



Sports Economics, Management and Policy
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Siegfried Nagel
Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund
Bjarne Ibsen
Jeroen Scheerder *Editors*

Functions of Sports Clubs in European Societies

A Cross-National Comparative Study

 Springer

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Editors

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Foreword

Sport was only recently included in the policies of the European Union, when it was mentioned for the first time in the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. With this important step, the European Union started to not only acknowledge, but also, and most importantly, to support and take initiatives to promote the role of sports in citizens' life and the benefits it brings to society. This is why the European Commission welcomes the publication of this book on such an important topic.

In recent years, sport has been changing greatly. New stakeholders are emerging, as well as new forms and settings to practise sports, less structured and formal than before. Despite this, sports clubs are still at the heart of the sports system in Europe, as proven by the estimated number of club memberships, which has remained constant over the last decade, according to Eurobarometer.

As the main providers of organised sports activities, sports clubs allow talents to grow and develop under the guidance and supervision of qualified staff, who are responsible for conveying relevant skills and promoting the positive values that are enshrined in the nature of sports itself, such as tolerance or fair play.

The crucial and manifold role of sports clubs is recognised by the European Union and is reflected in the priorities that have been set in the field of sport to make use of its full potential. The promotion of health-enhancing physical activity is probably one of their most prominent and visible functions, but sports clubs bring several other benefits to our societies.

Sports clubs, in fact, play an essential part in social inclusion and integration, offering people from all population groups a similar access to sports activities, bringing people together and creating communities. Moreover, sports clubs contribute to democratic participation and active citizenship, especially through volunteering and membership.

Last, but by no means least, the role of sports clubs in public wealth should not be forgotten. Whether through employing staff and coaches, or through the organisation of sports events, the work of sports clubs contributes to local economies and employment. In addition, the economic dimension of sports goes beyond the sports industry itself. The work of sports clubs in all the above mentioned fields, from promoting physical activity to social cohesion, have an impact on several other

economic and political dimensions, such as public health, regional development and tourism.

I am glad to acknowledge that the Erasmus + project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE) has successfully allowed for the collection of such extensive data, which ultimately led to the publication of this book.

The Erasmus+ Sport chapter has been very successful since its introduction in 2014. The future Erasmus programme for the period 2021–2027 is currently under negotiation. Thanks to the good results of the current programme, sport is expected to gain more importance in the next programme, with increased funding and new actions. We also expect that more and more clubs will be able to benefit from the support of Erasmus in implementing their priorities and achieving their goals.

Head of the Sport Unit of the European Commission
Brussels, Belgium

Yves Le Lostecque

Foreword

Sports clubs are a fundamental part of the European sporting landscape. They are represented in the sports system of every European country and have a meaningful contribution to society. On no other continent are the sports clubs such an important player within the sports model. Regardless of their particular position within policy and politics, sports clubs are considered to have societal value. Sports clubs have traditionally been associated with health promotion, social cohesion, volunteering and democratic participation. However, the extent to which sports clubs actually contribute to these elements, and how this differs between European countries, has remained unknown.

The *Sport Organisation Research Network* (SORN), which functions under the umbrella of the European Association for Sociology of Sport (eass), signalled this lacuna in research and successfully started the Erasmus+ project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” and the subsequent book project. The dedication and hard work of the scholars within SORN, and in particular the editors of this volume, has provided us with an overview of the contribution of sports clubs to health promotion, social cohesion, democratic participation and volunteering.

As president of eass, I am proud to see that the close cooperation within our association and networking of experts on social aspects of sports and sports organisations in Europe, led to this book, *Functions of Sports Clubs in European Societies – A Cross-National Comparative Study*. The eass is a forum responsible for stimulating research, publications and professional development in the area of sports and social sciences. The current scientific analysis of the functions of sports clubs, and the joint efforts to promote sociological research on this topic, are fine examples of trajectories that originate from eass conferences or gatherings.

I would like to compliment the editors and the respective authors of the country chapters on their excellent work and their important contribution to the body of knowledge on the functions of sports clubs in European societies. This book provides new theoretical and empirical insights and has the potential to stimulate debate

and discussion on the societal importance of sports clubs. I hope this book will inspire both researchers and practitioners to embrace the topic of sports clubs and to increase (the understanding of) sports clubs' contribution to public welfare throughout Europe.

President EASS
Utrecht, the Netherlands

Remco Hoekman

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The editors wish to thank the team of authors of the country chapters for their expert insight. Most of them were also involved in the project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE). We wish to acknowledge all research partners in the SIVSCE-project for the valuable contribution to the project and to this publication:

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We are grateful to the editorial team at the Institute of Sport Science, the University of Bern: Rahel Spring for her considerable effort in editing and finalising the manuscripts, Pascal Stegmann for creation and thorough edit of all the figures and tables, and Susan McClements Wyss for proofreading several chapters. This editorial team transformed the original manuscripts into 14 chapters that provide valuable information for researchers, policy makers, board members and managers in sports federations and clubs.

Bern, Switzerland
Odense, Denmark
Odense, Denmark
Leuven, Belgium

Siegfried Nagel
Karsten Elmose-Østerlund
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Jeroen Scheerder

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| 1 Introduction | 1 |
| Siegfried Nagel, Karsten Elmosse-Østerlund, Bjarne Ibsen, and Jeroen Scheerder | |
| 2 Conceptual Framework and Research Design | 9 |
| Siegfried Nagel, Karsten Elmosse-Østerlund, Bjarne Ibsen, and Jeroen Scheerder | |
| 3 Belgium/Flanders: The Evolution of Flemish Sports Clubs as the Cornerstone of Society from Past to Present to Future | 35 |
| Joris Corthouts, Bart Verschueren, Elien Claes, and Jeroen Scheerder | |
| 4 Denmark: High Participation at the Expense of Democratic and Social Engagement? | 65 |
| Karsten Elmosse-Østerlund and Bjarne Ibsen | |
| 5 England: A Long Tradition, Adapting to Changing Circumstances | 93 |
| Geoff Nichols and Matthew James | |
| 6 Germany: Sports Clubs as Important Players of Civil Society | 121 |
| Svenja Feiler and Christoph Breuer | |
| 7 Hungary: Potentials for Civil Initiatives in Sports | 151 |
| Szilvia Perényi | |
| 8 Netherlands: Sports Clubs at the Heart of Society and Sports Policy | 183 |
| Jan-Willem van der Roest, Resie Hoeijmakers, and Remco Hoekman | |
| 9 Norway: The Ambiguity of Sports Clubs and Nonsports Social Functions | 211 |
| Ørnulf Seippel | |

| | | |
|-----------|---|-----|
| 10 | Poland: Small Local Sports Clubs with High Social Engagement | 235 |
| | Monika Piątkowska and Sylwia Gocłowska | |
| 11 | Spain: Conviviality, Social Relationships and Democracy at the Basis of Spanish Sports Clubs' Culture | 263 |
| | Ramon Llopis-Goig and María P. García-Alcober | |
| 12 | Switzerland: Autonomous Sports Clubs as Contributors to Public Welfare | 289 |
| | Siegfried Nagel, Pascal Stegmann, Rahel Bürgi, and Markus Lamprecht | |
| 13 | Exploring Pan-European Similarities and Differences in Club-Organised Sports: A Cross-National and Cross-Temporal Comparison | 315 |
| | Jeroen Scheerder, Kobe Helsen, Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund, and Siegfried Nagel | |
| 14 | The Contribution of Sports Clubs to Public Welfare in European Societies. A Cross-National Comparative Perspective | 345 |
| | Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund, Bjarne Ibsen, Siegfried Nagel, and Jeroen Scheerder | |

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Chapter 1

Introduction



**Siegfried Nagel, Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund, Bjarne Ibsen,
and Jeroen Scheerder**

Abstract Sports clubs claim to fulfil several important socio-political functions and therefore to play an important role in public welfare for European contemporary societies. This significance is mainly based on the considerable size and voluntary character of the club-organised sports sector. In almost all European countries, sports clubs are valuable sports providers, playing a crucial role in regular sports activity, particularly for youth and competitive sports. In the main, sports clubs offer a setting for regular and well-organised sports activities characterised by conviviality and togetherness. This book investigates the contribution of sports clubs to public welfare using the broad range of empirical data collected within the framework of a comparative study. The project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE) collected comparable data at various analytical levels across ten European countries. The overarching concern of this book is to analyse and compare the extent sports clubs can contribute to health promotion, social cohesion and democratic participation through volunteering and therefore promote public welfare in European societies. In the introduction, we provide a background and give an overview of the structure of the ten country-specific chapters and two comparative chapters contained in this book.

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1.1 Background and Aim

Sports clubs play an important role in public welfare for European contemporary societies. Sports policy for the European Union and other institutions recognise and even emphasise the wide importance of sports clubs (European Commission 2007, 2011). This is mainly based on the considerable size and the voluntary character of the club-organised sports sector. It is estimated that a total of 60 million Europeans are active in sports clubs (Breuer et al. 2015; European Commission 2014) – a figure that highlights the considerable potential of voluntary sports clubs. In almost all European countries, sports clubs are the most important sports providers and play a crucial role in regular sports activities, particularly in youth and competitive sports (Breuer et al. 2015; Hallmann and Petry 2013). In the main, sports clubs have high popularity compared to other voluntary associations (e.g. in the cultural or political sector). They usually offer a setting for well-organised sports activities characterised by conviviality and togetherness and the ability to convey social rules, norms and values to specific target groups (e.g. children and youth).

Since their establishment in the nineteenth century, sports clubs have claimed to fulfil several important social as well as political functions. Regular sports activities with clubs assumedly have health-related effects. As sports clubs have the ability to bring people together in social networks, there is also widespread belief that participation in sports clubs can promote social integration in society. Finally, voluntary associations in general and sports clubs in particular are often viewed as a foundation of civil society, purportedly schooling democracy and creating social trust (e.g. Münkler 1997; Putnam 2000). In particular, members who do voluntary work in a club can gain experience in active citizenship (Ibsen et al. 2019). As a consequence, public authorities in European countries usually and in various ways support sports clubs in order to promote their specific social and political assets. The EU recognises the central role of sports clubs in many European countries and aims to promote health-enhancing physical activity, social integration, democratic values and volunteering through membership in sports clubs. To this end they state: “The Commission believes that better use can be made of the potential of sport as an instrument for social inclusion in the policies, actions and programmes of the European Union and of Member States” (European Commission 2007: 7).

In this context, research on sports clubs has particularly focused on the following benefits to society (e.g. Jaitner and Körner 2018; Nagel et al. 2004; Rittner and Breuer 2004):

1. Contribution to *health promotion through regular sports activities* of their members (e.g. Kokko et al. 2018; Meganck et al. 2017; Thiel and Mayer 2018). This assumes that sports participation in a club is characterised by higher regularity compared to non-organised sports activities.

2. Bringing people together and therefore the opportunity to create social networks and to familiarise with social rules and values. Thus sports clubs have the potential to promote *social integration and social cohesion* (e.g. Nobis 2018; Østerlund 2014; Østerlund and Seippel 2013; Scheerder et al. 2004; Vandermeersch et al. 2017), particularly for specific target groups (e.g. people with a migration background, people with a disability, etc.).
3. Democratic decision-making structures, social activities and joint responsibility of members for the club's activities. These elements are believed to make a contribution to *democratic involvement and engagement* for the community (Ibsen et al. 2019; Jaitner 2018).
4. Volunteering in sports clubs can be viewed as a specific form of democratic involvement and a form of active citizenship based on reciprocal relations between members. This makes *voluntary work* relevant not only as a resource for sports clubs but also for society (e.g. Hallmann and Fairley 2018; Vos et al. 2012).

Besides these four crucial issues, research has also analysed other socio-political functions of sports clubs: for example, to what extent sports clubs promote the development and stabilisation of identity, values and norms, especially for children and adolescents. Furthermore, the economic relevance of sports clubs is discussed. However, we will not cover these topics within the framework of this book.

Sports policies across the EU member states are very diverse, which creates different conditions for the promotion of social welfare in sports clubs. Specific traditions and distinct historical roots of sports clubs have induced a variety of sports systems and policies in Europe (see, e.g. Hallmann and Petry 2013; Scheerder et al. 2017). It is feasible that the range of histories, policies and organisational structures have impacted on sports clubs and their potential to fulfil certain functions in society. However, there is a limited amount of up-to-date comparative knowledge on the socio-political functions of sports clubs and their potential to promote public health, social cohesion, democratic participation and volunteering and thus to contribute to public welfare across European societies. Most existing studies are country-specific and do not allow comparison from a cross-national perspective. For example, *Sport Clubs in Europe* by Breuer et al. (2015) provides a comparative and general overview of sports clubs in 20 different European countries and describes the historical and societal context as well as the main structural characteristics of sports clubs. However, the database for each country used in this volume is quite varied, and opportunities for comparison are rather limited.

The project, “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE), collected and analysed comparable data and knowledge across ten European countries (see Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2016). For the first time, data from sports clubs across different European countries was collected using the same instruments and standardised questionnaires. Furthermore, data was collected about structural characteristics of sports clubs as well as about the members and the volunteers in sports clubs.

This book aims to present the socio-political functions of sports clubs by using the broad range of empirical data collected within the framework of the comparative SIVSCE study. The overarching guide for this work is *the extent to which sports clubs contribute to health promotion, social cohesion and democratic participation through volunteering and therefore promote public welfare in European societies*. This book offers integrated insights into sports policies, sports clubs, their members and volunteers across ten different European countries and mainly focuses on social and political functions. Policy makers, board members and managers in sports federations and clubs will find this information valuable.

Another original contribution of the SIVSCE project is the multi-level approach (see Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2016; Nagel et al. 2015). The data collected in the comparative project is analysed in a comprehensive way for each of the ten countries by combining the following three analytical levels:

1. At the *macro-level*, the historical roots and the embedding of sports clubs in society as a whole, and the sports policy system in particular
2. The *meso-level* comprehends the structural characteristics, goals, resources and management of sports clubs, particularly with regard to measurements for promoting social integration and volunteering
3. At the *micro-level*, the personal characteristics of the members and the volunteers as well as their sports activities, social integration and democratic and voluntary engagement.

