

ORGANIZATIONAL RESOURCES AND COLLABORATION BETWEEN SPORT CLUBS: A QUALITATIVE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

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INTRODUCTION

Community sport clubs (hereafter, 'sport clubs') are among the primary providers of organized sport activities (Seippel et al., 2020). These organizations need to collaborate with other entities such as public authorities, sport governing bodies, or private companies to achieve their objectives (Misener & Doherty, 2012; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013). Collaborations between non-profit sport organizations (hereafter referred to as 'non-profit sport collaborations') are particularly desirable because they allow pooling similar operational processes which reduce costs, create social capital and meet social directives, promoting community engagement, innovating to address 'wicked' problems (Jones et al., 2017; Misener & Doherty, 2012, 2013; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wemmer et al., 2016; Wicker et al., 2013). However, studies indicate that these collaborations are not always widely developed (Jones et al.,

2017; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013). For example, while 56% of German sport clubs and 35.6% of Flemish sport clubs maintain collaboration with other sport clubs (Wicker et al., 2013), there are very few non-profit sport collaborations in the American community sport context (Jones et al., 2017). Given the potential benefits to sport clubs and their communities, it is essential to understand the factors explaining the disparity between collaborating and non-collaborating sport clubs.

To date, many sport collaborations studies have looked at the antecedents (for a review, see Babiak et al., 2018). Studies have focused on the motivations to collaborate (Babiak, 2007), the nature of collaboration (Misener & Doherty, 2012), the formation of collaboration (Zeimers et al., 2019), and organizational resources (Jones et al., 2017, 2018, 2020; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013). The rationale of examining organizational resources as antecedents of non-profit sport collaboration is twofold.

On the one hand, non-profit sport organizations generally have limited resources and therefore need to collaborate to acquire crucial ones and achieve their goals (Jones et al., 2017; Wicker et al., 2013; Zeimers et al., 2019). On the other hand, resources are assets non-profit sport organizations rely on to function and collaborate (Doherty et al., 2014; Millar & Doherty, 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Previous studies have highlighted the relationships between human, infrastructural, strategic, and financial resources and the tendency of sport clubs to collaborate (Jones et al., 2017, 2018, 2020; Wicker et al., 2013). These studies have significantly advanced knowledge by highlighting that organizational resources can influence the decision to collaborate or not. However, it is unclear how these resources combine into collaborating or non-collaborating sport clubs' profiles. For example, Jones et al. (2020) noted that organizations with low-resource profiles engage in integrative collaborations like organizations with medium- and high-resource profiles. However, although classifying organizations based on low-, medium- and high- resource profiles is an appropriate and valuable first step, this approach does not indicate the relative importance of each resource within these profiles. Yet, it is timely to examine the composition of these resource profiles to identify combinations of critical resources characterizing collaborating and non-collaborating sport clubs (Jones et al., 2020).

Our study aims to identify resource-based profiles of sport clubs related to collaboration and non-collaboration with

other sport clubs. Building on a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), this exploratory study addresses the following two research questions: 'Does a resource-based profile of sports clubs related to collaboration with other sport clubs exist? If yes, what are the resource-based profiles of sport clubs related to collaboration or non-collaboration?'. This research offers three contributions. First, it contributes to the non-profit sport collaboration literature by extending knowledge on the role of organizational resources as antecedents of these collaborations. Our study identifies profiles of collaborating and non-collaborating sport clubs. Second, this research engages in a neglected stream of the sport collaboration literature: the non-collaboration. By identifying distinct combinations of resources related to collaboration and non-collaboration, our research introduces the notion of asymmetry between collaborating and non-collaborating sport clubs. Finally, this study demonstrates the relevance of going beyond traditional research methods to further integrate configurational methods in the sport management field.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Non-profit sport collaborations

Collaborations have received increasing attention from practitioners and scholars in the sport context. However, most of the literature has focused on cross-sectoral collaborations and less on non-profit sport collaborations (Babiak et

al., 2018). Adapted from Babiak (2007), non-profit sport collaborations are defined as a constrained or voluntary, close, long-term, planned exchange process between two non-profit sport organizations to serve mutually beneficial purposes in a problem domain. Non-profit sport collaborations have particular features related to the environment in which they occur and the partners' organizational characteristics (Jones et al., 2017; Sotiriadou et al., 2017; Zeimers et al., 2019). On the one hand, these collaborations occur in a coopetitive environment where the partners collaborate and compete for the same crucial resources (e.g., sport facilities or subsidies) (Wemmer et al., 2016). On the other hand, partners involved in non-profit sport collaborations are characterized by an organizational fit (i.e., they share similarities, such as their legal status, mainly having a social objective and essentially voluntary management) (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Seippel et al., 2020). However, some critical differences in the complementary resources they seek prevail (Zeimers et al., 2019). Moreover, non-profit partners generally possess limited resources (Doherty et al., 2014; Lefebvre et al., 2021; Millar & Doherty, 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2009). This interest in collaborating in response to resource scarcity and the high degree of organizational fit among non-profit sport organizations suggests that more studies should examine this type of collaboration and its antecedents.

