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Exploring Family Features in Non-Family Organizations: The Family Metaphor and its Behavioral Manifestations

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Abstract: In this study, we explore the possibility of reproducing family business characteristics in the professional context of a non-family organization and analyze the behavioral manifestations of this application. Drawing upon discussions in the family therapy, organizational behavior and family business literatures, we identify cohesion and flexibility as the two primary dimensions of the family metaphor. We build on illustrative cases of three sports teams to explore these dimensions in a non-family business setting. Our exploratory analysis of these cases reveals the existence of family features and extends our understanding of these features beyond family businesses.

Keywords: family features, family metaphor, non-family firms, pseudo-family, sports teams

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When referring to his tenure as Tesco's CEO, Sir Terry Leahy described his efforts as attempts to build advantages present in family businesses into his organization (Leahy 2006). According to Leahy, "the ideal company would therefore be one which combines the strengths of the publicly owned company with the strengths of the family business" (Leahy 2006). Therefore, Tesco has incorporated some of the values and characteristics of a family firm into the method that it uses to manage the company. Other non-family organizations may express the same ambition. However, studies have found that family businesses differ from non-family businesses in several aspects, such as organizational culture (Denison, Leif, and Ward

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2004), financial performance (Anderson and Reeb 2003; Lee 2006; Villalonga and Amit 2006), and in their roles as employers (Lee 2006; Sirmon and Hitt 2003; Ward 1988). These differing views between practice and research raise the question of whether non-family organizations *could* behave similar to family firms, which is the motivation for our research. A related concern would be to identify the family firm characteristics that could be "imported" into non-family organizations. Because the key distinction between a family and non-family organization is the family itself, our research entails exploring the characteristics of family features in the family metaphor and in family behavior and describing these features in family and non-family organizations.

Successful family firms are known for their low failure rates and their longevity (Daily and Dollinger 1992; Goto 2006). Interest in family firm advantages has not only been piqued by their longevity but also by reports of their performance compared with non-family firms over time (Caspar, Dias, and Elstrodt 2010). Greater researcher interest has developed with recent studies that have found that family firms in the United States outperform non-family firms (Anderson and Reeb 2003; Miller and Le-Breton-Miller 2006; Villalonga and Amit 2006). Outside the United States, public family firms have been found to perform better than non-family firms in Chile (Martinez, Stohr, and Quiroga 2007) and in Japan (Allouche et al. 2008).

Despite the growing interest in the field of family firms, little is known regarding the unique specifications of these organizations; despite numerous attempts to articulate a conceptual and operational definition of family firms, none of these attempts has yet gained widespread acceptance (Sharma 2004). The various definitional attempts converge around the important role of family in terms of determining the vision and control mechanisms employed in a firm and the creation of unique resources and capabilities (Sharma 2004). Moreover, Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999) claim that it is *behavior* that distinguishes an organization as a family firm rather than other qualities, such as ownership percentage. While these efforts to define a family firm attempt to discuss its unique qualities and separate its form of organization from others, the definition of a family firm based on certain behavior opens up the possibility for a non-family organization to behave in a similar manner.

This study develops the concept of non-family firms possessing pseudo-family features. We propose that non-family business organizations are not limited to these attempts to introduce family business advantages but may manifest these features and demonstrate their respective outcomes. This article introduces this possibility by describing the behavior of three non-family firms from several points of view, arguing that this behavior could be termed as pseudo-family features in non-family organizations. In this sense, the exploratory cases described in this article demonstrate the reality that Sir Terry Leahy wished for.

This article will attempt to describe the family metaphor in family and non-family organizations, and the behavior that defines this metaphor. We begin by examining the family metaphor in the fields of family therapy, general organizations, and family firms to define the metaphor and to delineate the family features. We examine the development of the family metaphor prior to describing how it can be manifested in non-family organizations. Then, we will draw upon qualitative descriptions of three professional sports organizations to demonstrate how family features are manifested. We will describe the behavioral manifestations of family features along the two primary dimensions of cohesion and flexibility. We will end with some theoretical and practical implications of the proposed phenomena.

The family metaphor – a literature review

Family features in family therapy literature

The family features prominently in the field of family therapy; this branch of psychotherapy works with families and extended families. Hence, we begin the search for the characterization of the family metaphor in this context. When trying to define and measure the behavior of families, Olson and his colleagues developed the Circumplex Model of Marital and Family Systems (Olson 1988, 2000; Olson and Gorall 2003). They built this model as a "relational diagnosis" for family research, as well as for practical reasons, such as clinical assessment, treatment planning, and measuring outcome effectiveness (Olson and Gorall 2003, 515). Olson and colleagues (Olson 1988, 2000; Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell 1979) developed the Circumplex model in an attempt to bridge the gap between theory, research, and practice. With more than 50 terms to describe a family's behavior, the Circumplex model focuses on two primary factors: *cohesion* and *flexibility*, and each factor is divided into five levels. *Communication*, the third Circumplex dimension, is considered a facilitating dimension that is available to couples and families to alter their levels of cohesion and flexibility. For our initial exploration into the family features in non-family organizations, we will focus on the two descriptive dimensions of cohesion and flexibility, and we will leave to future studies the possibility of changing a family's type of behavior through communication.

We refer to the Circumplex model because it sums up all possible family behaviors along only the two dimensions of cohesion and flexibility. The use of the Circumplex model to describe the behavior of families is particularly useful because it is system focused and integrates dimensions that have repeatedly been considered highly relevant in a variety of family theory models and family therapy approaches (Olson 2000). Moreover, there have been recent efforts to re-bridge the distance between the academic worlds of family science and family business because the latter has become increasingly dominated by research conducted from a business rather than a family perspective (James, Jennings, and Breitkreuz 2012). The Circumplex model has already been suggested by family firm scholars for analyzing family dynamics within the family firm setup (Labaki 2008, 2011; Michael-Tsabari and Lavee 2012).

Cohesion (also referred to as *togetherness* and *closeness*) is described as "the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (Olson and Gorall 2003, 516). Cohesion focuses on the balance within the family system between extreme separateness and extreme togetherness. Examples of the specific variables used to diagnose and measure cohesion are emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision making, interests, and recreation (Olson and Gorall 2003). The mid-levels between the extremes of *Overly connected* and *Disconnected* are *Somewhat connected, Connected,* and *Very connected* families. *Flexibility* (also referred to as *adaptability*) is defined as "the amount of change in … leadership, role relationships, and relationship rules" (Olson and Gorall 2003, 519). Flexibility focuses on how the family systems balance extreme stability with extreme change. The specific variables related to flexibility include leadership style (control, discipline), negotiation styles, role relationships, and relationships rules. The mid-levels between these extremes are *Very flexible, Flexible,* and *Somewhat flexible* families (Olson and Gorall 2003).

With five levels on each continuum, the Circumplex creates a typology of 25 types of families with the types at the center denoting the optimal functioning of the family and the types at the ends denoting problematic functioning. The Circumplex model has been validated over three decades of research and with over 700 studies that support the model (Olson 2000, 2011; Olson and Gorall 2003). To sum up, the Circumplex model (with its relational and practical focus) prepares us to investigate the degrees of cohesion/togetherness between family members and the degrees of flexibility of rules and roles as definitions of family features based on family therapy studies. The model has a behavioral perspective in the sense that it examines relationships and their rules (and not attitudes or cognitive constructs) and how these change over time. These relational dimensions will guide us when we attempt to explore the family metaphor in organizations. We will now discuss the organizational forms in the general organization literature that have been linked to the family metaphor.