1.2 Structure of the Book

Chapter 2 discusses theoretical concepts, such as the multi-level approach and existing knowledge of the different socio-political functions of sports clubs, in order to formulate research questions. Furthermore, methodological issues of the SIVSCE project are presented.

Results are then presented in ten country-specific case study chapters that take a closer look at the socio-political functions of sports clubs. In these chapters, different functions of sports clubs are analysed from various perspectives – based on club data as well as results from the member and volunteer survey – to depict the social and political role of sports clubs. Each chapter is structured as follows:

1. The first section clarifies the position and historical context of sports clubs in national and local sports policy programmes, with a particular focus on the expectations of the social role of clubs in society.
2. The structural characteristics and context of sports clubs are then presented to provide insight into the potential and capacity to fulfil socio-political functions.
3. Regular sports participation patterns of sports club members as an aspect of health promotion and public health are subsequently examined.

4. Different facets of social integration follow, analysing both specific target groups and general membership from the perspective of potential contribution of sports clubs to social cohesion.
5. The next section on democratic decision-making and involvement provides information about the extent to which sports clubs can be characterised as vibrant democratic associations.
6. The final section focuses on volunteering as a specific form of democratic participation and engagement for both the club and civil society.

In each of these chapters, the multi-level data from the SIVSCE project is combined. The data from clubs and member surveys provide in-depth information about the potential achievement of various socio-political functions of sports clubs. Compared to other existing studies that often only focus on the club level, this data also enables insight on the level of individual members and volunteers.

Following the chapters on each country, comparisons at the European level are made, using available Eurobarometer data to examine similarities and differences between European member states. The results of these analyses are discussed in the framework of the central analytical perspectives of the book, namely, the socio-political functions of sports clubs in Europe.

To conclude, cross-national comparisons are developed from the main findings. The chapter offers interpretations and potential explanations for similarities and differences in the contribution of sports clubs to public welfare with a particular focus on differences between countries seen as coherent cases. Points of awareness regarding how the contribution of sports clubs to public welfare can be enhanced will also be presented.

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Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework and Research Design



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and Jeroen Scheerder

Abstract The overarching aim of this book is to analyse the contribution of sports clubs to public welfare across different European countries. Sports clubs are firstly conceptualised as voluntary organisations. Then a multi-level conceptual framework is developed to consider the following three analytical levels: (1) historical roots and the embedment of sports clubs in society and sports policy systems (macro level); (2) the sports club with structural characteristics, goals, resources and management (meso level); and (3) the members and volunteers and their sport activities and engagement in the club (micro level). We then briefly introduce relevant research as well as important policy documents about various socio-political functions, i.e. health promotion, social integration, democratic involvement and participation as well as volunteering. Furthermore, the research questions that guide the analysis across the ten country-specific chapters are developed. Finally, the research design of the project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE) is presented and limitations are discussed. This project collected comparable data across ten European countries by means of the same instruments and standardised questionnaires.

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2.1 Conceptualisation and Multi-level Framework of Sports Clubs

2.1.1 *Sports Clubs as Voluntary Organisations*

The main purpose of this book is to present a comprehensive view of the various socio-political functions of sports clubs in different European countries – particularly health promotion, social integration, democratic involvement and volunteering. Therefore, it seems necessary to firstly characterise sports clubs as voluntary organisations. Sports clubs in European countries can usually be marked by seven constitutive features and typical elements that have their historical roots in the nineteenth century when sports and gymnastics clubs first occurred (see Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2016; Heinemann 2004; Horch 1992; Ibsen 1992). These include:

1. *Voluntary membership*: The members can individually decide on their entry and duration of membership.
2. *Orientation towards the interests of members*: Due to the voluntary nature of the membership, the clubs can only exist when they retain their members through direct incentives and the fulfilment of joint club goals and not through monetary means. Therefore, voluntary sports clubs are characterised by programmes and measures that implement the common interests of the members by producing club goods (e.g. sports activities and social services) at a reasonable price and to provide these goods (exclusively) to their members (Heinemann 2004).
3. *Democratic decision-making structure*: To realise the members' interests, democratic decision-making structures are crucial since they allow the members to influence the club's goals. The individual right to vote in the general assembly creates a formal power base for members.
4. *Voluntary work*: The services provided by sports clubs are mainly generated by the voluntary work of the members. Although over the last years, paid jobs have increased in some sports clubs in the context of professionalisation and modernisation, they still play a minor role. Without payment is here defined as no contractually regulated flow of money, and voluntarily means the voluntary engagement is not mandatory.
5. *Autonomy*: Voluntary associations pursue their goals independent of others. Even though no associations are totally independent, each association has to control its own management and operations. This does not prevent national organisations and public authorities from making demands on the association, but in principle the association decides which activities it wants to be involved in, who the members of the board are, etc. Accordingly, the financial source is primarily internal, mainly through membership fees. However, the autonomy of the association allows access to subsidiary public funding and the acquisition of other external resources, in particular the implementation of programmes to fulfil certain socio-political functions. In many European countries, sports clubs gain public

subsidies for their contribution to certain policy goals (e.g. health promotion, social cohesion).

6. *Not-for-profit orientation*: In contrast to companies, sports clubs do not pursue financial profit targets. Any financial surplus from a club's activities is not distributed amongst members but must be reinvested to realise the goals of the club.
7. *Solidarity*: For sports clubs, the principle of solidarity is crucial. This means that no direct consideration in the form of rates and charges can be paid for efforts received. Instead, a flat-rate membership fee is usually collected that allows use of all the services of the club and gives the right to vote at the general assembly.

These typical characteristics of sports clubs are connected to their historical roots (e.g. Nagel et al. 2015) and form the basis to sports clubs' potential contribution to public welfare (see below). The rise of sports clubs in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth century is closely linked to the emergence of a civic culture and the introduction of legal rights for civilians (Szymanski 2006), particularly the right to organise and engage in voluntary associations that can promote certain societal functions as an added value when realising the members' interests. Thus, the joint engagement of members in the realisation of club goals can also be relevant to civil society and public welfare, since it can foster social cohesion and democratic engagement.

2.1.2 Multi-level Framework for Analysing Socio-political Functions of Sports Clubs

For a comprehensive analysis of socio-political functions of sports clubs, it seems necessary to analyse policies for sports clubs, the goals and activities of the clubs as well as the engagement, attitudes and perceptions of the members. Here, a multi-level conceptual framework appears useful in order to combine the investigation on the following three analytical levels (according to Nagel et al. 2015):

1. *Macro level*: the historical roots and the embedment of sports clubs in society as a whole, and the sports policy system and policies for sports clubs in particular, which intend to activate and implement certain initiatives that can contribute to public welfare.
2. *Meso level*: the sports clubs with their structural characteristics, goals, resources and management, especially the programmes and measurements to contribute to socio-political functions.
3. *Micro level*: the members and the volunteers, with their personal characteristics, sport activities, social integration and democratic and voluntary engagement in the club.

To work out a framework that can combine the different levels (see in detail Nagel 2006, 2007), it is appropriate to analyse sports clubs using the social theory of action (Coleman 1974, 1986; Giddens 1984). The basis for actor-theoretical

thinking is – according to Giddens and his structuration theory – the presumption that social acting and social structures are in a constant reciprocal connection throughout time (Giddens 1984). Each social structure is the result of the interaction of actors, and at the same time, social acting always depends on social structures. As we specify these basic assumptions, we need to conceptualise sports clubs as corporative actors (Nagel 2008; Schimank 2005).

Based on this theoretical concept of sports clubs as corporative actors and the ideas of Coleman (1986) and Esser (1999), a multi-level framework for analysing sports clubs has been developed (see Nagel 2006, 2007; Nagel et al. 2015). Here, we are interested in the socio-political functions of sports clubs in the sense of the collective explanandum (see Fig. 2.1). That means that sports clubs can contribute to public welfare – often in the form of side effects – when they fulfil the club goals.

Macro Level Sports club development and the potential contribution to certain socio-political functions have to be understood in the context of the broader development in society and modern sports. Sports clubs are embedded in several fields of society (e.g. politics, health care, education, etc.) and in specific structures of the national sports system (especially umbrella organisations and national or regional government bodies). Therefore, it is necessary to consider the societal, cultural and political embedding of sports clubs as well as their historical origins. In addition, it is interesting to focus on the role that sports clubs play in the national and regional sports context as well as in national sports policy. Here, it is particularly appropriate to consider the way in which sports clubs as institutions cohere to the policies and expectations of national organisations or the state (Skille 2008).

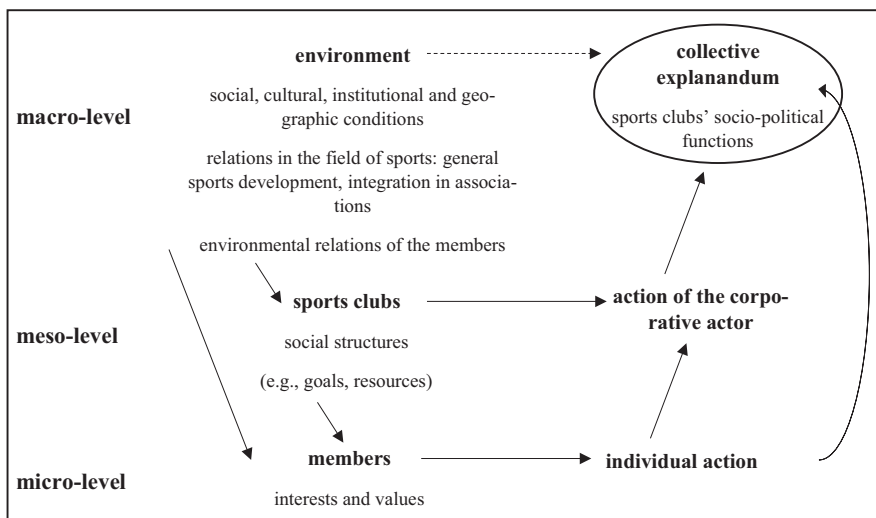


Fig. 2.1 Multi-level model for the analysis of the development of sports clubs (cf. Nagel 2006, 2007; according to Esser 1993)

Meso Level However, not all sports clubs in a certain country reveal the same structures and goals. According to Esser (1999), to understand the specific development of sports clubs (with regard to the contribution to socio-political functions), it is necessary to have a closer look at the meso level and to consider sports clubs as corporative actors. Here we can assume that the specific organisational context influences the actions and decisions of the club. For example, the number of members, the financial resources, the clubs' goals and attitudes as well as the importance of traditions and cultures in different kinds of sports may play a crucial role for the specific activities, e.g. for health promotion or social integration.

Micro Level Furthermore, it also seems appropriate to look at the specific interests of the members as well as their engagement and attitudes in the context of the club and socio-economic background. With their collective actions, the members constitute and change the social structures of their sports club (e.g. joint sport activities in groups) that are relevant for the contribution to socio-political functions. For example, when the members create social networks and friendships in the club, they can develop a sense of belonging and identification with the club.

If this kind of social integration is generated in many sports clubs, then sports clubs can contribute to social cohesion in society.

2.2 Overview on Socio-political Functions of Sports Clubs

Sports clubs as voluntary organisations have always been considered as institutions that can contribute to public welfare. The first gymnastic clubs (inspired by the German *Turnen*) in particular had various social goals and considered themselves to be promoters of their members' health and education (e.g. Stamm et al. 2015). Thus, from a historical perspective, the sports club movement can be viewed as a private alternative to public sports promotion and as fulfilling important functions in civil society (for sports clubs, Stamm et al. 2015; Waardenburg and Nagel 2019; in more general, Salamon et al. 2017).

Sports clubs significantly developed over the twentieth century and remain the main promoters of mass sports and elite sports in many European countries. During the last decades, sports has become an important leisure activity for an increasing number of people in many European countries. Sports clubs are usually fairly important organisations for the sports activities of the population and are also often regarded as one of the main actors in implementing broader socio-political functions. The EU underlines the important social contribution of sports clubs in various policy papers (e.g. European Commission [EC] 2007). As a consequence, several scholars have discussed the potential social roles of sports clubs (e.g. Braun 2003; Coalter 2007; Houlihan and White 2002; Skille 2009; Waardenburg 2016). With manifold challenges in modern societies, e.g. public health, social cohesion, immigration and democratic participation, sports clubs are increasingly encouraged and expected to contribute to these socio-political functions and to implement specific

programmes to promote these social issues (Skille 2008, 2011; Waardenburg and Nagel 2019). Sports clubs are increasingly expected to be open to different target groups that are usually underrepresented in sports, e.g. the elderly, people with a disability, people with a migration background or people on a low income. In general, sports clubs in different European countries are stimulated by government, umbrella organisations or national governing bodies for sports to promote sports for health, social cohesion, etc. (Houlihan and Green 2009) and to implement specific policies in the sports club setting. In this context, sports clubs increasingly cooperate with public institutions (e.g. Ibsen and Levinsen 2019). However, sports clubs are autonomous organisations, implying that there is also scepticism and criticism concerning the expanded functions that policy actors expect the sports clubs to fulfil (e.g. Adams 2014; Harris et al. 2009). Sports clubs face several challenges when achieving the different and partially conflicting social functions expected by policy makers (Waardenburg and Nagel 2019).

Aside from sports policy documents, there is a growing body of literature on the social significance and various socio-political functions relevant to sports clubs (e.g. Jaitner and Körner 2018; Nagel et al. 2004; Rittner and Breuer 2004) as well as literature on concepts to analyse the process of policy implementation (e.g. Adams 2014; Cowell et al. 2008; Skille 2008; Skille and Stenling 2018). In the following sections, we briefly introduce relevant research as well as important policy documents on the contribution of sports clubs to the socio-political functions. These elements will be imperative for the country chapters, i.e. health promotion, social integration, democratic involvement and participation as well as volunteering.

2.2.1 Health Promotion

As one of the most popular organised leisure-time settings, sports clubs are increasingly perceived by policy actors as an appropriate milieu for promoting health-enhancing behaviour.

There are different definitions of health that take into account various aspects: e.g. physical health, psychological health and social health. Early definitions of health focused on the functional ability of the body and the absence of disease. In 1948, however, the World Health Organization (WHO) proposed a definition linking health to well-being, in terms of “physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity” (WHO 1958). The concept thereby changed to be a positive concept, emphasising social and personal resources, as well as physical capacities (World Health Organization, Regional Office for Europe 1984). This understanding is widely accepted today but makes it difficult to measure the health condition of the individual and the effects of political programmes and organisational activities such as the activities of sports clubs.

