

The dilemma of multi-stakeholder sport associations: organizational design and its constraints

Remarks on Sport Governance in Three French Sport Federations

Cristina Fusetti

**Junior Research Fellow
DAIMAP - Dipartimento di Analisi Istituzionale e Management Pubblico
Università Bocconi
Via Guglielmo Röntgen, 1
20136 Milano - ITALY**

e-mail: cristina.fusetti@unibocconi.it

Abstract

The main objective of this study is to explore the determinants of the current organizational form of French sport governing bodies, focusing in particular on the barriers undermining their functioning, and to examine organizational transformation and shift of French sport federations. The article is based on a multi-sited ethnographic study in three sport governing bodies in France (handball, football and sailing) and uses a combination of techniques, such as semi-structured interviews, participant and non-participant observation and secondary analysis of documents. The main limitations identified are seen as a product of encounters between the three groups of stakeholders active in the sport governing bodies. The concept of social capital with its relational and cognitive dimensions is presented as a tool to grasp the phenomena under study and to cope with the multi-stakeholder nature of these kinds of organizations.

Key words: France, multi-stakeholders, organizational design, governance, ethnographic study, sport governing bodies, social capital

Introduction

French law states that sport federations are independent third-sector organizations. Although, they are also required by law to provide sport as a public service. As such, they include three different categories of stakeholders: volunteers, public officers, and paid managers and administrative staff to ensure operational functioning. From a relational perspective, this creates great challenges in terms of organizational structure and consequently shapes the decision-making process.

The operating challenge of a sport governing body is to design an organizational form that will effectively mobilize and deploy the resources to deliver the sport service. The organizational design has to cope with the French law requirements. The government specifies which committees a sport association must have in its organizational structure as a requirement to satisfy in order to be granted by the state. The legal framework shape what will be called in the present article the *coercive organizational structure*. Meanwhile, sport governing bodies need to cope with the *informal organizational structure* shaped by internal alliances and in-group social capital which are built between the three main categories of stakeholders working in the national sport associations. The resulting organizational form, represented by the flowcharts of the sport associations, is the outcome of the two above-mentioned structures and their forces, which draw on the organizational typologies developed by Henry Mintzberg (1979). The *formal organizational structure*, which supposedly should be the optimal organizational form, is both derivative and determinant of the entrepreneurial process, because it is the outcome of both coercive and normative pressures (P.J. DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b) and it also contributes to shaping the decision-making process. In the

present analysis, some limitations of the formal organizational form will be identified. These constraints are often triggered by tensions caused by the different managerial styles of the two main decision makers (i.e. the directors and the boards of the sport associations) and by the lack of both voice and representation of the three different groups of stakeholders in the boards.

This article aims to highlight the determinants of the formal organizational structure and to examine the organizational transformation of the sport federations. The author will draw upon new institutional theory to shed light on the roles and strategic behaviours of organizational actors. This will be done by first investigating historically the determinants of two main types of organizational structures, the coercive one and the informal one. To provide a better understanding of these mechanisms and processes, particular attention will be paid to social capital. Aiming to highlight the importance of cognitive, relational and structural dimensions of social capital, this kind of approach accounts for the informal structure of sport organizations. Secondly, the article will identify how coercive and normative pressures have shaped the formal organizational form. Thirdly, the article will frame the French sport federations within the structural taxonomy of, and archetypes for, national sport organizations that have already been defined by organization theory-related research in sport management (Kikulis, Slack, & Hinings, 1992; Kikulis, Slack, Hinings, & Zimmermann, 1989; Slack, 1997). In the subsequent part, a discussion of the main limitations of the current organizational structure will follow. Finally, the article will take a closer look at the main conflicts that determine the potential shift to a new model of governance (i.e. the stakeholder model) and will address the potential of relational management as an alternative approach to solving conflicts.

Two recent areas of interest for sport organization scholars are institutional theory and strategic alliances/partnerships (Parent, 2006). However, very few studies have addressed issues related to sport organizations from a relational perspective (Harvery, Lévesque, & Donnelly, 2007; Seippel, 2006) or, in particular, by using qualitative methods, such as ethnography. Taking this approach in the present study makes it possible to conduct a detailed micro organization-specific case study of three national sport federations, giving due weight to qualitative data gathered during eight months of fieldwork in France. Moreover, this approach allows the author to capture the actors' way of thinking and doing things. Thus, the factors affecting the development of both the informal and the formal organizational structure.

Saying this, the paper aims to contribute to sport management studies by answering the following questions: how do sport organizations cope with their multi-stakeholder nature? What are the limitations of the formal organizational form? What are the barriers of the decision-making process? Where do conflicts originate? Can we speak about three different types of configuration for the organizational forms in case of handball, sailing, and football?

To answer these questions, this paper draws on a multi-faceted ethnographic study conducted during 2007 in France and focusing on three national federations representing three sport disciplines: handball, football, and sailing.ⁱ The rich empirical evidence was collected by means of three different techniques: semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation, and the analysis of secondary documents. The semi-structured interviews were conducted at the national, regional, and local levels and included member of all the three groups of stakeholders. In total, more than 60 interviews were conducted and used for the subsequent organizational analysis of the national sport governing bodies. Participant and non-participant observation during different sporting events and sport governing bodies' activities (e.g. general assemblies, executive committee meetings, and annual conferences) helped create a more coherent picture of the object under study. Newspaper articles and sport association documents (e.g. meeting minutes, charters, norms, and resolutions) were also analysed.

The Theoretical Framework

The primary goals of the author are to identify the determinants of the current organizational form of national sport associations and to show some limitations of that structure with respect to organizational governance. Organizational action will be understood in its historical context, while analysing how previous rules or actors' actions shape the national sport associations and affect the decision-making process. The multi-paradigm perspective pursued by Morgan (1986) and adopted by Cornforth (2003) to investigate the governance of non-profit organizations through their boards, is the theoretical landscape within which the organizational analysis of sport federations is developed here. As argued by Morgan (1986: 339), this multi-paradigm approach is necessary to 'understand and grasp the multiple meanings of situations and to confront and manage contradiction and paradox, rather than pretend they do not exist', furthermore, Lewis (2000) discusses the usefulness of a multi-paradigm approach in highlighting paradoxes and tensions in governance, by contrasting opposing theoretical approaches.

