

# Chapter 7

## Germany

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### 7.1 Sport System and the Structure of Organized Sport

The organizational structure of the sport system is shaped, to a large extent, by the federal structure that is characteristic of the Federal Republic of Germany and which is a feature of both public sports administration and the structures of autonomous civic or self-administration of sport. As described in Fig. 7.1, the sports organizational structure at federal level has two distinct pillars: one of public administration and a two-tier pillar of autonomous or self-administration of sport. Nonprofit sport clubs offer a range of sport programs to the population, and there are more than 91,000 nonprofit sport clubs (Breuer and Feiler 2013c).

Since the merger of the DSB and the NOC in May 2006, the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) has represented the interests of its member organizations as the sole umbrella organization. The DOSB has 98 member organizations comprising 27.8 million members including people who are members of two or more sport clubs (DOSB 2012). The member organizations of the DOSB unite 16 federal state sport confederations/federations, 62 national federations (34 Olympic and 28 non-Olympic), and 20 sport federations with special tasks (e.g., German Olympic Society, German Association for Sport Science, German Association of Physical Education Teachers, Makkabi in Germany) (DOSB 2012). The German

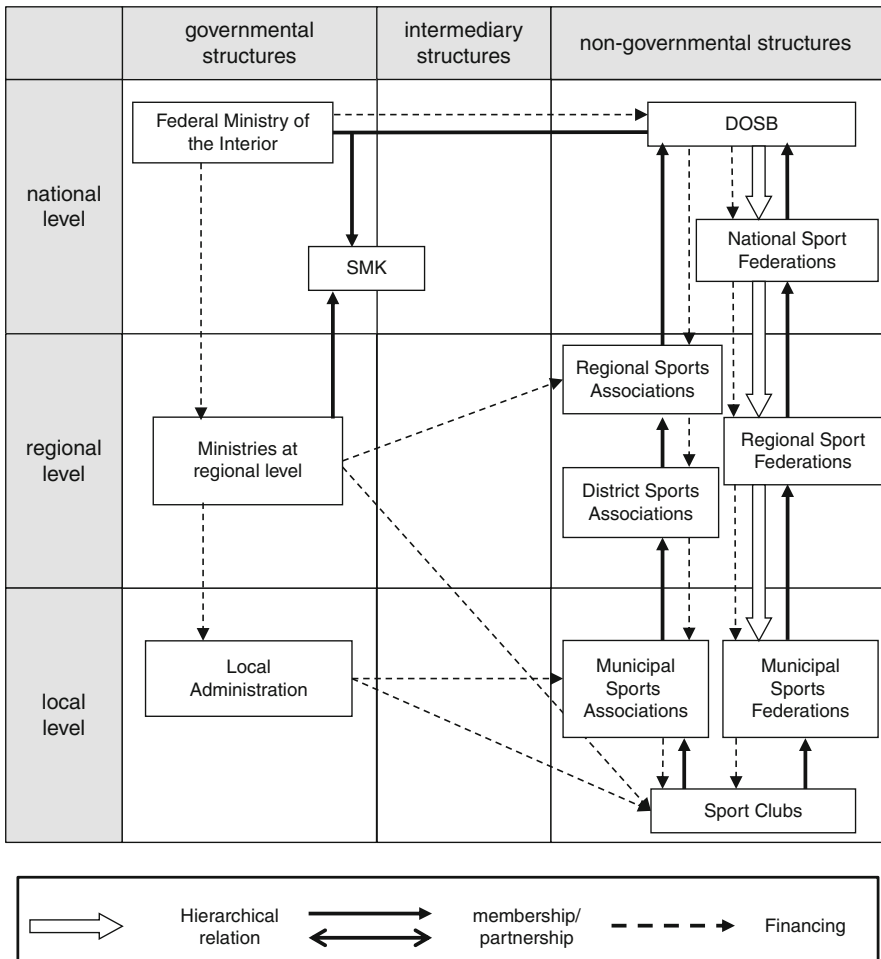
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**Fig. 7.1** The organization of sport in Germany. Note: *SMK* Konferenz der Sportminister/-innen der Länder (Meeting of Sport Ministers of all federal states), *DOSB* Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund (German Olympic Sports Confederation)

Sports Youth is the umbrella federation of youth organizations belonging to the German Sports Confederation, and it focuses, in particular, on working with children and young people. The German Sports Youth combines the interest of more than 9.5 million young people until the age of 27, and they are organized in sport clubs in 16 regional sports youth, 53 youth organizations of the national federations, and 10 youth organizations of the federations with special tasks (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2010).

