behavior of the first shareholder and institutional investors after the introduction of loyalty shares. Since the first shareholder is typically a family, and their wealth is highly concentrated in the firm's equity, loyalty shares may allow the under-diversified controlling shareholder to reduce the firm stake without losing control.

Please insert figure 1 here

Figure 1 shows the pattern of the average equity and voting capital of the first shareholder from two years before to three years after the adoption of the loyalty shares. By construction, before the adoption of loyalty shares, there is no distinction between the first shareholder's equity and voting capital. Starting two years after the adoption (when double voting comes into effect), the votes in the hands of the first shareholder increase, as the effect of the double vote of loyalty shares. Interestingly, the equity capital progressively declines from approximately 53 percent before the adoption, down to less than 50 percent one year after, and about 48 percent three years after, suggesting that the first shareholder might have chosen loyalty shares to liquidate part of their stake without losing control.

Please insert figure 2 here

When we exclude from the set of firms adopting loyalty shares non-family firms, the same dynamics of the first shareholder's equity capital are observed (Figure 2).

Moving to a multivariate perspective, we use a DiD-like approach again, by regressing the annual change of the first shareholder's equity stake against *Loyalty* and *Post loyalty*. The former variable captures the cross-sectional effect of firms adopting loyalty shares, while the latter yields the post-treatment effect, i.e. after the adoption of loyalty shares. Table 8 shows the results. While *Loyalty* is not significant, *Post Loyalty* is negative and significant in all models, suggesting that the stake of the first shareholder is lower for companies adopting loyalty shares in the post-adoption period. This is consistent with the univariate evidence of Figure 1. After controlling for other firm-specific variables, the coefficient of *Post Loyalty* suggests that the holdings of the first shareholder are reduced by about 2.5 percent on average after loyalty shares are in place. This evidence is in line with the hypothesis that under-diversified families seek to reduce idiosyncratic risk without losing control.

Please insert Table 8 here

Table 9 focuses on institutional investors' holdings and their dynamics after the adoption of loyalty shares. Following the same approach, the results show that institutional investors increase their holdings after the approval of loyalty shares. In other words, institutional investors do not shy away from loyalty share companies, instead they increase their investments. The marginal governance costs of adopting loyalty shares are limited, as adopting firms were and still are family-controlled. Therefore, their higher profitability, growth, and payout policy outweigh the risk of additional agency costs from the new control-enhancing mechanism. The increased investment of institutional investors may be explained by the controlling family partially reducing its stake and increasing the free float. In some cases, the controlling family sells a relevant stake directly to institutional investors after the adoption of

loyalty shares, through an accelerated book-building.²² In other instances, the increased holdings of institutional investors may be explained by the asset allocation of passive index funds, as the positive performance of adopting firms triggered an increased weight of these stocks in more prestigious market indexes.²³

Please insert Table 9 here

3.6 Equity-dilutive corporate transactions

Another motivation for adopting loyalty shares could be the desire of families to retain control in anticipation of events that could dilute their voting rights, like seasoned equity offerings and acquisitions. Despite the short time span, we check whether the introduction of loyalty shares affects the likelihood of issuing new equity capital or completing an acquisition in the subsequent year. To this purpose, we run logit regressions. The first set of regressions uses the completion of an SEO in year $t + 1$ as the dependent variable. The second set of regressions employs the completion of at least one acquisition in year $t + 1$ as the dependent variable. In both cases, t is the loyalty share adoption year. For both equity-dilutive corporate transactions, *Post loyalty* is insignificant in all our specifications.²⁴ Therefore, we do not find evidence supporting the hypothesis that loyalty shares are used to preserve family control in times of external growth or financing.

²² We looked at the press releases of adopting firms and searched Il Sole 24 Ore (the main Italian financial daily newspaper) and we report that direct sales to institutional investors, through an accelerated book-building, occurred for Reply (October 2017, 7.7 percent of the capital), Amplifon (June 2017, 2.4 percent), Salvatore Ferragamo (June 2018, 3.5 percent), and Technogym (twice, on June 2017, 8 percent, and April 2019, another 7 percent).

²³ Three firms adopting loyalty shares (Amplifon, Hera, and Diasorin) were included in the Italian major stock index, the FTSE MIB index, composed of the first 40 largest and more liquid firms, in the post-adoption period. We actually observe an increase of the holdings of institutional investors following this event for all three firms.

²⁴ We do not report these analyses in the paper. They are available upon request.

3.7 Liquidity

One of the stated goals of loyalty shares is to stimulate long-term investments by shareholders, in particular institutional investors. Therefore, the adoption of loyalty shares could negatively affect stock liquidity. On the other hand, Figure 1 and Table 8 report a decline of the first shareholders' equity stake after the adoption of loyalty shares. This could lead to improved stock liquidity, thanks to an increase in free float. Eventually, the impact of loyalty shares on stock liquidity is an empirical matter.

Table 10 presents some evidence on the effect of loyalty shares on liquidity, as measured by the relative share turnover, i.e. the ratio of trading value over market capitalization. Using the same multivariate approach as in the previous tables, we regress the (log of 1 plus the) relative share turnover on a firm-level vector of covariates, including *Loyalty* and *Post loyalty*. Table 10 documents a slightly negative effect of *Post loyalty* on relative share turnover.

For robustness, we also construct [Amihud's \(2002\)](#) illiquidity, i.e. a measure of price impact. We carry out the same analyses as in Table 10, and *Post loyalty* turns out to be insignificant in all specifications.²⁵ Overall, the evidence seems to suggest that there is a mild decrease in stock liquidity for those firms introducing loyalty shares.

Please insert Table 10 here

3.8 Robustness analyses

²⁵ Unreported, but available from the authors upon request.