Based on empirical evidence, the WHO has advocated the use of a settings-based approach as one of the optimal strategies for health promotion. More precisely, the WHO, in its Jakarta Declaration (WHO 1997), stresses the importance of settings such as local communities, schools and workplaces for the implementation of health-promoting strategies. Here, reference is made to the five strategies enclosed in the WHO Ottawa Charter, namely, (1) build healthy public policy, (2) create supportive environments, (3) strengthen community action, (4) develop personal skills and (5) reorient health services (WHO 1986, pp. 2–3). However, the settings-based approach has barely been implemented by sports clubs to date (see the review of Geidne et al. 2019). A key feature of the settings-based health promotion approach is the systems perspective (Dooris 2009). This implies that a specific system, such as a sports club, may interact with other settings (e.g. schools, companies or voluntary associations), or may even be part of a larger context like a community, municipality or city. This interrelatedness and even interdependence can be illustrated by, amongst others, the resource dependence of most health-promoting settings. For their financial means, sports clubs depend on the subsidiary support from (local) authorities and/or their umbrella federation.

Thus, it is increasingly acknowledged that sports clubs have the potential to act as a health-promoting setting (Geidne et al. 2013; Kokko 2014b; Kokko et al. 2014, 2016; Meganck et al. 2015, 2017). Through their provision of regular sports activities, sports clubs can contribute to health promotion amongst their members (Eime et al. 2010; Thiel and Mayer 2018). Health promotion initiatives can be taken at different organisational levels in a sports club (Kokko 2014a; Kokko et al. 2014). Firstly, the general policy of the club, particularly its health promotion orientation, and activities by the club officials have to be considered. These activities are implemented in order to guide and support the coaches. From their perspective, coaches operate at a lower level, performing actions that focus on the club members. To obtain optimal results, health-promoting initiatives need to be fulfilled at each of these organisational levels (Kokko 2014b). Although the importance and potential of health-promoting sports clubs has been recognised, especially during the last two decades, most club officials and coaches find it difficult to undertake health-promoting activities they consider as being not directly related to the club's core responsibility or to the task of offering activities in particular sports (Kokko et al. 2016).

The concept of the Health-Promoting Sports Club (HPSC) was launched in Finland by Kokko et al. (2006, 2009, 2011). In order to gauge the health promotion orientation of sports clubs, health-promoting sports clubs need to meet the 22 standards of the Health-Promoting Sports Club Index (Kokko et al. 2009). For this instrument, four sub-indices are identified, these being (1) policy, (2) ideology, (3) practice and (4) environment. After its development and implementation in Finland (Kokko et al. 2006, 2009), the HPSC Index was also introduced and applied in other countries, including Flanders/Belgium (Meganck et al. 2015, 2017), France (Van Hoya et al. 2015) and Ireland (Lane et al. 2018). The results from these studies indicate that, according to club officials and coaches, sports clubs can be considered

as health-promoting settings. Club officials and coaches also appear to insist that sports clubs should be increasingly recognised as a potential and proper place for health promotion. Meganck et al. (2015) found that recently established youth sports clubs are more likely to obtain a higher score on the four health promotion indices. This was also the case for clubs offering multiple types of sports and providing both recreational and competitive sports activities. The study by Meganck et al. (2015) also indicated that the strongest barriers for not obtaining high health promotion marks were the lack of policy priority for health promotion by the sports club board (see also Skille 2009) and a lack of expertise within the sports club. In another study, Meganck et al. (2017) have shown that youth sports clubs have a better health-promoting orientation compared to adult sports clubs. This can be partly explained by the fact that youth are a prime target group for health promotion and that sports clubs have an important educational responsibility towards their young members (Kokko 2014b; Vella et al. 2011).

The following questions are relevant to the comparative analysis of sports clubs' contribution to health promotion: What characterises the policies and attitudes of sports clubs to offer health-enhancing physical activity? To what extent do sports club members practise sports regularly within their clubs? Are there differences between the ten countries that are considered in this book?

2.2.2 Social Integration

Sports clubs are considered and promoted as important vehicles for social integration in late modern societies that are increasingly characterised by social differentiation and disintegration (Etzioni 1995b; Putnam 2000). High expectations for the integrative power of sports clubs can be found amongst the general public (Seippel 2019) as well as in sports policy documents (Hoye and Nicholson 2008; Ibsen et al. 2016). Sports clubs are viewed as tools for building integrative communities and, therefore, as important contributors to public welfare (Spaaij et al. 2014).

Social integration is a multidimensional concept closely related to a number of other concepts, such as social inclusion/exclusion, diversity management and segregation. A useful typology to capture the dimensionality of social integration was established by Elling et al. (2001). They argue that social integration should be viewed as a broad concept that cannot be measured solely by equal representation of different population groups (i.e. structural integration). Cultural understanding and acceptance (i.e. socio-cultural integration) as well as social engagement and emotional commitment (i.e. socio-affective integration) also need to be considered. In the context of sports clubs, the typology draws attention to at least two central aspects of social integration: (1) the integration of underrepresented population groups in sports clubs and (2) the integration of club members into the activities and social communities in sports clubs.

2.2.2.1 Integration of Underrepresented Population Groups¹

Some of the most commonly targeted population groups in sports policy documents are people with disabilities, people with migration background and socially vulnerable groups (e.g. people on a low income, the unemployed, etc.). These groups are – to varying degrees – underrepresented in sports clubs in European countries (Adler Zwahlen et al. 2018; Breuer et al. 2010; Darcy et al. 2017; Scheerder and Vos 2011; Seippel 2015; Studer et al. 2011; Vandermeerschen et al. 2015).

The literature supports the notion that participation in sports clubs can have positive externalities for people from underrepresented population groups. Sports club participation can have positive effects on people with disabilities as they can meet new friends, have opportunities to socialise with others, strengthen their health, find an identity, experience nature and generally have a good time (Darcy and Dowse 2013; Darcy et al. 2011). For people with a migration background, participating in organised sports can also have positive effects as sports clubs can bring people together from various ethnic backgrounds and enable them to gain contacts and thus create bridging social capital and facilitate social integration (Janssens and Verweel 2014; Walseth 2008). O’Driscoll et al. (2014) give a systematic overview on the psychosocial benefits of sports participation of people with migration background. Furthermore, club sports can contribute to the integration of people with a low socio-economic status into society, with the experience of a range of personal and social benefits (Holt et al. 2011; Ullrich-French and McDonough 2013). In this regard, sports clubs can play an important role in integrating people on a low income since one of the main goals of clubs is the supply of affordable sports activities (Breuer and Feiler 2017).

However, sports clubs’ potential for social integration is also in doubt, as they show social closure practices like discrimination, prejudices and conflicts (Brown and Pappous 2018; Burdsey 2011; Elling and Claringbould 2005; Patel 2015). Several authors reported that sports clubs can be a place where ethnic boundaries and segregation practices can occur through the participation of members with inappropriate behaviour and habits (Elling and Claringbould 2005; Seiberth and Thiel 2010; Spaaij 2013). In general, the ability of sports clubs to be effective in promoting social integration depends on the specific conditions in the clubs (Verdot and Schut 2012).

Empirical studies have identified different barriers for the integration of various population groups in sports clubs, including barriers related to the religion, language, culture, race and social status (Elling and Claringbould 2005; Strandbu et al. 2019; Walseth and Fasting 2004); environmental barriers, such as the lack of suitable sports facilities and community support (Darcy and Dowse 2013; Darcy et al. 2017; Misener and Darcy 2014; O’Driscoll et al. 2014); organisational barriers, such as the shortage of economic resources and trained staff (Darcy et al. 2017;

¹This section has been co-authored by Svenja Feiler from the German Sport University in Cologne.

Humbert et al. 2006); and the lack of integration-related goals in sports clubs (Skille 2011; Spaaij et al. 2014; Stenling and Fahlén 2016).

2.2.2.2 Integration of Members into Sports Clubs

Various studies have found that most of the members in sports clubs are well socially integrated in the sense that most feel respected by other members, interact socially, create social networks and friendships and identify with the club (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Østerlund 2014; Schlesinger and Nagel 2015; Seippel 2005; Ulseth 2004). Sports clubs bring people together and give them the opportunity to create social networks and familiarise with social rules and values. Thus, sport clubs have the potential to promote social integration and social cohesion (e.g. Nobis 2018; Østerlund and Seippel 2013). Across European countries there are, however, some differences in the integration of members according to the country context (Van der Roest et al. 2017). Furthermore, the social integration of members has been found to depend mainly on individual-level factors, including the socio-demographics of members and their affiliation and participation in the club. In contrast, organisational (club-specific) factors have been found to be less influential (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019).

Socio-demographic variables (i.e. gender, age and educational level) play a relatively modest role in the social integration of members. Studies find barely any gender effects with regard to the integration of members (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Østerlund and Seippel 2013; Schlesinger and Nagel 2015; Seippel 2005). Considering age, studies have found younger people to exert higher levels of social integration in sports clubs (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Østerlund 2014; Østerlund and Seippel 2013). However, existing research indicates few differences in social integration with regard to educational level (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Seippel 2005).

Social integration in sports clubs takes time and is associated with specific forms of affiliation and participation in the context of sports clubs. Studies on sports club members show that the type of affiliation to a club (e.g. volunteering), the membership duration, the frequency of sports participation, the form of participation (e.g. competitive sports) as well as the team or training group size are positively correlated with social integration (Albrecht et al. 2019; Baur and Braun 2003; Elling and Claringbould 2005; Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Nagel 2006; Østerlund 2014; Østerlund and Seippel 2013; Schlesinger and Nagel 2015).

In the existing literature, there is no agreement as to how organisational (club-specific) factors influence social integration. The highest level of agreement is related to the finding that increasing club size is associated with less socially integrated members (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Nagel 2006; Østerlund and Seippel 2013). Also, the nature of the sports activity provided by the clubs seems to be important (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Østerlund 2014; Østerlund and Seippel 2013). More ambiguity exists regarding the role of club goals, club management

and professionalisation for the social integration of members (Baur and Braun 2003; Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2019; Nagel 2006).

2.2.2.3 Integration Through Sports: Social Capital Research

It is common to distinguish between social integration in and through sports. Integration in sports represents the participation and feeling of affiliation within the realm of the sports clubs. Integration through sports represents the link between the participation and feeling of affiliation within the realm of the sports club and the integration into other areas of society (Elling et al. 2001). In the following section, the topic of integration through sports is briefly touched upon, even though data on this aspect was not collected in the project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE) and thus is not analysed further in this book.

One of the main research strands into integration through sports is inspired by the concept of social capital as described by Putnam (2000). By participating in voluntary organisations, including sports clubs, members become better at participating in democracy and become more trusting citizens to the benefit of themselves and society. Another line of research is also connected to the concept of social capital based on the understanding of Bourdieu (1986). By participating in voluntary organisations, including sports clubs, members accumulate different forms of social capital, which they can utilise to become better integrated into society. Integration into the labour market is often used as the most prominent example of this form.

In both lines of research into social capital, there appears to be mixed evidence regarding the proposed positive externalities of sports club participation for the individual and for society. In particular, the causality issue has proven difficult across these lines of research (Elmoose-Østerlund and Van der Roest 2017; Østerlund 2014; Sønderskov 2011; Stolle and Hooghe 2004).

By considering the different issues presented above, the following questions as to the possible contribution of sports clubs to foster social integration arise: To what extent are different population groups, e.g. people with a disability, people with migration background, the elderly, and women, represented in sports clubs? What characterises the policies, attitudes and measures of sports clubs to promote social integration? What characterises members’ participation in and their attitudes towards social life and commitment to their sports club? Are there differences between the ten countries analysed in this book?

2.2.3 Democratic Involvement and Participation

When people join a sports club, it is mostly for the purpose of doing some kind of sports (Breuer et al. 2017). The main difference between sports clubs – as voluntary organisations – and other types of organisations (commercial and public) that offer sports is that sports clubs have a democratic decision-making structure with formal

rules for members' democratic rights. Association democracy is an acclaimed ideal for sports clubs that has strong historical roots and largely legitimises public financial support for clubs in many European countries. In associational democracy, members are – in principle – responsible for service provision and governance in specific areas defined by the association itself: Members elect the club's board and statutes, they can influence via expressing a direct opinion about the association's decisions regarding its goals and actions and they actively participate – as volunteers – in the implementation of the club's activities (Hirst 1994).

Associational democracy with a formal decision-making structure and an informal democratic culture are believed to make a contribution to democratic involvement in society in general. Such associations are believed to be *schools for democracy*, and research has particularly focused on investigating the democratic function of associations: Do members of associations participate to a greater extent in representative democracy than non-members? Yet, this aspect constitutes only one side of democracy. The other is *participatory democracy*, which means that people are collectively responsible for the pursuit of common interests and goals (Barber 1984; Etzioni 1995a; Hirst 1994; Ibsen et al. 2019; Kaspersen and Ottesen 2007; Pateman 1970, 2012; Streek 1995).

Central to both aspects of democracy is the extent to which the clubs endeavour to involve members in the decision-making and how members take their democratic part in the association – both through participation in formal decision forums (general assembly and other formal meetings) and participation in informal democratic decision-making which includes, for example, discussions with other members about issues in the association and talks with members of the board as efforts to influence conditions in the association. Some studies discuss the contribution of sports clubs to democratic involvement and participation of their members (e.g. Ibsen et al. 2019; Jaitner 2018). Burrmann et al. (2019) demonstrate limited evidence that sports club members are better democrats than non-members. Other studies from different countries have shown that a relatively small proportion of members of sports clubs are engaged in association democracy (e.g. Østerlund 2013a; Peterson et al. 2016), but this differs significantly between types of clubs.

The following general questions arise from these observations: What characterises the policies and attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement of members? To what extent do members engage in democratic decision-making within clubs? Does this differ between the ten countries included in this book, all of which are democratic countries but have significant variation in democratic culture and length of time the country has been a democracy?

