THE M— RELATION FOR NUCLEATED GALAXIES
DEAN E. MC LAUGHLIN, ANDREW R. KING, AND SERGEI NAYAKSHIN
Department of Physics and Astronomy, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH, UK
dean.mclaughlin@astro.le.ac.uk ; ark@astro.le.ac.uk ; sergei.nayakshin@astro.le.ac.uk

ABSTRACT

Momentum feedback from super-Eddington accretion offers a simple explanation for the observed M—and M—M spher relations between supermassive black holes (SMBH) and the spheroids of their host galaxies. Recently Ferrarese et al. and Wehner & Harris observed analogous relations between the masses of central star clusters and their hosts. We show that stellar winds and supernovae from such nuclear clusters (NC) give similar feedback explanations for this case also, and we discuss the connection to the Faber-Jackson relation for the spheroids themselves.

Subject headings: galaxies: star clusters, formation, nuclei

1. INTRODUCTION

It is well known that the masses of supermassive black holes (SMBHs) in the nuclei of early-type galaxies and late-type bulges correlate tightly with the velocity dispersions of the stellar spheroids: M BH/ M * , with x = 4 04.5 (Tremaine et al. 2002; Ferrarese & Ford 2005). M BH also increases nearly linearly with galaxy spheroid mass (e.g., Haring & Rix 2004). It is now becoming clear that many galaxies have nuclear star clusters (NCs) with masses similarly connected to the host properties.

A recent HST/ACS survey of 100 early-type galaxies in Virgo has found that 70%–80% of systems with M * < 20 5, M BH < 15 contain dense nuclear components that are resolved by HST into star clusters with luminosities L M L = 5 10 L , half-light radii of about 4 pc (possibly with a size-luminosity relation among the brighter nuclei), and colors suggesting ages of ~10 Gyr and metallicities [Fe/H] ~ −0.5 (Côte et al. 2006). Most spiral bulges and bulgeless disk galaxies also contain nuclear clusters with rather similar properties (Phillips et al. 1996; Carollo, Stiavelli, & Mack 1998; Boker et al. 2000; Walcher et al. 2005).

All known NCs have masses less than a few 10 M , while most measured SMBHs have M BH / 10 M . The apparent paucity of low-mass SMBHs is at least partly a selection effect, but the upper limit on the nuclear clusters may well be real. Côte et al. (2006) find that NC luminosity increases with spheroid luminosity, such that M NC / 2 10 M is expected for galaxies with M BH < 20 5. But although they have HST surface photometry of the cores of all such galaxies in Virgo, Côte et al. find no evidence for nuclearation in any of them.

Ferrarese et al. (2006) have obtained long-slit spectra for 29 of the nucleated ellipticals in Virgo. They find that the NC masses correlate well with the galaxies’ velocity dispersions averaged over an effective radius (1–2 kpc): M NC / x with x = 4 3 0.6, essentially the same as for the SMBH relation. However, they also find an offset between the cluster and black-hole scalings. Fitting power-law M— relations with x 4 to the NC data and to SMBH data from the literature yields (L. Ferrarese, private communication)

\[
\log M_{\text{NC},B} = (1.25, 0.55) + 4 \log M_{\text{spher}} / 200 \quad (1)
\]

where M s = 10 M and M spher = (0.25, 0.33) + 4 log M / 200 ; a limit of M NC / 2 10 M thus corresponds to 120 km s −1.

The nuclei of spheroids with velocity dispersion less than this are dominated by stellar clusters, with the mass of any SMBH that might be present expected to be ~10 times smaller. More massive galaxies apparently always contain nuclear SMBHs but, so far as is known, not NCs. Wehner & Harris (2006) use photometric data in the literature for about 40 dwarf-elliptical nuclei to show that M NC increases almost linearly with galaxy spheroid mass. Ferrarese et al. (2006) also find this for their nucleated Virgo galaxies with dynamical mass estimates. Moreover, both studies conclude that the M NC—M spher and M BH—M spher relations meet almost seamlessly at a mass scale 10 M , i.e., there is no large offset as in the M— relations. These authors therefore refer to nuclear clusters and supermassive black holes together as “central massive objects,” or CMOs. We adopt this term here.

