



NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

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## Private Credit Portfolio Construction: Key Considerations & Macro Factors

NYU  
April 22, 2025

## PRESENTER

**SYLVIA OWENS**

Partner

Sylvia Owens joined Kennedy Lewis in 2021 and is a Partner focused on the Firm's business development and investor relations activities. Ms. Owens was formerly a Managing Director and Global Private Credit and Real Assets Strategist with Aksia, a specialty investment consultant. In her role at Aksia, she was responsible for overseeing the implementation of private credit and real assets portfolios across a global base of LPs, and advised investors with respect to portfolio construction, investment selection, pacing, risk and tactical plans. Ms. Owens has partnered with prominent industry organizations to increase awareness of private credit as an asset class, including spearheading the development of Institutional Limited Partners Association's (ILPA) Private Credit Specialist Series, where she was one of the lead instructors for the course. Prior to joining Aksia, Ms. Owens spent nearly a decade in the private markets space, working with both investors and GPs across private equity, real assets, and private credit selection and positioning. She began her career at Goldman Sachs in Chicago, where she oversaw the Midwest Convertibles business and then moved to New York to co-lead the institutional synthetics convertibles business. Ms. Owens graduated from the University of Southern California with a BA in Economics and East Asian Studies and holds an MBA in Finance from the University of Chicago Graduate School of Business.

# DEFINING PRIVATE CREDIT: A DIVERSE LANDSCAPE



Direct Lending	Distressed Debt & Special Situations	Specialty Finance	Real Estate Credit	Real Assets Credit	Mezzanine
<b>U.S. Direct Lending</b> Senior Opportunistic LMM (sponsored) LMM (non-sponsored) Private BDCs Industry Focused Revolvers	<b>Corporate Distressed</b> Stress / Distressed Trading Influence / Control Diversified Distressed	<b>Consumer &amp; SME Lending</b> Marketplace Finance Lender/Platform Finance	<b>U.S. CRE Core Lending</b>	<b>Infrastructure Lending</b> Senior Focus Sub-IG Focus Mezz Focus	<b>U.S. Mezzanine</b> Upper Middle Market Middle Market Lower Middle Market
<b>European Direct Lending</b> Senior Opportunistic LMM Country-Specific Funds	<b>Opportunistic Structured Credit</b> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Party CLO Equity Captive CLO Equity CLO Debt CLO Multi Consumer ABS CMBS/CRE Esoteric ABS European Structured Credit RMBS Structured Credit Multi-Sector	<b>Rediscount Lending</b>	<b>U.S. CRE Transitional Lending</b> Large Loan Middle Market Small Balance Opportunistic	<b>Energy Credit</b> Energy Lending Energy Mezzanine Lending Opportunistic	<b>European Mezzanine</b>
<b>Emerging Markets Lending</b> Asian African CEE/Middle East Latin American Pan-EM	<b>Real Estate Distressed</b>	<b>Factoring &amp; Receivables</b>	<b>U.S. CRE Bridge Lending</b> Large Loan Middle Market Small Balance	<b>Trade Finance</b>	<b>Structured Equity</b>
<b>Global Direct Lending</b>	<b>NPLs</b>	<b>Regulatory Capital Relief</b>	<b>European CRE Lending</b> Bridge Transitional Core	<b>Metals &amp; Mining Finance</b>	
	<b>Capital Solutions</b>	<b>Music/Film/Media Royalties</b>	<b>Emerging Markets CRE Lending</b>	<b>Agricultural Credit</b>	
	<b>PC Special Situations</b>	<b>Oil &amp; Gas Minerals Royalties</b>	<b>CRE Structured Credit</b> Agency CRE B-Piece Non-Agency CRE B-Piece	<b>Transportation</b> Aviation Lending Maritime Lending Road & Rail Lending Transportation Lending (Multi)	
	<b>PC Secondaries</b>	<b>Metals Royalties</b>	<b>Residential Mortgages</b> Residential NPLs Single Family Rental Mortgage Servicing Rights Residential Origination		
		<b>Healthcare Lending &amp; Royalties</b> Healthcare Lending Healthcare Royalties			
		<b>Venture Lending</b>			
		<b>Technology Lending</b>			
		<b>Financial Services Credit</b>			
		<b>Insurance Linked Credit</b> Diversified Life Insurance Non-Life			
		<b>Litigation Finance</b> Litigation Finance Merger Appraisal Rights			
		<b>PE Portfolio Finance</b>			
		<b>Stretch ABL</b>			
		<b>Diversified Specialty Finance</b>			

## PRIVATE CREDIT MARKET IS MUCH DEEPER THAN CORPORATE DIRECT LENDING



## The Private Credit Market

## Corporate

- Nonperforming Loans
- Franchise Finance
- Reg Cap
- Rescue Capital
- Performing middle market non sponsored and sponsored lending

## Commercial Real Estate

- CRE Debt
- Infrastructure Debt
- Agricultural Lending
- Energy Efficient Finance

## Residential Real Estate

- Residential Mortgages
- Home Improvement
- Homebuilder Finance

## Consumer

- Auto Loans
- Consumer Finance
- Residential Solar

## Specialty

- Digital Infrastructure Finance
- Music & Healthcare Royalties
- Railcar Leasing
- Equipment Finance
- Aviation Finance
- Litigation Finance
- Intellectual Property