The DOSB’s Performance Division and the equivalent structures at regional level (Regional Performance Committee/LA-L) play a guiding and coordinating role in elite sport development. The Performance Sports Division is responsible for

**Table 7.1** Top ten sport federations by memberships (DOSB 2012)

| Federation                   | Memberships |
|------------------------------|-------------|
| Soccer Federation            | 6,800,128   |
| Gymnastics Federation        | 4,967,401   |
| Tennis Federation            | 1,504,112   |
| Shooting Federation          | 1,394,060   |
| Alpine Association           | 918,553     |
| Track and Field Federation   | 860,120     |
| Handball Association         | 818,640     |
| Equestrian Federation        | 718,965     |
| Federation of Sportfishermen | 628,066     |
| Golf Federation              | 624,569     |

managing and coordinating top-level sport within the DOSB. It launches initiatives for the development of strategic plans and makes declarations of principle regarding performance sport for young athletes and top-level sport.

Table 7.1 lists the ten sports federations within the DOSB that have the highest number of memberships: the German Soccer Federation has the largest number of members, with 6.8 million in total (DOSB 2012). The German Gymnastics Federation plays a special role in the landscape of sport federations because it combines a large number of sports for all programs. The Federal Government also helps to fund the German Gymnastics Festival and the Gymnaestrada (the largest international general gymnastics festival).

In the public administration of sport, both the Federal Government (through the Federal Ministry of the Interior) and the 16 federal states (for instance, via their Ministries of Culture or the Interior) have joint responsibility for sport in their area. There are consequently no independent specialist ministries of sports. Responsibility for top-level sport, however, lies with the Federal Ministry of the Interior operating as the specialized department. The latter plays the leading role in the area of state support for top-level sport. It also coordinates the activities of the other federal ministries that have specific responsibilities in the area of top-level sport, such as supporting top-level sport in the Federal Armed Forces.

However, sport issues at local government level are the responsibility of specialist sports offices. As a result of the country's federal structure, these public structures do not constitute a hierarchically integrated, top-to-bottom system. Rather, the individual ministries operate largely independently although they do, at regional level, coordinate their activities as part of the Conference of Ministers of Sports of the regions. The situation is different with regard to the self-administered autonomous sport sector: the clubs are organized both at the level of specific disciplines (into governing bodies) and at the level of multiple sports (into sports confederations; Petry and Schulze 2011).

The majority of sport clubs in Germany are registered, and they belong to the voluntary associations that are characterized by certain features:

- Membership is voluntary.
- Members can join or leave a sports club without any external constraints.

- The decision to become a member of a club can hence be swayed by the sport programs offered by the club.
- If clubs cease serving the interest of its members, they risk losing members, and if the programs clubs' offer is very attractive, they stand to gain new members.
- Sport clubs are not dependent on third parties, as they provide their services by and large, through the financial contributions and voluntary involvement of their members. The fact that they are dependent on their members ensures they are not dependent on third parties. Sport clubs represent the interests of their members, who are only willing to contribute resources (e.g., money or time) if this facilitates activities that align with their interests. The decision-making structure of German sport clubs is also democratic. The objectives and services provided by the club are jointly determined by the members, who exert their influence via their voting rights and not via personal ownership of the club.