Table 4 and Table 5 show that family firms are more likely to adopt loyalty shares, especially when family members are involved in the governance of the firm. The next set of analyses aims at providing robustness to these findings.

The first robustness exercise consists of running the same set of regressions for the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares, but using a Cox proportional hazard regression instead of a pooled logit. Survival analysis models the time to the occurrence of an event (the decision of introducing loyalty shares), and also accommodates censored survival times, as we know which companies chose loyalty shares over the period 2015-2019, but not which companies will eventually opt for loyalty shares afterwards. Cox's proportional hazard model is widely employed, as it does not assume any prespecified baseline hazard rate. Hazard ratios are reported in Table 11, and confirm what has already been reported in Table 4 and Table 5. The likelihood of adopting loyalty shares is positively associated with the status of family firms and negatively with the use of pyramidal groups and the presence of directors appointed by the minority shareholders (Panel A). Panel B also confirms the relevance of family involvement in the board and the role of a family member serving as either the CEO or the chair in increasing the likelihood of adoption.²⁶

Please insert Table 11 here

²⁶ The Wald test of equal coefficients of *Family board* and *Family no board*, *Family CEO/chair* and *Family no CEO/chair*, *Family CEO* and *Family no CEO*, and *Family chair* and *Family no chair*, resemble those already reported for Table 5. In particular, we cannot reject the hypothesis that the coefficients of *Family board* and *Family no board* are the same ($\chi^2 = 1.44$, $p = 0.2302$), and the same for *Family CEO* and *Family no CEO* ($\chi^2 = 0.16$, $p = 0.6848$). On the contrary, we reject the null of equal coefficient when considering *Family CEO/chair* v. *Family no CEO/chair* ($\chi^2 = 4.59$, $p = 0.0321$), and *Family chair* v. *Family no chair* ($\chi^2 = 3.44$, $p = 0.0636$).

Next, we repeat the analysis on the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares (logit models) only on the subsample of family firms (roughly two-thirds of the observations in our sample). Since not all family firms adopted loyalty shares, understanding the determinants of this choice within the subsample of family firms may be insightful. As Table 12 shows, the evidence that family members involved in the CEO/chair position positively affect the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares is confirmed, as well as the negative sign and significance of the variable measuring a minority representation on the board. Relative to the full sample, the latter variable enhances its significance across all models, likely because minority-appointed directors oppose to the introduction of loyalty shares in family firms, as the majority shareholder's power would be strengthened. Since at least one member of the controlling family sits on the board of directors in almost 90 percent of the observations for family firms, *Family board* is not significant in this analysis.

Please insert Table 12 here

Finally, in an unreported analysis, we estimate the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares excluding financial companies.²⁷ Overall, we find that removing the financial industry from our sample does not qualitative alter the results reported in previous tables.

4. Conclusion

Shareholder engagement over a longer-term horizon is considered beneficial to reducing short-termism and favoring firm value in the long term. For this reason, regulators have suggested loyalty

²⁷ The results are available from the authors upon request.

shares as a device apt at achieving such an objective. In the wake of a EU-wide discussion on fostering long-term shareholder investment, France made loyalty shares mandatory in 2014 (unless firms decide to opt-out), Italy introduced them for the first time in 2014, and Belgium approved a company law reform in 2019 which allows their introduction on a voluntary basis in 2020. Loyalty shares also exist in the Netherlands.

In this paper, we exploit the ideal setting of the Italian market, characterized by concentrated ownership and family firms, to study the five years that followed the introduction of loyalty shares. About one-fifth of the listed firms in our sample (i.e., 49 firms out of 260) have already taken advantage of this new control-enhancing mechanism. Our empirical investigation shows that loyalty shares are significantly more likely to be introduced by firms with a family controlling shareholder.

Aimed at favoring long-term shareholder investments, loyalty shares may also help controlling shareholders to strengthen their control over the firms. Notwithstanding the short period of analysis, we find some evidence regarding controlling shareholders reducing their holdings after loyalty shares are adopted, especially close to and after the two-year period required for doubling their voting rights. This may suggest that the first shareholder might have chosen loyalty shares to liquidate part of their stake without losing control.

We report no evidence of wealth effects associated with the introduction of loyalty shares, neither at the announcement (and at the general meeting) nor in the years after the adoption. Loyalty shares have encountered the formal opposition by institutional investors, that generally voted against their introduction at the extraordinary general meeting. However, their vote “with their hands” was not followed by a “vote with their feet,” as institutional investors increase their stake afterward. Adopting firms are more profitable, faster-growing, more cash-generating, and more cash dividend-paying than other firms, and these characteristics outweigh the additional agency costs from the new control-

enhancing mechanism. The increased investment of institutional investors may be explained by the controlling family partially reducing its holdings and hence increasing the free float. We report that in some cases, the controlling family sells a substantial stake directly to institutional investors through an accelerated book-building. In other instances, the positive performance of adopting firms triggered an increased weight of these stocks in more prestigious market indexes, and this may have attracted new investment of passive index funds.