This exploration of the organizational structures of the three national sport federations draws upon different theoretical perspectives on organizational governance, such as the agency theory, the stewardship theory and the stakeholder theory. Moreover, it builds on neo-institutionalism of organizations (P.J. DiMaggio & Powell, 1991a; Scott, Meyer, & Associates, 1994), whose central idea is that organizations are shaped by the institutional environment. As will be explained in the analysis section, the organizational design process is the result of both coercive and normative pressures. Over time, various practices and multi-stakeholder relationships and interests have gained legitimacy and become social capital, which is defined in this study as a relational resource that is individual and/or collective, based on mutual acquaintance and recognition, more or less intentionally built and used to achieve goals. The resulting social capital shapes the organizational form referred to throughout the article as *informal organizational structure* and its configuration. Indeed, as argued by Numerato (Numerato, 2008) in his analysis of the Czech governing bodies through the lens of social capital:

‘From the perspective of social capital, a sport governing body represents an institution as a set of network ties which have a certain configuration and which are organized in a certain way.

The members of a federation share cognitive images about themselves and the relationships are maintained through a certain level of trust. Behaviour of the association members, who are more or less identified with a sport movement, is regulated by norms and obligations’ (Numerato, 2008).

At the same time, social norms become institutionalized because they take on ‘a rule-like status in social thought and action’ (DiMaggio Powell 1991a: 9). Organizations may also be shaped also by cultural elements of the context, i.e. ‘-taken for granted- beliefs and widely shared rules that serve as templates for organizing’ (ibid.: 26-27). Chifflet (Chifflet, 1993) defines three different types of organizational cultures of the sport governing bodies: the association culture of the elected volunteer executives, which is based on the federal values of amateurism and volunteering; the public service culture of public servants, who are placed at different levels within the federation; and the managerial culture of managers and experts, which is based on meritocracy, performance and profitability. From the perspective of the organizational design process, the above dynamics generate a normative pressure, according to Cornforth’s definition (2003). Thus, they also affect the resulting structural form of the sport organizations.

Three main tensions facing boards, identified by Cornforth (2003), will be used to better elucidate the relationships between the elected volunteer executives and the boards in the sports federations. These tensions stem from three main issues: the question of who governs, the role played by the board, and the relationship between the board and management. They have been adapted to the research field of this article, by stating that the first tension refers to the conflicts about the functions of the boards and the style of management. The second tension refers to the different orientation and behaviour on the part of the board member in steering the sport federations, which can be oriented to conformity or performance. The third tension can be understood in the light of the relationships between the boards and the management. The relationship can be oriented more towards control or towards establishing partnerships with executive directors. Indeed, they are representative of the structural features of sport federations.

Various theorists have used the term 'structure' to describe a wide variety of organizational dimensions and their interrelationships. Thompson (1967) referred to structure as the departments of an organization and the connections established within and between them, while De Soto (1960) defines it as 'the relations among a set of people'.

Research aiming to classify sport organizations (Chelladurai, 1985 ; 1992; Gasparini, 2000; Jacoby, 1965; Slack, 1997) has made use of several typologies, following Weber (1947) and Parsons's (1956) legacies. Weber demonstrated how each type of organization can be characterized by a number of mutually complementary or at least simultaneously occurring attributes (Miller & Friesen, 1984). Following Weber, Parsons created a typology based on the goals and functions that an organization pursues and performs for the environment. Nizet and Pichault (Nizet & Pichault, 1995) attempted to use theories developed by Mintzberg (1979) and by Crozier and Friedberg (1980) in their analysis of organizations, considering four variables: the contextual factors affecting the organization, the goals of the organization, the actors and the actors' power. Zintz (2005) analysed the transformation of sports federations in Europe using the same approach and showing both 'the limits and the pertinence of the approach while considering the nature of the research object, represented by the national league and sport federations' (ibid: 26). Furthermore, he captured the mutual influence of three organizational variables linked to the organizational structure, to the context and to the roles of the actors.

Organizational design process between coercive and normative pressures

The shifts taking place in organizational structure have already been analysed in sport studies (Slack & Hinings, 1992, 1994). As a first step in this analysis, the institutional context and the informal

relationships will be described because they are behind the formal organizational form of the sports associations and they are determinants of it. This choice of dealing with the informal and coercive organizational form first taps into neo-institutionalism (P.J. DiMaggio & Powell, 1991b; Meyer & Rowan, 1991) and into the concepts of coercive and normative pressures (DiMaggio & Powell 1991b) to which the organizational design process has been subjected. Coercive pressures refer to the ability of some organizations to impose rules and values on others, for example government laws and regulations. Government requirements about how boards and sport organizations should be structured and the presence of public service agents within the federation are examples of coercive pressures. They affect the status of people, who are part of the boards, and determine a form of co-management, which refers to an arrangement in which third-sector organizations produce services in collaboration with the state. Furthermore, the annual targets (*convention d'objectives*), approved by the Minister of Health, Youth and Sports and agreed by both the president of the national federation and the National Technical Director, together with the delegation given by the state to each federation, which can be rescinded by the government in case of corruption or trials, have an impact on the decision-making processes. In this case, coercive isomorphism occurs as 'formal and informal pressure is exerted on an organization by organizations upon which they are dependent' (Skille & Skirstad, 2007).

On the other hand, normative pressure stems from wider cultural influences, such as social norms and values. This pressure affects the reproduction of the in-groups social capital and alliances, which make up the informal organizational structure. 'Normative isomorphism might develop by mechanisms of filtering personnel to do certain jobs in the field. The latter originates from professionalism; it refers not only to paid work but to an understanding of who is doing the job best...' (ibid.: 45).

In this respect, these two forms of institutional process explain the organizational design and contribute to shaping the formal organizational structure, which will be analysed in the last paragraph, showing some of its constraints. The relational dimension between the actors will be explored, revealing some limits of the sport federations' formal organizational structure and governance.