Organizational resources as antecedents of collaborations

Understood as the preconditions for forming collaborations (Parent & Harvey, 2009), the antecedents of collaboration have received significant interest (Babiak et al., 2018). The organizational resources (human, infrastructural, strategic, and financial) that sport organizations possess or need are important collaboration antecedents (Jones et al., 2017, 2020; Wicker et al., 2013). Previous research in the non-profit (AbouAssi et al., 2016) and sport context (Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013; Wicker et al., 2013) highlighted significant relationships between the (un)availability of some resources and the development of collaborations. In particular, scholars identified six tangible resources influencing the decision to collaborate: voluntary engagement (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2013), the presence of women on the board (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Foster & Meinhard, 2002), availability of facilities (Wicker et al., 2013), strategic vision (Jones et al., 2017; Misener & Doherty, 2009), revenues (Wicker et al., 2013), and diversification of revenue sources (MacIndoe & Sullivan, 2014). These resources are discussed in the next section considering our theoretical framework. In addition, it is noteworthy that other more intangible resources, such as trust, communication skills, leadership, are essential to develop and maintain collaborations (Misener & Doherty, 2013). However, due to its exploratory nature, this study mainly fo-

cuses on the six tangible resources mostly studied, identified above.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research is based on organizational capacity, which refers to the ability of an organization to mobilize resources to fulfill its mission (Hall et al., 2003). Several conceptual models of organizational capacity varying in number and names of dimensions have been proposed (e.g., Eisinger, 2002; Hall et al., 2003). Specifically developed for the non-profit context, Hall et al.'s (2003) framework includes five dimensions of capacity: human capacity, financial capacity, infrastructural capacity, strategic capacity, and relationship capacity. This model has been the foundation for many studies examining sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014; Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Jones et al., 2017, 2018, 2020; Millar & Doherty, 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Seippel et al., 2020; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013). This multidimensional framework is based on the premise that these dimensions should not be considered in isolation (Hall et al., 2003). Instead, the different dimensions are interconnected and can influence each other (Hall et al., 2003; Misener & Doherty, 2009). For example, in examining organizational capacity in sport clubs, Misener & Doherty (2009) have highlighted that the lack of strategic capacity hinders financial capacity development and the establishment and maintenance of collaborations. They also highlighted that relationship capacity is impacted by human capacity. Wicker et al. (2013) also found that collaboration

with other sport clubs is related to human, infrastructural, and financial capacity. The organizational capacity concept enables observing sport clubs through combinations of resources more or less present defining an organization's capacity to act (Wicker & Breuer, 2013). Hence, the multidimensionality and interconnections between dimensions make organizational capacity a relevant theoretical framework for examining the resource-based profiles of sport clubs leading to collaboration or non-collaboration. The sport clubs' organizational capacity also includes intangible elements such as the enthusiasm or the development of human resources, fiscal responsibility, communication skills, creativity, or personal connections beyond the scope of this exploratory study (Doherty et al., 2014). The resources examined in this study are part of different dimensions of organizational capacity and are subdivided into human, infrastructural, strategic, and financial resources.

Human resources refer to the human capacity, which is considered as "the ability to deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and volunteers) within the organization, and the competencies, knowledge, attitudes, motivations, and behaviors of these people" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 5). The human capacity of sport clubs has received significant interest from researchers, particularly the volunteerism in these organizations (Millar & Doherty, 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2009; Sharpe, 2006; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Two primary human resources have been identified as related to collaboration. First, in the non-profit context, AbouAssi et al.

(2016) showed that the number of volunteers is related to the engagement in collaboration. This observation was also noted in the context of sport clubs, which are mainly run by volunteers (Misener & Doherty, 2009, 2013). Second, because female leaders display a more transformational leadership, including collaboration development, the gender of board members is a relevant feature of human resources (Wicker et al., 2012, 2020). In their study on predisposition to collaborate, Foster & Meinhard (2002) pointed out non-profit organizations run by women have greater motivation for collaboration. Similarly, AbouAssi et al. (2016) showed that organizations headed by female directors tend to form more collaborations and engage with more partners.