Demand for private credit is growing as a secular transition away from traditional banking continues amid recession fears and constrained commercial bank lending in advance of Basel III changes

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~\$1trn private credit market in 2020 has grown to ~\$1.5trn at the start of 2024 and is expected to reach \$2.8trn by 2028<sup>1</sup>

## WHY PRIVATE CREDIT?



### Stable Risk Return Profile

- Potential for enhanced current income/returns vs. public bonds due to illiquidity premium
- Yield is typically floating rate based, which is a positive in this environment
- Limited reliance on EBITDA growth or price appreciation to achieve investment objectives

### J-Curve Mitigation

- Management fee typically paid on invested capital
- Shorter term structure and typically faster deployment relative to private equity/VC
- Cash distributions on quarterly basis during investment period are typical

### Diversification

- Performing and distressed
- Corporate, real estate, real assets and consumer collateral
- Idiosyncratic strategies and opportunistic themes within large asset classes

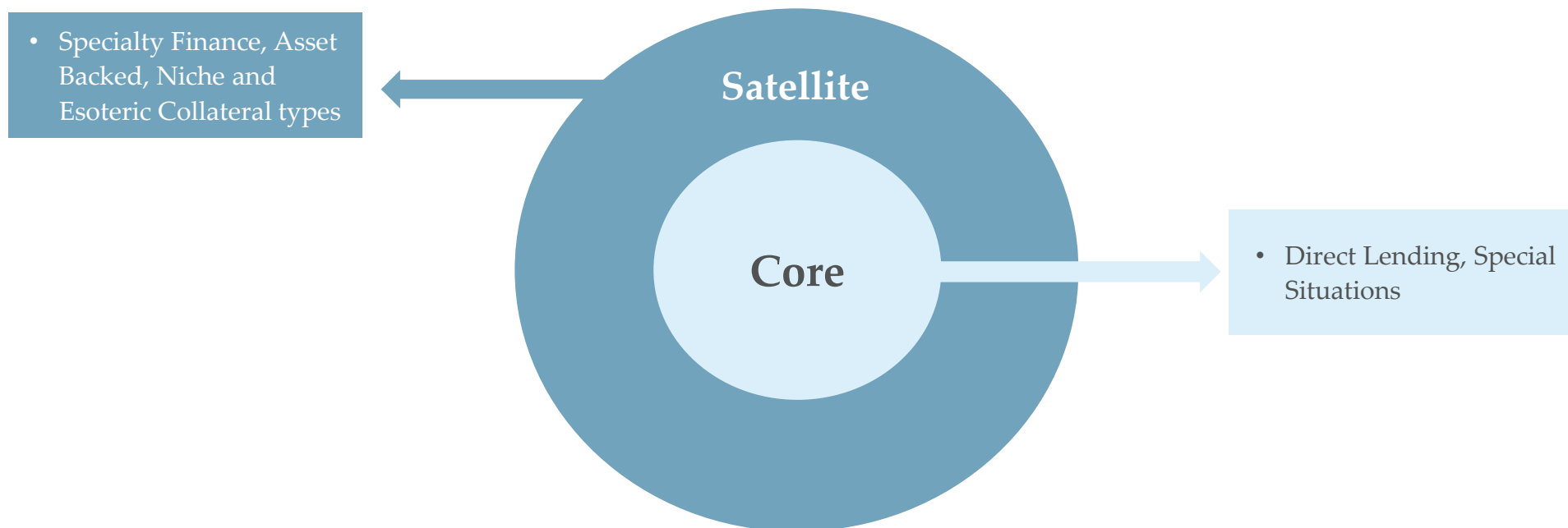
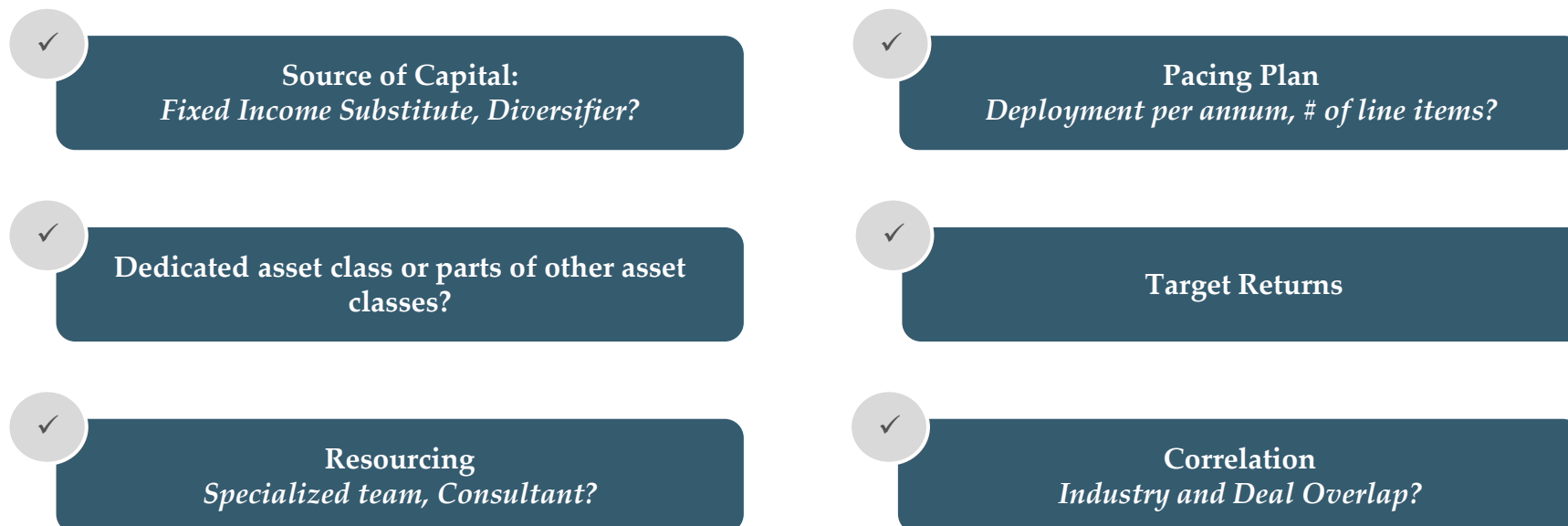
Potential Benefits		Potential Drawbacks
<b>Private Credit vs. Private Equity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Current yield</li> <li>• Shorter Fund Life</li> <li>• Generally lower fees</li> <li>• Senior in the Capital structure</li> <li>• Portfolio diversification through wide array of underlying collateral (e.g. hard assets, esoteric return streams)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lower expected returns</li> <li>• Less operational control</li> </ul>
<b>Private Credit vs. High Yield Bonds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce duration (floating rate)</li> <li>• Generally higher capital structure position</li> <li>• Spread pick-up</li> <li>• Less price volatility (quarterly vs daily marks)</li> <li>• Covenant protection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Generally higher fees</li> <li>• Less liquidity</li> <li>• Not immediately deployed (ramp period)</li> <li>• Less market transparency</li> </ul>
<b>Private Credit vs. Hedge Funds</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitable structure for less liquid assets</li> <li>• Preferred return or hard hurdle with back ended carry</li> <li>• Governance – LPAC voting rights</li> <li>• Improved transparency (often on a look through basis)</li> <li>• Reduced investor adjacency risk</li> <li>• Reduced cash performance drag</li> <li>• Less whipsaw risk</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less liquidity</li> <li>• Generally long only asset class</li> <li>• Certain strategies can be highly correlated with equity or credit beta</li> </ul>