2.2.4 Volunteering

Aside from democratic decision-making, volunteering constitutes another important and typical element of sports clubs (Horch 2018) with deep historical roots. Voluntary work is an important resource for realising club's goals and also can

contribute to the achievement of socio-political functions, as there are close relations between volunteering and democratic involvement in sports clubs. The members in the club board usually engage voluntarily, and the majority of clubs pursue the philosophy that elected volunteers are responsible for making important decisions (Breuer et al. 2017). Moreover, most of the coaches, who are responsible for regular sports activities in sports clubs, do their work as volunteers. Despite tendencies towards professionalisation, for the majority of European sports clubs, voluntary work in various positions is still the most important resource that provides affordable sports activities for the members (Breuer et al. 2017). Usually volunteers manage regular sports programmes, competitions, social gatherings and other activities for the club. However, many sports clubs articulate that they have problems recruiting and retaining enough engaged and qualified volunteers (Breuer et al. 2017; Nichols 2017). Thus, there are several challenges for sports club volunteer management (Nichols 2017; Schlesinger et al. 2014), particularly due to developments in modern societies such as individualisation and professionalisation (Lorentzen and Hustinx 2007; Seippel 2010). It is not surprising, then, that most studies about volunteering in sports clubs investigate relevant individual as well as structural factors for volunteering (see the reviews of Nichols 2017; Wicker 2017; Wicker and Hallmann 2013; and current multi-level studies, e.g. Schlesinger et al. 2019; Schlesinger and Nagel 2013). Furthermore, there is a significant amount of research on volunteer management that develops measures and practices to successfully recruit enough volunteers and to enhance their commitment (e.g. Cuskelly et al. 2006; Egli et al. 2016; Østerlund 2013b; Schlesinger et al. 2015; Wicker 2017; for a general overview see Einolf 2018). Voluntary work is a crucial resource for sports clubs, as well as for civil society (e.g. Hallmann and Fairley 2018; Nichols 2017; Vos et al. 2012). Volunteering in sports clubs can be viewed as a specific form of active citizenship that is potentially relevant to democratic societies (Ibsen et al. 2019; Warren 2001). Thus, volunteering can promote social cohesion and social trust in society; this appears to be quite important for modern societies that are increasingly characterised by individualisation (Putnam 2000). Volunteering in sports clubs gives people the opportunity to engage in public welfare and to integrate in the broader community (e.g. Janssens and Verweel 2014; Nagel et al. 2018). Here, voluntary organisations such as sports clubs can be regarded as a partial substitute for public initiatives and policies that have several positive side effects.

The current EU report on volunteering (European Commission 2010) identifies the specific added value of volunteering in the sports sector and its social and cultural benefits. The report particularly emphasises the potential effects for promotion of social cohesion, where people from different social backgrounds have the opportunity to interact and create social networks in leisure time (see also Østerlund and Seippel 2013; Seippel 2005). Here, current research demonstrates that volunteers in sports clubs experience higher levels of social integration in their club (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019). Furthermore, voluntary engagement “allows sport clubs to maintain low costs and membership fees, thus removing financial barriers to participation” (European Commission 2010, p. 220). Volunteers help sports clubs avoid financial barriers for people with low income who like to practise sports. Thus,

volunteering can also be regarded as basic factor of health promotion, because it offers many possibilities to practise different sports. Moreover, the EU report highlights that volunteering in sports clubs can foster an inter-generational dialogue, since usually various age groups engage together. Finally, volunteering can have positive externalities not only for society but also for the volunteers themselves, e.g. learn and develop new skills and enlarge social networks (European Commission 2010). However, there is no clear empirical evidence on these political expectations of volunteer engagement.

In sum, volunteers can have valuable experiences in active citizenship by contributing to their community in the club, and this can foster their social integration. Voluntary engagement in sports club can be beneficial to public welfare, such as health promotion, social cohesion and democratic decision-making. Thus, volunteering is presumably the basis for the fulfilment of other socio-political functions examined in this chapter and in the book as a whole.

In the light of the potential contributions of volunteering in sports clubs to civil society and critical developments in modern societies such as individualisation and professionalisation, the following questions arise: To what extent do the members of sports clubs undertake regular voluntary work in different positions and tasks? What characterises the policies and attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work? To what extent are sports clubs successful in recruiting and retaining volunteers? Are there differences between the ten countries due to various traditions and cultures of volunteering?

2.3 Research Design and Data Collection

To analyse the research questions presented in the section above, the data collected in the project “Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe” (SIVSCE) was firstly analysed separately for each country involved in the project (see country Chaps. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 in this book). Following this, the results of the ten countries were compared with regard to the socio-political functions of sports clubs (see comparative Chap. 14).

The SIVSCE project collected comparable data and knowledge across ten European countries by means of the same instruments and standardised questionnaires (for details see Breuer et al. 2017; Van der Roest et al. 2017). To cover a broad political, geographical and cultural diversity and to consider different sports systems with various sports policies, the following ten countries were selected in the project: Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, England, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain and Switzerland. The countries were selected as representative of different European regions (North-South-East-West-Central Europe), sports policy systems (with more or less generous funding schemes, demands for public funding and more or less well-developed sports infrastructures) and levels of sports (club) participation and volunteering (from relatively low

participation – e.g. Hungary, Poland and Spain – to relatively high participation, e.g. Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland).

The following section describes the data collection and samples selection as well as limitations of the joint data.

2.3.1 Data Collection and Samples

Comparative data from the ten European countries was collected on each of the three analytical levels (see sect 2.1.2).

2.3.1.1 Macro Level: Sports Club Policies and the Historical Context of Sports Clubs

Information about sports club policies and the historical context of sports clubs was gathered in all ten countries in the spring of 2015 (see Ibsen et al. 2016). The information was structured using a template which covered the following topics: the relations between various levels of government (national, regional and local) and sports clubs, the relations between national and regional governing bodies and sports clubs and, finally, the historical influences on sports clubs.

Based on this framework, researchers from all ten countries filled in the existing research and available knowledge for the specific country. The information from each country was then edited into a format that similarly detailed the descriptions. The information was then analysed with the initial aim to highlight the similarities and differences between the countries regarding sports club policies and then to analyse the possible explanations for these correlations and divergences. This information is accounted for when describing the specific situation in the country chapters and for the comparison between the countries.

2.3.1.2 Meso Level: Sports Clubs

An online survey study was conducted in the autumn of 2015, using national translations of an English questionnaire developed by the research group (see Breuer et al. 2017). The questionnaire included comparable questions referring to the structural characteristics of the sports clubs and the main issues related to their management, as well as different questions about attitudes and activities, particularly related to social integration and volunteering in the clubs. One person for each club – most often the chairperson – was contacted electronically and asked to participate in the survey.

The sports clubs were sampled to be as representative for the population of sports clubs in each country as practically possible (for a detailed description of the sample, see Breuer et al. 2017). Where possible, the questionnaire was sent to

Table 2.1 Samples of the club survey in the ten countries

| Country | Number of clubs | Response rate (in %) |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Belgium (Flanders) | 1002 | 10 |
| Denmark | 3631 | 31 |
| England | 812 | 25 |
| Germany | 20,546 | 27 |
| Hungary | 1222 | 19 |
| The Netherlands | 1103 | 54 |
| Norway | 601 | 31 |
| Poland | 668 | 7 |
| Spain | 870 | 14 |
| Switzerland | 5335 | 35 |
| Total | 35,790 | 25 |

populations or randomised samples of clubs from available databases. In most of the countries, databases from national sports organisations were applied (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway and Switzerland), which means that clubs that were members of a sports organisation were included. In Belgium (Flanders), half of the municipalities provided contact information on clubs. The same was the case in Spain for 6 of the 17 autonomous communities. In Hungary and Poland, data from statistical offices on the population of sports clubs was applied, but due to a shortage of e-mail addresses, desk research was conducted to gather contact information. Finally, in England, it was only possible to collect data within a selection of sports, which means that some sports are underrepresented or absent in the English survey data.

A total number of around 35,790 sports clubs replied to the survey, ranging from about 600 in Norway and Poland to about 20,000 in Germany (for a detailed description of the sample, see Table 2.1).

2.3.1.3 Micro Level: Members and Volunteers

An online survey study was conducted in the spring of 2016, using national translations of an English questionnaire developed by the research group (see Van der Roest et al. 2017). The questionnaire contained comparable questions about the affiliation with the sports club, sports participation, social integration, democratic and voluntary engagement as well as the social background of the members and volunteers.

The sports clubs from which all members and volunteers were asked to participate were not selected to be representative of sports clubs in Europe, but rather as representing the variety within sports clubs in each country (for a detailed description of the sampling in the different countries, see Van der Roest et al. 2017). Thus, sports clubs that offer team sports as well as clubs that offer (semi-)individual sports

Table 2.2 Samples of the member and volunteer survey in the ten countries

| Country | Number of clubs | Number of members and volunteers |
|--------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| Belgium (Flanders) | 47 | 762 |
| Denmark | 36 | 3163 |
| England | 40 | 717 |
| Germany | 141 | 2455 |
| Hungary | 47 | 716 |
| The Netherlands | 144 | 1965 |
| Norway | 30 | 1330 |
| Poland | 61 | 570 |
| Spain | 55 | 445 |
| Switzerland | 41 | 959 |
| Total | 642 | 13,082 |

were selected in each country. In the countries where possible, football, tennis and swimming clubs were oversampled in order to be able to compare the participation and commitment of members and volunteers within specific sports. Other than this, variation on the structural characteristics and context of sports clubs was central to the selection procedure. In particular, variation with regard to club size and the degree of urbanisation in the area of location of the club were considered, as was the representation of both single sport and multisport clubs. Therefore, the sample of clubs represents a large part of the variation of population of sports clubs in Europe – and in each of the ten countries.

A total number of around 13,082 members and volunteers replied to the survey ranging from approximately 350 in Spain to 2700 in Denmark (see Table 2.2). The members and volunteers were recruited for the survey by e-mail invitation sent directly to members and volunteers or through club representatives. Because of this combined distribution method, it was not possible to calculate response rates.

2.3.2 *Limitations*

Even though the data is the best available comparable data on European sports clubs, pragmatic considerations have in some situations meant that it was not possible to collect data in exactly the same manner or with exactly the same sampling procedure for all countries. This could potentially influence the representativity and comparability of the samples of sports clubs as well as of the members and volunteers.

It is well established in the literature on survey design that people with a strong interest in the topic(s) of a survey are more likely to reply to that particular survey (Fowler 2014; Groves et al. 2009). Since the surveys were framed according to the topics of social integration and volunteering, it is likely that the clubs with a focus

on these aspects are overrepresented in the sports club survey and that the more socially integrated members and engaged volunteers are overrepresented in the member and volunteer survey.

As the data collection took place in ten different countries, concepts and questionnaires originally worded in English had to be translated into the appropriate language. Although the same experts who designed the survey conducted the translation, this procedure may potentially have affected the understanding of central concepts and may potentially result in differences between countries that do not reflect actual differences, but rather linguistic variations on how questions are understood (Van de Vijver and Tanzer 2004). This is likely to be more of an issue related to attitudinal questions rather than to factual. In order to mitigate this, the most ambiguous words were elaborated using an explanation or an example.

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Chapter 3

Belgium/Flanders: The Evolution of Flemish Sports Clubs as the Cornerstone of Society from Past to Present to Future



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Abstract Flanders (Belgium) has a long history of organising sports in a club-organised context. From the 1970s onwards, Flanders counts as one of the European pioneers of implementing Sport for All initiatives in order to facilitate active participation in sports. Crucial for the potential social-integrating and health-enhancing role of sports and physical activity is the number of volunteers sports clubs can invoke. This chapter provides insight into the structure and culture of Flemish sports clubs by discussing their development, organisation and management, as well as attitudes regarding social inclusion and volunteering. The results show that – compared to other countries – Flemish sports clubs are large in number and small in size, that they face few problems upon recruiting and/or retaining volunteers, and that they are seen as an important setting for social activities. With regard to social integration we can state, based on the findings, that target groups are reached at least to a certain extent, albeit mainly by ethnically homogeneous clubs.

3.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

3.1.1 *History of Sports Clubs in Belgium*

Belgium has a long, rich, and variegated sporting culture. Archery and fencing associations have been existing for more than 700 years in the oldest Belgian cities (Renson 1976). Although these sports associations had a more cultural reason of existence than sports clubs nowadays, members were certainly physically

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active while practising their actions. A lot of these old associations are now often transformed into modern sports clubs, still treasuring their historical heritage.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a relative dense network of sports clubs (gymnastics, cycling, rowing, track and field, football, tennis, etc.) knows their origin in that period. Many of these sports clubs later organised themselves into national sports federations. Due to the ideological differences (catholic, liberal, and socialist) in that time in all levels of society, a structural segmentation of sports between sports clubs and sports federations was used because every ideology had his own sports organisations. This would persist until the beginning of the twenty-first century (Scheerder et al. 2015b).

In the 1970s Belgium emerged from a unitary state towards a balanced federal state, due to economic and cultural reasons between the Flemish- and French-speaking parts in Belgium. This had also an impact on sports organisations, because from then on, the three different communities (Flanders-, French-, and German-speaking) were responsible for the legislation on organised sports (Scheerder and Vos 2011). As a consequence a new legislation in Flanders on sports federations was introduced in 1977, which implicated that only Flemish sports federations received funding from the government. Although this decree had no direct impact on sports clubs, their policy became more and more orientated towards the expectations of the policy of their sports federations and the subsidising government.

On the other hand, one important organisation remained federal, namely, the national Olympic Committee of Belgium. This institute highlights the alleged unity of Belgium. Members of the committee are mainly the national sports federations.

3.1.2 The Influence of National Government Organisations and Legislation

Since the constitutional revision in Belgium in 1970, no national governmental administration or policy on sports exists. Due to the application of the principle of subsidiarity, ensuring that matters are handled at the lowest possible political and administrative level, and as close to the citizens as possible, there is no direct relationship (political or economic) between the government at national level and the community sports clubs in Belgium. Political power and institutions are separated between the federal government level, the three community governments (Flemish Community, French Community, and German-speaking Community – division based on cultural differences), and the three regional governments (Flemish Region, Walloon Region, and Brussels-Capital Region – division based on economic differences).

As a part of the cultural sphere, governmental competences with regard to sports, such as the organisation of sports (e.g. the qualification of persons responsible for managing sports and the coordination of elite sports), sports policy planning, and

subsidising of sports federations, are the exclusive responsibility of the three communities. At national level, there are some overarching responsibilities for sports, for example, security at football matches (Scheerder et al. 2011).