Development of the French sport system: a milestone in organizational design

In order to understand the formal structure of the sports federations analysed, it is first necessary to describe the main features of the French sport system and its legislative framework. This section explores both the institutional and legal contexts within which several principles and regulations concerning sport governing bodies have arisen. The way to govern sport federation is rooted in the historical background of the French sport system, as well as in the law code governing the sport sector. Federations are defined by law as non-profit associations, governed by volunteers, which need to achieve the objectives set with the public officer in the annual document approved by the Minister. The founding principle of the formal organizational structure stipulates that there be a complete separation between board members, on the one hand, and administrative staff and management, on the other. These features match with the ones described by agency and compliance models of governance.

In France, the delivery of sport as a public service is based on the collaboration between the state and the sport movement. In the literature this is known as the ‘French exception’ (P. Arnaud, 2000).

A description of the institutional context of the French sport system must take the main phases in the evolution of the national sport system into account (L. Arnaud & Augustin, 2000; P. Arnaud, 2000; Holt, 1981). As in many other European countries, the rise of the nation-states in the nineteenth century supported the development of a form of gymnastics, which was characterized by strict discipline, moral and civic virtues and patriotism. During this phase, movements of political nature arose such as the *Turnen* of the German Friedrich Ludwig Jahn or the Czech Miroslav Tyrš *Sokol*. In France, the ‘Union sportive et gymnique du travail’ (USGF) and several associations affiliated with it were created in 1873; by 1880, gymnastics had become compulsory for all schools. The aim was the same one envisaged in the laws on public education that had been passed during the Third Republic in the 1880s: to facilitate the creation of a national identity. From this point on, the state began to increase control over on physical and sports activities, for two reasons: to encourage French nationalism and to create a fitter and better trained population for future military action. The Gaullist conception of sport, whose main insights include citizen’s audience participation in sport and sport’s educational role, has been the principle foundation of French sport policy ever since (L. Arnaud & Augustin, 2000). The ‘Union des sociétés françaises de sports athlétiques’ (USFSA) was a French multisport federation founded on 20 November 1887, with the aim of grouping all the sport disciplines to promote the state’s interest in them. It splintered into several specialized federations after the end of World War I (1919–1920).

The first autonomous single-sport federation was for football, created in 1919 (Gillet, 1948). Thus, the early twentieth century, until the First World War, was characterized by the autonomous development of multi-sport federations without government intervention, except with regard to training youth at school.

The legal framework for the organization of sport and its federations is provided by the law of association of 1901: associations – including sport organizations – were defined as groups of individuals who organize activities with non-profit making purposes and were monitored by the state. In 1920, the first post-World War I government included the post of Junior Minister of Leisure and Sports under the Ministry of Public Education. In addition, a policy on the development of sport facilities within urban planning was characteristic of the post-World War I period; indeed, Le Corbusier was of the opinion that sport was the keystone of urbanization (LeCorbusier, 1929). During the Second World War, the Vichy government sought to influence the domain of sport, introducing both a German pedagogical approach and strengthening existing state interventions. Two important dates in 1940 marked this latter historical trend: the office of General Commissioner of Physical Education and Sport was created on August 7, and the Sports Charter was issued on December 20. From this point on, the tie between government and sport organizations became closer. A state decree (2 October 1943) framed the relationship between the state and the sport movement which has left a tricky inheritance in terms of who controls sport activities and a tendency to generate power struggles. Sport associations are obliged to conform to statutory regulations in order to receive what is known as “delegation of power”: the responsibility for organizing sport events and selecting athletes was delegated exclusively to state-approved sport federations. Later, the ordinance of 28 August 1945 passed by the returned democratic government of the Fourth Republic, delegated the provision of sport as a public service to the federations with largely the same responsibilities, although each one remained subject to the government’s approval.

After liberation, the new class of politicians proposed a range of sports policies, including the establishment of a state administration of youth and sports and created the Department of Youth and Sports was created under the Ministry of Education on 18 August 1945. However, the power relations between the sport movement and the government have always hindered the creation of a Ministry of Youth and Sport (L. Arnaud & Augustin, 2000). The institutionalization of the sport system occurred after the De Gaulle’s return of power with the advent of the Fifth Republic: the Department of Youth and Sport was replaced by the office of High Commissioner in 1958, led by

Maurice Herzog. At the same time, France also has an Olympic Sport Committee, the national umbrella sport governing body of sports federations of which structural features reflect the administrative structure of the State. It has never tired of claiming financial autonomy and its role of main decision-maker for sport activities in the French society (CNOSF, 2006), although sport is still considered part of the French government administration. When French athletes put up a poor performance at the Rome Olympics in 1960, the State renewed emphasis on technical and pedagogical training, deciding to place public service agents in each federation to partner with elected volunteer executives in its federation. The system is still in use today: the public service agents are hired by the Ministry (a total of 1670 in 2007) and represent one of the main sources of financial and managerial support provided to the sport movement by the government. The president of each federation and the chief of the directorate of sport in the Ministry of Health, Youth and Sports (prior to May 2007 sport was covered by the Ministry of Youth, Sports and Associational Life) agree on a person who will become the National Technical Director (DTN) for each single-Olympic sport, single non-Olympic sport or multi-sports federations. The DTN has executive power within the federation, is responsible for all public service agents employed in the federation and is officially in charge of the technical side of sport and its development. In the 1960s, state-funded academies were created, which are still considered by practitioners today to be one of the best institutions for providing sport-specific education and training and developing new equipment for athletes in the national teams. One example of these state-funded academies is the national school of sailing (ENV).

To understand how power relations between the state and the sport movement have shaped the current French sport system, two laws should be mentioned that form the principle foundations between them today (Miège, 1993). The first is the 'Mazeaud Law' of 29 October 1975, which outlines the powers of the minister responsible for sport, describing sport as a fundamental part of French society and culture, and as a national obligation. It also gives the state the right to grant the sole power to govern a single Olympic sport, a single non-Olympic sport, or a multi-sport unit to one federation. Additionally, the 'Avice Law' of 16 July 1984 identifies the government and sport federations as the two actors in charge of providing sports services. Notwithstanding minor amendments, these laws continue to provide the foundation for the relationship between the French state and the sport federations as a form of co-governance in which the State and the federations work together to create policy at the national level.