Appendix A – Variable definitions

Variable	Definition
<i>Loyalty</i>	Cross-sectional dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm has adopted loyalty shares
<i>Post loyalty</i>	Time-varying dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm has adopted loyalty shares, from the year of adoption onwards
<i>Total assets</i>	Total assets (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Sales</i>	Net sales (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Leverage</i>	Ratio between total debt and total assets (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>CAPEX</i>	Ratio between capital expenditures and total assets (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Tobin's Q</i>	Market capitalization plus total liabilities over the sum of book value of equity plus total liabilities (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>ROA</i>	Ratio between net income and total assets (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Dividend-paying</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the company pays a cash dividend (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Cash</i>	Ratio between cash and cash equivalents and total assets (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Relative share turnover</i>	Ratio of daily trading value over daily market capitalization, averaged across all annual trading days (source: Datastream/Worldscope)
<i>Family control</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm is family-controlled. Firms are classified as family-controlled if their largest shareholder is a family and the family owns more than 10 percent of the common equity capital. (source: CONSOB)
<i>Family board</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if at least one family member sits in the firm's board of directors (source: CONSOB)
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if a family member is either the CEO of the firm or the chair of the board of directors (source: CONSOB)

<i>Family CEO</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if a family member is the CEO of the firm (source: CONSOB)
<i>Family chair</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if a family member is the chair of the board of directors (source: CONSOB)
<i>First shareholder's equity</i>	Share of common equity capital of the largest shareholder (source: CONSOB)
<i>Institutional investors' equity</i>	Share of common equity capital of institutional investors (source: Eikon)
<i>Board size</i>	Number of directors composing the board of directors (source: Assonime)
<i>Independent directors</i>	Share of independent directors in the board of directors (source: Assonime)
<i>CEO duality</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the CEO is also chair of the board of directors (source: Assonime)
<i>Directors from minority list</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if there exists at least one director elected from a list presented by minority investors (source: Assonime)
<i>SEO dummy</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm has made a SEO between 1 to 3 years after the adoption of loyalty shares (source: Thomson One Banker Equity issues)
<i>Acquisition</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm has completed an acquisition between 1 to 3 years after the adoption of loyalty shares (source: Thomson One Banker M&A)
<i>Dual-class firm</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm has dual-class shares at time t (source: CONSOB)
<i>Pyramidal group</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm is part of a pyramidal group (i.e., the firm is controlled by at least one listed company) at time t (source: CONSOB)
<i>Dual-class firm 2008-2013</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm had dual-class shares in the period from 2008 to 2013 (source: CONSOB)
<i>Pyramidal group 2008-2013</i>	Dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the firm was part of a pyramidal group (i.e., the firm is controlled by at least one listed company) in the period from 2008 to 2013 (source: CONSOB)

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Panel A - Number of firms adopting loyalty shares by year									
		<i>Loyalty shares</i>		<i>IPOs</i>		<i>Listed firms</i>			
2014		0		0		0		0	
2015		18		1		17			
2016		8		1		7			
2017		9		1		8			
2018		10		3		7			
2019		4		0		4			
Total		49		6		43			

Panel B - Total number of firms by year and other control-enhancing mechanisms									
<i>Year</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>In</i>		<i>Out</i>		<i>Dual-class firms</i>		<i>Pyramidal groups</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>N, %</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N, %</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N, %</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>N, %</i>
2014	233					22	9.4	49	21.0
2015	235	10	4.3	8	3.4	18	7.7	46	19.6
2016	230	5	2.2	10	4.3	21	9.1	41	17.8
2017	228	8	3.5	10	4.4	16	7.0	43	18.9
2018	221	4	1.8	11	5.0	16	7.2	42	19.0
Total	1,147	27		39					

Table 1 – Number of firms adopting loyalty shares, total number of listed firms, and other control-enhancing mechanisms by year. Panel A of this table shows the number of companies adopting loyalty shares in our sample between 2015 and 2019, divided into newly listed companies (IPOs) and already listed firms. Panel B shows the total number of listed firms, their dynamics within our sample (entry and exit), and the time distribution of other control-enhancing mechanisms, by year.

<i>All firms</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Median</i>	<i>Max</i>
<i>First shareholder's equity capital, %</i>	43	55.4	11.0	30.7	54.1	88.5
<i>Second shareholder's equity capital, %</i>	43	6.2	7.1	0.0	4.2	28.8
<i>Equity capital at the EGM, %</i>	43	68.0	12.9	37.0	70.6	88.2
<i>Capital voting in favour, %</i>	43	60.5	9.9	37.0	60.2	85.5
<i>Capital voting against, %</i>	43	7.4	8.0	0.0	3.8	24.7
<i>Abstentions/not voting, %</i>	43	0.1	0.4	0.0	0.0	2.6
<i>Before January 31, 2015</i>						
<i>First shareholder's equity capital, %</i>	3	52.6	1.3	51.0	52.7	54.1
<i>Second shareholder's equity capital, %</i>	3	7.0	2.7	5.1	5.1	10.8
<i>Equity capital at the EGM, %</i>	3	79.4	3.1	75.0	81.2	82.0
<i>Capital voting in favour, %</i>	3	57.6	3.3	53.6	57.3	61.8
<i>Capital voting against, %</i>	3	21.8	2.2	19.4	21.4	24.7
<i>Abstentions/not voting, %</i>	3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 2 – *Voting results of the extraordinary general meeting approving loyalty shares.* The table shows the voting results of the extraordinary general meeting aiming at amending the company's bylaws and approving loyalty shares, as reported by the minutes of the meeting. Relative to the number of firms reported in the previous table (49 firms), 6 of them adopted loyalty shares in preparation of the IPO, and therefore at the date of the ESM they were private. The 3 firms reported in the lower part of the table (Astaldi, Amplifon, and Campari) adopted loyalty shares prior to January 31, 2015, when the simple majority of votes (rather than the qualified majority of two-thirds of votes) was required.