The most important resource within sport clubs is the voluntary involvement of their members, who work free of charge and without directly receiving anything in return. Breuer and Feiler (2013c) stated that around almost 0.75 million people were engaged as volunteers at the board level in nonprofit sport clubs. The involvement of members in this way facilitates cooperation, based on the spirit of solidarity in the pursuit of their interests. Voluntary involvement enables the clubs to be organized in accordance with the interests of their members. The extent to which sport clubs are being transformed from communities of like-minded people into service organizations has been a subject of debate and, in some case, a source of controversy. Controversy is especially evident in large multi-branch clubs that offer a comprehensive range of sport for all opportunities.

## 7.2 Financing of Sport

The German sport system distinguishes between nonprofit and for-profit sport organizations, and the financing of sports differs between these segments. Sporting organizations have different sources to generate income. These include, among others, membership fees, sponsoring deals, TV rights, merchandising, public subsidies, and lottery. Before analyzing sources of revenue for sport organizations, it must be noted that the German government supported elite sports from 2006 to 2009 with 842 million euros (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2010). The federal states and local municipalities support in addition elite sport but also sport for all. One of the lotteries supported sport in 2009 with EUR 15.9 million which went to the German Olympic Confederation (35 %), the German Sport Aid Foundation (25 %), and the regional sport confederations (40 %) (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2010). Revenues from advertising, sponsoring, and media rights amounted to EUR 5.5 billion in 2010 (an der Heiden et al. 2012). Considering income from sponsoring, nonprofit sport clubs received EUR 2.05 billion, while for-profit sport clubs received EUR 1.1 billion (an der Heiden et al. 2012). Although the amount for nonprofit sport clubs is higher, the number of nonprofit sport clubs is also higher (there are

more than 90,000 nonprofit sport clubs in Germany), implying that the single club received on average less.

Nonprofit sport clubs have accumulated a range of income sources such as membership fees (approx. 60 %), donations (8.8 %), subsidies from the municipalities/federal state (9 %), and other sources such as club restaurant, loans, and sponsoring contracts (Breuer and Feiler 2013b). These heterogeneous sources of income work like a protective shield; that is, a decrease in income in one of the categories is generally less severe with regard to the overall financial situation (Breuer and Feiler 2013b).

Besides direct income, nonprofit sport clubs benefit also from indirect income such as the use of municipal sport facilities for free or a small amount of money and fiscal privileges and the work of volunteers. The volunteer hours for nonprofit sport clubs amounted to 12.5 million hours in Germany in 2012, indicating a monetary value of EUR 2.25 billion at the board level (Breuer and Feiler 2013c). In addition, voluntary activities are performed at other levels of the nonprofit sport club. If we consider further voluntary activities, in soccer, six million hours of voluntary activities are performed; in tennis, 2.1 million hours of voluntary activities are performed; and in handball, one million hours are monthly provided (Breuer and Feiler 2013a). This shows the importance of indirect financing in this sector, and the functioning of nonprofit sport clubs highly depends on it. Nonprofit sport clubs spend money on coaches (17 %), maintenance of facilities, equipment, and clothing for teams, organization of sport events, fees for federations, and traveling costs, insurance, taxes, etc. (Breuer and Feiler 2013b).

For-profit sport organizations can be distinguished on the one hand into commercial sport providers like fitness centers and on the other hand the teams in the German top leagues of, for instance, soccer, basketball, ice hockey, and handball. The fitness centers generated in 2011 a turnover of EUR 3.98 billion, having 7.57 members who paid on average a membership fee of EUR 46.2 (DSSV Arbeitgeberverband deutscher Fitness- und Gesundheits-Anlagen 2012). Those fitness centers spend the highest income on staff (27.7 %), rent (12.2 %), energy (5.6 %), marketing (4.8 %), leasing (4.6 %), and other things (e.g., insurance, maintenance; DSSV Arbeitgeberverband deutscher Fitness- und Gesundheits-Anlagen 2012). The teams of the leagues have the advantage that they benefit – divergent from nonprofit organizations – more from income of the league competition, advertising, TV rights, and sponsoring (Hovemann 2005). The disadvantage is that those clubs are also more dependent on these sources since they have in general fewer sources than nonprofit sport clubs. For instance, the overall revenues of the German Handball League have amounted in 2011/2012 to 86.1 million euros of which 69.5 % were generated from sponsoring, 21.0 % came from income generated at match days (mostly ticket sales), 3.0 % from TV rights, 1.5 % from merchandising, and 5.0 % from other sources (Vogel and Ehemann 2012). The German Ice Hockey League had similar revenues in terms of absolute numbers 86.2 million euros. However, the income distribution differed: 46.9 % sponsoring, 36.0 % income from match days, 3.4 % from merchandising, and 13.7 % from other sources (Vogel and Ehemann 2012). In contrast, the third German Soccer League had revenues in the season 2011/2012 of 100.4 million euros. These were generated from sponsoring