## PRIVATE CREDIT STRATEGY: CONSIDERATIONS AND RISKS<sup>1</sup>



- ✓ Capital Structure Seniority
- ✓ Documentation and Control
- ✓ Complexity
- ✓ Scalability of Opportunity Set
- ✓ Competitive Moats
- ✓ Team Experience and Track Record
- ✓ Dependence on Leverage to Meet Target Returns
- ✓ Sourcing – Sponsor or Non-Sponsor, Specialized or Generalist

1. For illustrative purposes only. All opinions are those of Kennedy Lewis and do not represent investment advice.

PRIVATE CREDIT PORTFOLIO IMPLEMENTATION: KEY CONSIDERATIONS<sup>1</sup>

1. Framework is for illustrative purposes only and characteristics of sponsored and non-sponsored deals are based on Kennedy Lewis' opinions, observations and experiences as an experienced participant in the direct lending market.

DIRECT LENDING: SPONSOR AND NON-SPONSOR FINANCING<sup>1</sup>

## Sponsor

### "Equity-Led Financing"

- Sponsor-backed deals are debt financings **arranged by private equity sponsors**
- Ownership is typically a control-oriented **private equity manager**
- Typically involve a transaction such as an **LBO or acquisition** as a catalyst
- As the driver of the deal, **the sponsor selects the industries and companies** in which to invest
- Debt provider **leverages equity sponsor relationships** to source deals, and accesses their diligence leading to a more streamlined underwriting process

## Non-Sponsor

### "Debt-Led Financing"

- Non-Sponsor deals are debt financings **arranged by the credit provider** to fund corporate objectives
- Ownership include publicly listed companies, founders, management teams, minority equity sponsors and families, but **not necessarily "control" oriented private equity managers**. They can range from small and medium sized enterprises to large corporations
- Funding needs are typically more bespoke **requiring industry expertise and creativity from the lender**
- **Lender proactively sources deals** allowing more agency in industry exposure
- Debt provider conducts **independent due diligence**

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DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SPONSOR AND NON-SPONSOR UNDERWRITING<sup>1</sup>