Variable	Loyalty shares					No loyalty shares					Difference	
	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max	Mean	Median
Financials												
Total assets, € mln	220	1,309.5	533.2	8.2	8,952.4	907	13,750.4	632.5	4.7	207,444.0	-12,440.9 ***	-99.3
Sales, € mln	220	892.5	430.0	0.0	6,134.4	904	3,257.5	286.4	0.0	83,577.0	-2,365.0 **	143.6
Leverage, %	220	26.2	25.3	0.0	63.7	904	28.9	27.8	0.0	87.9	-2.7 *	-2.5
CAPEX, %	216	3.1	2.3	0.0	21.1	875	2.6	1.5	0.0	22.2	0.6 *	0.8 ***
Tobin's Q	220	1.6	1.2	0.5	6.7	906	1.3	1.1	0.5	6.7	0.2 ***	0.1 ***
ROA, %	220	3.3	3.2	-33.0	24.9	907	-0.1	1.1	-52.8	24.9	3.4 ***	2.2 ***
Dividend-paying, %	220	68.2	.	.	.	906	60.8	.	.	.	7.4 *	.
Cash, %	220	14.0	12.0	0.0	84.5	907	11.1	8.4	0.0	87.0	2.9 **	3.6 ***
Relative share turnover, %	224	68.1	44.6	2.7	386.0	923	91.2	45.3	0.6	650.9	-23.1	-0.7
Ownership and governance												
Family control, %	224	91.1	.	.	.	922	58.5	.	.	.	32.6 ***	.
Family board, %	224	84.8	.	.	.	922	50.2	.	.	.	34.6 ***	.
Family no board, %	224	6.3	.	.	.	922	8.2	.	.	.	-2.0	.
Family CEO/chair, %	224	78.1	.	.	.	922	40.6	.	.	.	37.6 ***	.
Family no CEO/chair, %	224	12.9	.	.	.	922	17.9	.	.	.	-4.9	.
Family CEO, %	224	46.9	.	.	.	922	28.5	.	.	.	18.4 ***	.
Family no CEO, %	224	44.2	.	.	.	922	29.9	.	.	.	14.3 ***	.
Family chair, %	224	70.1	.	.	.	922	35.9	.	.	.	34.2 ***	.
Family no chair, %	224	21.0	.	.	.	922	22.6	.	.	.	-1.6	.
First shareholder's equity, %	224	52.1	53.1	9.7	84.0	922	46.7	51.0	0.0	99.5	5.4 ***	2.0 **
Institutional investors' equity, %	221	15.6	16.0	0.0	78.4	922	13.4	9.3	0.0	92.1	2.2 *	6.7 **
Board size	217	10.2	10.0	5.0	18.0	883	10.0	9.0	3.0	32.0	0.2	1.0 **
Independent directors, %	217	42.6	42.9	15.4	86.7	835	47.8	45.5	7.7	100.0	-5.2 ***	-2.6 ***
CEO duality dummy, %	217	30.9	.	.	.	883	23.3	.	.	.	7.5 *	.
Directors from minority list dummy, %	217	31.8	.	.	.	883	48.2	.	.	.	-16.4 ***	.
External growth												
SEO, %	224	7.6	.	.	.	923	8.8	.	.	.	-1.2	.
Acquisition, %	224	13.8	.	.	.	923	10.3	.	.	.	3.5	.
Control-enhancing mechanisms												
Dual-class firm, %	224	6.7	.	.	.	923	9.3	.	.	.	-2.6	.
Pyramidal group, %	224	14.3	.	.	.	923	21.0	.	.	.	-6.7 *	.
Dual-class firm 2008-2013, %	224	8.5	.	.	.	923	17.2	.	.	.	-8.7 **	.
Pyramidal group 2008-2013, %	224	16.5	.	.	.	923	28.7	.	.	.	-12.2 ***	.

Table 3 – Descriptive statistics of firms partitioned by firms adopting v. not adopting loyalty shares. The table reports the descriptive statistics for the sample of Italian companies listed between 2014 and 2018, contrasting companies adopting loyalty shares (49 unique companies) to companies without loyalty shares (211 unique companies). For a description of the variables, please refer to Appendix A.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
<i>Family control</i>	0.0883*** (0.0268)	0.0860*** (0.0270)	0.0800*** (0.0288)	0.0903*** (0.0287)	0.0899*** (0.0297)
<i>Log total assets</i>	-0.0022 (0.0039)	-0.0049 (0.0040)	-0.0066 (0.0051)	-0.0028 (0.0055)	-0.0025 (0.0054)
<i>Leverage</i>	-0.0572 (0.0397)	-0.0551 (0.0387)	-0.0657 (0.0416)	-0.0655 (0.0434)	-0.0638 (0.0427)
<i>CAPEX</i>	-0.0210 (0.1826)	-0.0392 (0.1801)	-0.1234 (0.2128)	-0.1619 (0.2192)	-0.1825 (0.2162)
<i>Tobin's Q</i>	0.0026 (0.0063)	-0.0014 (0.0068)	-0.0059 (0.0073)	-0.0087 (0.0078)	-0.0107 (0.0082)
<i>ROA</i>	0.0692 (0.0822)	0.0444 (0.0875)	0.0457 (0.0926)	0.0162 (0.0939)	0.0463 (0.1155)
<i>Dividend-paying</i>	0.0155 (0.0186)	0.0150 (0.0188)	0.0173 (0.0200)	0.0150 (0.0207)	0.0128 (0.0212)
<i>Cash</i>	0.0630 (0.0510)	0.0628 (0.0500)	0.0896* (0.0498)	0.1096** (0.0507)	0.1142** (0.0478)
<i>First shareholder's equity</i>		0.0006 (0.0004)	0.0006 (0.0004)	0.0005 (0.0004)	0.0005 (0.0004)
<i>Institutional investors' equity</i>		0.0010 (0.0006)	0.0008 (0.0007)	0.0008 (0.0007)	0.0008 (0.0007)
<i>Board size</i>			0.0042 (0.0032)	0.0046 (0.0032)	0.0054 (0.0034)
<i>Independent directors</i>			-0.0402 (0.0524)	-0.0415 (0.0554)	-0.0492 (0.0537)
<i>CEO duality</i>			0.0009 (0.0192)	-0.0007 (0.0194)	-0.0051 (0.0195)
<i>Directors from minority list</i>			-0.0319* (0.0172)	-0.0326* (0.0177)	-0.0293* (0.0171)
<i>Dual-class firm</i>				0.0046 (0.0324)	
<i>Dual-class firm 2008-2013</i>					-0.0165 (0.0293)
<i>Pyramidal group</i>				-0.0619** (0.0308)	
<i>Pyramidal group 2008-2013</i>					-0.0535** (0.0264)
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	936	935	873	873	873
Pseudo R-squared	0.132	0.140	0.166	0.185	0.185