(44.5 %), income match days (16.9 %), TV rights (15.1 %), merchandising (1.9 %), and other sources (21.6 %; Vogel and Ehemann 2012). Thus, differences between soccer and other team sports are prevalent. For-profit organizations have different expenditure categories such as players, administrative staff, youth and amateurs, material costs, and merchandising. The biggest amount is spent on players (Vogel and Ehemann 2012).

### ***7.2.1 Financing of Sport Facilities***

In the past, sport facilities (public sport facilities) have been mainly financed with the help of public money. Yet, this classical way of financing has been partly substituted by private funding or hybrid models of funding (Breuer et al. 2011c; Breuer and Hovemann 2006; Vornholz 2005). Again, a portfolio of financing opportunities is available for financing sport facilities. These include equity financing, debt capital financing, and financing with mezzanine capital (Vornholz 2005; Breuer and Hovemann 2006). Besides, financing can be public, private, or through public-private partnerships.

The overall expenditures for sport facilities, their modernization, and maintenance amounted in 2008 to 22.6 billion euros. The biggest amount (9.7 billion euros) was spent for maintenance costs (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie 2012). Breuer and Hovemann (2006) stated that municipalities were the main providers for the financing of sport facilities since their engagement amounted to 72–78 % of the total public sport funding between 1992 and 2001. Further numbers from 2008 support this notion: 74 % of investment and maintenance costs of public sport facilities were paid by the municipalities (Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Technologie 2012). Consequently, the biggest finance resource is public money. Yet, the amount of public financing models increased (Breuer et al. 2011c). Notwithstanding, it has to be mentioned that the risk of investing into a sports facility is high since the venue's profits depend with regard to for-profit organizations on the home team's success (Napp and Vornholz 2002). A third model for financing sport facilities is through public-private partnerships (PPPs) which occur in different organizational and cooperational forms. The cooperations include oftentimes the state on the one side and private investors on the other side to facilitate the management of complex tasks (Vornholz 2005).

## **7.3 Sports Policy**

In the aftermath of the World War II, new umbrella sport organizations emerged in the federal republic which replaced the state-dominated sports movement of the National Socialists. In 1949, the National Olympic Committee for Germany (NOK)

was set up, and in 1950 the German Sports Association (DSB) was established. The NOK was designed to represent the Olympic ideal in Germany, and the DSB was set up as the national umbrella organization representing all sport federations. In 2006, these organizations merged into the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB), which means that the Olympic and non-Olympic sport disciplines now have a common umbrella organization. In terms of statutes, the DOSB distinguishes its fields of tasks into general goals, performance-oriented goals, and goals that relate to sport for all (DOSB 2011).

Under Article 30 of the Basic Law, the 16 federal regions are generally responsible for subsidizing sport in the Federal Republic of Germany. The main focus in this regard is on the area of subsidies for school sport, university sport, sport for all, and leisure sport within and outside the federations and on the construction of sports facilities. Adhering to the principle of the autonomy of sport, the state interprets its role as that of a sponsor who merely creates the framework that enables autonomous sport and its athletes to perform at the highest international level. For this reason, the government does not become involved in dealing with issues through its own programs or initiatives, but rather by participating in the different bodies involved in the self-administration of sport (Petry and Schulze 2011).