	Sponsor	Non-Sponsor
<b>Due Diligence</b>	Lenders <u>leverage sponsor analysis</u> with limited management engagement	Lenders rely on <u>independent due diligence</u> around the borrower's financial health, cash flows, collateral, and business model viability
<b>Lending Criteria</b>	Lenders in sponsor transactions often place <u>significant emphasis on the track record and reputation of the private equity sponsor</u> , in addition to the creditworthiness of the underlying borrower	Without reliance on a private equity sponsor, the <u>lender's focus is on the standalone creditworthiness and business performance of the company</u>
<b>Interest Rate</b>	<u>Competitive bidding processes</u> among lenders can lead to <u>lower interest rates</u> .	The <u>challenges and complexity of direct negotiations</u> typically command a <u>100-200 bps premium</u> over sponsor-backed deals.
<b>Covenant Protections</b>	Loans in sponsor-led deals may come with <u>more flexible terms</u> , given the preference of private equity managers. Often, these include <u>covenant-lite</u> structures, which have fewer restrictions on the borrower and offer more leniency on financial performance metrics.	Loans to companies in non-sponsor deals generally come with <u>stricter covenants and terms</u> , reflecting the lender's risk management practices. These might include financial maintenance covenants, which require the borrower to meet certain financial ratios and other governance rights such as Board Observation rights or formal Board representation.
<b>Workout</b>	In equity-driven deals, <u>distressed exchanges are a common strategy</u> used by sponsors to maintain control.	Tighter covenants and stronger governance generally lead to <u>earlier hard defaults which can allow lenders to preserve value</u> . Credit managers in these deals must have appropriate restructuring and workout expertise to achieve good outcomes.

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PRIVATE CREDIT: KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANAGER SELECTION<sup>1</sup>

Below is a checklist of items which LPs may want to consider when evaluating Private Credit managers:

- 1**  
**Deal Sourcing**

The manager should have senior investment professionals with deep roots into their focused sectors. In addition, where sponsor-backed strategies can often rely on sponsor relationships for repeat deal flow, non-sponsor managers need to prospect directly with borrowers requiring a deeper network with management teams
- 2**  
**Ability to Scale**

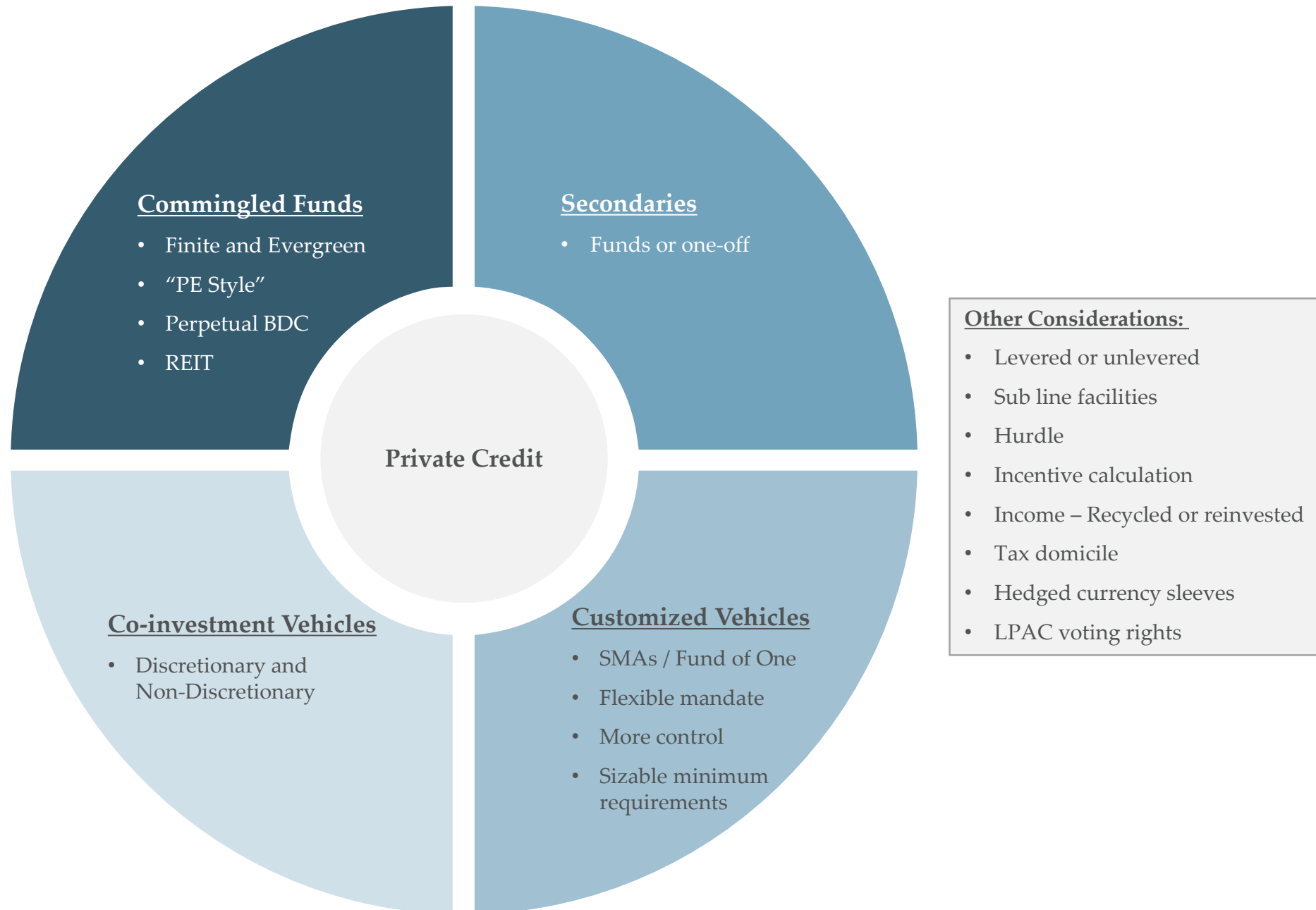
Managers need to have a sufficient number of well-experienced investment professionals to span a range of sectors and achieve diversification and scale
- 3**  
**Underwriting Capabilities**