A derivation of the M BH— scaling has been given by King (2003, 2005) (see also Fabian 1999; Murray, Onakaert, & Thompson 2003; Begelman & Nath 2005). He considers super-Eddington accretion on to a seed SMBH at the center of an isothermal dark-matter halo. Accretion feedback produces a momentum-driven superbubble that sweeps ambient gas into a thin shell, which expands into the galaxy. Eventually the shock cooling time becomes so long that the shell becomes energy-driven and accelerates to escape the galaxy. This truncates accretion and freezes in a relation of the form M BH / 4 that, with no free parameters, matches the observed one remarkably well. A roughly linear relation between M BH and M spher is also established as part of this process.

In this Letter, we examine the possibility that the mass of a central star cluster in a protogalaxy might be similarly self-regulated, by feedback from stellar winds and supernovae.

2. THE M CM O — RELATION

The argument of King (2003, 2005) for the M BH— relation has gas in a protogalaxy flowing in to a low—mass, seed black hole at super—Eddington rate. This grows the mass of the hole, but also drives an intense outflow with momentum flux given

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\text{after this paper was submitted, a preprint appeared by Li, Haiman, & Mac Low (2006, which uses numerical simulations to study the development of an apparently common M CM O—M spher relation for both NCs and SMBHs. Unlike that work, in our analytical model we consider stellar feedback explicitly to explain this result, and moreover we attempt to understand the offset between the M— scalings for NCs vs. SMBHs.}
by the Eddington luminosity: $M_{\text{w}} \cdot L_{\text{Edd}} = c$, independent of the actual supercritical accretion rate (King & Pounds 2003). Here $v_\text{w}$ is the outflow velocity and $L_{\text{Edd}} = 4 GM_B H_B c$, with $= 0.398 \text{ cm}^2 \text{ g}^{-1}$ the electron scattering opacity.

King (2003) shows that this outflow is initially momentum-conserving, as the shocked gas cools efficiently. The ambient medium is swept up into a thin supershell, which is driven outwards by the ram pressure of the SMBH wind:

$$w \cdot v_\text{w}^2 = M_{\text{w}}(4 \pi R^2) = GM_B H_B (R^2)$$

at radius $R$. The dark-matter halo is assumed to be an isothermal sphere and the ambient gas fraction spatially constant, so that $\text{amb}(R) = f_\text{g} = 2\pi(2G\pi)^2$. Realistically, there could be a gradient in $f_\text{g}$ due to a concentration of cool gas towards the center of the galaxy, but here we take $f_\text{g}$ to be everywhere equal to its average over the entire halo: $f_\text{g} = \text{amb} = 0.016$ (Spergel et al. 2003). If gravity is ignored, the supershell accelerates once $M_{\text{BH}}$ has grown to the point that $w \cdot v_\text{w} \\_ \text{amb}^2$. Any ambient gas outside it is then driven out of the galaxy, stopping the growth of the SMBH. This happens when

$$M_{\text{BH}} = f_\text{g} \frac{4}{c^2} (2G)^2.$$

Including the gravity of dark matter inside the superbubble alters this result by a factor of two (King 2005). The initial dynamical expansion of the shell then stalls at a radius $R_{\text{stall}} (1 - M_{\text{BH}}/M_{\text{crit}})$, with

$$M_{\text{crit}} = f_\text{g} \frac{4}{c^2} (G)^2;$$

where the gravity balances ram pressure. So long as $M_{\text{BH}} > M_{\text{crit}}$, this happens well inside the galaxy. More gas can then filter through to the nucleus, feeding the hole and causing the shell to re-expand (on a Salpeter timescale) to a larger $R_{\text{stall}}$ appropriate to the new $M_{\text{BH}}$. As $M_{\text{BH}}$ approaches $M_{\text{crit}}$, however, the stall radius becomes very large, and before the shell can actually reach it the gas cooling time becomes longer than the crossing time of the bubble. The shell then enters an energy-conserving snowplow phase and accelerates to escape the galaxy, leaving $M_{\text{BH}} < M_{\text{crit}}$. As emphasized above, it is noteworthy that $M_{\text{crit}}$ contains no free parameter.