Infrastructural resources refer to the infrastructural capacity, defined as 'the ability to deploy or rely on infrastructure, process, and culture' (Hall et al., 2003, p. 6). This capacity relates to the organizations' internal structures such as policies, procedures, information technologies, and facilities (Misener & Doherty, 2009). Most sport clubs do not have their facilities and use public facilities that are not always accessible (Misener & Doherty, 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). As a result, sport clubs generally have weak infrastructural resources (Jones et al., 2017). For example, according to Wicker & Breuer (2011), 42.3% of German sport clubs owned their sport facilities in 2007. In another study, Wicker et al. (2013) showed that sport clubs with problems related to the avail-

ability of sport facilities were more likely to collaborate with another sport club.

Strategic resources refer to strategic capacity, which includes developing and drawing on strategic plans and policies (Hall et al., 2003). Misener & Doherty (2009) found that implementing strategic plans was challenging for sport clubs. This lack of strategy notably results from their informal nature and day-to-day focus (Sharpe, 2006). Strategic resources are closely related to collaboration between non-profit sport organizations. According to Misener & Doherty (2009), the lack of strategy hinders the capacity of sport clubs to develop collaborations. In addition, Jones et al. (2017) found that most collaborations between these non-profit sport organizations are strategic-related, either to receive strategic resources or to send them.

Finally, financial resources refer to the financial capacity, which is considered 'the ability to develop and deploy financial capital (i.e., the revenue, expenses, assets, and liabilities of the organization)' (Hall et al., 2003, p. 5). Sport clubs rely on multiple resources such as subsidies, sponsorship, and donations but remain highly dependent on membership fees (Wicker et al., 2012). Wicker et al. (2013) found that sport clubs with serious financial problems are more likely to collaborate with other sport clubs. Moreover, revenue diversification allows sport clubs to have more flexibility to achieve their organizational goals (Millar & Doherty, 2016; Wicker & Breuer, 2013). High revenue diversification also had a positive impact on the financial capacity of sport organizations (Jones et al., 2018;

Wicker et al., 2012; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). In the non-profit context, MacIndoe & Sullivan (2014) found that non-profit organizations with more diverse sources of revenue are more likely to collaborate with other non-profit organizations.

METHOD

A qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) was carried out to highlight combinations of organizational resources related to collaboration among sport clubs. After an introduction to QCA methodology, the stages of the research design as proposed by Greckhamer et al. (2018) are described.

Qualitative comparative analysis

Crisp-set QCA (i.e., one of the QCA methods, hereafter called QCA) is a method that examines the relationship between combinations of binary states (i.e., presence or absence) of conditions and an outcome (Ordanini et al., 2014). Ragin (1987) originally developed this comparative configurational approach in political sciences (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Recently, QCA has also established itself in sport studies (Clausen et al., 2018; Winand et al., 2013; Zeimers et al., 2021). Using QCA on large-N samples is a suitable alternative to traditional approaches (Fiss et al., 2013; Ganter & Hecker, 2014; Greckhamer et al., 2013). QCA provides configurational thinking that emphasizes the diversity of organizations (Greckhamer et al., 2013). Specifically, large-N QCA enables to answer specific

research questions that other methods such as cluster analysis do not allow (Greckhamer et al., 2018). For example, while cluster analysis aims to answer questions such as 'what cases are more similar to each other?', QCA aims to answer questions such as 'what configurations of attributes are associated with an outcome of interest?' (Greckhamer et al., 2018). In this study, the configurations of attributes are the resource-based profiles, and the outcome is the collaboration between sport clubs.

By comparing cases, QCA brings out similarities and differences between various combinations of conditions related to the same outcome (Marx & Dusa, 2011). Using Boolean mathematics, QCA strives to offer a parsimonious explanation of complex relationships between combinations of conditions and an outcome (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009).

Constructing the empirical sample and collecting data

The first step involved constructing the empirical sample and collecting data. The data were collected in Wallonia, the French-speaking part of Belgium. Wallonia has 6881 clubs divided into 54 sport governing bodies. An online survey was sent directly to sport clubs or governing bodies and municipalities. The precise number of clubs that received the survey is unclear due to European privacy regulations. The questionnaire was designed to enable only one respondent per club to respond from February to April 2019. Questions relating to organizational resources of sport clubs and relating varia-

bles derived from the work of Wicker & Breuer (2013). The questionnaire was pre-tested on a sample of ten clubs' representatives and academic experts. In total, 1145 clubs responded to the survey. After cleaning the data, $n=427$ clubs were included in the QCA. The deletion of respondents is mainly due to the absence of answers to specific questions essential to the analysis (mainly those related to financial resources). Respondents represented sport clubs from 48 sport governing bodies. On average, 24.9 sport clubs per sport governing body responded to the survey ($SD=18.4$). Consequently, although almost the entire population is represented, generalizations should be made with caution.