The rise of the bureaucratic organization

Modern management literature (itself a fairly recent development compared with other disciplines that pre-dated the twentieth Century) has had a conflicted relationship with family firms. With the rise of the modern corporation, the literature began with a dislike of the family firm and grudgingly acknowledged the family aspects of the early enterprises. This perspective was followed by the development of management principles and practices, such as total quality management, that are built on family-like values. In more recent times, there has been a growing interest in family businesses in the light of their reported longevity and superior corporate performance. These developments are predicated upon the family metaphor.

The rise of modern organizations is linked to urbanization, literacy, and wealth creation, while poor, illiterate, rural, or technically backward societies are associated with traditional organizations (Stinchcombe 1965). The "bureaucratization of industry" and the rise of modern organizational forms are described as consisting of two major stages: the differentiation of the role at work from that of family life and the differentiation of top managerial positions from kinship institutions (Stinchcombe 1965); these differentiations contradict the common descriptions of family firms. In conventional writings, a rational and formal organizational structure is assumed to be the most effective method to coordinate and control the complex networks involved in modern work activities (J. W. Meyer and Rowan 1977). From the perspective of managerial capitalism, the family firm is considered only one of the initial stages in the life of the enterprise, which follows the start-up period and precedes the public company phase (Colli 2003). The rise of modern organizations has been attributed to rational bureaucratic principles. In contrast, the family firm as a work organization is described in these writings as an early and under-developed stage of institutionalization and primarily as a "pre-organizational" state:

> We conjecture that a critical period is that during which the organization grows beyond the control of a single owner/manager. At this time the manner in which authority is delegated, if at all, seems likely to have a lasting impact on organizational structure. This is the period during which an organization becomes less an extension of one or a few dominant individuals and more an organization per se with a life of its own.
>
> Hannan and Freeman (1977, 960)

According to Hannan and Freeman, the "birth" of the business organization as a distinct entity (apart from the founding/owning family) occurs only when the founder steps down. Because the founder's era may last several decades (Sharma, Chrisman, and Chua 1997) and because founders have been recognized for their long tenures and central positions in their families and firms (Sharma 2004), this period may continue for a very long time. However, family firms are not only defined by the first stage of new organizations and may also have characteristics of very large and older corporations (e.g., Anderson and Reeb 2003; Villalonga and Amit 2006); thus, a family firm is an organizational form that deserves its own definition, theory, and research.

This perspective is shared not only by institutional theory scholars but also by the family firm literature. This has led to family business definitions such as: "[A] family business is a unique form of business organization since it involves the overlap of a system structured on rational economic principles with a system organized and driven by emotions" (Kets-de-Vries, Carlock, and Florent-Treacy 2007, 26).

The identification of the family as an organization with primarily emotional characteristics was the driving force behind previous approaches that sought to separate the family from the business operations in the name of "right" and "professional" management, while the family was perceived as contributing to the "irrationality" of the business function (Denison, Leif, and Ward 2004; Hollander and Elman 1998; Kepner 1983; Nordqvist 2005; Whiteside and Brown 1991). Whiteside and Brown (1991) state it clearly: "Since the purpose of business was to be logical and profit making, the emotional aspects of the family were an interference that needed to be excluded" (1991, 384). Hollander and Elman (1998) note: "Many writers … advocated placing the firm's interests before the family's interests and condemned family emotional processes as the prime source of contamination" (Hollander and Elman 1998, 146). This has led to the exclusion of the family organization from family firm studies and has placed its focus, until recently, on the business subsystem (Chua, Chrisman, and Steier 2003; Dyer 2003).

The separation between the business and the family systems in these writings resembles the compartmentalization of rationality and emotions in organizational theory:

> Up to the present time, the bureaucratic ideal has been a mainstay of assumptions that guide organizational theory. This ideal left it taken for granted that organizations optimally limit or eliminate human emotion. Emotion, better left to a (typically female and therefore) non-organizational (but rather domestic) sphere, was thus theorized out of organizations. The slogan that represented this drift was, and in many places still is, "it's not personal, it's business. Don't be emotional."
>
> Rafaeli and Worline (2001, 100)

While the general organizational literature views the firm as separate from family characteristics, the family metaphor has been attributed to specific forms of organizations.

The “family” metaphor in the general organization literature

The family metaphor in the general organization literature refers to a more clan-like, paternalistic and holistic view of organizational culture, and its relationship with its members has been termed as “type Z” organization (Ouchi 1980; Ouchi and Jaeger 1978; Schein 2004). A type Z organization is characterized by a culture that values very long employment periods, consensual decision making, collective responsibility, implicit and informal control, and a holistic concern (Ouchi and Jaeger 1978). The “clan” form “conforms to Durkheim’s meaning of an organic association which resembles a kin network but may not include blood relations (Durkheim 1933)” cited in Ouchi (1980, 132).

The “family” metaphor was widely studied during the 1980s and 1990s when corporate organizations around the world adopted principles and practices of a popular management strategy called Total Quality Management (TQM) (Casey 1999). This strategy was also called participative management, and the metaphors of “team” and “family” were pivotal for the organizational cultural practices used at that time (Casey 1999). Scholars and managers assumed that the installation of team- and family-style structures and practices should replace outdated bureaucratic workplaces (Ouchi 1980) and would enhance employee participation, commitment, and, thus, organizational productivity: “in relinquishing old industrial habits of work and manifest, collectivized conflict, the employee is rewarded in the team-family culture with psychically harmonizing benefits in the *affect* of belonging, of being valued, and being productive” (Casey 1999, 175) (italics in the original).

This discussion of a type Z organization clearly describes pseudo-family characteristics in non-family organizations. These features are based on an inclusive clan/family organizational culture with emotional ties between employees. Interestingly, the development of the TQM movement as a popular management technique in the early 1980s coincided with the inception of the field of family firm research. From this time forth, family firm research gained importance as a scholarly field, while the debate regarding family-like mechanisms in non-family organizations has faded. Nevertheless, the notion that non-family firms could engage in family-like behavior has already been presented and discussed in the literature on type Z organization. The family features in the type Z organization can be summed up as including the characteristics of long employment periods, a collective and holistic outlook, the affect of belonging, and the existence of non-bureaucratic relationships with employees. In this article, we consider family features in light of the two dimensions of cohesion and flexibility (defined by the Circumplex model to characterize the “relational diagnosis” of families), and we suggest that the descriptions of collectivism, emotional ties, and committed relationships conform to the dimension of cohesion. The dimension of flexibility refers to leadership styles and rules of behavior that conform to the descriptions of paternalism and long relationships with low levels of change. The family metaphor in family firms is described in the following section.