The Federal Government is represented, in particular, in the commissions and committees that have high-level competencies in the area of top-level sport. Representatives of the Federal Government are present, *inter alia*, on the boards, commissions, and committees of the DOSB, the national sports federations, and the German Sports Aid Foundation and on the boards of trustees of the federal training centers (Petry et al. 2008).

### ***7.3.1 Top-Level Sports***

With reunification, the German top-level sports system faced the challenge of integrating the GDR's centralist and totalitarian system into the top-level sports system of the federal republic, which was characterized by great openness and by the fact that it took federal structures into account. Some extraordinarily successful structures of the GDR's top-level sports system had to be eliminated as part of this process for political, economic, or ethical reasons, only to be reintroduced later on in a changed or similar form. In relation to the role Germany plays in international sports competition, the aspiration for success that developed during the previous phase has been maintained. This also manifests itself in the publicly stated requirement that Germany be one of the top nations at the Olympics (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2010).

Objectives are much more rigidly and accurately defined in the all-German top-level sports system than in the former federal German sports system. Medal guidelines have become customary in a large number of sports federations, and the weighting of Olympic successes according to their representative value in society appears to have increased, particularly over the past 15 years.

### **7.3.2 *Sport for All***

The Federal Government continually emphasizes the importance of sport, especially the promotion of sport for all, but there is no governmental program that has set particular goals with regard to a “sport for all” policy. However, there have been and are several initiatives that are used to foster sport participation such as such a particular outdoor movement in the 1970s (“Trimm Dich”), an initiative promoted by a health insurance company and a major TV broadcaster called “Germany gets active” (“Deutschland bewegt sich”), or an initiative with a long tradition housed by the German Olympic Sports Confederation called “Sportabzeichen” (sports badge). Here, every citizen having accomplished exercises within a particular limit (e.g., being 70–74 years old, one should swim 43 s or below on 25 m for the gold badge) in four categories gets awarded the badge. This initiative celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2013 and has thus a long tradition in Germany. The exercises can be accomplished on a yearly basis.

Furthermore, the Federal Government supports the autonomous sport movement in the certain fields (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2010, p. 17).

#### **7.3.2.1 Youth Sports and the Federal Youth Sport Games**

The Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) supports sport for children and young people. The Federal Government’s plan for children and young people envisages supporting the so-called free and public youth welfare organizations. It provides funds mainly for the German Sports Youth, although it also supports other youth associations of the various sport federations, two bilateral youth offices (Franco-German Youth Office and the German-Polish Youth Office), and the implementation of the Federal Youth Sport Games. The Federal Youth Sport Games have been implemented in schools and sports clubs since 1951 and is the biggest sporting event in Germany with approximately five million children and young people taking part (Bundesministerium des Inneren 2010, p. 77).

#### **7.3.2.2 Women and Girls in Sport**

Women and girls are equally represented in organized sport in Germany although they are clearly underrepresented in the management bodies of organized sport (federations, DOSB, and sports clubs). The Federal Government has promoted a number of campaigns and projects of the DOSB, such as the model project “Women at the Top.”

#### **7.3.2.3 Sport for Seniors and Sport for Families**

Together with the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ), a number of projects were implemented aimed at including



older people and families into organized sport. The Federal Government also used the tool of campaigns and model projects (“Staying fit at 50 +” or the project “Family and Sport”).

Other important areas in which the Federal Government emphasizes the sociopolitical importance of sport are (a) sport and integration, (b) sport and the prevention of violence, (c) sport and voluntary involvement, (d) sport and health, and (e) sport and the environment.

## 7.4 Sport Participation

Sport participation is of interest to policy makers since several positive externalities are attributed to taking part in sports, leading to a reduction in healthcare costs. These positive effects include, for instance, health, integration, and social inclusion (Heinemann 2005). Before shedding light on the actual participation rates and the most practiced sports, a definition of sport participation will be provided.

### 7.4.1 *Current and Past Participation Rates*

Research on sport participation was conducted in different nationwide surveys (e.g., Krug et al. 2012; Becker et al. 2006) and in several German cities (e.g., Breuer et al. 2011b; Wicker et al. 2009; Hallmann et al. 2011). A broad definition of sport participation was used, implying that also leisurely activities like intense walking (including walking the dog) or cycling were considered as sport. Yet, participation of at least 30 min per week was considered a prerequisite for being physically active.