Politics and sport administration are still heavily oriented towards central authority in Paris, despite decentralization efforts during the 1980s. Many scholars question the role of the territorial bodies, regional and county councils, as well as municipalities, and their responsibility for administering their own sport agendas (L. Arnaud & Augustin, 2000; Bayeux, 1996). However, there is no clear definition of the jurisdiction of each level of public administration in the area of sport. Therefore, as several politicians and practitioners interviewed by the author confirmed, sport remains a very important tool for achieving political consensus and for being elected to office or confirmed in it.

The informal structure

I have used the term “informal structure” to describe the hidden skeleton that supports what I called the “formal structure”; it is composed of the internal relationships between different individuals within the sport federations. These relationships represent a resource both for individuals and for collective bodies. Therefore, this paper analyses this informal structure through the lens of social capital, which should be understood here in terms of traditional definitions of the concept (Bourdieu, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Putnam, 1993). The cognitive and the relational dimensions, attributed to social capital by Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) are explored. Some of the most significant observations made by interviewees during the author’s fieldwork with the three sports governing bodies shed light on the cognitiveⁱⁱ dimension—which consists of shared codes, language and shared narratives—as well as on the relational dimension that is described in terms of trust, norms, identity and obligations. Many studies have already focused on the topic of social capital and its construction through sport, following Putnam’s argument (1995) that participation in sport produces ‘social capital’ through face-to-face interactions that facilitate the development of interpersonal trust, co-operative behaviours, public awareness about commonwealth, and political consciousness. Following on this premise, the practice and organization of sport and sport organizations are seen as vehicles for disseminating cooperative behaviours, interpersonal and institutional trust and the practices of reciprocities (Dyreson, 2001; Harvery et al., 2007; Seippel, 2005, 2006). A stream of research focusing on the ‘dark side’ of social capital has recently emerged: this research tends to stress the exclusive role of social networks and social aspects inscribed or reproduced through sport practice (Collins, 2003; Dyreson, 2001; Jarvie, 2003; Palmer & Thompson, 2007) and the misuse of sport for power, economic, and ‘exclusive’ interests (Baglioni & Numerato, 2008).

Bearing these contributions in mind, the main stress here is on the cognitive aspects of social capital, as norms, beliefs and past historical legacy developed within the three groups of stakeholders active within the national sport governing bodies: the elected volunteer executives, the administrative staff and management and the public service agents (in French: *Conseillers techniques nationaux*). Fieldwork data provide evidence of cognitive dimension of social capital, raised by the in-group relations that affect the sport governing body's informal structure.

The human resource managers of the handball, football and sailing federations talked about the volunteers and the public agents as groups of actors with “their own ideas and way of thinking”. According to their description of similarities and commonalities among the actors, a common educational background triggers shared interpretations and representations in the case of the public agents, who usually attended the same type of schools and were selected by public examination. Furthermore, the observation conducted during the meeting of the board of trustees of the football federation and the annual assembly of the handball federation shed light on the mechanisms which generate the cognitive dimension of social capital. Whenever the management raises a delicate issue about association governance of the associations, it always triggers a reaction from the side of the volunteers of volunteers who are ready to support the voice of another volunteer. On the other hand, two administrative employees and one director of the football association emphasized that management and staff share a common ‘group thinking’, which builds on the idea of having a professional president in future rather than an elected volunteer.

Moreover, a former elected volunteer member of the handball federation told me an anecdote about his divergences with the majority of the other elected volunteer executives and the incoming president. After having been part of the board of directors for many years old, he decided to resign because he no longer agree with the policy of the sport federation. One of his main reasons was that he realized he was thinking differently from the majority and was unwillingness to “*break up the harmony of the federation and the peacefulness of the board of directors*”. His solution to his minority position was found in the exit mechanism, which is not usually considered propaedeutic to create innovation in organizations.

This latter episode confirms that the dynamic remaining after a connection has been severed, resides in what is defined as the cognitive dimension of social capital, and when the share representations, interpretations and systems between actors fail, even durable relationships are affected.

The relational dimension of social capital refers to the nature and quality of connections. Shared rules and norms, which are explicit in a bureaucratic structure of the federation to define roles and hierarchies, affect the creation and the maintenance of the intra-group social capital. The recruitment process, as well as the reporting system, contributes to shaping the obligations and norms, while also affecting the perception of the sport association that each actor develops. The human resources manager of the sailing federation confirmed this, explaining how the recruitment process usually takes place. After meeting with the human resources manager, the candidate is interviewed both by the general director and by the president of the federation. Therefore, the last decision is up to the president. However, administrative employees have to report to the director, their employer, who establishes their tasks. Meanwhile, they also have to accomplish the demands coming from the volunteer executives. The same dynamics are applied to the public service agents, who are hired through public examination and have to report to the National Technical Director (DTN), who is directly responsible for them within the federation.

The resulting outcome of these internal processes is that the employees tend to agree with the main views of the group of stakeholders they belong to and to shape their obligations according to the director's expectation. How this represents a constraint for the actual organizational form will be discussed below.

From the relational perspective, trust within the three main groups of stakeholders is the by-product of the long-lasting intra-group relationships and of the mechanisms described above. This is a dimension of social capital that underpins the day to day functioning of the federations. Thus, some secretaries or administrative staff were found to make use of this relational resource when they had to face an issue, which should be an elected volunteer's executive competence. However, due to both the absence of the volunteers during the day time and their different professional commitments in that moment, the question was addressed to a director. The manager did not usually miss the opportunity to make a decision to let things 'keep going' in order to pursue the sport governing body's effectiveness. What contributes to an efficient and effective governance of the sport federations is the inter-groups trust, as will be clarified below.

Identity is the last component of what was defined as the relational dimension of social capital. To link this with the emergence of intra-group social capital, it must be pointed out how often people from one of the three groups of stakeholders make use of categorization to describe both the functioning and the organization of the federation. It was found that administrative staff employees

and directors often talked about something they thought was important for the governance of the sport association, as part of a dominant stream of thoughts of their own group of stakeholders. Legitimization comes from the adherence to the group's main beliefs and norms, so that identity seems to strengthen when cognitive schemes are shared.