Table 4 – *Likelihood of adopting loyalty shares*. The table shows the results of a pooled logit regression for the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares against the reported explanatory variables. Average marginal effects are displayed. For a description of the variables please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
<i>Family board</i>	0.0824*** (0.0288)			
<i>Family no board</i>	0.0417 (0.0393)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>		0.0903*** (0.0297)		
<i>Family no CEO/chair</i>		0.0387 (0.0309)		
<i>Family CEO</i>			0.0840*** (0.0297)	
<i>Family no CEO</i>			0.0770** (0.0301)	
<i>Family chair</i>				0.0906*** (0.0301)
<i>Family no chair</i>				0.0532* (0.0297)
<i>Log total assets</i>	-0.0062 (0.0052)	-0.0080 (0.0051)	-0.0069 (0.0052)	-0.0082 (0.0052)
<i>Leverage</i>	-0.0589 (0.0440)	-0.0566 (0.0439)	-0.0641 (0.0421)	-0.0586 (0.0427)
<i>CAPEX</i>	-0.1286 (0.2153)	-0.1056 (0.2106)	-0.1135 (0.2120)	-0.1289 (0.2070)
<i>Tobin's Q</i>	-0.0069 (0.0074)	-0.0114 (0.0081)	-0.0066 (0.0074)	-0.0105 (0.0078)
<i>ROA</i>	0.0544 (0.0967)	0.0501 (0.0996)	0.0477 (0.0927)	0.0470 (0.0982)
<i>Dividend-paying</i>	0.0144 (0.0196)	0.0185 (0.0203)	0.0176 (0.0201)	0.0205 (0.0198)
<i>Cash</i>	0.1090** (0.0536)	0.0993* (0.0552)	0.0910* (0.0498)	0.0942* (0.0517)
<i>First shareholder's equity</i>	0.0006 (0.0004)	0.0007 (0.0005)	0.0006 (0.0004)	0.0006 (0.0005)
<i>Institutional investors' equity</i>	0.0008 (0.0007)	0.0007 (0.0007)	0.0008 (0.0007)	0.0007 (0.0007)
<i>Board size</i>	0.0036 (0.0034)	0.0046 (0.0031)	0.0044 (0.0033)	0.0042 (0.0032)
<i>Independent directors</i>	-0.0393 (0.0521)	-0.0404 (0.0518)	-0.0396 (0.0524)	-0.0383 (0.0521)
<i>CEO duality</i>	-0.0015 (0.0190)	-0.0035 (0.0184)	-0.0021 (0.0197)	-0.0050 (0.0182)
<i>Directors from minority list</i>	-0.0304* (0.0174)	-0.0311* (0.0174)	-0.0320* (0.0172)	-0.0319* (0.0174)
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	873	873	873	873
Pseudo R-squared	0.170	0.182	0.166	0.177

Table 5 – Likelihood of adopting loyalty shares for different types of family firms. The table shows the results of a pooled logit regression for the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares against the reported explanatory variables. Average marginal effects are displayed. The *Family control* dummy is broken up here into *Family board* v. *Family no board* (model 1), *Family CEO/chair* v. *Family no CEO/chair* (model 2), *Family CEO* v. *Family no CEO* (model 3), and *Family chair* v. *Family no chair* (model 4). For a description of the variables, please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

<i>All firms</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Announcement</i>		<i>EGM</i>	
		<i>Average, %</i>	<i>SE, %</i>	<i>Average, %</i>	<i>SE, %</i>
CAR [-1, 1]	43	0.85	0.84	-0.15	0.47
CAR [-2, +2]	43	0.53	0.85	0.11	0.55
CAR [-5, +5]	43	-0.65	1.03	0.93	0.79
<i>Family firms</i>					
CAR [-1, 1]	40	0.99	0.51	-0.25	0.49
CAR [-2, +2]	40	0.72	0.90	0.00	0.56
CAR [-5, +5]	40	-0.62	1.10	0.83	0.84
<i>Non-family firms</i>					
CAR [-1, 1]	3	-1.12	0.51	1.23	1.60
CAR [-2, +2]	3	-1.98	0.78	1.61	2.64
CAR [-5, +5]	3	-1.14	0.70	2.31	0.93

Table 6 – *Market reaction at the announcement and the adoption of loyalty shares.* The table presents the average CARs (and their standard errors, SE) at the announcement and the approval of loyalty shares (date of the extraordinary general meeting) for the 43 already-listed companies included in our sample, as well as for the two sub-samples of family v. non-family firms (40 and 3 companies, respectively).