Previous research based on large surveys suggested moderate to high participation rates of 60–75 % for Germany. For instance, it has been indicated that in 2003 two thirds of the German population were physically active, though only one third once per week using a nationwide survey (Becker et al. 2006). Several surveys conducted in various German cities between 2007 and 2009 with an overall sample size of  $n=26,263$  suggested that 73.6 % of the population took part in sports at least once per week (Breuer et al. 2011b). A different nationwide study regarding health-related issues in Germany revealed that 72.6 % of the male population and 65.4 % of the female population practiced at least once per week sport (Krug et al. 2012). Following this study, there was an increase in sport participation of 14 % for males and 16 % for women from 1998 to 2008–2011 when the data collection took place (Krug et al. 2012).

Having a look at the most practiced sports (see Table 7.2), cycling with a participation rate of 20.1 %, swimming with a participation rate of 13.7 %, and running with a participation rate of 13.3 % were among the activities performed most often. Other popular sports were fitness, gymnastics, going for a walk and hiking, soccer, Nordic walking, dancing, and tennis (Breuer et al. 2011b).

**Table 7.2** Sport participation rates for the ten most practiced sports (Breuer et al. 2011b)

| Sport                    | Participation rate (in %) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Cycling                  | 20.1                      |
| Swimming                 | 13.7                      |
| Running                  | 13.3                      |
| Fitness                  | 10.1                      |
| Gymnastics               | 9.1                       |
| Going for a walk, hiking | 9.0                       |
| Soccer                   | 8.1                       |
| (Nordic) Walking         | 5.8                       |
| Dancing                  | 3.9                       |
| Tennis                   | 3.9                       |

### 7.4.2 Organizational Types

In Germany, sport programs are offered by nonprofit sport clubs or commercial sport providers or individuals who take part in sports in a non-organized way. Almost every third German is a member of a nonprofit sport club, though multiple memberships are also possible. Besides, there are several commercial sport providers offering also sport programs to the population. There are more than 7,300 sport facilities run by commercial sport providers, and more than 7.6 million German are a member of one of the commercial sport providers (Deloitte and DSSV 2012). Thus, every 10th German is practicing sport using programs offered by a commercial sport provider.

Research in two German municipalities indicated that 31.1 % take part in nonprofit sport clubs and 14.2 % are physically active in commercial sport centers (Breuer et al. 2011a). This represents organized sports. Of the respondents, 51.7 %<sup>1</sup> specified to take part in sports without being affiliated to any organization; thus, they practice sports in a non-organized way. In Germany, several sports such as cycling, running, or swimming are associated with non-organized sports, while sports such as soccer, gymnastics, or volleyball are associated with participation in a nonprofit sport club, and sports such as dancing, yoga, and back fitness are most often practiced using a commercial sport provider.

## 7.5 Conclusion

Sport in Germany is based on the principle of autonomy and self-administration, and they are firmly embedded in the political thinking of the German people and are therefore extremely resistant to all types of reform endeavors. Generally speaking,

<sup>1</sup> This number was analyzed in particular for this contribution, using the same dataset from which the other numbers from Breuer et al. (2011a) were derived.

sport is intended to promote personal development, the aim being to achieve equal participation of children, young people, men and women, people with disabilities, and senior citizens. It strives to pursue the basic Olympic principles and to support sport science. In terms of sport policy, the DOSB is keen to preserve the independence of its member organizations and to facilitate cooperation with government agencies and international sports federations. It aims to develop adequate sporting facilities and to procure the necessary funds. The use of public funds is always a subject of controversial discussion in the German sport system, particularly within local authorities. The question of the extent government needs to get involved in order for sport programs to be effective (and hence to enhance participation rates) is discussed primarily in the towns and local authorities. The basis for a demand-based range of sport programs presupposes not only a good sport infrastructure but also an integrated approach by local sports clubs, commercial providers, and political players.

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