Building the configurational model

The second stage involved constructing the configurational model. This model included the outcome to be explained and the conditions expected to relate to this outcome.

For this study, the outcome was the collaboration between sport clubs. Therefore, we measured the outcome with the following question: 'According to the following definition of collaboration, does your sport club collaborate with other sport clubs?'. The definition provided to the respondent is the definition of non-profit sport collaboration described in the literature review: "a constrained or voluntary, close, long-term, planned exchange process between two non-profit sport organizations to serve mutually beneficial purposes in a problem domain".

The conditions of the configurational model were organizational resources of sport clubs. Greckhamer et al. (2018) mentioned that selecting conditions involves an iterative process guided by theory or case knowledge. Therefore, we included six conditions in the configurational model based on studies discussed earlier (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Foster & Meinhard, 2002; Wicker et al., 2013). These conditions are human resources (i.e., voluntary engagement and women on the board), infrastructural resources (i.e., facilities), strategic resources (i.e., strategy), and financial resources (i.e., relative revenue and revenue diversification). Table 1 provides details about the measurement of the different conditions.

Calibrating the data

The next step—the data calibration—involved determining cases (that is, sport clubs) membership in sets (Greckhamer et al., 2018). This step implies conceptualizing conditions and outcomes as sets. This means that the outcome examined in this study can be divided into two sets: one including sport clubs that collaborate with other sport clubs and one that does not collaborate with other sport clubs. Similarly, for each condition, cases had to be classified into sets. In other words, for each condition, if the case was a member of the set, the condition was considered as 'present' for that case. On the contrary, if the case was not a set member, the condition was considered 'absent.'

The data calibration entailed identifying a threshold to determine cases' mem-

Table 1
Conditions, thresholds and calibration

Condition	Description – Measure	Threshold	Calibrated condition
Human resources			
Voluntary engagement (VOL)	Number of volunteers/number of members	.17 (Median)	More than 0.17: ■ Less than or equal .17: □
Women in the board (WOM)	Number of women in the board/number of board members	.26 (Median)	More than .26: ■ Less than or equal .26: □
Infrastructure resources			
Infrastructure (INFRA)	Does your sport club own its sport facilities?	Yes/No	Yes: ■ No: □
Planning resources			
Strategy (STRAT)	Does your sport club have a vision, a mission statement and a strategic plan?	Yes/No	Yes: ■ No: □
Financial resources			
Revenues (REV)	Total revenues/number of members	140 (Median)	More than 140: ■ Less than or equal 140: □
Revenues diversification (DIV)	1 – Herfindahl Index* for revenues	.46 (Median)	More than .46: ■ Less than or equal .46: □

Notes: ■: the condition is “present” - □: the condition is “absent” - *Herfindahl Index is defined as the sum of the squares of each revenue category’s proportion of the total (range from 0 to 1). 1-Herf = 1 indicates a high level of revenues diversification and 1-Herf = 0 indicates a low level of revenues diversification.

bership in the sets. This identification is iterative based on theoretical ground and the empirical distribution of cases (i.e., median, mean, or quartile) (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Table 1 presents the configurational model and data calibration by outlining the conditions, descriptions, thresholds, and calibrated data.

Analyzing the data

The final stage consisted of analyzing the calibrated data. This stage involved three sub-steps.

First, the 'fsqca 3.0' software (Ragin & Davey, 2016) constructed a *truth table* that comprises all the possible configurations of conditions. The number of possible configurations equals 2^k , where k is the number of conditions (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). In this study, there were 64 possible configurations (2^6 conditions). However, cases from the sample did not always represent all the possible configurations.

The second sub-step enhanced the model's validity by eliminating under-represented configurations. Following the recommendations of Greckhamer et al. (2013), we set a *frequency threshold* of three. All configurations represented by less than three cases were eliminated from the analysis. Thus, 50 configurations on the 64 available were retained for the analysis.