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
<i>Loyalty</i>	0.0795 (0.1429)	0.0752 (0.1444)	0.0302 (0.1407)	0.0757 (0.1439)	0.0278 (0.1383)
<i>Post loyalty</i>	-0.0346 (0.1519)	-0.0321 (0.1509)	-0.0364 (0.1511)	-0.0339 (0.1535)	-0.0196 (0.1486)
<i>Family control</i>	0.0498 (0.0937)				
<i>Family board</i>		0.0589 (0.0972)			
<i>Family no board</i>		-0.0034 (0.1783)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>			0.1739 (0.1063)		
<i>Family no CEO/chair</i>			-0.1697 (0.1091)		
<i>Family CEO</i>				0.1517 (0.1263)	
<i>Family no CEO</i>				-0.0112 (0.0984)	
<i>Family chair</i>					0.2083* (0.1130)
<i>Family no chair</i>					-0.1317 (0.1008)
<i>Log total assets</i>	-0.1047*** (0.0276)	-0.1045*** (0.0276)	-0.1073*** (0.0268)	-0.1064*** (0.0272)	-0.1105*** (0.0277)
<i>Leverage</i>	-0.4219 (0.2601)	-0.4185 (0.2593)	-0.4164* (0.2510)	-0.4091 (0.2553)	-0.4088 (0.2501)
<i>CAPEX</i>	0.4532 (1.2711)	0.4118 (1.2522)	0.3076 (1.1985)	0.5698 (1.2836)	0.1757 (1.1809)
<i>Dividend-paying</i>	0.2180** (0.0933)	0.2141** (0.0942)	0.2216** (0.0897)	0.2252** (0.0912)	0.2302** (0.0909)
<i>Cash</i>	1.1145* (0.6378)	1.1354* (0.6190)	1.2051** (0.6102)	1.1269* (0.6315)	1.1979* (0.6179)
<i>First shareholder's equity</i>	0.0053* (0.0027)	0.0053** (0.0027)	0.0052* (0.0027)	0.0055** (0.0026)	0.0050* (0.0026)
<i>Institutional investors' equity</i>	0.0154*** (0.0036)	0.0153*** (0.0036)	0.0149*** (0.0035)	0.0152*** (0.0035)	0.0148*** (0.0035)
<i>Board size</i>	0.0222** (0.0108)	0.0218** (0.0108)	0.0233** (0.0107)	0.0234** (0.0109)	0.0216** (0.0103)
<i>Independent directors</i>	0.7917*** (0.2579)	0.7968*** (0.2567)	0.8319*** (0.2538)	0.8260*** (0.2565)	0.8521*** (0.2516)
<i>CEO duality</i>	0.1208 (0.1118)	0.1160 (0.1116)	0.0746 (0.1093)	0.0576 (0.1118)	0.0458 (0.1096)
<i>Directors from minority list</i>	-0.1584** (0.0707)	-0.1568** (0.0709)	-0.1602** (0.0691)	-0.1575** (0.0712)	-0.1615** (0.0690)
<i>Industry fixed effects</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Time fixed effects</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>Number of observations</i>	1,011	1,011	1,011	1,011	1,011
<i>Adjusted R-squared</i>	0.264	0.263	0.282	0.268	0.284

Table 7 – *Wealth effect from the adoption of loyalty shares.* The table shows the results of a linear regression for Tobin's Q against the reported explanatory variables. *Loyalty* is a cross-sectional dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the company has adopted loyalty shares, *Post loyalty* is a variable which takes the value of 1 in the post-adoption period for companies adopting loyalty shares. For a description of the other variables, please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all the models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
<i>Loyalty</i>	0.0807 (1.3756)	0.1806 (1.3813)	0.1512 (1.3663)	0.0792 (1.3750)	0.1139 (1.3701)
<i>Post loyalty</i>	-2.4802* (1.4504)	-2.5199* (1.4436)	-2.4501* (1.4489)	-2.4618* (1.4546)	-2.4835* (1.4490)
<i>Family control</i>	0.9568 (0.6992)				
<i>Family board</i>		0.6809 (0.6769)			
<i>Family no board</i>		2.5067 (1.5233)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>			0.7143 (0.6799)		
<i>Family no CEO/chair</i>			1.3554 (0.9741)		
<i>Family CEO</i>				0.4997 (0.7679)	
<i>Family no CEO</i>				1.2007 (0.7687)	
<i>Family chair</i>					0.8321 (0.7011)
<i>Family no chair</i>					1.0912 (0.8847)
Financial control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ownership and governance variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	785	785	785	785	785
Adjusted R-squared	0.011	0.012	0.010	0.010	0.009

Table 8 – *Change in the first shareholder’s common equity capital*. The table shows the results of a linear regression for the change in the equity capital of the first shareholder against the reported explanatory variables. *Loyalty* is a cross-sectional dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the company has adopted loyalty shares, *Post loyalty* is a variable which takes the value of 1 in the post-adoption period for companies adopting loyalty shares. For a description of the other variables, please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
<i>Loyalty</i>	-2.0824 (1.3220)	-2.2550* (1.3133)	-2.2413* (1.3236)	-2.0811 (1.3180)	-2.1804 (1.3362)
<i>Post loyalty</i>	2.5927* (1.4085)	2.6614* (1.3810)	2.5248* (1.3570)	2.5771* (1.4080)	2.6024* (1.3936)
<i>Family control</i>	-0.9108 (0.6210)				
<i>Family board</i>		-0.4338 (0.5960)			
<i>Family no board</i>		-3.5904** (1.6149)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>			-0.3643 (0.5839)		
<i>Family no CEO/chair</i>			-1.8091** (0.9103)		
<i>Family CEO</i>				-0.5250 (0.6808)	
<i>Family no CEO</i>				-1.1166* (0.6421)	
<i>Family chair</i>					-0.5424 (0.5897)
<i>Family no chair</i>					-1.3079 (0.8141)
Financial control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ownership and governance variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	785	785	785	785	785
Adjusted R-squared	0.010	0.022	0.014	0.010	0.011