Selectivity is a key component to investment success; thus, good managers will evaluate a much greater percentage of deals than they actually invest in, which require significant resources
- 4**  
**Creativity**

Complexity can command a higher yield, but also requires a creative solution. Managers with extensive lending experience who have had success structuring creative deals in unconventional situations are likely to generate greater deal flow as the “partner of choice” to potential borrowers and their respective management teams
- 5**  
**Operational Expertise**

At times, both equity-led and debt-led financings require the lender to take on operational responsibilities and oversight when the risk of capital loss arises. This operational skill set is distinct from finance, so it is important to understand a manager’s capabilities and resourcing in this area

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ACCESSING PRIVATE CREDIT<sup>1</sup>

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## PRIVATE CREDIT RISK MANAGEMENT: SAMPLE MANAGER APPROACH



## Senior Management

- Dedicated Chief Risk Officer
- Cultural focus on capital preservation
- Rigorous Investment Committee process with emphasis on downside risk

## Deal Teams

- Deal Structuring
  - ✓ Tight Covenants – Ensure lender can exert control when performance does not meet expectations
  - ✓ Delayed Draws – Provide capital in tranches with milestone requirements for each to limit exposure before management proves ability to execute

## Risk Management Team

- Portfolio Monitoring
  - ✓ Police portfolio exposures to ensure risks remain within target tolerance
    - Concentration
    - Downside Modeling

- Macroeconomic View
  - ✓ Private nature of investments means the critical risk management effort happens *before* investment
  - ✓ Strict focus on top-down portfolio construction
  - ✓ Align investment pipeline with macroeconomic expectations

Benefit of Non-Sponsor Approach

# PORTFOLIO CONSTRUCTION: SAMPLE MANAGER APPROACH



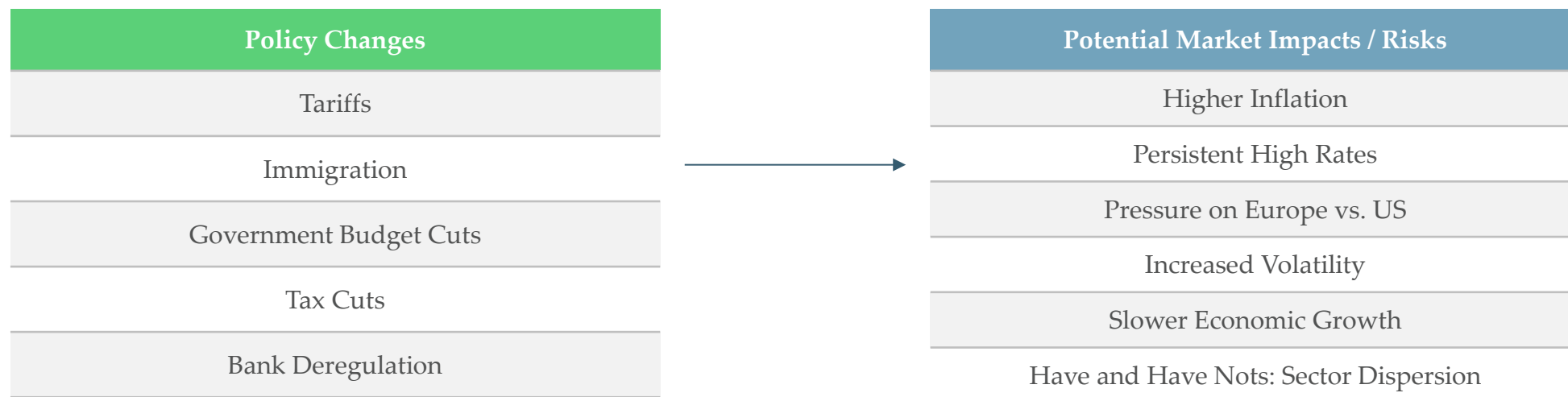
## Portfolio Construction Principles

- Thematic economic view and opportunity set drive investment
- Vertical allocation is capped at max concentration of 25% and no predetermined allocation
- No internal competition for capital – single compensation pool
- Lean into and out of themes as dictated by market views