The "family" metaphor in family firm research

The field of family firm research considers the family firm a special form of business organization that combines two systems that are usually set apart: the family and the firm. The "classic" family firm is defined as "[A] business in which property and control are firmly entwined, where family members are involved in both strategic and day-by-day decision making, and the firm is shaped by a dynastic motive" (Colli 2003, 9). The definition of family firms revolves around the important role of family in terms of determining the vision and control mechanisms used in a firm and its creation of unique resources and capabilities (Sharma 2004). This interaction between family and business contradicts the very essence of a modern bureaucratic organization, which stems from the rationalized and impersonal character that is attached to structural elements and the goals that link them (Meyer and Rowan 1977).

Many anecdotal descriptions of the organizational culture in family firms exist in the literature. These descriptions tend to address the metaphor of "family" and its various derivatives: a cohesive group with collective values and emotional, inclusive, and long-term relationships. These descriptions fall into the first dimension of the Circumplex model of cohesion, i.e., the level of togetherness between members. Cohesion is a necessary condition for family business success and sustainability and is defined as one of several mechanisms that assure long-term family business survival (Pieper 2007; Pieper and Astrachan 2008). Astrachan (1988) writes that family firms are "highly emotional, diffuse in nature, particularistic, sharing, cooperative, ascription and collectivity oriented" (Astrachan 1988, 168). Collectivism is stressed to the point that individuality is viewed as a betrayal (Fleming 2000). Kaye (1996) maintains that individuation and the family business are at odds. The "family" metaphor refers to the family's as well as the firm's culture because family business employees tend to develop long-term loyalties and become "part of the family" during the founder's tenure (Kets-de-Vries 1996; Ward 1987).

The family firm at the initial stage is described as possessing possible strengths from the emotional bond that employees feel toward the organization and its "extended family" (Chua Chrisman, and Steier 2003). Nicholson (2008) points to an inclusive culture with a communitarian size and structure where non-family employees at all levels feel the positive difference of working for a family firm. Guzzo and Abbott (1990) argue that this "family" metaphor is powerful as a mechanism of social identity in family firms: "[T]he identity of nonfamily employees is bound to the identity of the family. As Turner (1987) shows, individuals take on and internalize the salient qualities of the social entities to which they belong. In this case, that entity is the family in business" (Guzzo and Abbott 1990, 24). Poza, Alfred, and Maheshwari (1997) describe a "family feeling" that non-family managers consider a non-monetary reward and an advantage of working for a family firm. The positive associations invoked by the "family" metaphor include integration, harmony, and loyalty. Positive associations are more prevalent in descriptions of a family firm's culture than the more negative, gendered implications of "family," which may include hierarchical, repressive, or paternalistic social relationships (Ainsworth and Wolfram-Cox 2003).

Paternalism is a leadership and decision-making style that is part of the second dimension of the Circumplex model: flexibility. This dimension describes the degree of change in roles and rules. In this sense, family firms are often characterized as paternalistic organizations that are owned by patriarchal families (Dyer 1986, 1988). Lansberg (1999) describes a charismatic founder who controls the business and family affairs and practices a centralistic management technique. This technique views promotion within the business as a function of loyalty and seniority. Scholars have put forth that paternalism can explain family business dynamics (Ainsworth and Wolfram-Cox 2003), especially at the entrepreneurial stages (Johannisson and Huse 2000; Michael-Tsabari 2011; Mussolino and Sharma 2010). Paternalism is defined as "a style that combines strong discipline and authority with fatherly benevolence" (Erez 2011). Dyer (1986) found that the most common configuration of a first-generation family firm consists of a paternalistic organization and a patriarchal family:

> [The founder's] attitude toward his employees has been very much that of a father toward his children... The children of a forceful, effective, and loving father are quite willing to accept his exercise of broad power over their lives, with the feeling that their future is secure in his hands. They will admire and respect him; they will have faith and trust in him.
>
> Dyer (1986, 71–2)

This demonstrates the current definition of the paternalistic relationship between the leader and his or her subordinates and speaks of a father-like leadership style in which strong authority is combined with concern and care (Pellegrini and Scandura 2008). "I'm a father figure rather than a boss" are the words a family firm owner used to describe his relationship with his employees (Ainsworth and Wolfram-Cox 2003, 1476). In this relationship, subordinates willingly reciprocate the care and protection of parental authority by showing conformity (Aycan et al. 2000; Pellegrini and Scandura 2008).

When defining the rules of conduct, nepotism has been a characteristic attributed to the behavior of family firms from early writings (Lansberg 1983). Ciulla (2005) argues that although nepotism is problematic, it is not always bad, and it is almost impossible to avoid. Bellow (2003) claims that although nepotism has been criticized, “a quick glance around reveals any number of successful families whose sons and daughters have gone on to accomplish objectively great things, even if they got a little help from their parents” (2003, back cover). Nevertheless, nepotism describes rules of behavior that are attributed to families while wishing to promote and take care of their members. Rules of behavior and the amount of change in these rules are part of the dimension of flexibility according to Circumplex terminology.

To sum up, the family features attributed to family firms in the cohesion dimension include warm, emotional, and intimate relationships (Astrachan 1988) and an inclusive and collective culture (Nicholson 2008). Regarding the flexibility dimension, scholars describe nepotistic, paternalistic, and patriarchal organizations (Dyer 1986, 1988) that are controlled by a dominant leader and for which promotion within business is due to loyalty and seniority (Lansberg 1999). The family features described by the fields of family therapy (by the Circumplex Model), management (type Z), and family firms are summed up in Table 1. It can be observed from the summary that the dimensions of the family metaphor in organizational and family firm literature can be accommodated within the cohesion and flexibility dimensions of the Circumplex model.

As such, we will employ these dimensions in the analysis of the family metaphor in the non-family organizations that we study.

Method

We propose that non-family organizations may exhibit family features that are described in the fields of family therapy, “type Z” and family firms, and we will demonstrate certain family characteristics in three non-family organizations in this section. Multiple cases are used as explorative examples to build theory (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007) and to explore whether they demonstrate family-like characteristics and behaviors. We chose two cases from the past, as well as a present case to mitigate bias by combining “retrospective and real-time

Table 1: Family features as described by the literatures of family therapy, organizations, and family firms.

Family therapy: the circumplex model	Organizations: type Z organization	Family firms
***Cohesion*:** Togetherness, the emotional bonding that family members have toward one another. This focuses on the balance between extreme separateness and extreme togetherness within the family system (Olson 1988, 2000, 2011; Olson and Gorall 2003; Olson et al. 1979).	Consensual decision making, collective responsibility, and a holistic concern (Ouchi and Jaeger 1978).	Individuality is viewed as a betrayal. Individuation and the family business are at odds, (Kaye 1996) highly emotional, sharing, cooperative and collectivity oriented (Astrachan 1988), employees tend to develop long-term loyalties, and they become "part of the family" (Kets-de-Vries 1996; Ward 1987).
	Collectivism: the employee is rewarded in the team -family culture by psychically harmonizing benefits in the effect of belonging or of being valued (Casey 1999).	Warm and intimate long-term relationships (Astrachan 1988), an inclusive and collective culture (Nicholson 2008), and progress in the business is due to loyalty and seniority (Lansberg 1999).
***Flexibility*:** Also referred to as *adaptability* is defined as the amount of change in leadership, role relationships, and relationship rules. Flexibility focuses on how the family systems balance extreme stability with extreme change (Olson 1988, 2000, 2011; Olson and Gorall 2003; Olson et al. 1979).	Very long employment periods (Olson and Gorall 2003). Non-bureaucratic work practices (Ouchi 1980). Organic association that resembles a kin network but may not include blood relations (Durkheim 1933) cited in (Ouchi and Jaeger 1978). Implicit and informal control (Ouchi and Jaeger 1978).	Patriarchal family with paternalistic firm (Dyer 1986), owner controls the business and family affairs (Lansberg 1999), very long tenures for business leaders (McConaughy 2000). Nepotism is problematic but not always bad and almost impossible to avoid (Ciulla 2005), nepotism has been criticized but can also bring to objective success (Bellow 2003).