3.1.3 The Influence of Regional Government Organisations and Legislation

The division of Belgium into three administrative regions implies that the rest of this description only concerns Flanders, the northern part of Belgium.

Although there is no direct relationship between the regional government and community sports clubs in Flanders, the sports federations and the local sports authorities serve as mediating partners between the Flemish government and the community sports clubs.

On sports federations' level, the Vlaamse Sportfederatie (VSF) represents the member sports federations (up to 60) for the government and supports their members at legal, administrative, organisational, and policy levels. The Dynamo Project of the VSF guides and supports board members of sports clubs in domains such as statutory and legal matters, tax and VAT, volunteer management, insurance, funding, general administration, and many other areas. Support to the sports clubs' voluntary board members is provided through a wide variety of learning facilities (e.g. information on the website, booklets, leaflets, group seminars, online assistance, helpdesk, and individual guidance) as well as through the provision of management toolsites. In this way, sustainable, efficient, and effective management of sports clubs is being promoted and facilitated although no measurable objectives are defined. Support from the VSF pays special attention to increasing social inclusion, as described below, and volunteering.

Sports clubs in Flanders are supported in the recruitment, coaching, and retention of volunteers. For example, help with the recruitment is provided via a volunteer online database, accessible through the website www.vrijwilligerswerk.be, where organisations and candidate volunteers can offer/ask for volunteer work that is not confined to sports clubs. Many sports federations also support their clubs with regard to the recruitment of volunteers via their own website. The Dynamo Project, outlined above, provides seminars for board members of clubs to learn how to motivate and reward volunteers. Sports clubs are also assisted in ensuring that the administration of volunteers complies with the legislation. The Dynamo Project provides model volunteer contracts and volunteer registration forms (Thibaut and Scheerder 2018).

Moreover, the Dynamo Project organises seminars on the retention of volunteers. The election of a Volunteer of the Year or Coach of the Year is an exemplary way to reward volunteers. The full range of municipalities, regions, sports services, sports federations, and even foundations, financial and corporate companies organises these elections. The annual Week of the Volunteer with numerous activities in this framework also provides a lot of promotion of and appreciation to the volunteers.

Moreover, there are very specific training opportunities for volunteering in sports, particularly in the *Vlaamse Trainersschool* (Flemish School for Trainers and Coaches; VTS). As a department of the central Flemish sports agency, Sports Flanders, the VTS provides educational programmes to obtain a trainer certificate or degree. The VTS also organises educational trainings for volunteers. However, this is not a large programme, and the sessions are short (± 3 hours).

3.1.4 The Influence of Municipal (Local) Government Organisations and Legislation

Because of the subsidiarity principle, the local authorities handle the specific interpretation and implementation of Sport for All initiatives. This was emphasised in 2012 by issuing a new decree concerning local sports policy or Sport for All policy at the local level. The decentralisation of sports policy actions, as well as the reinforced role of local sports departments as regulators of grassroots sports policies, was the core principle of the legislation. The support and subsidising of voluntary sports clubs is mainly the role of local governments (i.e. municipalities; Scheerder et al. 2015b).

Municipalities in Flanders receive funds from the central Flemish government to develop Sport for All policies (i.e. an annual financial support of about EUR 14 million for a 6-year period). As such, the local authorities are responsible for the allocation of about 75% of the regular public funding for sports in Flanders (Van Poppel et al. 2018).

Municipalities support the development of sports clubs through a targeted subsidy in order to professionalise their organisation. Special emphasis is on the quality of youth sports and supporting the inclusion of specific target groups in sports. This means that the local sports authorities can incorporate working towards social inclusion objectives as a condition of their subsidy to sports clubs. However, recent research shows that the latter only occurs to a limited extent. Local sports departments aim to attain social goals mainly through the sports activities they provide directly rather than through their policies towards sports clubs (Van Poppel et al. 2018). Nevertheless, this differs between municipalities. For example, certain Flemish municipalities recently engaged in a new participation project, called UiTPAS. This is an integrated system to provide sports and culture opportunities for everyone and especially for people living in poverty, in a non-stigmatising way and at a lower price. This involves activities provided by the municipality itself, as well as by the civic and private sector.

In January 2016, the legislation for local sports policy was changed. The Flemish subsidies for several policy domains such as culture, sports, youth, development aid, etc. were integrated into the overall subsidies in the *Gemeentefonds* (i.e. general municipal fund), which Flemish cities and municipalities already received from the Flemish government in order to offer more autonomy and less administration for the local governments. With this integration, the conditions to receive subsidies and the

earmarks of the subsidies seem to disappear what could lead to inefficiency. Apparently, this threat has not escaped the attention of the Flemish government because in February 2018, a new decree on local policy has been published and will be put into practice from 2020 onwards. This decree, together with a new version of the *beleid & beheerscyclus* (i.e. policy and management cycle; henceforth BBC) compelled the local government to differentiate the budget for sports into four different categories instead of one (as indicated in the previous decree). These categories are (1) support of the sports sector and sports clubs, (2) sports promotion and sports events, (3) sports infrastructure, and (4) other sports policy (Nassen 2018). As local governments still are free to divide the total budget, questions arise whether the local sports sector will be strong enough to adapt to this change and to acquire at least the same resources as before.

To sum up this chapter, it is important to remember that the influence of the government towards sports clubs had its origin in the post-war period in Belgium. Prior, administrators managed their sports clubs at their discretion. In 1970, due to political reforms, the most important influence moved from the national level to the communities. The impact of the government increased in that period, because of subsidiarity legislation. In Flanders, two non-governmental sport bodies (VSF through sports federations and ISB through municipal government) now support the sports clubs.

3.2 Structure and Context

In this paragraph, the structural and contextual characteristics of sports clubs in Flanders are discussed. This includes figures about size and membership development, as well as more specific information about sports clubs' perceptions regarding their organisation.

Firstly, we look at the size of the Flemish sports clubs. On average, a Flemish sports club counts almost 146 members, with a median of 76 members, pointing towards the existence of a few very large clubs as opposed to a very large proportion of small clubs (Breuer et al. 2017). Accordingly, as Fig. 3.1 illustrates, the highest proportion of sports clubs in Flanders are rather small (35% with less than 50 members). Furthermore, only 5% of the Flemish sports clubs have more than 500 members. The large number of sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) can be explained by the traditionally high value that Flemish people attach to their freedom of association. Following, in Flanders, there is a dense organised sports network with approximately 24,000 sports clubs that deliver sports programmes to 6.5 million Flemish inhabitants (Scheerder and Vos 2013). Hence, for every 100,000 inhabitants, there are 319 sports clubs in Flanders.

Approximately half of the Flemish sports clubs do not experience any real changes within their membership numbers. Moreover, the membership development verdict is positive, since 36% of the 777 Flemish clubs indicated that they perceive an increase in memberships, in comparison with 20% of the clubs that feels

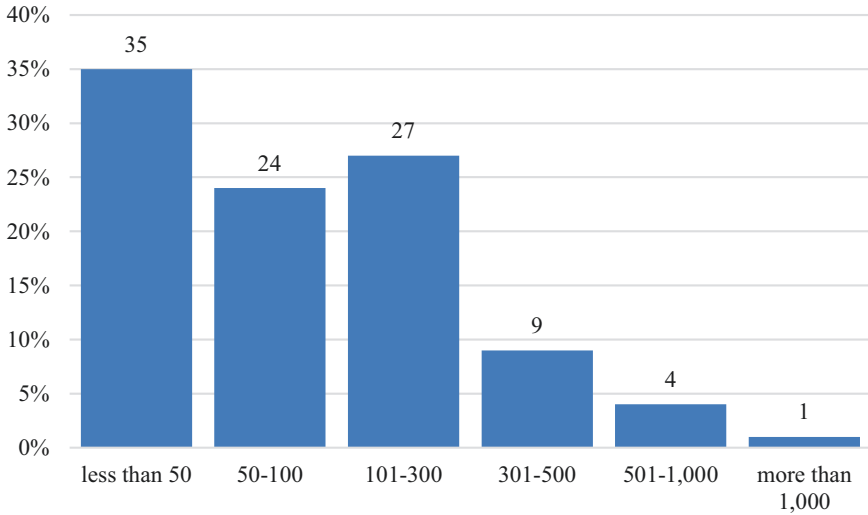


Fig. 3.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 762$)

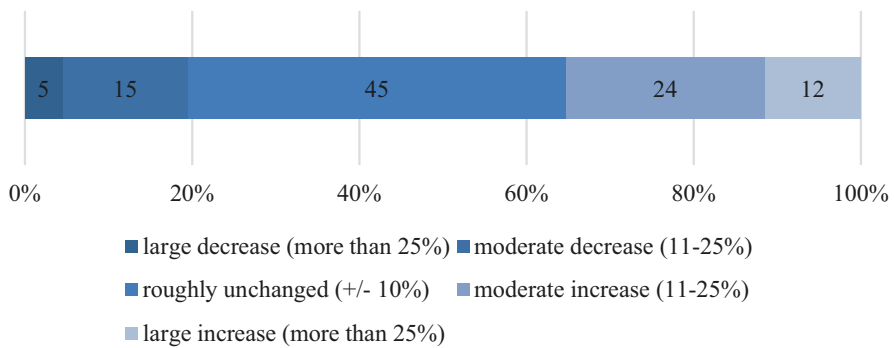


Fig. 3.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 777$)

that the number of members have decreased relative to 5 years earlier. Overall, Flanders reflects the European mean value concerning the perception of membership development over the past 5 years (Breuer et al. 2017).

Of course, sports clubs that have had a decrease in membership numbers over time do not necessarily perceive this as problematic. Indeed, when asked about their problems with the recruitment and/or retention of members, almost half of the surveyed Flemish sports clubs indicate that this is not a problem for them (Table 3.1). Moreover, only 11% of the Flemish clubs feel that it is a (very) big problem to recruit and/or retain members. Consequently, notwithstanding that 20% of the sports clubs in Flanders experienced a decrease in their number of members (see Fig. 3.2), and fewer clubs (11%) identify this as a problem. This finding corresponds with the results of Wicker and Breuer (2010) who found that the size of a sports club

Table 3.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, $n = 707$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 45 | 20 | 25 | 8 | 3 |

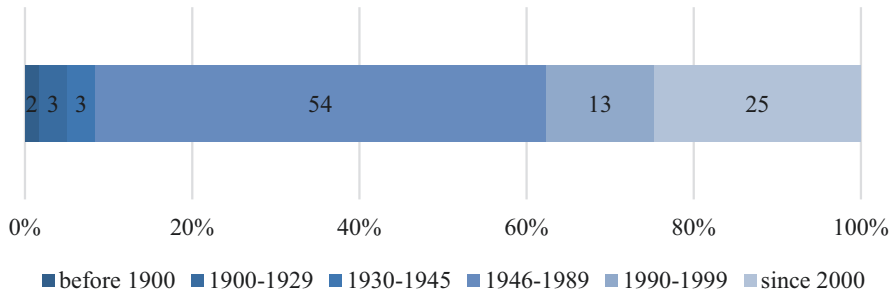


Fig. 3.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 952$)

displays a negative relationship with the perceived problem of the adherence and acquisition of members. Following, the same assumption of Wicker et al. (2014) could be made that heterogeneity increases as membership numbers do, leading to free-rider problems. Free-riders refer to members that do not share uphold (all of) the same values of the club. In sum, a lower membership may entail less diverse expectations that can be answered more easily by clubs.

Another structural component that characterises sports clubs is the club’s age, based on the year of its foundation. Unlike other conservative welfare states (see Breuer et al. 2017), Belgium (Flanders) consists of only 8% sports clubs that are founded before 1945. In addition, a high majority of Flemish sports clubs were founded between 1945 and 1989. A quarter of the sports clubs is established after the second millennium and can therefore be defined as young sports clubs (Fig. 3.3).

Subsequently, this study distinguishes single and multisport clubs. A single sport club provides only one sport to its members, whereas a multisport club can offer multiple sports to their affiliates. The latter types have been emerged later and are therefore not as frequently present as its counterpart is. Notwithstanding that all countries consist of more single sport clubs, the proportion of single sport clubs in Belgium is above the European average (87–76%). The same explanation as for the clubs’ size can be put forward, namely, that Flemish sports clubs find it easier to render services to a small homogeneous group of members that have similar expectations (Fig. 3.4).

Table 3.2 presents the ten most often provided sports by Flemish sports clubs. Like eight of the ten other European countries participating in the SIVSCE-project, football comes out on top with 18% of the sports clubs in Flanders offering this sport.

Flanders is sometimes called the cradle of cycling, and this is reflected in its second position of most often provided sport (with 12%).

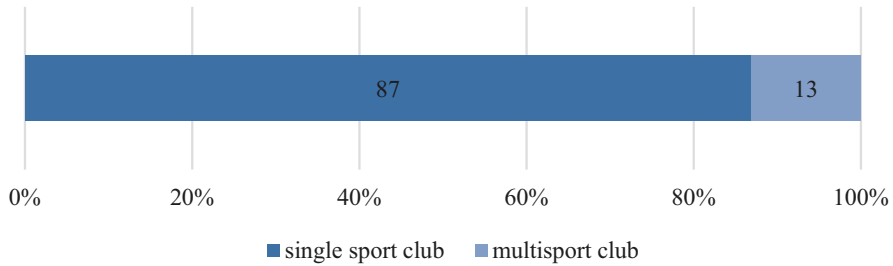


Fig. 3.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 995$)

Table 3.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 987$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|------------------------|----|
| 1 | Football | 18 |
| 2 | Cycling | 12 |
| 3 | Fighting/combat sports | 8 |
| 4 | Gymnastics | 7 |
| 5 | Dancing | 7 |
| 6 | Walking/Nordic walking | 7 |
| 7 | Volleyball | 7 |
| 8 | Swimming | 5 |
| 9 | Badminton | 5 |
| 10 | Tennis | 4 |

On place three, we have fighting or combat sports with nearly 8% of the clubs in Belgium (Flanders) offering them. Since the proportion of clubs offering fighting or combat sports is low in other European countries, these can be labelled as a country-specific sports. The relative high popularity of fighting and combat sports in Flanders can be partly clarified by both its history of elite sporting success and its low-threshold form. Regarding the former, judo is the fighting sport that has delivered Belgium many Olympic medals. At the time, this led to an increase in judo sports club participation. Nevertheless, this increase was of short duration, and even though judo success was guaranteed with elite athletes in the 1990s; this had no (or even a decreasing) effect on judo sports club participation (Scheerder et al. 2012). Secondly, there is a low threshold value of fighting and combat sports. In particular, the equipment necessities are low (cost). In this light, fighting and combat sports are also used as a means to integrate target groups, such as people from a migration background or with a low income, especially within urbanised cities (Tjønnndal 2017).