### Expression Through Verticals:

Power & Energy Transition	Life Sciences & Healthcare	TMT	Opportunistic Cyclicals	Tactical Opportunities / ABF	Homebuilder Finance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deglobalization</i>: Geopolitical frictions amplify energy transition challenges</li> <li>• <i>Reshoring</i>: Shifting energy demand dynamics</li> <li>• <i>Inflation Protection</i>: Non-discretionary spending</li> <li>• <i>Sub-Themes</i>: Infrastructure; Power</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Demographic tailwind</i>: Aging baby boomers</li> <li>• <i>Inflation Protection</i>: Non-discretionary spending.</li> <li>• <i>Sub-Theme</i>: Medical devices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Supply chain disruption</i>: Content creation shortage through COVID and Writer strikes</li> <li>• <i>Reshoring</i>: Surge in industrial investment creates opportunities in supporting Tech infrastructure</li> </ul>	<p><b>Aerospace &amp; Defense</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Deglobalization</i>: Geopolitical friction adding to a sharp increase in defense spending</li> <li>• <i>Demographics</i>: Aircraft demand driven by populous developing countries</li> </ul> <p><b>Industrials</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Reshoring</i>: Investment in US manufacturing is likely to have a dramatic impact in coming years</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consumer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Labor Shortage</i>: Signs of weakness in absolute levels of debt or delinquency are misleading as they miss the important component of dramatically higher notional income levels.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Demographic tailwind</i>: Millennials entering household formation age</li> <li>• <i>Supply/Demand Imbalance</i>: Significant under-investment since 2008 crisis</li> <li>• <i>Inflation Protection</i>: Real asset collateral (land)</li> </ul>

## MACROECONOMIC IMPACTS ON PRIVATE CREDIT - KEY TAKEAWAYS



### *Private Credit Market*

#### **Positives**

- Floating Rate Asset class
- Higher Absolute Yields
- Includes strategies with “hard asset” collateral – diversifier to corporate credit
- Ability to take advantage of dislocations

#### **Risks**

- Rising defaults due to deteriorating credit metrics
- EBITDA erosion from stubborn inflation
- Lower Interest Coverage ratios
- Bank Deregulation increasing Competition for Private Lending
- Covenant Lite structures reducing recoveries

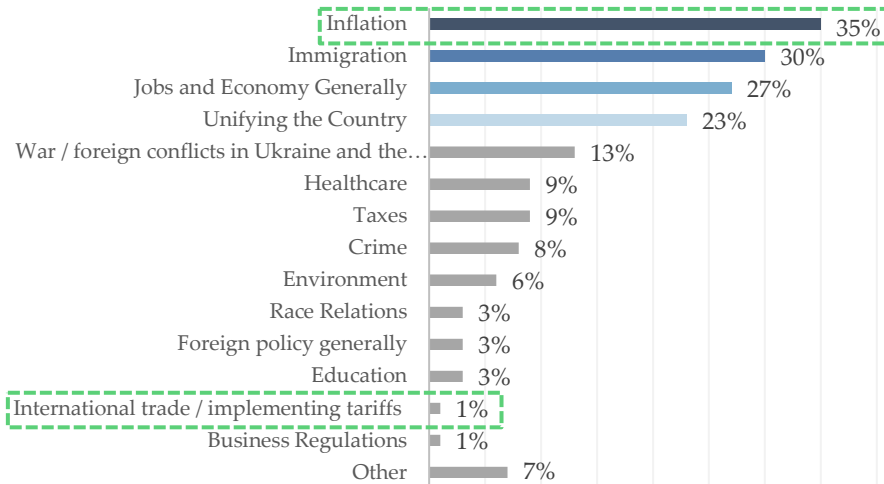
## IMPACT EXAMPLE: TARIFFS

- Broad and severe tariffs **could cause widespread inflation**
  - 2018 tariffs were limited in scope, but *inflation was evident* in the impacted categories
  - Estimates of current tariff regime are roughly **10x the impact of 2018**
  - Retaliatory measures would further disrupt supply chains and pressure global prices higher
- Low-income households would be disproportionately impacted
  - Discount retailers source heavily from China
- Political challenges are mounting
  - Inflation bigger concern than tariffs for voters
  - Fear is rising

*Our expectation is that tariffs will have a negative impact on growth and put upward pressure on inflation to start. More severe consequences could follow depending on tenor of negotiations.*

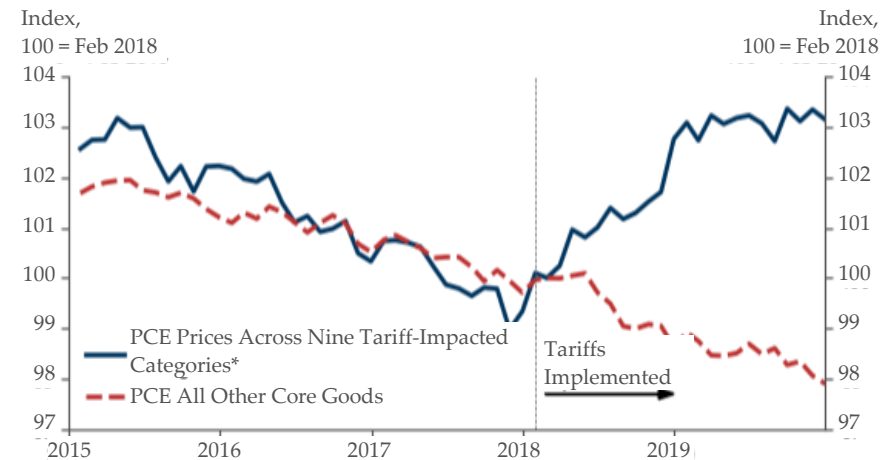
### Voters Fear Inflation More than Trade Imbalance<sup>2</sup>

What issues do you want President Trump to focus on in his 100 days in office?