Finally, there is one more factor that influences the development and the maintenance of in-group social capital, which Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) define as stability. The human resources manager of the sailing federation challenged me to visit the restaurants around the federation during lunchtime, in order to find some different groups of people who belong to one of the three main groups of stakeholders, but also have been working within the federation for the same number of years. So I did and I found a confirmation of the previous observation: stability and a long-term orientation in employment relationships and organizational reciprocity norms favour intra-group social capital. As already pointed out by Bourdieu (1986), stability is critical because social capital reflects the accumulation of goodwill over time. From a process perspective, increased stability allows for a level of continuity in social structures, which in turn increases the development of trust and norms of cooperation (Granovetter, 1985; Putnam, 1993).

To conclude, the informal structure focused on the drivers for the creation of intra-group social capital, which come from the fieldwork data. These drivers have been identified here with the main components both of the relational and of the cognitive dimension of social capital. Furthermore, from a process perspective, stability has also been treated as an explanatory dynamic factor.

Formal organizational structure: its strengths and its weaknesses

The design of the formal organizational structure aims to cope with government's requirements -the coercive pressure- and to take advantage of in-group social capital. The organizational form is represented by the flowchart of sport association. In every sport federation, there are committees required by law: an education committee, a referees committee, and a medical committee. Moreover, elected volunteer executives are members of the board of trustees. In the sailing and handball federations, the system is based on lists of candidates for the board, whereas in the football association, the president is nominated by the board of elected volunteer executive and then confirmed by the General Assembly.

This is just one of the differences between the federations analysed in this paper. However, it is interesting how these locked electoral systems affect the turnover the board of trustees' member, by

decreasing it: as shown by Bayle (2001) in the elections of 1996, a new president was elected, only in five of the twenty-nine Olympic federations. These findings are representative of the period when there was oligarchy in the French federations; this happened in the forties, during the development stage of the sport association's life cycle. Given that, sport federations have never completely abandoned the oligarchic configuration (Moreau, 2004) and this intermediate phase, in which they shifted from the simple structure to the machine bureaucracy model. Hence, they are still characterized by clear delineation between line and staff relationships and a centralized hierarchy of authority. Since 1940, the sport system has gradually become the focus of state intervention, and its structural features have been shaped to reflect the administrative structure of the state, by determining what Slack defines as 'bureaucracy' (2001: 302). The right of the state to grant to one federation the sole power to govern a single Olympic sport means that the federation receives a state-sanctioned monopoly to coordinate the sport.

Up until the 1980s, the growth of participants affected the size of the associations. However, it is the commercialization of sport, together with the rationalization of training techniques and of organizational functioning, and the institutionalization of professions linked to sport that are gradually increasing the number of professionals in the federations (Chantelat, 2001). The rise of professionalism led to the creation of a new organizational form known as 'professional bureaucracy'. The president of both the handball federation and the amateur football league confirmed this trend. In their words, sport federations are now 'association enterprises' that need specific managerial techniques and strategies to make corporate governance satisfying criteria of efficiency and efficacy. Also, they emphasized the need to have—in addition to traditional roles such as directors, lawyers, and accountants employed full-time—new figures such as engineers for new technologies, web designers, and occupational psychologists. These are the professionals who, to use Mintzberg's words, have joined the strategic apex and have helped to create newer departments inside the federations (i.e. On Line Information and Website Services, Legal Services, Human Resources Service) in addition to the traditional ones (i.e. Referees' Services, Disciplinary Services). Executive directors who are the link between the administrative staff and the elected volunteer members lead these services.

All the three federations investigated during the fieldwork exhibited the characteristics of professional bureaucracy, as defined by Slack (2001). These organizations had high levels of professional specialization and an extensive range of programmes. Volunteer specialization, in both technical and administrative roles, was not high, thus indicating that programme operation and

management were in the hands of professionals and public service agents rarely assisted by volunteers. Two main observations from the fieldwork confirmed the shift to this last configuration in the maturity phase of the sport federations' life cycle (Moreau, 2004). Coordination of programmes and staff is achieved through committee meetings, which take place monthly and sometimes less often. Committees consist of all three groups of stakeholders. In reality, only two of them—the administrative staff and the public servant agents— work on the administration and on the technical side of the projects on a daily basis. During these meetings, the elected volunteer executive of a committee should communicate the main decisions reached by the strategic apex -the board- and decide the tasks of each employee. However, the employees' tasks are decided, planned and monitored by the executive director, and they are communicated and coordinated through the informal organizational structure. The same occurs for the public service agents whose tasks are set by the National Technical Director by law.

In the previous situation, it is found a lack of coordination within the structure of the sport governing body. Three other types of limitations for the formal organizational form were raised by testimonies in the field: different timescales of the various stakeholders, the exclusion of some groups from decision-making processes and the lack of internal communication. An administrative staff employee of the handball federation explained the first limitation, emphasizing how she attempts to overcome to it by proceeding in two ways when decisions need to be taken immediately:

When I'm faced with problems regarding issues discussed with elected volunteer members, I try to reach them on the phone. If I'm unable or if I know they are busy with their jobs, I bring up the issue with the director.ⁱⁱⁱ

However, during an interview, an elected volunteer executive of the same federation pointed out how one of his main right is not respected when excluded from decision-making processes. He was very angry when I questioned about the decision-making process. He knew about the proceedings described in the previous testimony and he clarified his disagreement as follows:

When I realize that, more than once, decisions have been made without me being involved, I do never stop to tell both secretaries and administrative staff that they must inform me every time a decision regarding that particular issue is requested, and that no decisions should be made without consulting me in advance.

Finally, the lack of the internal communication is due to the organizational structure of the federations. An employee usually attends the same meeting on a specific issue (referees, education, accountability). This results in a lack both of knowledge of everyone else's work and of knowledge

integration within the sport association. To overcome this barrier, the employees and directors usually use their own personal relationships and social capital. This exchange of information through socialization was confirmed in several interviews with employees, which can be summarized in these words of an employee of a sailing federation:

To address my limited insight into the organization's activities, I ended up regularly having lunch together with other employees involved in different committees with different tasks. This means that I'm updated with faster and more accurate information than would be the case by just listening to the volunteer executive member telling about the sport governing bodies' activities during the committee meeting.

Employees and directors often know more about what the rest of their colleagues were doing than the elected volunteer executives. There are two main explanations for this: the low frequency of board meetings, which usually take place every six months, and also the lack of time during these meetings to learn more about what other people are doing. The list of items in the order of business is already so long that board meetings usually last until late in the night. This results once again in a lack of coordination within federation.