cases" (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, 28). We chose three sport organizations: two teams (football and basketball) located in North America and one team (basketball) in Israel. Sport groups have already been studied as examples of group cohesion and as case studies to develop tools to assess cohesion (e.g., Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley 1985; Spink 1995). Following the definition of the "relational diagnosis" in the Circumplex model, these professional sports organizations were chosen because they are known to be closely knit organizations with tight relationships between players, coaches, managers, and owners. They are described as having exceptional relationships with former players, staff, and fans. In all three cases, the terms used to describe the teams during the study duration are terms that belong to families, such as "dynasty", "marriage," or "family."

Prior research in the family business literature has used the family metaphor to identify family firms without specifying what is envisaged. Chua, Chrisman, and Sharma (1999), for example, claim that behavior could define a family firm but do not suggest the behavior that should be observed or measured. Moreover, the family as a social system has been advocated as a factor that influences the business organization of a family firm (e.g., Chrisman, Chua, and Sharma 2003; Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan 2006; Habbershon and Williams 1999); however, the family features and metaphor were not described. Because there is no theory of family characteristics in business organizations (with the exception of type Z literature), we propose to use the presented cases as bridges from qualitative evidence to mainstream deductive research (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007).

We use these cases as qualitative examples to study "phenomena in the environments in which they naturally occur" and to describe "the actual human interactions, meanings, and processes that constitute real-life organizational settings" (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007, 25). Qualitative research can provide the basis for understanding the social processes that underlie management and memorable examples of important management issues to build theory (Gephart 2004). The sport organizations in the provided case examples appear to provide evidence in support of the possibility that family business characteristics may be found in other non-family organizations.

Moreover, firms in the sports industry typically enjoy a large amount of coverage in popular press. This coverage provides access to information for research (game performance, management actions, and team policies). Additionally, some of the famous figures observed in this study have written autobiographies or have books written about themselves or their teams. The cases described are a result of a triangulation between several sources, such as the group's official website, newspapers, memoires, and media coverage.

Maccabi Electra Tel Aviv

The Maccabi Electra Tel Aviv Basketball Club (hereafter called Maccabi) is located in Israel and was founded as a sports club in 1932 as part of a Zionistic sports non-profit organization. In 1954, an Israeli basketball league was founded, and Maccabi won the league's first championship. In 1958, Maccabi also began to play in the European basketball championship. The club was successful and was a leading club in Israel. In 1969, Shimon Mizrahi (adv.) became involved with the team and, from 1970 onward, has served as chairman of the club. Under his management, Maccabi became the leading basketball team in Israel and won five European championships. The period from 1969 until today is of interest to our investigation because it features the long tenure of Shimon Mizrahi's leadership role in the team. In 2007, Mizrahi was included in Time Magazine's list of the 50 most prominent sports execs in the world (Weissberg 2007). In 2000, Maccabi became a registered business corporation with five groups of owners, and only one of these groups was owned by Shimon Mizrahi. Currently, Maccabi ownership is divided between three groups; Mizrahi is a minor share owner and serves as the club's president today.

The Boston Celtics

The Boston Celtics (hereafter called the Celtics) is a basketball team located in Boston, U.S.A. Our time frame of interest is the period between 1950 and 2006 (when Red Auerbach served in various positions in this sports club). Auerbach started as a coach for 16 years and then served as a general manager, president, or vice chairman until his death in 2006. During this period of more than five decades, ownership changed hands more than a dozen times; thus, there was no continuity of ownership during this time. In December of 1999, The Sporting News named Auerbach as one of the 100 most powerful people in sports of the twentieth century (Hilton 2003). He was named the architect and mastermind behind one of the most dominant franchises in professional sports history and helped lead Boston to 10 Eastern Division titles in 16 years.

The Green Bay Packers

The Green Bay Packers (hereafter called the Packers) is an American football team based in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The team was founded in 1919 and was owned by the Green Bay Packers, Inc. The team has been a publicly owned, non-profit corporation since 1923. This case example is interested in the time during which Vince Lombardi was involved with the team (1959–1968) as a head coach and general manager. Lombardi departed after nine seasons, leaving behind one of the greatest dynasties in NFL history. He led the Packers to five NFL championships, including three in a row between the years of 1965 and 1967.

Case examples – the family metaphor

In the following sections, we will describe the sports teams using the two primary dimensions defined by the Circumplex model, namely (a) cohesion, or the emotional bonding that the team members have for one another, and (b) flexibility, or the change in the group's leadership, roles, and rules.

Cohesion

This dimension describes the degree of togetherness or closeness between the organization members. The constructs or variables included in this dimension include the balance between enmeshment and separation, the degree of boundaries between members, the style of decision making (together or apart), and the degree of cohesion. Systems vary along a continuum between overly connected/ enmeshed to disconnected (Olson and Gorall 2003).

All three cases manifest cohesive, collective team cultures. A family or clan organizational culture, as previously described, is characterized by a collective, informal, and holistic outlook (Ouchi and Jaeger 1978). This culture resembles a clan or family (Ouchi 1980). All of the organizations in our case examples have evidence showing that their respective dominant cultures were team cultures with a preference for the group's identity over the individualistic concerns more common in a "regular" business organization. During the long years of Mizrahi's control of Maccabi, the culture has been that of a warm and cohesive organization that demands loyalty and prefers "team players" to individualistic stars. Players testify on their personal commitment to the team and a personal relationship with the club (unlike professional players in other teams who can easily switch teams and play for a competing club). When asked about the performance of a single new player, the current coach of Maccabi once answered the reporters: "Unlike you, I focus less on individual players and focus more on the group as a whole" (Shachrur 2012). Maccabi thus described the team's culture.

Auerbach was also famous in focusing on the team over the individual players; his approach was oriented toward the collective effort or the group as a whole: "The individual players weren't the ones who made the difference. It was the team as a whole" (Hilton 2006). This attitude had concrete outcomes: the individual achievements of the players on the team were significantly lower than the group achievements. In addition to his emphasis on teamwork, Auerbach's teams never appeared to have a dominant scorer. In a similar manner, the year prior to the arrival of Lombardi was an excellent year for the individuals but one of the worst years for the team: with five future halls of famers playing on the team, the Packers finished with a record of 1–10–1, which was the worst in Packer history.

Auerbach himself defined the team's culture at his time as a family relationship focused on caring for each other. When asked about what was unique to his team, he answered: "It's the whole idea of caring. I'm in contact with the Frank Ramseys and Ed McCauleys and Bones McKirmeys who played for me 35 years ago. I know where they are, what they do. If they want something, they call me and if I want something, I call them. There's a family feeling" (Webber 1987).