Our main point is that the above argument is qualitatively unchanged if the CMO is not an SMBH but instead a very young star cluster where massive stars are still present. Then stellar winds and supernovae drive a superwind from the nucleus with a momentum flux that is much less than $L_{\text{Edd}} = c$, but still directly proportional to it. We can thus treat the two types of CMO simultaneously by parametrizing the wind thrust as

$$M_{\text{w}} \quad L_{\text{Edd}} = c = (4GM_{\text{CMO}});$$

Here takes a value 1 in the black hole case, but a value $\geq 1$ (related to the mass fraction in massive stars) for a nuclear cluster. The limiting mass in equation (2) becomes

$$M_{\text{CMO}} = 3 \cdot 10^7 M_\odot \frac{4}{200} (f_\text{g} = 0.16);$$

and the offset $M_{\text{BH}} - M_{\text{NC}}$ relations of equation (1) follow immediately if $0.1$ for a typical NC.

3. EFFICIENCY OF STELLAR FEEDBACK

To evaluate the efficiency of the massive-star feedback from a young nuclear cluster, we rewrite equation (3) as

$$\eta = \frac{M_{\text{w}}}{4GM_{\text{NC}}} = \frac{M_{\text{w}}}{4 \cdot 2 \cdot 10^7 (M_{\text{NC}}/M_\odot) \text{ dyn}}$$

and estimate the separate contributions from supernovae and stellar winds.

First, the combined momentum flux from all supernovae is $2N_{\text{SN}}E_{\text{SN}}(v_{\text{SN}}/c)$, where $N_{\text{SN}} = 0.011(M_{\text{SN}} = M_c)$ is the number of stars with mass $> 8M_\odot$ in a cluster with a Chabrier (2003) IMF; $E_{\text{SN}} = 10^{51}$ erg is the energy released per supernova; $v_{\text{SN}} = 4000 \text{ km s}^{-1}$ is the typical ejecta velocity (Weiler & Sramek 1988); and $N_{\text{SN}} = 2 \cdot 10^5$ yr is the main-sequence lifetime of an “average” SN progenitor (see Leitherer, Robert, & Drissen 1992). Putting this into equation (5) gives $\eta \approx 0.02$.

Second, the line-driven wind from a single hot star produces a momentum flux of $(L \equiv c)$ on average—somewhat less than $\eta$ if there are few lines to drive the wind, but several times higher for O and Wolf-Rayet stars in which photons are multiply scattered (see, e.g., Lamers & Cassinelli 1999 chapter 8). Using the main-sequence mass-luminosity relation of Tout et al. (1996) to integrate $(L \equiv c)$ over all stars more massive than $5M_\odot$ in the IMF of Chabrier (2003), we find that the total momentum flux from stellar winds is about $1 \cdot 10^{53} (M_{\text{NC}} = M_\odot)$ dyn, and thus winds $0.02$.

Despite its very simple derivation, our final

$$\eta = \frac{N_{\text{NC}} + \text{winds}}{0.05}$$

is in good agreement with the values implied by the detailed calculations of Leitherer, Robert, & Drissen (1992) for the total momentum deposition in solar-metallicity starbursts. Note also that the stellar luminosity corresponding to the limiting NC mass in equation (3) with $= 0.05$ is comparable to that derived by Murray, Quataert, & Thompson (2005) from related considerations (see their eq. [18]).

One caveat here is that, while SN momentum fluxes are insensitive to stellar metallicity, wind momenta are roughly proportional to $Z$ (Leitherer, Robert, & Drissen 1992). For $(Z = Z_\odot) \approx 13$, typical of NCs in Virgo, this might then imply a net $\eta \approx 0.03$. However, this effect could be easily balanced by increases in both SN and winds if the IMF in these dense, central starbursts were slightly “top-heavy,” as may be the case near the center of the Milky Way (e.g., Nayakshin & Sunyaev 2003; Stolte et al. 2005). We proceed assuming the fiducial value for $\eta$ in equation (6).

With $\eta \approx 0.05$ for a nuclear cluster and $1$ for a supermassive black hole, equation (3) implies an offset of a factor of 20 between the two $M_{\text{CMO}} - M_{\text{NC}}$ relations, while observationally it is only a factor of 10 (eq. (1)). However, population-synthesis models (e.g., Fioe & Rocca-Valmerangi 1997; Bruzual & Charlot 2003) show that a star cluster more than $10^7$ yr old will have lost some 40%–50% of its initial total mass to stellar winds and supernovae, and to the conversion of massive stars into degenerate remnants. Thus, we expect the $M_{\text{NC}}$ scaling originally to have been more offset from the SMBH correlation than it is now, by an additional factor of about 2. By the same reasoning, the fact that the two $M_{\text{CMO}} - M_{\text{spher}}$ relations currently appear to have very similar normalizations must be something of a coincidence.