The distribution of the other most offered sports in Flanders, such as gymnastics (7%), volleyball (7%), and tennis (4%), leans close to the average proportion of European sports clubs (Breuer et al. 2017).

On average, one third of all sports clubs have their own sports infrastructure, and 68% of the clubs surveyed mention the use of public sports infrastructure.

Just over a quarter of Flemish sports clubs use their own sports infrastructure. The fact that these numbers do not amount to 100% can be explained by the fact

Table 3.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees, and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 681$, public facilities $n = 678$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 437$, share of revenues $n = 524$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for using public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 26 | 65 | 89 | 13 |

Table 3.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 691$, financial situation $n = 698$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 51 | 16 | 17 | 8 | 9 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 65 | 14 | 13 | 5 | 2 |

that, *inter alia*, cycling, and walking clubs, which are popular in Belgium (Flanders; see Table 3.2), are mostly practised in open air and do not need an indoor facility.

From the share of clubs that make use of public facilities, 89% of Flemish sports clubs indicate to pay fee for their usage. Consequently, 57% of the sports clubs in Flanders have to pay for public facilities.

Aside from the above infrastructural resources, sports clubs can also receive financial support from the public government, in terms of direct public subsidies. Similar to the partition of European countries with regard to the facility usage fee obligation, the share of sports clubs' revenues from direct public funding follows the state typology distribution. In this context, public subsidies make up 13% of the total revenues of the sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders), situated between the high proportional value of public funding for post-communist states and the low allocation of public subsidies within social democratic countries (Table 3.3).

Sports clubs were also asked about their perceptions about the availability of facilities and their financial situation (see Table 3.4). In both respects, sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) experience smaller problems than the average European sports club. Concerning the sports facilities, approximately half of the Flemish sports clubs have no problem with the availability. Furthermore, only 9% of the sports clubs perceive the availability of infrastructures as a very big problem. The problems with financial resources are even smaller for sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders). Almost two thirds of the Flemish sports clubs have no problems with the financial situation of their club, while this causes a very big challenge for only 2% of the clubs in Flanders. Thus, while 65% of the Flemish sports clubs depend upon the infrastructural resources from the government, and nine out of ten Flemish sports clubs are obliged to pay for this use (see Table 3.3), this does not seem problematic. This finding is interesting because Claes et al. (2017b) found that six out of

Table 3.5 Paid staff and paid manager(s) in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 876$, paid manager(s) $n = 874$)

| Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager(s) (%) |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 24 | 3 |

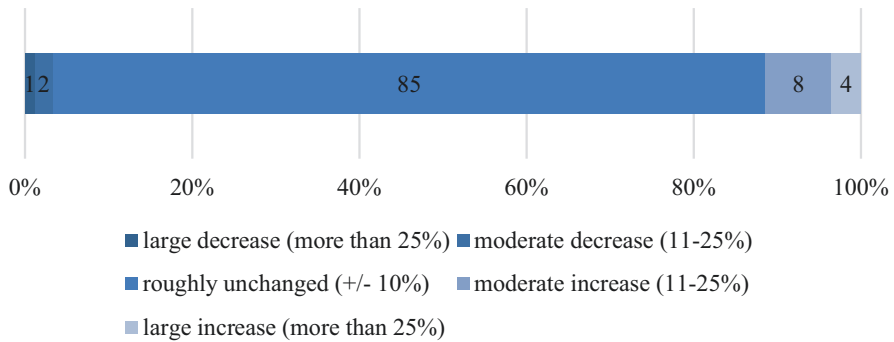


Fig. 3.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last five years (club survey, $n = 404$)

ten sports clubs experienced an increase in accommodation costs following the recent economic downturn, whereas with almost 30% of the total expenditure, this is still the largest expense for the Flemish sports clubs (Claes et al. 2017b). Nevertheless, Belgium (Flanders) has the highest proportion (85%) of sports clubs that can represent positive final annual accounts.

As mentioned above, the Flemish sports government has the objective to rationalise the organised sports sector. Alongside the efforts to merge sports federations, there is also an increasing desire to professionalise sports federations by investing in paid and qualified personnel. In this context, there is a thriving discussion about the ambiguous remuneration of volunteers (Scheerder and Vos 2013). Overall, the Flemish club-organised sports sector employs over 18,000 full-time equivalents (FTE). As Table 3.5 illustrates, in Flanders, a quarter of the clubs work with paid staff. Though, when put against the number of members, there is only 1 paid employee per 100 members (1%) in Flemish sports clubs. In Flanders, after the Netherlands, most of the paid personnel work within the sports and training area (74% and 82%, respectively). Furthermore, 10% is active within the administration and management area, 8% within the sports and competition area, and 9% within other tasks.

As part of the administration and management area, sports clubs can also appoint a paid manager, i.e. in a leading full- or part-time position. Only 3% of the sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) have a paid manager, whereof 1% full- and 2% part-time employed (Breuer et al. 2017). Logically, the proportion of clubs with a paid manager increases along with the clubs' membership numbers.

Moreover, the number of paid staff seems to be consistent over time. In particular, 85% of the Flemish sports clubs say that this development has remained unchanged over the past 5 years. Yet, a higher proportion (12%) also indicates that the paid employment has increased than decreased (3%) (Fig. 3.5).

Table 3.5 emphasises the role of volunteers in providing sports services to the members of Flemish sports clubs. In sum, although evidence suggest that it would be more efficient for a sports club to work with paid personnel (i.e. the human resources cost per member is bigger for non-profit sports clubs in comparison to fitness and health clubs), Flemish sports clubs do not yet choose for this way of professionalisation (Vos et al. 2012a). An explanation can be that sports clubs do not measure or evaluate volunteering by mere financial statistics (i.e. economic profit) but also acknowledge that voluntary work can contribute to greater social support both inside and outside the club (i.e. social profit).

In sum, the Flemish sports landscape is shaped by a large amount of small, post-war established single sports clubs with solid membership numbers. Furthermore, Flemish sports clubs seem to look ahead a bright future since they perceive both the recruitment/retention of members and availability of infrastructural and financial resources as rather non-problematic.

3.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

Research by Meganck et al. (2017) already indicated that sports clubs in Flanders could improve their health promotion orientation, as the average scores on the health-promoting sports club (HPSC) indices are rather low, especially for the policy and practice indices.

Therefore, is it important to know to what extent Flemish sports clubs are committed to offer health-enhancing physical activity programmes and how the sports clubs feel that their specific sports discipline(s) are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity (Table 3.6).

Flemish board members of sports clubs have a slight other opinion about offering health-enhancing physical activity than the average European sports club. The difference between the share of sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) and Europe that totally agree with the statement (9% vs. 28%) is the biggest indicator that influences the Belgian average score.

Table 3.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 716$, sports disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 723$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 7 | 12 | 44 | 28 | 9 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 2 | 2 | 20 | 49 | 28 |

When asked about the Flemish board's opinion if their sports discipline is suitable for health-enhancing parameters, the difference between their European colleagues is also lower, albeit smaller. Again, the totally agree score seems to be the main influencer. In particular, 46% of the European respondents totally agree with the fact that their sports meet the health-enhancing standards, while only 28% of the Flemish sports clubs declare total agreement herewith.

Previous research on sports participation in Flanders by Scheerder et al. (2015a) indicates that 63% of the people participates in sports at least once in a year. Also, Borgers et al. (2016) investigated the differences in sports participation with regard to organisational settings (i.e. general, club sports, other organised sports, informal group, and individual sports) in relation to age. Although the study "Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sport Clubs in Europe" (SIVSCE) did not take the age factor as a parameter, it is interesting to know that 58% of the sports participants aged 15–18 practise sports in a sports club. This result decreases rather strong when people are older.

Although many people are active as sports participants in sports clubs, there is great variation in the frequency in which they participate. Where some only sporadically practice sports in their sports club, others take part in the sports activities very frequently. Figure 3.6 shows that many respondents frequently participate in sports in their club in Flanders. On average almost six out of ten respondents (53%) exercises in the club at least twice a week.

The proportion of respondents who exercises very frequently (three times a week or more) in the club in Flanders is low (18%) compared to other countries (average 29%). On the other hand, the Flemish sports clubs count a large proportion of respondents who do sports once (35%) or twice a week (35%).

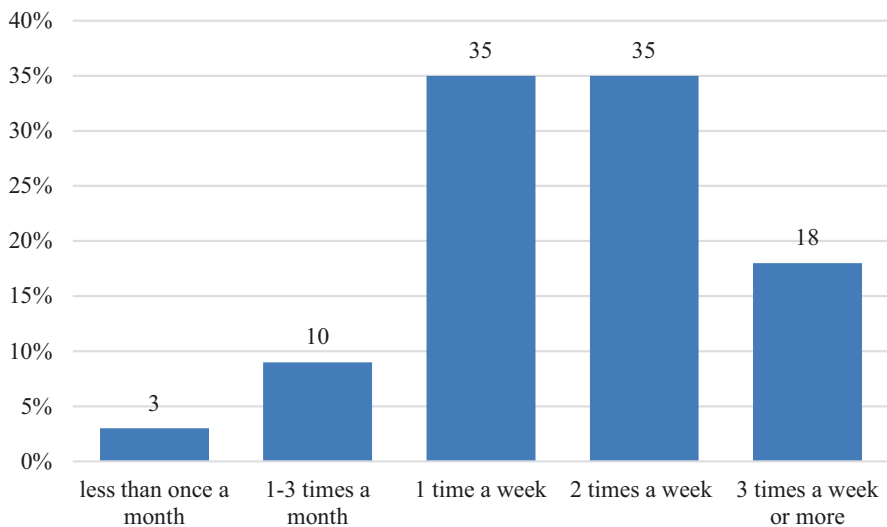


Fig. 3.6 Frequency of sports participation in sports clubs (member survey, $n = 583$)

Table 3.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 589$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 36 | 25 | 39 |

Sports clubs have a history in offering sports at a competitive level. Many sports clubs were set up to take part in a kind of competitive struggle. Over the years, however, recreational sports and sports activities focusing on health have become more popular (Scheerder et al. 2013; Scheerder et al. 2011). On average, around six out of ten (62%) of the sports active respondents participate in competitive sports (Table 3.7).

Flanders, together with Denmark, has the lowest share of competitive athletes (36%). This is remarkably lower than in the other countries (average of 62%). Four out of ten respondents from the Flemish sports clubs have never participated in competitive sports. A quarter does not do this anymore.

This observation can partly be explained by the Sport for All policy that has been actively pursued by the Flemish government for more than 40 years (Scheerder et al. 2013).

When making a summary for this chapter, it is noticeable that the health-enhancing factor doesn't seem to be a key factor for offering physical activity in sports clubs. In addition, athletes in sports clubs do not participate very much on a competitive level. One could assume that social reasons are more important to organise and practise sports.

3.4 Social Integration

Table 3.8 displays two types of attitudes of Flemish sports clubs about the integration of different population groups. The first item asked if clubs offer sports to as many population groups as possible. In Belgium (Flanders), this seems to be the case, as only 11% of the sports clubs did not agree with this statement. Furthermore, the participants were asked if their club strives to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated into the club. Almost half of the Flemish clubs are undecided on this matter. Although, on the one hand, there is a positive inclination towards agreement for this statement, rather than disagreement, on the other hand, the mean scores for these two items are below the European average.

Additionally, in the club survey, social integration in sports clubs was investigated by the representation of different population groups (Breuer et al. 2017). As indicated in the introductory section of this chapter, Belgium (Flanders) took a pioneering role in developing several national Sport for All promotion campaigns in the early 1970s. In such, Belgium responded to the stratified sports landscape where mostly young, white, and educated men were active (Van Tuyckom and Scheerder 2010). From 1970 onwards, sports became a societal right in Belgium (Flanders) for every group. Furthermore, a time-trend analysis of Flemish adults' sports participa-

Table 3.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 719$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 718$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 5 | 6 | 29 | 45 | 15 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 6 | 8 | 47 | 30 | 8 |

Table 3.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 717$, people with migration background $n = 714$, elderly $n = 721$, women $n = 762$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 54 | 42 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| People with migration background | 36 | 46 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 35 | 39 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Women | 10 | 16 | 19 | 31 | 13 | 10 |

tion from Scheerder and Vos (2011) teaches us that influencing background factors have been flattened from 1979 to 2009. In particular, the gender gap between men and women seems closed. Moreover, increasing age is not a barrier for sports participation anymore, as is the case for a lower education concerning sports club participation. Nevertheless, it is apparent that sports (club) participation is still sometimes related to people's background characteristics. Household income and marital status are still significantly associated with sports participation (Scheerder and Vos 2011).

Indeed, Table 3.9 illustrates that some population groups, like women, are integrated in Flemish sports clubs. More specifically, while only 10% of the surveyed clubs do not have any women among their members, approximately one third and one tenth have a female representation of, respectively, 26–50% and more than 75%.

The representation of people with a migration background and elderly in Flemish sports clubs follow more or less the same figure distribution. While more than one third of the clubs have no members of these target groups, 46% of the clubs in Belgium (Flanders) constitute of 1–10% of members with a migration background and 39% of elderly. Moreover, in comparison with most other European countries, Belgium (Flanders) counts more clubs with a representation of over 50% for these groups. Thus, it can be concluded that elderly and people with a migration background find their way to a sports club. Nevertheless, these results also point to the existence of homogeneous sports clubs of people with the same background.

Finally, the relative amount of people with disabilities in Flemish sports clubs is considered. Across Europe, large differences appear for the representation of this target group. Since Eurostat (2015) shows no significant differences between the population representations of this group, this matter cannot explain proportional cross-national differences. In this light, Belgium (Flanders) scores below

the European average with more than half of the clubs without people with disabilities.