The inclusive and personal attitude was such an exception during Auerbach's time that it led to social/political records as well as in sports because he included many minority players to his team as long as the players served the group's objectives. This inclusive attitude reflects a family value of belonging: "Probably his most notable attribute was that Auerbach was color-blind. He didn't see black or white players on the court; he just saw players who could help him win. In 1950, he became the first to draft an African-American .... He was first to start five blacks and first to hire a black coach in the NBA" (Hilton 2006). Lombardi shared the same attitude and also stood out as a color-blind coach, and he was determined "to ignore the prejudices then prevalent in most NFL front offices in their search for the most talented players." Lombardi explained his views by saying that he "... viewed his players as neither white nor black, but Packer green" (Wikipedia 2012c). Of the quotations attributed to Lombardi are several that stress the importance of team effort over individualistic concerns: "Individual commitment to a group effort – that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work," "Teamwork is what the Green Bay Packers were all about. They didn't do it for individual glory. They did it because they loved one another" (www.brainyquotes/vincelombardi 2012).

The family/clan culture within a given sports team is summed up by a former player of the Celtics who described Auerbach's style: "Red was the ultimate team builder. He was a great motivator because he made an attempt to know and understand people. He knew the needs of his players emotionally and mentally. He respected you and your family and made us all welcome to the Celtics family. He had great compassion and created a family environment" (NBA.com 2012).

When describing Auerbach's relationship with his players, one of the Celtics' directors of basketball operations said players considered him a patriarch, "kind of like a grandfather," and Auerbach drew admiration for the manner by which he "dealt with people, calmed egos, and handled the jealousies that can exist on a team of talented players" (Springer 2006). These relationships lasted for many years and, despite his demanding nature, Auerbach was popular among his players. Auerbach recalled that 45 of his ex-players attended his 75th birthday party. The relationships that Auerbach made with his players were not based on the traditional statistics used in the sports world. Auerbach once said, "I don't believe in statistics. There are too many factors that can't be measured. You can't measure a ballplayer's heart" (Webber 1987).

Mutual trust, caring, and long-lasting relationships are typical in family relationships. Note these same aspects in the following description that describes Auerbach's values, which transcend the usual employer–employee monetary-based relationship:

> One important thing is trust within our organization. I really believe that *loyalty* is a two-way street. Unfortunately, in most businesses managers expect loyalty from employees but are very reluctant to give loyalty. We've built up an organization where *we care about our people* .... Anybody who's been with us for more than five or six years will usually finish his career here. And when a player is on the tail end of his career, *we don't just say, "We paid you, you played. See you later."* Most of our players have self-retired. They tell me when they don't think they can play anymore.
>
> Webber (1987, 86) (italics added)

The special relationships between Lombardi and his players are demonstrated in the following story that shows the level of care, intimacy, and personal touch that he employed:

> Lombardi discovered that rookie running back was deaf in one ear, something that had escaped his parents, schoolteachers, and previous coaches. Lombardi observed Brown's habit of tilting his head in one direction when listening to signals being called and walked behind him during drills and said "Larry". When Brown did not answer, the coach asked him to take a hearing exam. Brown was fitted with a hearing aid, and with this correction he would enjoy a successful NFL career.
>
> Wikipedia/Vince Lombardi (2012)

Cohesion and extreme closeness are characterized by unclear boundaries between members (Olson and Gorall 2003). This resembles the overlap between the three systems of ownership, management and family during the first stages of family firms when the systems are not clearly defined or separated (Gersick et al. 1997). Unclear boundaries between family and firm have already been described as typical for the early stages of family firms (Kets-de-Vries 1996; Ward 1987), and the systems of business and family tend to be blurred, particularly during the founder's era (Labaki, Michael-Tsabari and Zachary 2011; Michael-Tsabari and Lavee 2012). The three mentioned case examples show diffused boundaries between the roles of owners, coaches, players, and managers. By diffused boundaries we mean that the differentiation between organizational levels or different roles tend to be unclear. Employees may function as owners at times, for example, and there is no clear boundary defining various roles.

Unclear boundaries are also manifested when the same individual holds multiple roles within an organization. The Celtics had former players who became coaches, and Russell served simultaneously in a dual player–coach position (Bjarkman 2002). Maccabi was also coached by a former player. Dual positions are frequently held by family members in family firms (e.g., father-employer). Likewise, each of the three discussed team leaders in their respective organizations moved from role to role and carried multiple positions: Mizrahi as manager, president, and owner; Auerbach as coach, general manager, president, and vice chairman; and Lombardi as coach and general manager.

Moni Fanan served as the general manager of Maccabi with Mizrahi and committed suicide sometime after his resignation allegedly because of debts amounting to millions of dollars (Bassok 2009; Cohen and Harush 2009). Fanan has been accused of running a private investment bank for Maccabi players and other sports figures (Bassok 2009). This affair clearly involves crossing boundaries between private and public life, as well as professional and friend relationships:

> Since the early 90's, Moni Fanan, Maccabi's mythological general manager, has led *friendly, professional and financial relationships with players*, coaches and senior team's managers in Israeli football and basketball. Fanan, who was having fatherly relationships with Maccabi Tel Aviv's players, has won their confidence and competing team's confidence as well, and with their money has created what is known in the Israeli basketball world as "Fanan's bank."
>
> Cohen and Harush (2009) (italics added)

In this dimension of cohesion (which describes the closeness between members and their emotional bonding according to the Circumplex terminology), each of the three presented case examples shows that non-family organizations may also be characterized by warm, inclusive relationships with strong emotional connections between members for long periods of time. Their respective clan-like behaviors can be characterized by collectivistic concerns over individualistic concerns and extreme high levels of cohesion.

Flexibility

This dimension describes the degree of change in roles and rules in the organization. Flexibility's constructs and variables are leadership and negotiation styles, as well as how control and discipline are manifested in the system. An organization can be characterized along a continuum between overly flexible to inflexible (Olson and Gorall 2003). The three studied sport teams can be described as relatively low in flexibility, with roles and rules that did not change for long periods of time. The leadership style in each is a paternalistic style with a dominant leader in each organization.

All three sports groups had a dominant leader during the time frames discussed. Unlike the figures in family firms, the dominant figure in sports groups does not necessarily need to be an owner: Shimon Mizrahi serves as an unpaid chairman and president for Maccabi. After approximately 30 years of Mizrahi's leadership, the club turned into a shareholding company in 2000, and Mizrahi is now a minor shareholder. Regarding the Celtics, Red Auerbach stayed with the team since he arrived as a coach in 1950 and remained until he died as a vice chairman in 2006. During these years, Auerbach also served as general manager and as a president of the team. Vince Lombardi had a shorter tenure with the Packers compared with the more than four decades of the first two team leaders. Lombardi coached the Packers for eight years and served another year as their general manager. Both Auerbach and Lombardi were employees in their organizations and never shared ownership. However, all three played a central role in their respective teams.