As seen in by these examples, the spread of information and the coordination of work are achieved through informal communication in sport organizations—a phenomenon described by Mintzberg (1979) as mutual adjustment. This method of coordination is possible thanks to the connections of individuals, here referred to social capital.

Although decision-making is officially centralized at the volunteer board level in the sport federations, it is decentralized to professional level in an ideal professional bureaucracy. To explain why decision-making processes do not correspond to the predicted one, there are at least two reasons: firstly, because of the legacy of the previous machine bureaucracy model. Secondly, it is important to note that the design type is an ideal type. As such, no sport organization is exactly like one design type. However, here arises the first limit of this type of structure: in French sport organizations, decisions are nowadays made by professionals, but ratified by the board. Although decisions must be sent to the board level for approval, the directors in these organizations are able to structure the flow of information to the board so as to obtain the response they desire. Although control belongs officially to the board, the professional staff has decision-making power. The same processes occur in the Canadian sport associations analysed by Slack (2001). This is a typical feature of a professional bureaucracy, which assumes that professionals' behaviours are correct and that these professional are acting on behalf of the sport governing bodies. Several interviews conducted in the field showed that directors seem very committed to the official structure. The

statute of association describes the role of the elected volunteer members as decision makers. However, managers confirmed that they have to take decisions by themselves, because of the time pressures they work under. 'Each process would take forever' is one of the recurring justifications of this style of operation.

As explained by both directors and elected volunteers, the level of autonomy among directors and administrative staff is affected by both the stability of the relationship and reciprocity. Moreover, it mainly depends on the level of trust. Can this unofficial way of dealing with decision-making processes be interpreted as a lack of real internal democracy within the sport governing bodies, which consequently cause disaffection among the stakeholders?

Few studies to date have investigated the power of elected managers versus the remunerated managers in French sport associations (Mayaux, 1996). However, there is a broad range of prescriptive literature on non-profit organizations, which defines the roles of the boards (c.f. Cornforth, 2003b for a discussion). The board is 'the point of final accountability for the actions of the agency, being the employer of staff, formulating policy, securing resources, and acting as a boundary spanner' (Rochester, 2003: 121). Cohesion in volunteer sport executive committees has been explored (Doherty & Carron, 2003). Similarly, Bieber (2003) describes the roles of the boards in providing leadership, identifying objectives, deciding policies, and measuring achievements as a milestone in the board-director relationship. As a result, the board deals with ends and the directors with means. Mayaux (1996) tries to use a political approach to depict the strategic core of the federations, where he makes the distinction between volunteers and professionals. He finally proposes seven types of strategic cores, which are useful to frame the decision-making process of the three French sport federations analysed and the locus of power.

In this study, the sailing federation has a 'tandem' president-executive director core. They collaborate in decision-making and in planning activities and projects. Furthermore, because the executive director has a law degree, he also acts as a legal consultant to the president. A similar situation can be observed in the handball federation, in which the 'enlarged tandem' strategic core includes the board of directors and the executive director. The executive director coincides with the National Technical Director in the handball federation, so that the association is closer to a model of a public agency. The president appointed the national technical director as general director because of its skills: in addition to his education in sport, he also has a master's degree in management. As pointed out above, the National Technical Director is a public service agent who works together with the administrative director to manage daily operations and organize human resources,

including both public servants and employees. Therefore, he personifies the concept of co-management, by being at the same time a public officer and also having the highest position as a professional employee. Finally, the football federation is the one where the strategic core is closer to the type defined as an alliance, because the power tend to unofficially belong to the professionals and directors, which are part of the alliance and not to the elected volunteer executives.

For a more comprehensive understanding of the board-directors relationship and of the constraints of organizational structure of sport organizations pointed out in this section, it is useful to recur to some theories proposed to depict the role of the boards in the private sector but extended by Cornforth (2003a) to the non-profit sector. I will consider two theories, which help to catch the evolution of the organizational forms of the three sport federations, according to the view of the author.

The agency theory can be considered as the dominant theory of the governance arrangements of sport federations, because of the role played by the elected volunteer executives. These who are appointed to look after the money and the resources of the sport organizations, as well as to ensure that the staff and management carry out the organization's objectives. However, due to the specificity of non-profit organizations, people volunteer to work because they like the social issue or, in the specific case of French sport federations, they feel committed to deliver sport as a public service. As emphasized in the interviews with the Presidents of the handball and football federations, as well as to the executive and administrative directors, their relationship is based on trust and builds on the stewardship theory. This latter assumes that managers will act as effective stewards of an organization's resources and on behalf of the association. It means that the interests of both the boards and the management should coincide.

When this optimal situation fails because of external or internal factors, such as the development of regulations regarding the sport system or because of the internal changes of the federation, the board-director relationship becomes difficult. This is what the author sometimes perceived during the study and the observation of daily activities. Therefore, every group of stakeholders tries to find their own solution to exchange good practices and knowledge. For example, the professionals in the sailing federation organize weekly meetings that all the employees can attend.

Meanwhile, the football federation has a more radical position, based on the stakeholder model that looks for incorporation of different stakeholders on boards. This leads to a shift of the political role

of boards, which should negotiate and resolve the potential conflicts of interest and expectations of the stakeholders in order to determine the objectives of the organization and set policy.

To complete this organizational analysis, it is important to mention several organizational cultures encountered during the ethnographic study. In the tradition of Mintzberg's contribution, who defined the organizational configurations as missionary and political, I will draw upon the organizational cultures defined by Chifflet (1993) to show which of these are predominant within the three sport associations.

The handball federation's culture is oriented towards traditional associative values such as volunteering and socialization, but also it falls into the public service culture. Interviews pointed out the educational role of sport and the importance of having professionals as for example public agents, placed at different levels (national, regional, county) within the federal structure. This last observation arose mainly at local level. Public service agents have mainly the task to ensure coherence with the implementation of the policies of the national office and with the level of technical quality expected by the sport governing bodies, as they are adapted in each local context. In the handball federation for example, there were sixty-four agents in 2007, plus the director: fifty of them are employed at the regional level and fourteen at the national level. The provision of sport as a public service and the involvement of the public service agents at integral points within the federations, seem to be dimensions of a process in which it is possible for government to steer these third sector organizations toward a specific outcome but also a way to control them. Therefore, the hierarchies or centralisation strategy, within patterns of policymaking and implementation seem to remain stable with government through its ministerial department. The annual targets document of each sport federation, together with the presence of the National Technical Director as executive manager, represent governmental means to manage the sport service and to engage in a highly centralized top-down approach; furthermore, to check the quality of the service provided by sport organizations.