The final sub-step was based on conceptualizing the relationship between the configurations and the outcome in terms of necessity and sufficiency (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Two measures evaluated the necessity and the sufficiency of

a configuration: the *consistency* and the *coverage*. The consistency is 'the proportion of cases exhibiting the configuration that exhibits the outcome,' while the coverage is 'the proportion of cases exhibiting the outcome captured by this configuration' (Greckhamer et al., 2018, p. 489). It is good practice to adopt a *consistency threshold* to ensure that observed configurations are consistently related to the outcome and thus improve the model's validity (Marx & Dusa, 2011). This study used the recommended *consistency threshold* of .8 (Greckhamer et al., 2013). The coverage is roughly comparable to the coefficient of determination (R^2) in traditional regression analysis (Fiss et al., 2013). Therefore, the coverage is given in the results section as an indicator of the scope of a configuration accounting for the outcome.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present section discusses the different profiles regarding the organizational resources that make them up. However, an individual and in-depth interpretation of the results is impossible due to the large sample size. Indeed, contrary to small-N QCA, in large-N QCA, the distance between the researchers and the cases does not allow to return to the cases (Greckhamer et al., 2013). Therefore, this study carefully interprets the profiles characterizing sport clubs without the pretension to 'intimately know' the specificity of each case. Although large-N QCA allows generating profiles representing almost all our sample, this

Table 2
Descriptive Results about the Conditions

Condition	N	Mean	Median	Min	Max
Voluntary engagement (VOL)	427	.22	.17	.02	2.67
Women on the board (WOM)	427	.24	.26	0	1
Infrastructure (INFRA)	427	.24	-	0	1
Strategy (STRAT)	427	.45	-	0	1
Revenues (REV)	427	199.34	140	3.57	1374.98
Revenues diversification (DIV)	427	.42	.46	0	.82

particularity offers future directions that will be further discussed.

Among the 427 cases included in the analysis, 241 sport clubs collaborate with other sport clubs (56%). Table 2 provides descriptive results.

The 'fsqca 3.0' software provided the most parsimonious solution of six configurations of organizational resources related to the presence of collaboration between sport clubs. Table 3 sums up these configurations and the unique consistency and coverage of the configurations. Five of the six configurations (C1; C2; C4; C5; C6) exhibit a sufficient consistency ($>.8$), and the solution's consistency of .83 is sufficient. The coverage of the solution is .22 and will be further discussed.

Each table row must be understood as a specific resource-based profile of a sport club. For example, the first row of Table 3 indicates that, within our sample, 84% (i.e., consistency score) of sport clubs displaying the profile C1 (that is, sport clubs with a voluntary engagement higher than .17 volunteers per member

and with more than 26% of women on their board but without a strategy and with relative revenue lower than 140€ per member) collaborate with another sport club. This profile represents 7% (i.e., coverage score) of the collaborating sport clubs in our sample.

Table 4 outlines the most parsimonious solution of three configurations related to the absence of collaboration with other sport clubs. All the configurations (NC1; NC2; NC3) exhibit a sufficient consistency ($>.8$), and the solution's consistency of .88 is sufficient. The coverage of the solution is .09 and will be discussed further.

The study identified five resource-based profiles of sport clubs related to collaboration between sport clubs. The profile 'C3' will not be discussed because its consistency was below the threshold. The study also identified three profiles of sport clubs related to the absence of collaboration between sport clubs.

Table 3
Profiles Related to Collaboration between Sport Clubs

	VOL	WOM	INFRA	STRAT	REV	DIV	Consistency	Coverage
C1	■	■		□	□		.84	.07
C2	■		■	■		■	1	.03
C3	□	□		□	□	■	.67	.03
C4	□	■	□		■	□	.87	.05
C5	■	□		■	□	■	.86	.02
C6		■	■	□	□	■	.83	.02

Notes: Solution consistency: .83 – Solution coverage: .22 – Blanks are “don’t care” conditions. This means that the presence or absence of this condition in these rows does not influence the outcome.

Table 4
Profiles Related to Non-Collaboration between Sport Clubs

	VOL	WOM	INFRA	STRAT	REV	DIV	Consistency	Coverage
NC1	■		■	□		□	.89	.04
NC2	□	□	■	■	■	■	.80	.02
NC3		□	■	□	□	□	1	.03

Notes: Solution consistency: .88 – Solution coverage: .08 – Blanks are “don’t care” conditions. This means that the presence or absence of this condition in these rows does not influence the outcome.

Combinations of collaborating sport clubs

First, the C1 profile is a 'human resources oriented' profile. Sport clubs with this profile tend to rely on their human resources to overcome the lack of strategy. Sport clubs often struggle to develop strategic resources and thus have to rely on human ones (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009), such as

a strong voluntary engagement and gender diversity within their board to collaborate. These two resources were found to reduce organizational problems for which collaboration can be a solution, such as, in this case, low relative revenue (Wicker et al., 2012; Wicker & Breuer, 2013). Two aspects can explain this profile. On the one hand, the number of volunteers is a strength that enables non-profit organizations to develop and

maintain collaborations (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2009). On the other hand, the presence of women on the board was related to collaboration (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Foster & Meinhard, 2002) because women adopt a more transformational leadership, including collaboration development (Wicker et al., 2020).