Each of the three leaders joined their teams during a time of crisis and not only helped their respective organizations to succeed but also led them to superior records. The difficult times prior to the arrival of each of the leaders appear to have contributed to their later centrality and fame. Mizrahi arrived at Maccabi in the wake of the club's financial problems. Auerbach started coaching the Celtics when the team's owner was desperate to turn his struggling and financially strapped franchise around. In the year prior to the arrival of Lombardi, the Packers "finished with a record of 1–10–1, the worst in Packer history. The players were dispirited, the Packer shareholders were disheartened, and the Green Bay community was enraged. The angst in Green Bay extended to the NFL as a whole, as the financial viability and the very existence of the Green Bay Packer franchise were in jeopardy" (Wikipedia 2012b).

Each of the three team leaders played a similar and dominant role in their respective teams: Mizrahi had total control over all decisions and processes and employed a general manager who took care of the "softer" issues. As one former player described: "In our time, there was an exclusive control of Shimon and Shemluk, and they were the only ones to run the club. The decisions were quick, over the phone or in a small meeting." Auerbach had a central role in all of the decisions regarding the management of the Celtics: "in the early days of the franchise Auerbach had no assistants, ran all the practices, did all the scouting – both of opposing teams and college draft prospects – and scheduled all the road trips" (Wikipedia 2012a).

Each of the three leaders was described as a dominant father figure that led their organization in a paternalistic manner. As described previously, paternalism involves fatherly benevolence with an expectation of loyalty from other employees (Pellegrini and Scandura 2008). Maccabi's fans sing the same song each game: "Shimon Mizrahi is the King." Auerbach was given the titles of "guiding light," patriarch, and father: "Red Auerbach himself would remain the guiding light of the Celtics franchise throughout the seasons and the decades to follow the great glory span of 1956–1966 – first as general manager, later as elder statesman and *patriarch*, always as *spiritual father* and visible touchstone of the revered Celtic ideal" (Bjarkman 2002, 7) (italics added). This paternalism was a conscious choice: "A football team's relationship to its coach isn't too far removed from that of a father to his family. Discipline, a discipline of love like that given by a father or mother, is not a hard thing to accept" (Lombardi-Jr. 2003, 57). Lombardi viewed his assistants largely as technicians and teachers and did not expect them to be "emotional leaders": "He jealously guarded that role for himself, and saved his emotion for his players" (Maraniss 1999, 207). After winning the NFL Western Conference for the first time since 1944, the Green Bay community was led to anointing Lombardi with the nickname "The Pope," which refers to the ultimate father figure.

The low level of flexibility exhibited during these periods is also manifested in very long tenures and relationships. The leadership role does not change for decades, and the relationships with employees/players also span many years. This ensures that the amount of change in roles and rules is relatively low, thus leading to rigid and less flexible organizations. Long CEO tenures tend to characterize family businesses compared with non-family businesses (McConaughy 2000). Mizrahi and Auerbach have more than four decades of involvement with their teams. Lombardi stayed with the Packers only for nine years, but this period of time is the longest Packers tenure with the exception of its founder. Lombardi died suddenly from cancer a year after leaving the Packers, and the team did not recover from this abrupt departure, resulting in relatively little on-field success for a quarter century after Lombardi's departure.

The long tenures typical to family firms help to establish long relationships with all stakeholders (McConaughy 2000). In each of the three case examples, the leaders played more than one role for their teams: president, general manager, and minor shareholder (Mizrahi), head coach, general manager, chairman, and vice chairman (Auerbach), and coach and general manager (Lombardi). The leaders' relationships with players, owners, and fans have been described as warm, devoted, and enduring. A former player described the general manager's work at Maccabi:

> It is difficult to find this kind of devotion. He is a very productive man that gets up in the morning at 6 am and started working for Maccabi the whole day, without expecting anything in return, because he saw the players as his children. Especially this year, with all the changes we went through, we needed somebody with an emotional spirit like his to combine all the foreigners and turn Maccabi to a whole which is more than the sum of its parts.
>
> Yedioth-Tel-Aviv (2009)

All of Auerbach's Celtics coach successors to the end of the 1980s were his former players that maintained his traditions and won six additional NBA championships (Bjarkman 2002). Thirty of his players became coaches, including 8 of the 12 players on his 1962–1963 team (May 2006). These long relationships were characterized by loyalty and devotion: "Auerbach was a true players' coach and his teams adored him for it" (Bjarkman 2002). One of the current owners at Maccabi contends that these relationships could even sometimes be more important than the sport issues – "Maccabi has some principles that are more important than basketball. I do not agree for example if the parents of Saras (a former player) come to Tel Aviv and he does not get to play, that is wrong even if the head coach were Phil Jackson." This is similar to the scholars' claim that family firms have more than business goals for their firms (e.g., Zellweger et al. Forthcoming).

As previously noted, flexibility includes the roles and rules of behavior. Nepotism has been described as a tendency for family firms (Lansberg 1983). Nepotism means that the family prefers and helps its own members (Bellow 2003). The three studied sport organizations have several examples of pseudo-nepotistic behavior. The former players who have become coaches with Maccabi and the Celtics can also serve as examples of pseudo-children that were given a better chance to lead their own teams. In the case of Maccabi, this did not succeed because Katash failed as a coach and was forced to resign. For the Celtics, however, these former players became successful coaches who maintained Auerbach's method (Bjarkman 2002). Other forms of nepotism are evident: Maccabi's general manager's son played as a basketball player on the team and later stayed as a trainer in the club. His daughter worked in the team's marketing division. Today, the sons of two owners serve as board members together with their fathers: one is a co-general manager and the other is vice chairman. Tradition is evident in the Lombardi family as well. Lombardi's grandson is the current quarterbacks coach for the New Orleans Saints. In the 2009 season, he helped lead the Saints to win the trophy that bears his grandfather's name.

Discussion

The primary question posed at the opening of this article is whether non-family organizations can behave similarly to family firms. To answer this question, we examined the manner in which the literature of family therapy, organization theory, and family business interact with the family metaphor. Our discussion ended with a summation of the descriptions from the different streams of literature in two dimensions of cohesion and flexibility drawn from the Circumplex model. We suggest that the family metaphor is best defined using these two dimensions. We illustrated the behavior defined by the Circumplex model using three case examples. There are striking parallels between these sports teams. The two dimensions described by the Circumplex model have multiple manifestations in the behavior of the three cases. This allows for a possible positive answer to our primary question of whether a non-family organization may behave similar to a family firm. We suggest that these family-like features may be part of a behavioral-based definition of family firms similar to Chua et al.'s (1999) proposal of "family firm as behavior" definition.

Each of the sports organizations had individuals that played the roles of pseudo-parents; each maintained roles and rules over long periods of time, each stressed the importance of the collective group, and each organization maintained close emotional relationships. The theoretical contributions of this study lie in the delineation of the family metaphor in the dimensions of cohesion and flexibility. These dimensions are represented in each of the three case examples and are measured through the aspects in Table 2. Thus, these examples provide the bridges from the conceptual to the actual manifestations of the family metaphor in non-family organizations.

Table 2: Cohesion, flexibility, and their manifest variables.