The sailing federation's governance is inspired by the associative philosophy but it also influenced by a managerial system of values. Performance and profitability of sponsorships, as well as attentiveness in the selection of human resources, based on meritocracy more than on the belonging to the sport association's family, characterize the managerial style of the association.

Finally, the football association is among the three federations investigated, the one more oriented to the values of modern sport and influenced by logic of commercialization. Its organizational culture is closer to the corporate governance as emphasized by the President of the amateur football

league and it consequently requires a commitment of a top manager instead of the one typical of an elected volunteer executive.

To conclude, in this section the author framed the French sport federations with reference to some features that literature already defined for national sport organizations (Kikulis et al., 1992; Kikulis et al., 1989; Slack, 1997). Furthermore, the differences and the constraints of the organizational forms have been pointed out, taking an evolutionary perspective.

Conclusions

This aim of this paper was to examine organizational transformation and shift of sport federations. The author analysed organizational structures, processes, and governance of three French sport associations, in relation to political, legislative, and cultural considerations. Moreover, the author pointed out how these organizations attempt to cope with their multi-stakeholder nature and elucidated the limitations of the formal organizational form and decision-making process.

Contributions to the field of sport management include the use of institutional theories to examine the roles and strategic behaviours of organizational actors and organizational change in national French federations. Drawing on the rich ethnographic evidence from handball, sailing, and football federations in France, it can be argued that the future pathways of these federations are often influenced by change that may derive either from inside or outside the organization.

The paper explained where the coercive and the normative pressures derive from and how they affect the formal organizational structure of the federations. To understand these mechanisms and processes, a particular attention is given to social capital. Such an approach aimed at highlighting the importance of cognitive, relational and structural accounts for the informal structure of sport organizations.

In the last section, the article recognizes the main features and constraints of the three sport organizations. While exploring the barriers undermining the functioning of the French sport governing bodies, the study has also taken into consideration contextual circumstances. Particular attention has been given to conditions affecting these processes: the historical legacies, the political and the legislative context, and the impact of the state intervention on sport governance.

Recognition of some limitations of the organization governance addresses new research questions for the field of sport management. As emphasized, there is a need to shift from the stewardship model and the agency model of governance because conflicts of interest rise between the stakeholders. Different style of operation between elected volunteer executives, who have political power, and managers trigger these conflicts. Volunteer tend not to have a substantial governance experience of big organizations, neither to be updated about the operational activities of the federations. Therefore, to face this limit the organization takes advantage of the social capital of each professional as a coordination mechanisms and a way to transfer information. This opens up new research opportunities both for social network analysis studies to understand the structure of relationships and for qualitative studies to investigate the contents of the relationships. Moreover, the shift to a new model of governance, as the stakeholder one, would need to go with a new form of regulation that best suits the model but that still need to be identified by scholars. Furthermore, there is a need to look for a framework for stakeholder relationship management, which makes social capital useful as a collective resource for the organization.

Finally, another open question regards the level of autonomy of the sport organizations in France and their relationship with the state. How long the government will be able to take in charge the army of the public service agents? Since a couple of years, there have been orientations not to replace all the public servants who decide to retire. Meanwhile, there have been implementing several policies on employment in the sport field, which helped the young people with an education in sport studies or management to get hired in sport organizations.

References

- Arnaud, L., & Augustin, J. P. (2000). L'État et le sport: construction et transformation d'un service public. In P. Arnaud (Ed.), *Le sport en France. Une approche politique, économique et sociale* (pp. 47-75). Paris: La documentation Française.
- Arnaud, P. (2000). Introduction. Sport et modernité: les origines du "sport moderne". In P. Arnaud (Ed.), *L'État et le sport: construction et transformation d'un service public* (pp. 9-20). Paris: La documentation Française.
- Baglioni, S., & Numerato, D. (2008). Sport and Social Capital: exploring the dark sides.
- Bayeux, P. (1996). *Le sport et les collectivités territoriales*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Bayle, E. (2001). Le processus de professionnalisation des fédérations sportives nationales. In P. Chantelat (Ed.), *La professionnalisation des organisations sportives, nouveaux enjeux, nouveaux débats*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Bieber, M. (2003). Governing independent museums. In C. Cornforth (Ed.), *The governance of Public and Non-Profit Organisations. What do boards do?* (pp. 164-184). London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of capital. In J. C. Richards (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and research for the Sociology of Education* (pp. 241-258). New York: Greenwood Press.
- Chantelat, P. (Ed.). (2001). *La professionnalisation des organisations sportives, nouveaux enjeux, nouveaux débats*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Chelladurai, P. (1985). *Sport Management: Macro perspectives*. London, Ontario: Sports Dynamics.
- Chelladurai, P. (1992). A classification of sport and physical activity services: Implications for sport management. *Journal of Sport Management*, 1, 37-47.
- Chifflet, P. (1993). Associations de sportifs ou entreprises du sport. In A. Loret (Ed.), *Sport and Management*. Paris: Dunod.
- CNOSF. (2006). *La raison du plus sport. De la contribution du mouvement sportif à la société française*. Paris: CNOSF - French National Olympic Committee.
- Coleman, J. S. (1990). *Foundations of Social Theory*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Collins, M. (2003). Social Exclusion from Sport and Leisure In B. Houlihan (Ed.), *Sport and Society: A Student Introduction* (pp. 67-89). London: Sage.
- Cornforth, C. (2003a). Introduction. In C. Cornforth (Ed.), *The governance of Public and Non-Profit Organisations. What do boards do?* (pp. 1-20). London: Routledge.
- Cornforth, C. (Ed.). (2003b). *The governance of Public and Non-Profit Organisations. What do boards do?* London: Routledge.