Second, the C2 profile is the only profile with a consistency of 1, which means that all the clubs in our sample exhibiting this profile collaborate. These sport clubs rely on a strong voluntary engagement, a strategic vision, and high revenue diversification to collaborate (AbouAssi et al., 2016; MacIndoe & Sullivan, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009). This profile characterizes 'well-developed' sport clubs. Moreover, these sport clubs possess their sport facilities, a critical and rare resource within the non-profit sport context (Jones et al., 2017; Wicker & Breuer, 2011). While Wicker et al. (2013) showed that sport clubs with unavailable facilities are more likely to collaborate, our results indicate that their facilities are a driver of collaboration. The configurational approach helps to understand this discrepancy between our results and previous ones. It enables us to observe that this particular profile has strong organizational resources across almost all its dimensions, providing stability and establishing collaborations with other sport clubs (Millar & Doherty, 2016).

Third, the C4 profile describes 'small' sport clubs in terms of members that rely on few volunteers and do not possess sport facilities. They have a high relative revenue but a low diversification of these

revenues. Low revenue diversification is a characteristic of most sport clubs, as they depend mainly on membership fees (Wicker & Breuer, 2011). Interestingly, our results contradict AbouAssi et al. (2016), that observed that non-profit organizations with higher relative revenues collaborate less. Similarly, although collaborations are generally correlated with financial problems (Wicker et al., 2013), our results significantly show that sport clubs with high relative revenue also collaborate. Thanks to the configurational approach, this study highlights the complementarity of the resources exchanged during the collaborations and helps explain the divergence with previous results. Recent studies have shown that non-profit sport organizations collaborate to exchange complementary resources (Jones et al., 2017; Zeimers et al., 2019), in this case, financial resources in exchange for infrastructural resources.

Fourth, like the C2 profile, the C5 profile characterizes 'well developed' sport clubs. These sport clubs also rely on a high voluntary engagement, a strategic vision, and a high revenue diversification to collaborate (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Misener & Doherty, 2009). However, they have low relative revenue, and some do not possess their sport facilities. As identified by recent studies (Jones et al., 2017; Zeimers et al., 2019), non-profit sport organizations develop strategic collaborations to tackle resources needs through exchanges of complementary resources (in this profile, facilities).

Finally, like C1, the C6 profile clubs do not have a strategic vision. This is in line with previous studies (Doherty et al.,

2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009) that identified strategic resources as a weak point of sport clubs. Contrary to Wicker et al. (2013), which highlighted a close link between the unavailability of sport facilities and collaboration, sport clubs collaborate despite their sport facilities. By examining the entire profile of these clubs, the QCA identifies other resource-related elements that may explain the trend towards collaboration. For example, according to previous studies (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Foster & Meinhard, 2002), a potential explanation is that clubs draw on the transformational leadership of gender diversity on their boards (Wicker et al., 2020) and share infrastructural resources to compensate for lower relative revenue.

The study points out that a single resource type cannot explain collaboration. Indeed, each resource needs to be combined with others to form a profile. These observations reveal the importance of holistically examining organizational resources as antecedents of the collaboration between non-profit sport organizations rather than focusing on only one resource. For example, it is interesting to note that each profile is characterized by low relative revenue and/or a high level of revenue diversification. This is consistent with previous studies showing that financial problems (i.e., low relative revenue) and high revenue diversification are related to collaboration between non-profit organizations (MacIndoe & Sullivan, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013). However, while these aspects of financial resources appear to be important antecedents of collaboration, they alone cannot

explain the tendency to collaborate. They must be observed with other organizational resources.

Combinations of non-collaborating sport clubs

All the profiles related to non-collaboration are characterized by the ownership of sport facilities by sport clubs. These results confirm but also extend the study of Wicker et al. (2013) that pointed out a positive correlation between facilities availability and collaboration problems. Yet, our results show that other conditions need to be examined to understand non-collaboration. Sport clubs with an NC1 profile also exhibit a high voluntary engagement, the absence of strategic vision, and low revenue diversification. The lack of strategy and low revenue diversification are often depicted as barriers to collaboration (MacIndoe & Sullivan, 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009). Another explanation for the non-collaboration is the presence of sport facilities and a high level of voluntary engagement. This would indicate that these sport clubs do not have to or want to collaborate as they already have these crucial resources to operate (Doherty et al., 2014; Misener & Doherty, 2009).