	Cohesion	Flexibility
Variables	Emotional bonding, boundaries, coalitions, time, space, friends, decision making, interests, and recreation	Leadership style (control, discipline), negotiation styles, role relationships, and relationships rules
Selected illustrations from cases	Team performance is preferred over individualistic achievements, using family terms (family, dynasty, emotions), inclusive and personal relationships. Relationships with players for decades, relationships sometimes more important than business goals, warm, intimate, and personal. Multi roles for leaders, former players become coaches, unclear boundaries between ownership and employees, between money and emotions	Very long tenures of over four decades, paternalistic management style, dominant, and central roles. Rules and roles do not change for a very long time. Rules of behavior include nepotism – former players become coaches, family members are hired as employees, sons of new owners are appointed for positions in the team

The question of whether the family features can be applicable to non-family organizations was directly posed to Auerbach. He was asked whether his management philosophy is applicable to managers in any field (Webber 1987). Auerbach summed up his philosophy in the values of loyalty, pride, teamwork, and discipline, and these values were termed the “Celtics’ mystique” (Webber 1987; Bjarkman 2002). These values could also fit within the descriptions of the family firm culture. Auerbach responded positively to this question and concluded by saying: “And it was “we”, not “I”” (Webber 1987, 91). He was confident that the collective team spirit that captures his managerial philosophy could be applied to organizations. The family metaphor, as well as the roles of leadership, emotions, and inspiration are manifested in another such example of family features in a non-family organization, namely “Chrysler”:

> Lee Iacocca has also been particularly adept in the use of metaphor and analogy …. He then draws an analogy to the family: “I call this equality of sacrifice … It wasn’t the loans that saved us, although we needed them badly. It was the hundreds of millions of dollars given up by everybody involved. It was like a family getting together and saying “We’ve got a loan from our rich uncle and now we’re going to prove that we can pay him back”.” He implies that he and his fellow Chrysler workers are all members of a common family working hard to prove their worth. By invoking this analogy of himself and Chrysler as a family, he attempts to create strong identification between himself and the average Chrysler worker. He interprets the hardships that Chrysler employees must experience as necessary to help the “family.” *This rhetorical tactic effectively plays on emotions*

> *associating the Chrysler situation with traditional family values*. By tying the company crisis to a positive analogy, workers are provided with a rationale for their difficulties and the motivation to prove their worth as a "family" to "Uncle" Sam.
>
> Conger (1991, 39–40) (italics added)

The rest of the study is organized as follows: we point to some limitations and then open up to discussing several related issues that can also lead to future studies. We conclude with the study's main contributions.

There are several limitations to this study. The cases are based only on secondary sources that include official websites, articles, and books. More in-depth case studies with first-hand sources should follow. Moreover, the cases do not represent a cross-section of other organizations but are confined to sports organizations. The accounts in our case examples stress the manner by which the behavior of the teams was *different* than that of their competitors. In a business world that is dominated by the "professional" and impersonal bureaucratic ideal that limits or eliminates the expression of human emotion where "it's not personal, it's business" (Rafaeli and Worline 2001), an organization with family features may stand out as just being *different*. Behaving in an inclusive, warm, and personal manner could be a possible way of behaving differently than their competitors. An organization may reap benefits simply from being different than its competitors, and the specific benefits of the family features were not examined in this study. We also did not look into other characteristics that could have been shared by the three cases and that may have led to their superior performance.

The possible antecedents of family features in non-family organizations have not been explored in the current study. Our case examples suggest the presence of a dominant manager, long tenures, and a paternalistic management style as common features. The difficulty that these sports teams experienced prior to the appointment of the three leaders may have had a role in preparing for a different style, but these questions remain open for future studies.

Other observations regarding the case examples should be noted. The first observation is on the length of time over which the family metaphor operated. It was not a transient phenomenon – the family features described in the sports teams were not limited to a single episode or a short period of time. In two cases, this phenomenon occurred across decades. In the third case, it spanned nearly a decade and was the longest tenure for a leader in that organization. This long-term facet also characterizes family firms and is connected with stability, unique employment settings, and advantages in utilizing manpower in these firms (Lee 2006; Sirmon and Hitt 2003; Ward 1988). However, we only explored the tenure of a dominant leader in each of the three cases and not the time prior to or after their tenures. *Prima facie* the cases may suggest that the family features of high cohesion and paternalistic emotional leadership style in non-family organizations may be connected with dominant managers with long tenures who create a clan-like culture in their organizations. Thus, the manifestation of a clan-like culture with family features may be temporarily bounded around a central leader and not an organizational level characteristic as in family firms. This suggests that future research could examine how the family metaphor operates not only at the top leadership levels but also at varying organizational levels.

The second point is the tension between business and non-business goals in these sports organizations which warrants mention because it mirrors the tension between the family and business spheres and goals in family firms (Zellweger et al. Forthcoming). A question was posed to Auerbach on this subject: “With all the money involved, the owners, the big contracts, do you look at professional basketball as a business or a sport?” He replied:

> At the back of your mind, you can’t help but think that it’s a business. *But basically I’ve always felt that it’s a labor of love. I’ve always put the chemistry and the performance of the ball club first* .... If you have a team that people like to see because the players are charismatic and they hustle, they play hard, they play as if they enjoy it – when you’ve got that, you draw people and make money. *Then the business practices fall into place*.
>
> Webber (1987, 89–90) (italics added)

Although the Celtics are a business organization, Auerbach placed love and chemistry before other more traditional business goals and believed that by doing so the end business outcomes would also be accomplished. Auerbach’s behavior is also observed in Maccabi: when trying to explain the untraditional method of choosing players at Maccabi, a sports analyst said: “The big change concerned the way the players were chosen by their fit to the team and their personality, and not by their statistics.... Blatt (the coach) saw things others did not.” Maccabi and the Celtics manifest a similar behavior of player selection despite different times and continents, and these demonstrate the family culture in these non-family organizations.

Auerbach’s answer regarding the labor of love concerns the third observation that should be made regarding the role of emotions in non-family as well as in family firms (Labaki, Michael-Tsabari, and Zachary 2013). Love and other emotions involved in caring relationships are included in the descriptions of the behaviors in the sports teams as part of both Circumplex dimensions: the emotional closeness of cohesion and the style of leadership of the second dimension of flexibility. The inclusion of emotions in these behaviors may be connected with the role and influence of emotions in leadership and organization. The emotional climate of groups has been found to influence performance and may be a primary incubator from which excellence emerges (Pirola-Merlo et al. 2002). Moreover, managing one's own emotions and the emotions of others is an important component of effective leadership, especially when leading groups (Goleman 1998). Conger (1991) argues that arousing affect in others is an important mechanism used by inspirational leaders to impact performance. Similarly, Bass (1990) connects the emotions of caring for one another with leadership and inspiration. Charismatic leadership is intimately tied to the leader's ability to model and redefine emotions and emotional responses (Wasielewski 1985), and leaders actually manage group emotions (Pescosolido 2002).

Emotions were theorized out of organizations because they were better left to a typically female and therefore non-organizational sphere (Rafaeli and Worline 2001). This relegates the emotions in the inclusive relationships between organizational members and the emotional leadership style to a discussion on gender issues. The construct of "bounded emotionality" has been suggested by Mumby and Putnam (1992) to define an alternative mode of organizing in which "nurturance, caring, community, supportiveness, and interrelatedness are fused with individual responsibility to shape organizational experiences" (Mumby and Putnam 1992, 474). This description resembles our exploration of the family features of the family metaphor and the first dimension of cohesion.