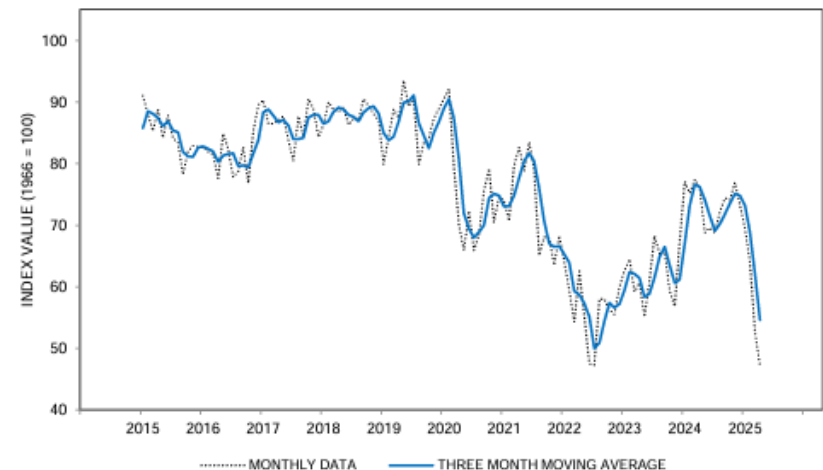
### The 2018 Tariffs Created Significant Inflation in Impacted Categories<sup>1</sup>

Effect of 2018-19 Tariffs on Core Goods PCE Prices



### Sentiment Indicators Hitting All-Time Lows<sup>3</sup>

INDEX OF CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS



1. Goldman Sachs, "Macro Outlook 2025: Tailwinds (Probably) Trump Tariffs." November 14, 2024.  
 2. IPSOS, "How Americans feel about Trump's mass deportations." December 6, 2024.  
 3. <https://www.sca.isr.umich.edu/charts.html>

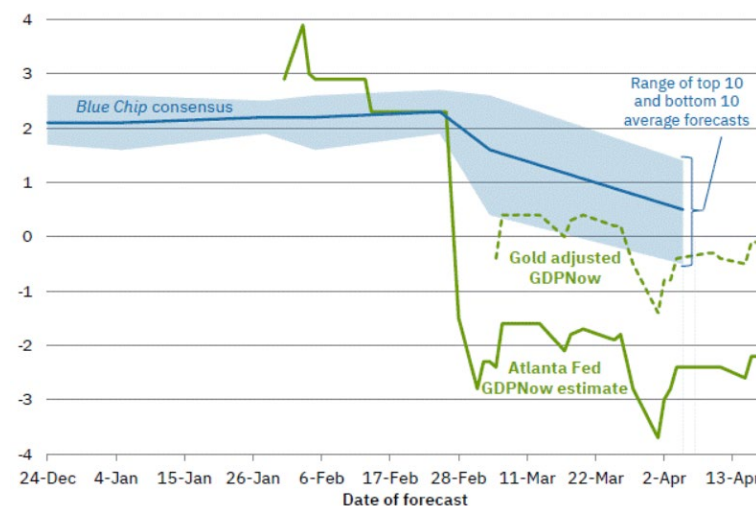
# TARIFF POLICY RISKS

- Before the tariff announcements, *the economy was reasonably strong.*
- Liberation Day *tariff rates were far higher than anyone expected* leading to broad uncertainty
- Market volatility spiked, but importantly, *stocks and bonds both sharply declined*
  - Typically, when investors are worried, they buy *US Treasury bonds as a safe-haven asset*
  - A declining bond market signaled that tariff policy was creating *concerns about the safety of US bonds*
  - A high level of foreign investment in the US compounds the risks

*The bond market is key here. Bond yields represent the cost of government borrowing. If costs rise while deficits are high as they are now, government budgets become incredibly difficult to manage.*

## Growth Projections Are Falling<sup>1</sup>

Evolution of Atlanta Fed GDPNow real GDP estimate for 2025: Q1  
Quarterly percent change (SAAR)

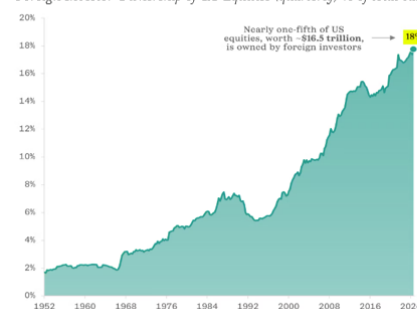


## Treasury Bond ETF (IEF) After Tariff Announcements<sup>2</sup>

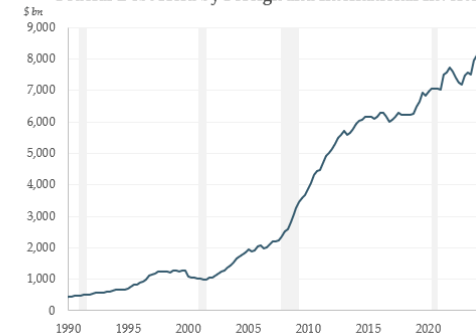


## Foreign Ownership of US Assets<sup>3,4</sup>

Foreign Investors Hold Record Share of US Stocks  
Foreign Investor Ownership of US Equities (quarterly, % of total value)