Similarly, NC2 and NC3 profiles exhibit a low share of women on the board of sport clubs. This result supports previous studies that emphasized the crucial role of women's transformational leadership (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Foster & Meinhard, 2002; Wicker et al., 2012, 2020). However, sport clubs with NC2

profile have the particularity to exhibit strong infrastructural, strategic, and financial resources but weak human resources. This lack of human resources is another explanation for the non-collaboration. In the non-profit sport context, volunteers are crucial for operations (Misener & Doherty, 2009; Wicker et al., 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2011), including developing and maintaining collaborations. Moreover, this profile also shows a high level of other organizational capacities. Therefore, non-collaboration may also be linked to the lack of new resource needs (Millar & Doherty, 2016).

NC3 is the perfect non-collaborative sport club. It already has its sport facilities (Wicker et al., 2013), it does not rely on the more transformational and collaborative leadership of women on its board (AbouAssi et al., 2016; Foster & Meinhard, 2002; Wicker et al., 2012, 2020), it lacks a strategic vision that facilitates the development of collaborations (Misener & Doherty, 2009), and it has undiversified sources of revenue that increase its financial vulnerability (MacIndoe & Sullivan, 2014; Wicker et al., 2012).

CONTRIBUTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study offers three significant contributions. First, this study contributes to the non-profit sport collaboration literature. It responds to the call of Babiak et al. (2018) to extensively examine the non-profit sport collaborations and, more specifically, through comparative analysis. Findings showed this type of collaboration is distinct because sport clubs demonstrate resourcefulness with the

unique assets they possess. The research extends studies focusing on organizational resources as antecedents of non-profit sport collaboration (Jones et al., 2017, 2020; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013) by identifying resource-based profiles of collaborating and non-collaborating sport clubs. While Jones et al. (2020) found out low-resources sport clubs are just as likely to collaborate than medium- and high-resources sport clubs, our research pinpoints these specific resource-based profiles of collaborating sport clubs. This contribution is critical to the literature on nonprofit sport collaboration because it highlights the lack of a unique resource-based profile of collaborating sport clubs. This lack of a unique profile is a significant finding for the collaboration literature and raises the need for further study of these different profiles. Furthermore, as this study is exploratory, it invites researchers to use and refine these resource-based profiles by adding other types of resources, such as intangible ones. Similarly, future research should build on this notion of profiles to incorporate other factors influencing collaborations between sport organizations (e.g., readiness to collaborate).

Second, this research brings new knowledge about a neglected sport collaboration literature stream: non-collaboration between sport clubs. Given the benefits of collaboration for sport clubs (Misener & Doherty, 2012; Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013), it is essential to understand why some sport clubs do not collaborate. This study extends knowledge by highlighting three

specific profiles of non-collaborating sport clubs. Moreover, this research points out that the link between organizational resources and (non-) collaboration is asymmetric. This asymmetry means that profiles related to the absence of collaboration are not the strict opposite of profiles related to the presence of collaboration. This research is, to our knowledge, the first to establish the notion of asymmetry. Previous quantitative studies generally examined the link between resources and (non-)collaboration through traditional correlation analyses that do not highlight this important notion (Vos & Scheerder, 2014; Wicker et al., 2013). Although several studies have examined the collaboration phenomenon in-depth, most have focused on organizations that collaborate and not on those that do not. Our study implies that future studies are needed to examine these non-collaborative club profiles further.

Third and last, this research has methodological implications. Our study emphasizes the relevance of examining antecedents of collaboration through configurational methods such as QCA. Jones et al. (2020) suggested that new methods are needed to explore the link between antecedents and collaboration. This study proves that QCA is a suitable method for examining this relationship. In particular, two features of the method were strengths for examining antecedents of collaboration. The first is the representation of cases in profiles of multiple variables ('conditions'), which is particularly relevant to studying multifactorial antecedents of collaboration (Parent & Harvey, 2009). The second is the ability

of QCA to relate these profiles to an outcome (i.e., collaboration). In addition, this study suggests broadly extending configurational methods' application through the sport management field. Our research demonstrated the relevancy of configurational methods to examine the organizational resources of non-profit sport organizations. However, these methods might be relevant to examine other multidimensional concepts such as (good) governance, organizational capacity, antecedents of collaboration. Configurational approaches, which are still rare in sport research, offer different and valuable perspectives for understanding multifactorial phenomena. In particular, configurational methods such as QCA can provide in-depth information on complex and multifaceted phenomena in an intermediate to many cases. Although not without its limitations, this mixed approach combines the strengths of more traditional quantitative (for example, many cases) and qualitative (for example, in-depth insight) methods.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Collaborations are relevant to tackling many long-lasting and topical challenges sport clubs face. However, resources are also needed to develop these collaborations. Therefore, this study recommends that sport clubs consider their resources through a 'strengths-needs' perspective. Identifying their strengths and needs is an essential step sport clubs should take before collaborating with other sport clubs. This identification can be made