4. THE $M_{\text{CMO}} - M_{\text{spher}}$ RELATION

In this feedback-regulated picture of CMO and galaxy formation, an $M_{\text{CMO}} - M_{\text{spher}}$ relation emerges as the primary correlation. A relation between $M_{\text{CMO}}$ and spheroid mass follows by combining equation (4) with details of the cooling of the wind from the central object. The basic steps are outlined in King (2003). Knowing how the shocked gas cools, we find
the cooling timescale $t_{\text{cool}}$ as a function of supershell radius $R$ and compare it to the dynamical time $t_{\text{flow}} = R/v_{\text{shell}}$. For small radii, $t_{\text{cool}} < t_{\text{flow}}$ and the outflow is momentum-driven. However, when the CMO is at or about the critical mass in equation (4), the bubble is so large that $t_{\text{cool}}$ exceeds $t_{\text{flow}}$, the thin shell becomes energy-conserving, and the wind can escape the galaxy. We use $R_{\text{cool}}$ to denote the radius at which this happens. The detailed fate of the swept-up ambient gas afterwards is beyond the scope of this Letter, but in general terms it should re-collapse to much smaller radii (since the CMO wind that pushed the gas to large $R$ in the first place carries essentially no angular momentum). It will cool rapidly as it does, because $t_{\text{cool}} < t_{\text{flow}}$ by construction inside $R < R_{\text{cool}}$, and $t_{\text{flow}}$ is of order the free-fall time in the halo. We therefore expect most of the ambient gas in the supershell at the point of wind blow-out to form a concentrated stellar spheroid, and thus we identify the mass of the shell at $R_{\text{cool}}$ with $M_{\text{spher}}$.

King (2003) shows that for a relativistic wind from an SMBH, the swept-up gas cools by Compton scattering, and ultimately,

$$\frac{M_{\text{BH}}}{M_{\text{spher}}} = 1.6 \ 10^{-3} \ b^{1.5} \ (e/v_w)^{8.5} \ (f_g = 0.16)^{-3.5} \ M_{\text{spher}}^{1.5} \ : (7)$$

Here $v_w$, $c$, $b$, $1$ is an outflow collimation parameter, and $M_{\text{spher}}$ is in units of $10^{11} M_{\odot}$. This agrees well with the observed SMBH-to-spheroid mass ratios in giant galaxies (Häring & Rix 2004).

If the CMO is a star cluster, equation (7) no longer applies because the wind driving the superbubble is far from relativistic, and the Compton cooling time for the shocked gas exceeds the free-fall time. The cooling in this case is by atomic transitions. However, the $M_{\text{NC}} - M_{\text{spher}}$ relation still has the basic form of equation (7), i.e., $M_{\text{CMO}} / M_{\text{spher}}$ in all cases.

To see this, note first that we always have $t_{\text{flow}} = R/v_{\text{shell}} = R/c$ for the shell as it escapes. In the SMBH case, the Compton cooling time is proportional to the inverse of the radiation energy density, which is diluted by the $1/R^2$ law: $t_{\text{cool}} / (L_{\text{Edd}}/4 \ R^2 c^3 / R^2) = M_{\text{BH}}$. In the NC case, the cooling time has the same dependence because the wind density also falls off as $1/R^2$. $w / M_{\text{NC}} = (4 \ R^2 v_w^2)$, and then $t_{\text{cool}} / w = 1/R^2 M_{\text{NC}}$. Thus, either type of CMO has $t_{\text{cool}} = t_{\text{flow}}$ at a radius $R_{\text{cool}} / M_{\text{CMO}}^{1/3}$, or simply $R_{\text{cool}} / 3$ using equation (4). Finally, $M_{\text{spher}} / R_{\text{cool}}^2 / 5$ and hence $M_{\text{CMO}} / M_{\text{spher}} ^{1/5}$.

In detail, the flow time is always (e.g., King 2003):

$$t_{\text{flow}} = 6.6 \ 10^3 \ yr \ R_{\text{kpc}} \ 200 \ -1.2 \ M_{\text{spher}}^{1.2} \ (f_g = 0.16)^{1.2} : (8)$$

for the shell radius $R$ in units of kpc and $M_{\text{spher}}$.