Aside from the proportion of target groups as members, sports clubs can also offer special initiatives towards them. In this context, sports clubs (can) act as social entrepreneurs that can cause change through deliberate and proactive social initiatives that involve both the generation and practical application of new ideas (Tjønnndal 2018).

As Fig. 3.7 illustrates, the social entrepreneurial character of Flemish sports clubs is equally divided across the four target groups. However, the share of clubs that implement one or more special initiatives is always lower than the European average. The biggest mean difference is found for the share of sports clubs that try to reach the elderly or women with special initiatives. These results can be explained by the fact that Flemish sports clubs have recognised the stratification of these target groups a while ago and thus have nearly closed their sports club participation gap (Scheerder and Vos 2011).

From the above, it is clear that people in Flanders do not only choose to take part in sports club for its competition. Rather, sports clubs offer more recreational sports services to their members. In line with this, we could expect that sports clubs in Flanders have strong positive feelings towards companionship and conviviality (Table 3.10). Indeed, albeit social aspects seem important to all European clubs, the mean Flemish sports clubs' value on the statement "Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality" is second largest in Belgium (Flanders). When asked about their opinion about the competitive values, one third of the Flemish sports clubs are undecided.

Following the clubs' positive opinion on social aspects, the study also asked about the members' attitudes towards their club's social life. Again, the results dem-

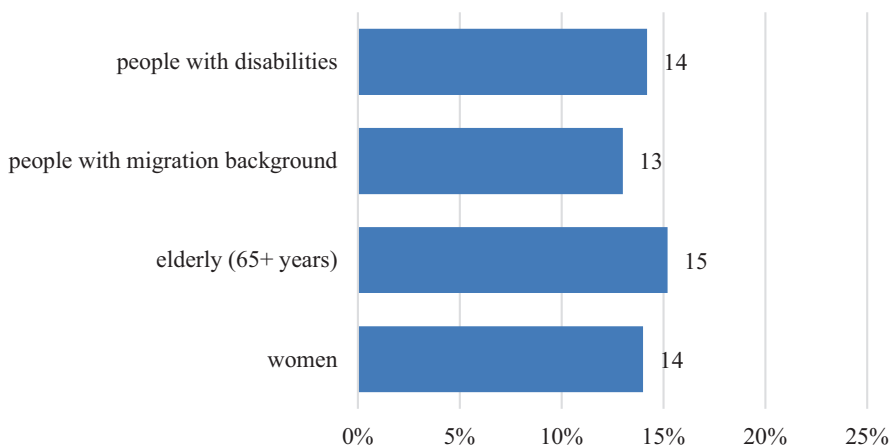


Fig. 3.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 711$, people with migration background $n = 717$, elderly $n = 715$, women $n = 719$)

Table 3.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 893$, competitive sports $n = 885$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 1 | 0 | 3 | 27 | 70 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 9 | 13 | 33 | 32 | 13 |

Table 3.11 Frequency of participation in the club's social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 580$, stay behind after trainings $n = 588$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|--|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club's social gatherings | 9 | 22 | 29 | 22 | 11 | 2 | 6 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches, or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 9 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 14 | 15 | 51 |

onstrate the important socialising capacity of Flemish sports clubs. Flemish sports clubs participants attend social gatherings regularly. However, the importance of the social interaction with other members really stands out when looking at the third half presence. The third half refers to the duration that members stay behind after sports practice. In Belgium (Flanders), the percentage of members' third half participation is the highest for all European countries (Breuer et al. 2017). In particular, more than half of all respondents said to stay behind at least once a week (Table 3.11).

Of course, sustainable social relationships are not established by mere structural integration, like participation in social get-togethers. Therefore, these gatherings should also lead to interpersonal emotional commitment. In this light, the respondents were asked if they made new friendships through participation in their club and if they socialise with other members outside of the club. Concerning the former, the results obviously show that sports clubs in Flanders are good environments to create new friendships. Concerning the latter, the results teach us that six out of ten members of Flemish sports clubs get together outside the club's context as well (Fig. 3.8).

A logical derivative of creating and sustaining new friendships is learning each other's name. The number of names of co-members one knows determines the breadth of socialisation. There is no member in the Flemish clubs who does not know anyone else by name, and only one person out of hundred that remembers the name(s) of one or two members. Analogously with the European average, more than half of the respondents implied to know more than 20 co-members' names by heart (Table 3.12). Furthermore, 1 out of 5 members know more than 50 persons of the

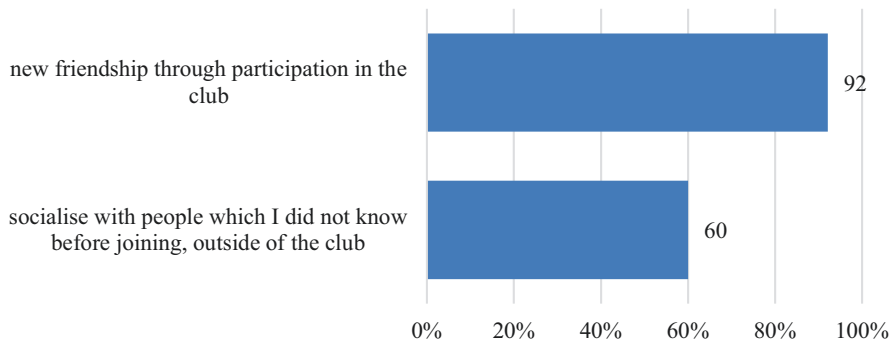


Fig. 3.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 619$, socialise with people $n = 608$)

Table 3.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 646$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 0 | 1 | 4 | 13 | 25 | 36 | 20 |

club by name. In Europe, this proportion is a quarter, but it should be noted that these figures should always be viewed with respect of the club’s size. As seen above, sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) are rather small (and sports clubs in the Netherlands big). Therefore, we may assume that the figures for Flemish members confirm the socialisation value of clubs in Belgium (Flanders).

While the previous statements gauge for the interpersonal connections between members of the club, the items in Table 3.13 were presented to the respondents as a mean to understand the feelings of members towards the club. Apart from respondents of the Netherlands, members of Flemish clubs least strongly agree that they are proud to belong to the club (Van der Roest et al. 2017). Nevertheless, together with the Netherlands, the proportion of members that are in partial agreement with the statement is highest in Europe. In particular, more than 85% of the respondents can be said to be proud members of their club.

The same rationale goes up for the answers on the two other statements: “the club is one of the most important social groups I belong to” and “other people from the club respect me for who I am”. On both statements, the proportion of strong agreement is lower and on partial agreement higher than the European average. In general, we can deduce from this that the sports club occupies a moderate, but important place in the social life of the Flemish sports clubs members.

To sum things up, the former pioneering role of the Belgian sports policy with regard to Sport for All is still present in today’s Flemish sports clubs’ attitudes about the integration of target groups, albeit that they are somewhat more reluctant in their

Table 3.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 628$, most important social group $n = 624$, respect me for who I am $n = 595$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 0 | 1 | 14 | 38 | 46 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 3 | 12 | 25 | 34 | 26 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 0 | 2 | 14 | 57 | 27 |

openness than the average European sports club. Besides people with disabilities, sports clubs in Flanders reach most target groups as much as the average European club, albeit through the supply of homogeneous, target group-specific clubs. Finally, apart from being a place to exercise, both the Flemish sports clubs and their members see/use their club as an important social gathering place.

3.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

In order to interpret the results on democratic decision-making, it is useful to know that 37% of the Flemish sports clubs are not a legal corporation, but are only formed by an unofficial council (factual association). Three out of five sports clubs are non-profit associations (but acknowledged by law), and 3% have some kind of profit partnership (Claes et al. 2017a).

The positions from Table 3.14 reflect the degree of democratic structure within a sports club. In general, most clubs involve their members in making important decisions. On the other hand, specific committees are not often used. Here, Flanders scores below the European average on both propositions, this can be due to typical size of sports clubs in Flanders.

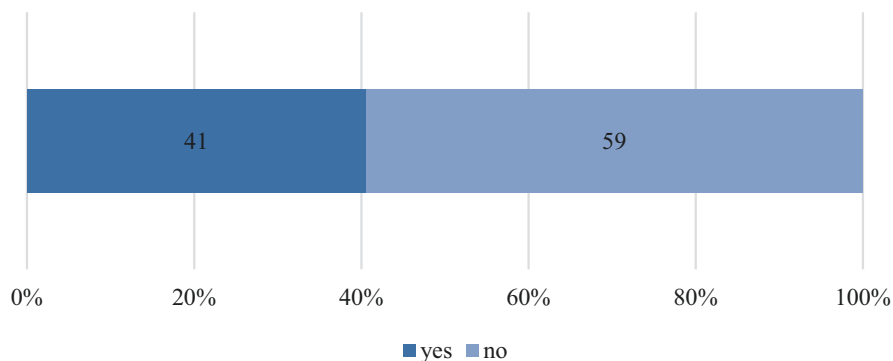
In addition to participating in sports activities and volunteering, sports clubs also offer the opportunity to participate in the democratic decision-making process. The latter can be done through formal channels, such as the general assembly, or through more informal forms of influence, for example, by means of addressing important persons in the club.

In Fig. 3.9, the presence of members is proposed at the general assembly. In most countries (including Flanders), the presence is lower than 50%. In Flanders 41% of the members of sports clubs attended the last general assembly (Table 3.15).

By participating in member meetings or in other club meetings, people can become more familiar with the club. It is remarkable that one third of the members never attend a meeting. Another way of influencing the course of affairs within the club is through addressing the key persons in the club. This is a more informal way to influence decisions within a club. This can be a more accessible way of influenc-

Table 3.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 894$, delegate decision-making $n = 880$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 2 | 8 | 24 | 45 | 21 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 15 | 22 | 27 | 28 | 8 |

**Fig. 3.9** Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 665$)**Table 3.15** Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 564$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 573$, share my view with other members $n = 570$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 33 | 21 | 13 | 12 | 10 | 10 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 22 | 12 | 11 | 12 | 16 | 27 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 18 | 9 | 9 | 11 | 19 | 36 |

ing, since key persons often walk around in the club. We find Flanders at the top of the list, with 43% of respondents sharing their opinion at least once a month with key figures within the club. People also share views with other members in their clubs to be more involved. A great majority of the club members talk with other members about the sports club.

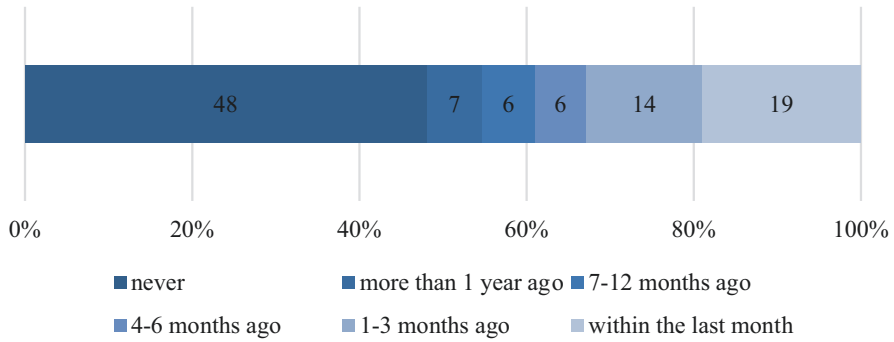


Fig. 3.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 647$)

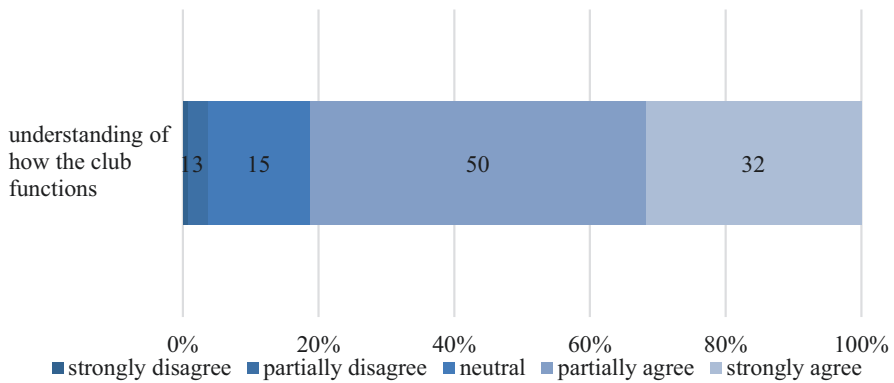


Fig. 3.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 612$)

Sports club members in Flanders are not keen to be an influencer on decision-making. Almost half of the members have never done an effort to weigh on the policy (Fig. 3.10).

Two important aspects of successful assimilation in a sports club are to know (1) how the club functions and (2) how one can influence decisions. These aspects are relevant because sports clubs are democratically organised. This means that members and volunteers have the opportunity to decide how the club should be run. Figure 3.11 shows the extent to which members and respondents are aware of how the club works. In Flanders, this share is 82%, of which however, only 32% fully agree with the statement. Only 4% of the members and volunteers of Flemish sports clubs do not understand the functioning of their club. This is the lowest share compared to the nine other countries and is well below the average (8%). This result for Flanders could be interpreted as an indication of successful assimilation of members and volunteers in their clubs.

This chapter highlights that sports clubs administrators in Flanders offer the opportunity to be part of the democratic process to club members, but in general they are not so inclined to take initiative. On the other hand, results show that a great majority knows how the sports clubs are managed.

3.6 Voluntary Work

According to Smits et al. (2015), in Flanders most volunteers are active in the sports sector (28% of the total volunteers in Flanders), prior to welfare and neighbourhood volunteering work. Consecutively, around 8% of the Flemish population between 15 and 86 years in 2014 was involved in a volunteering sports activity (Smits et al. 2015).

From the above, we have seen that only a quarter of the Flemish clubs use paid staff and 3% have a paid manager in their ranks. However, in Belgium (Flanders), like in other (European) countries, the tasks and responsibilities of sports clubs continue to increase. Consequently, sports clubs depend highly on their volunteers. Because of the increased need for volunteers, sports clubs try to attract/retain volunteers in an inventive way, whether or not fully in line with the regulations. Indeed, grey areas exist, for example, when sports clubs remunerate volunteers more than they are legally allowed to (Vos et al. 2012b), which open the debate to reflect on the future role of volunteers in sports clubs. This section sheds light on the current structure of volunteering work in Flemish sports clubs, considering both the view of the club and the volunteer.