Table 9 – *Change in the institutional investors’ common equity capital.* The table shows the results of a linear regression for the change in the equity capital of institutional investors against the reported explanatory variables. *Loyalty* is a cross-sectional dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the company has adopted loyalty shares, *Post loyalty* is a variable which takes the value of 1 in the post-adoption period for companies adopting loyalty shares. For a description of the other variables, please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>	<i>Model 5</i>
<i>Loyalty</i>	0.1108* (0.0605)	0.1103* (0.0610)	0.1061* (0.0623)	0.1104* (0.0609)	0.1093* (0.0619)
<i>Post loyalty</i>	-0.1418** (0.0609)	-0.1416** (0.0611)	-0.1420** (0.0610)	-0.1417** (0.0612)	-0.1414** (0.0612)
<i>Family control</i>	0.0498 (0.0481)				
<i>Family board</i>		0.0506 (0.0514)			
<i>Family no board</i>		0.0447 (0.0684)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>			0.0613 (0.0521)		
<i>Family no CEO/chair</i>			0.0292 (0.0641)		
<i>Family CEO</i>				0.0600 (0.0632)	
<i>Family no CEO</i>				0.0436 (0.0519)	
<i>Family chair</i>					0.0542 (0.0551)
<i>Family no chair</i>					0.0446 (0.0553)
Financial control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ownership and governance variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	1,012	1,012	1,012	1,012	1,012
Adjusted R-squared	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.228	0.228

Table 10 – *Liquidity effect from the adoption of loyalty shares.* The table shows the results of a linear regression for (the logarithm of 1 plus) *Relative share turnover* against the reported explanatory variables. *Loyalty* is a cross-sectional dummy variable which takes the value of 1 if the company has adopted loyalty shares, *Post loyalty* is a variable which takes the value of 1 in the post-adoption period for companies adopting loyalty shares. For a description of the other variables, please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all the models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

Panel A	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	
<i>Family control</i>	5.9701*** (3.7708)	7.5868*** (4.7465)	7.6500*** (4.9722)	
<i>Directors from minority list</i>	0.5086* (0.1921)	0.5012* (0.1966)	0.5334 (0.2039)	
<i>Dual-class firm</i>		1.1252 (0.7865)		
<i>Dual-class firm 2008-2013</i>			0.7039 (0.4538)	
<i>Pyramidal group</i>		0.2681** (0.1707)		
<i>Pyramidal group 2008-2013</i>			0.3080** (0.1731)	
Financial control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Ownership and governance variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Number of observations	899	899	899	
Pseudo R-squared	0.118	0.131	0.132	
Panel B	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Family board</i>	6.3231*** (4.0104)			
<i>Family no board</i>	2.6111 (2.3199)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>		7.5729*** (4.9826)		
<i>Family no CEO/chair</i>		2.4944 (1.7916)		
<i>Family CEO</i>			6.4902*** (4.1989)	
<i>Family no CEO</i>			5.5888*** (3.6871)	
<i>Family chair</i>				7.5549*** (5.0301)
<i>Family no chair</i>				3.4178* (2.3075)
<i>Directors from minority list</i>	0.5248* (0.1996)	0.5169* (0.1969)	0.5073* (0.1919)	0.5083* (0.1937)
Financial control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ownership and governance variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	899	899	899	899
Pseudo R-squared	0.121	0.130	0.119	0.126

Table 11 – *Likelihood of adopting loyalty shares, Cox proportional hazard models.* The table shows the results of a Cox proportional hazard model for the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares against the explanatory variables. Hazard ratios (i.e., exponentiated coefficients) are displayed. For a description of the variables, please refer to Appendix A. Panel A uses the *Family control* dummy, whilst panel B breaks up this variable into *Family board* v. *Family no board* (model 1), *Family CEO/chair* v. *Family no CEO/chair* (model 2), *Family CEO* v. *Family no CEO* (model 3), and *Family chair* v. *Family no chair* (model 4). Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.

	<i>Model 1</i>	<i>Model 2</i>	<i>Model 3</i>	<i>Model 4</i>
<i>Family board</i>	0.0713 (0.0531)			
<i>Family CEO/chair</i>		0.0888** (0.0381)		
<i>Family CEO</i>			0.0083 (0.0278)	
<i>Family chair</i>				0.0663** (0.0302)
<i>Directors from minority list</i>	-0.0604** (0.0299)	-0.0624** (0.0298)	-0.0636** (0.0294)	-0.0646** (0.0297)
Financial control variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ownership and governance variables	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Industry fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Time fixed effects	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	535	535	535	535
Pseudo R-squared	0.135	0.154	0.129	0.148

Table 12 – *Likelihood of adopting loyalty shares for the sub-sample of family firms.* The table shows the results of a pooled logit regression for the likelihood of adopting loyalty shares against the reported explanatory variables, for the sub-sample of family firms. Average marginal effects are displayed. For a description of the variables, please refer to Appendix A. Industry fixed effects following Fama-French 12-industry classification and time fixed effects are included in all models. Heteroskedasticity-consistent standard errors clustered at firm-level are reported in parentheses. ***, **, * indicate statistical significance at the 1, 5 and 10 percent level, respectively.



<i>Full sample</i>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
First shareholder's capital	53.2	54.6	53.1	49.6	47.0	48.4
First shareholder's votes	53.2	54.6	53.1	49.6	53.3	59.4
N	42	43	49	45	35	26

Figure 1 – *Dynamics of the average equity and voting capital of the first shareholder.* The figure depicts the average equity and voting capital of the first shareholder at the adoption of loyalty shares ($t = 0$), up to 2 years before ($t = -1$ and $t = -2$), and up to 3 years after ($t = +1$, $t = +2$, and $t = +3$).