Again, $1$ for an SMBH and $0.05$ for an NC. In the latter case, we further find for the radiative cooling time,

$$t_{\text{cool}} = 1.4 \ 10^3 \ yr \ R_{\text{kpc}}^{5.6} \ v_{\text{w200}} \ -1.8 \ M_{\text{spher}}^{1.8} (Z = Z) / 0.6 : (9)$$

where $v_{\text{w200}}$ is the speed of the cluster superwind in units of $300 \ km \ s^{-1}$. This follows from the definition $t_{\text{cool}} = \mu m_k {kT} / (\pi \ \hbar \ \kappa)$, with $0.6$; the wind density $\rho$ given by the continuity equation, $4 \ R^2 \ v_w^2 = M_{\text{w}}$; the shock temperature $kT = m_h (3/16) v_w^2$; and $\kappa$ the normalized cooling function calculated by Sutherland & Dopita (1993). This last is approximately $\kappa = 3.55 \ 10^{-18} (Z = Z) / 0.5^{0.25}$ erg cm$^3$ s$^{-1}$ for $(Z = Z) = 0.1 - 1$ and $T = 5 - 10^5$ K ($v_w = 200 - 600 \ km \ s^{-1}$).

Finding the radius at which $t_{\text{cool}} = t_{\text{flow}}$ leads to $M_{\text{spher}} = 2 f_g / 2 R_{\text{cool}} = G$, and combining with equation (4) gives

$$M_{\text{SMBH}} / M_{\text{spher}} = 2.7 \ 10^3 \ -1 \ Z / Z \ -0.48 \ f_g / 0.16 \ -3.5 \ v_{\text{w200}}^{4.5} / M_{\text{spher}}^{1.5} : (10)$$

Comparing equation (4) to equation (10), with $= 0.05$, the predicted offset of the original $M_{\text{SMBH}} - M_{\text{spher}}$ relation from the corresponding SMBH relation is only a factor of $3 - 4$ for a wind velocity near $300 \ km \ s^{-1}$ and slightly subsonic metallicities. Allowing for the long-term mass loss from the NC, discussed at the end of (4), the normalizations of the predicted-day scalings should agree, rather fortuitiously, to within a factor of two—just as Ferrarese et al. (2000) and Wehner & Harris (2000) infer observationally.

The contrast between this and the much larger offset separating the two $M_{\text{CMO}} - M_{\text{spher}}$ relations is due to the fact that, for given $v_w$, the radiative $t_{\text{cool}}$ with an NC at the limiting mass of equation (4) is nearly 10 times shorter than the Compton cooling time that applies when the CMO is an SMBH (see King 2003). Thus, the final $R_{\text{cool}}$ and $M_{\text{spher}}$ are larger by this amount for a galaxy containing a nuclear star cluster vs. one with the same stellar mass, but a central black hole.

5. THE FABER–JACKSON RELATION

For a galaxy with a supermassive black hole in its nucleus, equations (7) and (4) imply a relation between the mass and velocity dispersion of the spheroid alone (King 2003): $M_{\text{spher}}(\text{SMBH}) = 2.7 \ 10^4 \ M_{\text{BH}}^{1.5} (e/v_w)^{8.5} (f_g = 0.16)^{3.5} / 200 : (11)$

Perhaps despite appearances, this prediction is consistent with the well-known relation between the velocity dispersion and luminosity of giant ellipticals, $L / 4 \ 10^9$ (Faber & Jackson 1976). This is because the mass-to-light ratio in the cores of these galaxies increases systematically as the $0.2 - 0.3$ power of luminosity $v_{\text{w200}}^{4.5} / M_{\text{spher}}^{1.5}$, as was shown by van der Marel (1991; Cappellari et al. 2006), so that the Faber-Jackson relation in fact implies $M_{\text{spher}} / v_{\text{w200}}^{4.5}$.

The normalization in equation (11) is also in remarkably good agreement with observation: from Hasegawa et al. (2005),

$$M_{\text{spher}}(\text{obs}) = 1.93 \ 10^4 \ M_{\text{BH}}^{0.5} / 200 : (12)$$

for galaxies with $100 \ km \ s^{-1}$—and which, as we discussed in (11) are the ones that contain SMBHs rather than NCs.