- Crozier, M., & Friedberg, E. (1980). *Actors and systems: The politics of collective action*. London: University of Chicago Press.
- De Soto, C. B. (1960). Learning a social structure. *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 60, 417-421.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1991a). Introduction. In P. W.W. & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- DiMaggio, P. J., & Powell, W. W. (1991b). The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality. In P. W. W. a. P. J. DiMaggio (Ed.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Doherty, A. J., & Carron, A. V. (2003). Cohesion in Volunteer Sport Executive Committees. *Journal of Sport Management*, 17, 116-141.
- Dyreson, M. (2001). Maybe It's better to Bowl Alone: Sport, Community and Democracy in American Thought. *Sport in Society*, 4(1), 19-30.
- Gasparini, W. (2000). *Sociologie de l'organisation sportive* (Vol. 281): La découverte.
- Gillet, B. (1948). *Histoire du sport*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Granovetter, M. S. (1985). Economic action and social structure: the problem of embeddedness. *American Journal of Sociology*, 91, 481-510.
- Harvery, J., Lévesque, M., & Donnelly, P. (2007). Sport Volunteerism and Social Capital. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 24(2), 206-223.
- Holt, R. (1981). *Sport and Society in Modern France*. London: MacMillan.
- Jacoby, A. (1965). Some correlates of instrumental and expressive orientations to associational membership. *Sociological Inquiry*, 35, 163-175.
- Jarvie, G. (2003). Communitarianism, Sport and Social Capital. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 38(2), 139-153.
- Kikulis, L., Slack, T., & Hinings, C. R. (1992). Institutionally specific design archetypes: A framework for understanding change in national sport organizations. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 27, 343-370.
- Kikulis, L., Slack, T., Hinings, C. R., & Zimmermann, A. (1989). A structural taxonomy of amateur sport organizations. *Journal of Sport Management*, 3, 129-150.
- LeCorbusier. (1929). *Le cités-jardins de la banlieue*. Paris.
- Lewis, M. W. (2000). Exploring Paradox: Toward a more Comprehensive Guide. *Academy of management Review*, 25(4), 760-776.
- Mayaux, F. (1996). *Noyau stratégique des associations: quel partage des pouvoirs entre dirigeants bénévoles et dirigeants salariés?*, Lyon 3, Lyon.

- Meyer, J. W., & Rowan, B. (1991). Institutionalized organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. In W. W. Powell & P. J. DiMaggio (Eds.), *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Miège, C. (1993). *Les institutions sportives*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Miller, D., & Friesen, P. (1984). *Organizations: A quantum view*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Moreau, B. D. (2004). *Sociologie des fédérations sportives. La professionnalisation des dirigeants bénévoles*. Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of organizations*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Nahapiet, J., & Ghoshal, S. (1998). Social Capital, Intellectual Capital, and the Organizational Advantage. *The Academy of Management Review*, 23(2), 242-266.
- Nizet, J., & Pichault, F. (1995). *Comprendre le organisations - Mintzberg à l'épreuve des faits*. Levallois-Perret, France: Gaëtan Morin Editeur.
- Numerato, D. (2008). Czech Sport Governing Bodies and Social Capital. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 43(1), 21-34.
- Palmer, C., & Thompson, K. (2007). The Paradoxes of Football Spectatorship: On-Field and Online Expressions of Social Capital Among the "Grog Squad". *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 24(2).
- Parent, M. M. (2006). Organization theory in sport management. In P. P. Bouchet, C. (Ed.), *Management du Sport: Actualités de la Recherche et Perspectives* (pp. 211-225). Clapiers, France: AFRAPS.
- Parsons, T. (1956). Suggestions for a sociological approach to the theory of organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 1, 63-65.
- Putnam, R. (1993). *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- Putnam, R. (1995). Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital. *Journal of Democracy*, 6(1), 65-78.
- Rochester, C. (2003). The role of boards in small voluntary organizations. In C. Cornforth (Ed.), *The Governance of Public and Non-Profit Organisations. What do boards do?* (pp. 115-130). London: Routledge.
- Scott, W. R., Meyer, J. W., & Associates. (1994). *Institutional Environments and Organizations: Structural Complexity and individualism*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Seippel, Ø. (2005). Sport, Civil Society and Social Integration: The Case of Norwegian Voluntary Sport Organizations. *Journal of Civil Society*, 1(3), 247-265.

- Seippel, Ø. (2006). Sport and Social Capital. *Acta Sociologica*, 49(2), 169-183.
- Skille, E. A., & Skirstad, B. (2007). Understanding Sport Participation - A Cross Level Analysis from the Perspectives of Neo-Institutionalism and Bourdieu. In M. M. Parent & T. Slack (Eds.), *International Perspectives on the Management of Sport* (pp. 37-59). London: Elsevier.
- Slack, T. (1997). *Understanding sport organizations: the application of organization theory*. Champaign, IL, USA: Human Kinetics.
- Slack, T. (2001). La professionnalisation des associations sportives canadiennes: état des recherches. In P. Chantelat (Ed.), *La professionnalisation des organisations sportives, nouveaux enjeux, nouveaux débats* (pp. 301-314). Paris: L'Harmattan.
- Slack, T., & Hinings, C. R. (1992). Understanding change in national sport organizations: An integration of theoretical perspectives. *Journal of Sport Management*, 6(2), 114-132.
- Slack, T., & Hinings, C. R. (1994). Institutional pressures and isomorphic change: An empirical test. *Organization Studies*, 15(6), 803-827.
- Thompson, J. D. (1967). *Organizations in action*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*. New York: Free Press.
- Zintz, T. (2005). *Manager le changement dans les fédérations sportives en Europe*. Bruxelles: De Boeck.

ⁱ The study is a part of a larger research project which was carried out in the frame of the Marie Curie Excellence Grant “Sport and Social Capital in the EU” awarded to Dr. Margaret Groeneveld and Bocconi University.

ⁱⁱ The notion of a cognitive dimension is different from the one elaborated by Uphoff (1999) who used the adjective ‘cognitive’ to refer to qualities which in this approach make up a part of a relational dimension such as shared norms, values, trust, attitudes, and beliefs.

ⁱⁱⁱ All the quotations have been translated by the authors from French, with the aim of retaining their colloquial style and authenticity.