Federal Debt Held by Foreign and International Investors



- Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta, "Evolution of Atlanta Fed GDP Now real GDP estimate for 2024 Q4." January 2, 2025.
- Sherwood News, "The US stock market has become the global market over the last 60 years. Will that continue?" March 24, 2025.
- U.S. Department of the Treasury. Fiscal Service, Federal Debt Held by Foreign and International Investors [FDHBFIN], retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; <https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/FDHBFIN>, April 16, 2025.
- Bloomberg, ECAN index, January 7, 2024



# HOW IS PRIVATE CREDIT SUITED FOR THE CURRENT ENVIRONMENT?



- Ultimately, we believe that when the trade disputes are resolved, we will see an environment with:

- Higher inflation
- Higher interest rates
- More volatile markets
- Less liquidity due to uncertainty and a pull back of foreign capital

- In this environment, Private Credit has several advantages:

- Higher yields from higher base rates
- Low duration from floating rates
- Insulation from volatility through capital structure seniority

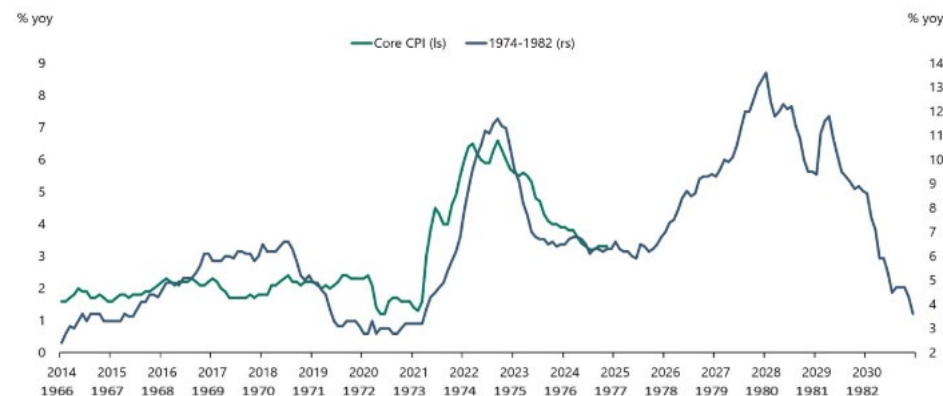
- Additionally, a non-sponsor approach benefits from:

- The ability to pursue investment themes since sponsors aren't required for deal flow
- An additional layer of protection from volatility with stronger covenant protections
- Strong diversification benefits in a broader portfolio as overlap with other managers is limited – “low beta”

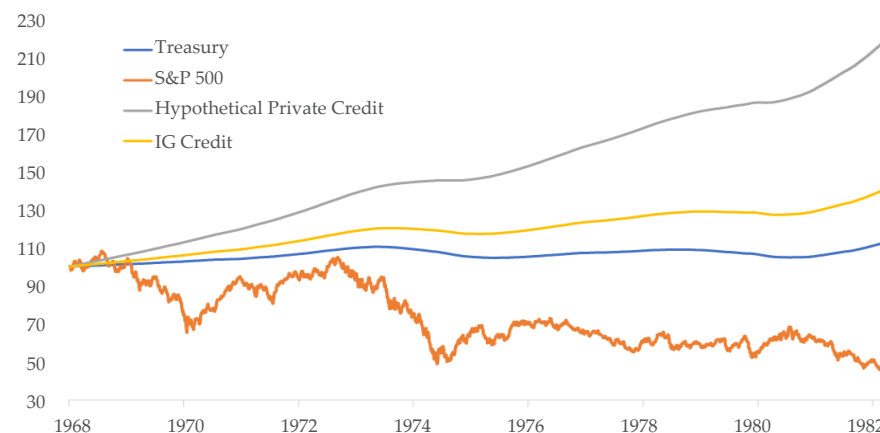
*With the current period of economic history setting up similarly to high inflation periods of the past, the current income, capital structure seniority, and low beta of non-sponsor private credit are attractive features that could lead to outperformance for the asset class.*

## Comparison of Inflation Today vs 1970s<sup>1</sup>

*Will we see a repeat of the 1970s?*



## Private Credit Theoretical Performance in 1970s<sup>2</sup>



1. Apollo, "Inflation Rising Again," December 15, 2024.  
 2. J.P. Morgan, "Market Volatility Commentary," February 21, 2024.

QUESTIONS?

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[ir@klimllc.com](mailto:ir@klimllc.com)

**New York**

225 Liberty Street  
Suite 4210  
New York, NY 10281

**Miami**

600 Brickell Avenue  
Suite 1400  
Miami, FL 33131

**Geneva**

Rue François Bellot 16  
1206 Geneva  
Switzerland

**Scottsdale**

6900 E. Camelback Road,  
Suite 800  
Scottsdale, AZ 85251  
(KL Servicers LLC)