For smaller galaxies with nuclei dominated by star clusters, $t_{\text{cool}} = t_{\text{flow}}$ gives the cooling radius $R_{\text{cool}}(\text{NC}) = 880 \ kpc (Z = Z) / 0.8 (f_g = 0.16) v_{\text{w200}}^{4.5} / 200 : (13)$

As we mentioned above, this is nearly 10 times larger than the equivalent scale in the SMBH-dominated case, and the spheroid mass is consequently larger than in equation (11):

$$M_{\text{spher}}(\text{NC}) = 2.6 \ 10^2 \ M_{\text{BH}}^{0.5} (Z = Z) / 0.8 f_g / 0.16 v_{\text{w200}}^{4.5} / 200 : (14)$$

In a plot of $v_{\text{esc}}$ vs. $M_{\text{spher}}$, we would therefore expect low-mass, nucleated galaxies to define a locus with $v_{\text{esc}}^{0.2} / M_{\text{spher}}^{0.5}$. 

$M_{\text{spher}}$ for galaxies with $\approx 100 \ km \ s^{-1}$—and which, as we discussed in (11) are the ones that contain SMBHs rather than NCs.
parallel to the non-nucleated galaxies with SMBHs but falling below them by a factor of $10^{0.2}$. Then, although our model does not predict a value for the final effective radius of the stellar spheroid in terms of $R_{\text{vir}}$, the virial theorem requires any such scale to depend on the spheroid mass roughly as $R_{\text{eff}} / M_{\text{bulge}}^{0.15}$, with nucleated galaxies lying above non-nucleated ones by a factor of about 2.5.

6. DISCUSSION

Current data probably do not rule out the idea that nuclei of galaxies with $\geq 120$ km s$^{-1}$ could harbor both star clusters and SMBHs some 10 times less massive, and thus it will be important to ask how such galaxies might choose between SMBH and NC feedback channels in regulating their formation. For now, a possibly more straightforward question is why there are no nuclear clusters in larger galaxies with $\leq 120$ km s$^{-1}$ ($M_{\text{bulge}} \leq 2\times10^8 M_{\odot}$), which apparently all contain black holes.

For our basic scenario to be self-consistent, we evidently require that the dynamical time of the superbubble always be shorter than that of the entire halo, until the point of blow-out when $t_{\text{flow}} = t_{\text{cool}}$. Equivalently, the radius of the shell must always be less than the halo virial radius, and in particular $R_{\text{cool}} - R_{\text{vir}}$ is required for the growth of a CMO (whether an SMBH or an NC) to be self-regulated as we envision. From the relations in Bryan & Norman (1998), if $m_0 = 0.3$, $\beta = 0.7$, and $H_0 = 70$ km s$^{-1}$ Mpc$^{-1}$, then $R_{\text{vir}} = 540$ kpc $200(1+z)^{-1.2}$ (accurate to better than 10% for $z < 2$). Combining this with equation (13), our picture can work for NCs forming at redshift $z_{\text{NC}} < 0.5$ and this upper limit becomes $< 130$ km s$^{-1}$. In halos with velocity dispersion higher than this, the superbubble blown by an NC reaches the halo virial radius before it becomes energy-conserving and can accelerate to escape. It is presumably then held there, or even driven into collapse, by the infall of material from beyond $R_{\text{vir}}$. The growth of the central star “cluster” is never choked off, and it ultimately becomes indistinguishable from the galaxy spheroid itself. When the CMO is a black hole, the much longer Compton-cooling time found in King (2003) implies that $R_{\text{cool}} - R_{\text{vir}}$ for all $500$ km s$^{-1}(1+z_{\text{BH}})^{-0.55}$, so it is only in very massive systems indeed that the self-regulated $M_{\text{BH}}$ -- relation of equation (2) breaks down.

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Note added in proof.—J. Rossa et al. (AJ, 132, 1074 [2006]) have recently analyzed a sample of nuclear clusters in 40 spiral galaxies, finding a relation between $M_{\text{NC}}$ and the luminosity of the galaxies’ bulge components, which has the same slope as the relation between SMBH mass and bulge luminosity with a comparable intercept. The situation for NCs in late-type spheroids thus appears very similar to that found by Wehner & Harris (2006) and Ferrarese et al. (2006) to hold in early-type galaxies.