The goal of bounded emotionality is to define interpersonal relationships through mutual understanding of work-related feelings (Jayasinghe, Thomas, and Wickramasinghe 2007). It is employed as an alternative to bureaucratic impersonality, and it was primarily studied in relatively small and usually non-profit organizations. An exception to this is the study of The Body Shop (Martin, Knopoff, and Beckman 1998), which describes how bounded emotionality is enacted in larger, for-profit firms where the organizational context mixes traditional bureaucratic control mechanisms including efficiency and financial measures with emotion management. After suggesting that more women in the organizational hierarchy are facilitating factors (Martin, Knopoff, and Beckman 1998), scholars have identified this construct with feminist literature (e.g., Ashcraft 2001; Jayasinghe et al. 2007). However, the three sports organizations explored in our study had primarily male members in very stereotypical masculine men's sports environments. The link between emotions, emotional leadership styles, and masculine or feminine identifications is beyond the scope of this article but deserves future exploration.

The forth point concerns the type Z literature, namely the idea that business organizations may behave similar to clans. The type Z literature clearly claimed that non-family organizations may display family features in their behavior. While the family metaphor has been applied to a type Z organization, the reverse association has not been made. There has been no connection to the field of family firms as type Z organizations. Whether family firms resemble type Z firms is beyond the scope of this study; nevertheless, the claim that non-family firms may behave similar to family-owned firms (as demonstrated in this study) deserves further scrutiny.

The fifth point addresses motivation: having argued that the family metaphor applies to other non-family organizations, there is a need to address the motivation for non-family organizations to adopt family features. What is the motivation for non-family organizations to embrace family features – namely, what can these features contribute to organizations? The common denominator of all three sports organizations is not only the similarity of behavior but also the huge success that is linked to these teams. This success is demonstrated in multiple sports (basketball or football), time frames (1969 to today, 1950–2006, 1959–1968) and countries (United States or Israel). In all three cases, the high performance attributed to the teams during these time frames is unique, outstanding, and acknowledged by media, fans, and objective measures, such as championships and wins. While we may not have covered all possible family features in family firms or in the case studies presented, the coincidence of the same behavior in various circumstances that have produced such similar outcomes cannot be underestimated or ignored. Nevertheless, there is no clarity regarding the direction of causation for the link between family features and performance, nor is it clear that the influence of family features on performance is only positive – family firms are also described as having negative outcomes such as favoritism, conflicts, and disruptive relationships (e.g., Eddleston and Kellermanns 2007; Levinson 1971). Our illustrative cases may only point to the correlation of family features with improved performance in these three cases. The outperformance of family firms is suggested to be linked to the founder's era (Villalonga and Amit 2006), which is also characterized by extremely cohesive families with no change in leadership roles or rules (Michael-Tsabari and Lavee 2012). The relationships with a dominant founder, the cohesion between members and performance, as well as the direction of causation and influence deserve future exploration in the family and non-family settings.

The sixth point concerns the level of analysis issue. The collective and inclusive culture evident in the three cases appears to have contributed to a *group* identity based on belonging, loyalty and commitment. As Auerbach suggested, this is a two-way relationship – the leaders have instilled a team culture that was reciprocated by the players and employees. We primarily described behaviors and practices as manifestations in the social level. Nevertheless, the values, emotions, and attitudes and other cognitive considerations related to the family metaphor that lay at the individual level should be part of future studies.

The seventh point concerns a wider perspective since family firms have been described as having more unique characteristics compared with non-family organizations than what we have described in this study, such as a long-term perspective (Daily and Dollinger 1992; Goto 2006), transgenerational aspirations (e.g., Habbershon and Pistrui 2002; Zellweger, Nason, and Nordqvist 2012), and the confluence and interaction of the family and firm systems (Tagiuri and Davis 1996), resulting in economic and non-economic goals (Zellweger et al. Forthcoming). The role and influence of these characteristics within the family metaphor and the family features warrants more scrutiny.

On the other side, several of the family features described in this study have already been studied in the family firm context and have scales and measures in the general organizational literature that can be applied, such as paternalism (Ainsworth and Wolfram-Cox 2003; Aycan et al. 2000; Johannisson and Huse 2000), collectivism (Sharma and Manikutty 2005; Taras, Kirkman, and Steel 2010; Zahra, Hayton, and Salvato 2004), and affective commitment (Allen and Meyer 1990; J. P. Meyer and Allen 1991; J. P. Meyer, Allen, and Gellatly 1990).

Conclusions

By putting forth initial observations that support the proposition that family features can be manifested in non-family organizations, we hope to lay the groundwork for more formal studies on the family metaphor in organizations and the behavioral manifestations of such a metaphor. The family features suggested in this study were evident in three explorative cases of sports organizations. Future research should examine the family metaphor in other organizations and industries. Qualitative and quantitative studies could shed more light on the family metaphor in various outlets. Our theoretical contribution is to help define the family metaphor in terms of cohesion and flexibility as drawn from the Circumplex model. We use this definition as a guideline for the diagnosis of the three case examples. The Circumplex model incorporates a third dimension of communication that helps families change their type, and this dimension should also be part of future studies. As noted by Olson and colleagues (Olson 2000; Olson and Gorall 2003), the Circumplex is a relational model that focuses on practical and behavioral aspects, while families may also be described by their cognitive aspects of values and attitudes.

The contributions of this study are of importance to the family as well as for the non-family fields of study. For family firms, this study demonstrates the relevance of a definition based on behavior and not only on ownership. While this definition could include only those family firms that seek a family culture in the organization (and not all types of family businesses), the behavioral aspect of the family firm definition should be investigated. Thus, the family features delineated in this study should be further explored. Scholars suggest that the family influences the firm by bringing in "familiness" qualities (e.g., Habbershon, Williams, and MacMillan 2006; Habbershon and Williams 1999). Our exploration of the family metaphor and its behavioral manifestations could be, as we have asserted, a step in the direction of building the theory of families in business. Whether there are more features or more specific definitions for the family metaphor or whether their presence in the three cases appears simultaneously or in correlation with each other in such different organizations warrants attention in future studies. Moreover, the outstanding performance achieved by these sports teams compared with their competitors may point to the possible advantages of family features in family and non-family organizations. The search for the source of outperformance that has been occasionally attributed to family firms may be linked to the family features suggested in this study.

The contribution of the current study for non-family organizations arises from the definition of the family features and their manifestation in practice. Our study translates the general description of a family culture attributed to a family owned organization into day-to-day behavior that could be applied and followed. Our descriptions and illustrations of real behaviors in non-family organizations (as having two primary definitions of the level of emotional cohesion and the degree of change in rules and roles) may also serve as managerial guidelines for practitioners. We point at specific behaviors that can be followed by managers who wish to have a family spirit in their organization. While this remains far from an actual manual for a clan-like work spirit, we hope to have suggested several practical directions. We show that non-family firms may adopt family-like attributes and that this adoption may have other advantages. We cannot be sure whether this was Sir Leahy's intention in introducing the strengths of family firms to Tesco (Leahy 2006), but this study suggests that he may have wished for a practical, successful, and positive direction for his non-family organization.

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