<i>Family firms</i>	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
First shareholder's capital	54.5	56.0	55.0	52.0	50.6	52.0
First shareholder's votes	54.5	56.0	55.0	52.0	57.4	64.3
N	39	40	45	42	32	23

Figure 2 – *Dynamics of the average equity and voting capital of the first shareholder (family firms only)*. The figure depicts the average equity and voting capital of the first shareholder at the adoption of loyalty shares ($t = 0$), up to 2 years before ($t = -1$ and $t = -2$), and up to 3 years after ($t = +1$, $t = +2$, and $t = +3$), for the sub-sample of family firms.

Variable	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12	#13	#14	#15	#16	#17	#18	#19	#20	#21	#22	#23	#24	#25	#26	#27
#1 Loyalty	1.00																										
#2 Total assets	-0.14	1.00																									
#3 Sales	-0.09	0.76	1.00																								
#4 Leverage	-0.06	0.01	-0.05	1.00																							
#5 CAPEX	0.07	-0.12	0.04	-0.01	1.00																						
#6 Tobin's Q	0.11	-0.14	-0.09	-0.14	0.11	1.00																					
#7 ROA	0.14	0.00	0.02	-0.18	0.07	0.13	1.00																				
#8 Dividend-paying	0.06	0.22	0.17	-0.17	0.03	0.04	0.39	1.00																			
#9 Cash	0.10	-0.17	-0.07	-0.17	0.08	0.26	-0.02	0.04	1.00																		
#10 Relative share turnover	-0.05	0.19	0.08	0.03	-0.05	0.11	-0.12	-0.11	-0.03	1.00																	
#11 Family control	0.27	-0.34	-0.22	-0.01	0.05	0.13	0.00	-0.12	0.20	-0.05	1.00																
#12 Family board	0.28	-0.29	-0.19	-0.03	0.08	0.10	0.04	-0.03	0.12	-0.07	0.85	1.00															
#13 Family CEO/chair	0.30	-0.25	-0.16	-0.02	0.08	0.17	0.06	-0.05	0.09	-0.05	0.71	0.83	1.00														
#14 Family CEO	0.16	-0.18	-0.11	-0.03	0.01	0.08	0.00	-0.08	0.07	-0.01	0.51	0.60	0.72	1.00													
#15 Family chair	0.27	-0.22	-0.14	-0.02	0.12	0.17	0.05	-0.05	0.08	-0.03	0.63	0.75	0.90	0.57	1.00												
#16 First shareholder's votes	0.10	-0.35	-0.20	-0.03	0.13	0.11	0.04	-0.11	0.16	-0.32	0.30	0.25	0.23	0.12	0.22	1.00											
#17 Institutional investors' votes	0.06	0.20	0.14	-0.06	-0.01	0.14	0.27	0.30	-0.06	0.10	-0.25	-0.19	-0.15	-0.14	-0.14	-0.37	1.00										
#18 Board size	0.03	0.46	0.20	-0.02	-0.09	-0.09	0.13	0.29	-0.19	0.16	-0.21	-0.14	-0.16	-0.19	-0.14	-0.30	0.27	1.00									
#19 Independent directors	-0.13	0.29	0.26	0.08	-0.01	0.00	0.02	0.10	-0.02	0.10	-0.32	-0.32	-0.29	-0.27	-0.28	-0.21	0.19	0.15	1.00								
#20 CEO duality	0.07	-0.16	-0.10	0.02	0.15	0.10	0.00	-0.03	0.04	0.02	0.27	0.31	0.34	0.50	0.38	0.10	-0.14	-0.23	-0.18	1.00							
#21 Directors from minority list	-0.13	0.24	0.20	0.04	0.00	-0.10	0.05	0.21	-0.13	0.02	-0.19	-0.18	-0.15	-0.16	-0.15	-0.17	0.16	0.23	0.36	-0.17	1.00						
#22 SEO	-0.02	0.10	0.06	0.00	0.01	0.11	0.00	-0.01	0.00	0.12	-0.04	-0.03	-0.02	0.00	0.00	-0.11	0.12	0.14	0.02	0.01	0.02	1.00					
#23 Acquisition	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.02	0.01	0.10	0.15	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	-0.02	-0.06	0.15	0.05	0.06	-0.04	0.05	0.06	1.00				
#24 Dual-class firm	-0.04	0.17	0.09	0.05	-0.07	-0.12	-0.02	0.02	-0.05	0.04	-0.04	-0.10	-0.08	-0.02	-0.08	-0.04	0.01	0.13	0.12	-0.06	0.05	0.06	-0.02	1.00			
#25 Pyramidal group	-0.07	0.24	0.28	0.03	-0.06	-0.10	-0.01	0.05	0.02	-0.04	0.04	-0.01	-0.07	-0.07	-0.05	0.00	0.06	0.17	0.17	-0.15	0.17	0.00	-0.05	0.08	1.00		
#26 Dual-class firm 2008-2013	-0.10	0.19	0.10	-0.01	-0.03	-0.05	0.04	0.07	-0.04	-0.02	-0.09	-0.13	-0.13	-0.05	-0.13	-0.05	0.05	0.14	0.13	-0.08	0.03	0.05	0.04	0.69	0.14	1.00	
#27 Pyramidal group 2008-2013	-0.11	0.23	0.26	0.03	-0.02	-0.05	-0.02	0.06	-0.02	0.08	-0.12	-0.16	-0.19	-0.14	-0.13	-0.05	0.10	0.21	0.19	-0.17	0.21	0.04	-0.04	0.04	0.65	0.19	1.00

Table B1 – *Pairwise correlation of variables*. The table reports the correlation coefficients of the variables employed in the multivariate analysis. Correlation coefficients in bold italic fonts indicate statistical significance at the 5 percent level.