through four simple questions: 'What are my needs?' 'Can collaboration meet these needs?' 'Do my current resources allow me to engage in this collaboration?' 'What can I offer to the partner?'. This study also suggests that when assessing their strengths, sport clubs do not focus on a single resource but rather on the whole set of resources by defining their club profile, much like a resource-based sport club identity card. Although generally stable, organizational resources of sport clubs can quickly become unstable, for example, by the withdrawal of a sponsor or subsidy, the leave of volunteers, or the inaccessibility of sport facilities. In these cases, this research indicates that not just one sport club profile can collaborate but several. With resourcefulness, any sport club could collaborate. In that case, sport clubs should demonstrate agility to counterbalance resource scarcity.

CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This study used QCA to investigate resource-based profiles of sport clubs and their tendency to collaborate or not with other sport clubs. This paper contributes to the body of knowledge in three ways. First, this research contributes to the body of knowledge on sport collaboration by identifying profiles related to collaboration between sport clubs. Second, by identifying resource-based profiles of non-collaborating sport clubs and introducing the notion of asymmetry, this study paves the way for a less developed but significant research stream on non-

collaboration. Third, our study demonstrates configurational methods' relevancy to examine multidimensional phenomena or concepts. Such methods are still scarce in the sport management domain. However, they complement and offer new perspectives (such as configurational thinking) than the traditional quantitative and qualitative methods.

Nevertheless, this research is not exempt from limitations that pave the way for future research. First, the coverage for solution related to collaboration is .22, and the coverage for the solution related to non-collaboration is .08. Therefore, the proportion of cases exhibiting the outcome captured by the solution can be considered relatively low. However, these low values are 'not indicative of theoretical or methodological problems with QCA but rather suggest that these studies' configurational models do not fully capture the complex causality underlying outcomes' (Greckhamer et al., 2018, p. 483). Two explanations can be provided.

On the one hand, QCA requires that the configurational model be guided by theory. The construction of our model was guided by previous studies that looked at the resources of sport clubs and the link between resources and collaboration (Wicker et al., 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2011, 2013). This study focused mainly on tangible human, infrastructural, strategic, and financial resources and measured them according to existing scales. In particular, the six resources in this study were chosen for their established link to the decision to collaborate. Nevertheless, these six resources do not

fully measure each organizational capacity's dimension used to frame this study. Future studies could build on this exploratory study and use more comprehensive and recent models of organizational capacity within sport clubs (Doherty et al., 2014; Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020). For example, future research might integrate intangible variables such as enthusiasm, personal connections, communication skills, or knowledge. On the other hand, the construction of the configurational model is only drawn on the concept of organizational capacity. While this concept is relevant for examining the antecedents of collaborations (Misener & Doherty, 2013), other theories usually used to describe antecedents of collaboration such as resource dependency theory, stakeholder theory, or institutional theory could reinforce the configurational model.

Second, another limitation is related to the data calibration. This crucial part of the QCA methodology requires the choice of thresholds that generally come from the literature or the data distribution (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Due to the absence of thresholds in the literature to calibrate the data, this study used distribution thresholds. Consequently, following QCA properties, this study allows a modest empirical generalization (Greckhamer et al., 2013). Future studies could be conducted in multiple contexts. Indeed, examining the relationship between organizational resources and collaboration in another context could bring to light new profiles. For example, Hall et al. (2003) demonstrated that organizational capacity is influenced by environ-

mental constraints and facilitators, access to resources, and context-specific historical factors. Another future direction could be to use another QCA approach, such as fsQCA, that draws on multiple thresholds to have a less discriminating calibration of the data or cluster analysis that could bring out similarities and differences in a large set of collaborative and non-collaborative sport clubs. Such studies could go beyond the results of this research which was limited to a single threshold due to its exploratory nature.

Finally, due to the distance between the researchers and the cases inherent to large-N QCA, this study does not allow us to know the specificity of each case (Greckhamer et al., 2013). This study only focused on whether or not clubs collaborate. Future studies could use process tracing methods to delve into specific cases using qualitative interviews. By undertaking in-depth analyses, researchers could examine the specificity of typical or deviant profiles, investigate different types and degrees of collaborations (e.g., in terms of formality, duration, and intensity of interactions) and add a demographic component to perhaps reveal trends for each profile.

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