Table 3.16 illustrates the average Flemish club's opinion towards voluntary work. Similar to the European mean (57% (totally) agree; Breuer et al. 2017), more than half (63%) of the sports clubs think that exclusively volunteers should run their

Table 3.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 842$, members as customers $n = 839$, demonstrating passion $n = 843$, all members can be volunteers $n = 848$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 3 | 11 | 23 | 35 | 28 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 28 | 39 | 19 | 10 | 3 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication, and energy for the work that needs to be done | 1 | 4 | 24 | 52 | 20 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 2 | 4 | 7 | 49 | 38 |

Table 3.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 876$, no fixed position(s) $n = 842$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 16 | 28 | 29 | 23 | 5 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 33 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 9 |

club. This figure aligns with the strong disagreement towards the statement “Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work”, although it must be noted that the mean of this item for Flanders is, except for Spain and Hungary the highest (Breuer et al. 2017). In addition, Flemish sports clubs are positive about the passion that their volunteers demonstrate. Only 5% of the clubs do not agree (at all) with this. Finally, almost nine out of ten sports clubs in Flanders think that every member can practise volunteering work regardless of their qualifications.

As described above, there is a thin line between real volunteering and paid labour (Thibaut and Scheerder 2018). In response to this discussion, Scheerder et al. (2010) propose to further differentiate the volunteering-labour continuum by referring to paid volunteering as a form of voluntary work in non-profit organisations for a legally determined remuneration.

Within this study, a distinction is made between volunteers in fixed and volunteers in no fixed positions. More or less the same with the European average proportion of volunteers relative to members, there is one volunteer in a (no) fixed position for five members within sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders; Breuer et al. 2017). Considering this, Table 3.17 shows the share of clubs with different ranges of fixed and no fixed volunteers. When comparing the share of sports clubs according to their volunteering types, we see that most sports clubs (29%) have 11–20 fixed volunteers and 0–5 no fixed volunteers. There is both a low proportion of clubs with over 50 volunteers in fixed and no fixed positions. The reason that this number is low is because sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) are usually small (see Sect. 3.2).

Additionally, the clubs were asked in which four tasks areas their fixed volunteers were employed. In accordance with the other European countries, most of the Flemish clubs make use of volunteers at the board level (Fig. 3.12). As such, approximately half of the volunteers in fixed positions perform management and administration related tasks. More than a quarter of the fixed volunteers are responsible for the training services, and 9% are referees or officials. Another 11% perform other tasks, such as operating the cafeteria or helping during eating days, etc. (Breuer et al. 2017).

These numbers partially correspond with the results from the Flemish Participation Survey of 2009 (PaS’09; Lievens and Waeghe 2011) and 2014 (PaS’14; Theeboom et al. 2015). In contrast to this study, the Flemish Participation Surveys deal with the demand side of the spectrum by interviewing a representative sample of the Flemish population between 15 and 86 years old. In both surveys, approximately a quarter (respectively, 26% in 2009 and 27% in 2014) of the respondents

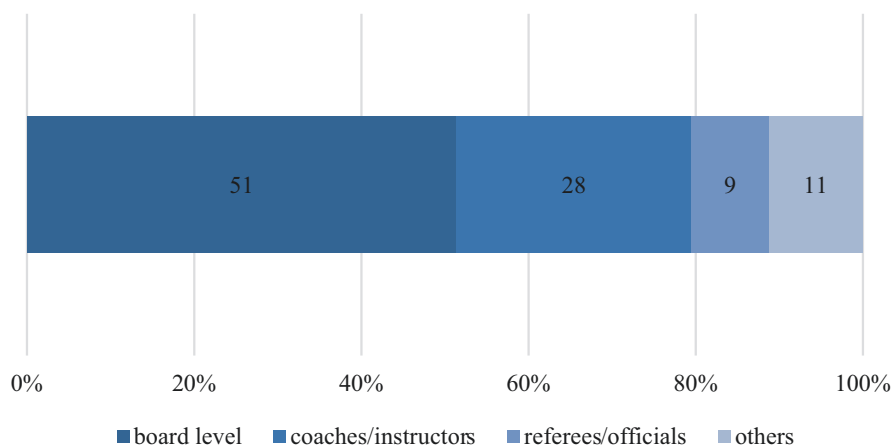


Fig. 3.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 872$)

Table 3.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 717$, coaches/instructors $n = 668$, referees/officials $n = 593$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 44 | 21 | 22 | 9 | 4 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 45 | 17 | 21 | 12 | 5 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 58 | 13 | 16 | 11 | 2 |

who were volunteering in sports indicated to be an instructor or trainer. As for the proportion of referees/officials, PaS' 14 also shows a comparable result since 11% of the respondents said to be active as a referee/official (Theeboom et al. 2015). However, the results of the PaS seem to delineate in the distribution regarding volunteers at the board level and for other tasks. More specifically, while a lower proportion of volunteers in sports imply to be involved in managerial or administrative tasks, a much higher proportion of sports volunteers help in other tasks like logistic support. Of course, a part of these similarities and differences can also be attributed to both studies' different methodologies.

The clubs' positive attitudes towards their volunteers are not only expressed through above opinions (see Table 3.16), but are also apparent via their perceived problems, as shown in Table 3.18. In Sect. 3.2, we showed that Flemish sports clubs have small problems with the recruitment/retention of members. Analogously, the

Flemish sports clubs indicate that they have the least problem with the recruitment and retention of their personnel. Both the Flemish averages for recruitment/retention of referees/judges, trainers/teachers, volunteers, and members are low.

In line with the development of members in the last 5 years, the amount of volunteers has remained roughly unchanged as well; 67% of the sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) did not notice a noticeable decrease/increase in their volunteering number. Furthermore, almost one out of five clubs have employed more volunteers in the past 5 years (Table 3.13).

In order to retain or recruit volunteers, sports clubs can take various initiatives. Table 3.19 shows that sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) mainly put effort in retain-

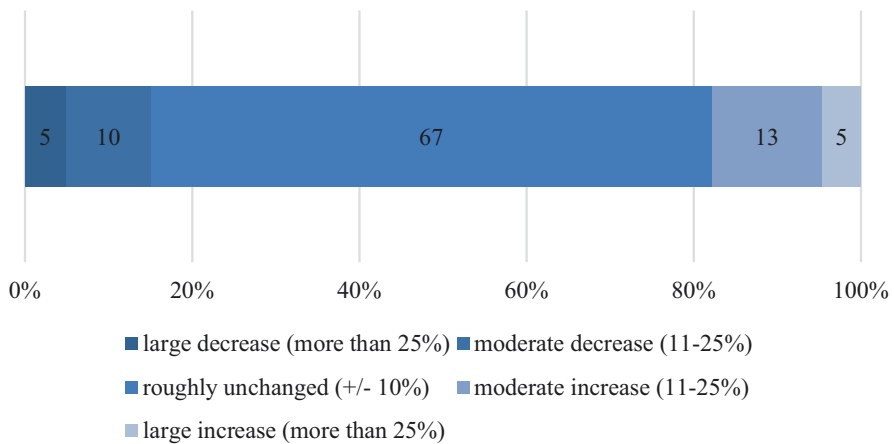


Fig. 3.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 820$)

Table 3.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 836$, social gatherings $n = 836$, recruit through current network $n = 836$, pay for training $n = 836$, inform members $n = 836$, inform parents $n = 836$, benefits in kind $n = 836$, recruitment outside $n = 836$, management $n = 836$, written strategy $n = 836$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 855$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 69 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 47 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 46 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 41 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 31 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 19 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 29 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 11 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 5 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 5 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 13 |

Table 3.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 444$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 8 | 16 | 15 | 14 | 7 | 19 | 16 | 5 |

ing volunteers to their club. This becomes evident when looking at the percentage of clubs that encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally. In comparison with the other European countries, this proportion (69%) is second largest (after Germany) for Belgium (Flanders). This could be the result of the support by the Flemish government and the sports federations (see also Sect. 3.1.4). Particularly, the Dynamo Project, provided by the Flemish Sports Confederation, is developed to teach sports clubs how to motivate and reward volunteers (Thibaut and Scheerder 2018). Furthermore, in the context of the retaining measures, Flemish sports clubs more often reward its volunteers with benefits in kind, pay for their training/qualification, and arrange parties and social gatherings for them than the average European sports club. On the other hand, Flemish sports clubs seem less entrepreneurial regarding membership recruitment. Particularly, only 5% of the sports clubs have a volunteer or paid staff with specific responsibilities or a written strategy for volunteer recruitment. Also, contrarily to the majority of sports clubs in Europe, less than half of the Flemish sports clubs recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members. Finally, sports clubs in Flanders less often expect (parents of) members to contribute to voluntary work. This conforms to the aforementioned finding that sports clubs in Belgium (Flanders) consider members more often as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work.

Four out of ten volunteers in Flanders work at least once a week in their sports club (Table 3.20). Additionally, approximately one fifth are active one or two times per month, and the other 40% perform volunteering work a couple of times in a year.

The Flemish sports club volunteer spends on average 143 hours of voluntary work in the club per year or season, which is lower than the European average of 173 hours. The median of hours worked by a Flemish volunteer is 60. This large average-median difference indicates that a smaller share of very motivated volunteers spends a lot of hours on voluntary work in comparison with a larger group of members spending less time on volunteering (Breuer et al. 2017).

Roughly a quarter of the fixed volunteers each spend between 0 and 5 hours, 6 and 10 hours, and 21 and 50 hours on voluntary work in an average month in the season (see Table 3.21). One fifth works between 11 and 20 hours, and only 5% of the Flemish volunteers spend more than 50 hours on voluntary work.

In short, the importance of volunteering is underlined by both the positive attitude towards and the relatively large number of volunteers in Flemish sports clubs. Compared to the past, a higher percentage of volunteers seems to have a

Table 3.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 255$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 27 | 24 | 19 | 25 | 5 |

management position. Just like with the members' situation, the low problems with recruitment and retention of volunteers are reflected by the status quo of their development.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter provides a comprehensive understanding of the multilevel structure and culture of the Flemish sports club landscape. In addition, because the same data was gathered within the SIVSCE study for ten European countries, the situation in Flanders can be compared cross-nationally. This yields some interesting findings, which can be summarised as follows.

Structure In relation to the number of inhabitants, Flanders has more and smaller sports clubs. Additionally, the Flemish sports clubs clearly focus on recreational sports. In more than half of the clubs, however, this is combined with a competitive offer. Only 10% of the clubs solely focus on competition. In addition, the share of members of Flemish sports clubs that do sports very frequently in the club (three times a week or more) is quite low (18%). On the other hand, the Flemish sports clubs count a large proportion of respondents that do sports once (35%) or twice a week (35%). This observation can be linked to the abovementioned fact that members of the Flemish sports clubs do sports remarkably more at a recreational level (64%) than in the other European countries (average 39%). In countries where the members of sports clubs are mainly competitive in their sports, sports are also more frequently practised in the sports club.

Notwithstanding the increasing challenges on the organised sports sector, sports clubs in Flanders look positive to the future. In particular, the results show that nine out of ten sports clubs expect their membership to remain stable or increase in the coming years. In addition, eight out of ten clubs have found that their membership has remained stable or (strongly) increased over the last 5 years. The majority of clubs assess their current situation regarding the size of the membership status positively; more than seven out of ten clubs indicate that they have sufficient members.

Social Cohesion/Integration Looking at the background of these members, almost all sports clubs agree with the statement that the club's membership is well-balanced, regardless of social, cultural, or ethnic background. Six out of ten clubs also indicate that they try to offer sports for as many population groups as possible. However, only a minority of clubs (39%) claim to strive to help socially vulnerable groups to

integrate into the club. Moreover, there is a clear and significant correlation between the size of the club and the presence of initiatives to increase sports participation among specific target groups. In this context, large clubs have a step ahead of the competition, as they are more likely to implement more special initiatives towards target groups.

This applies to all target groups studied (children and young people, the elderly, women/girls, people in poverty/low income, people with disabilities, and people with a migration background). Overall, conversely to their indications, we see that socially vulnerable groups often do not form (fully) part of every club's membership (yet).

Local sports authorities and sports federations encourage sports clubs to pay attention to accessibility for people in socially vulnerable situations. However, the encouraging role of local sports authorities and a fortiori of sports federations is still rather limited in reality: only four out of ten sports clubs indicate that they are encouraged by the local sports authorities in this area; promotion by sports federations is experienced by three out of ten sports clubs (Claes et al. 2017a). Moreover, we note that about a quarter of sports clubs consider insufficient support from the sports federation as an obstacle to making sports accessible to people in a socially vulnerable situation. One in four sports clubs also sees insufficient support from the (municipal) government as an obstacle in this context.

Socio-(Affective) Integration In contrast to the structural integration of people by Flemish sports clubs, socio-affective integration seems of high value for sports clubs and their members in Flanders. The club can offer numerous social activities. In particular, socio-affective integration can be about social extra-sportive activities at the club or about staying after a match or training talking to other members. Members and volunteers of Flemish sports clubs appear to participate actively in these social activities. Only 9% of the members and volunteers of sports clubs in Flanders never attend social meetings of the sports club. The third half refers to the time spent in the club (often in the cafeteria) by members or volunteers after training sessions or games. In clubs in Flanders, this half is clearly of high priority for many members.

Democratic Participation In sports clubs across Europe, members and volunteers have the opportunity to participate in the democratic decision-making process in their club. The results show that members and volunteers of Flemish sports clubs mainly try to influence this decision-making in an informal way, in particular by sharing their opinions with key persons within the clubs at least once a month. Influencing through formal channels, such as attendance at the general assembly, is less common in Flemish sports clubs.

Volunteering On the one hand, sports clubs in Flanders generally do not experience many problems with volunteer retention and recruitment. Though, on the other hand, the results show that much remains to be done concerning a more equal gender distribution in the different volunteering functions of sports clubs. The gender

imbalance is most apparent in the administrative functions, where women occupy only a quarter of the positions (Claes et al. 2017a).

Health Promotion Finally, sports clubs can make an important contribution to the health of their members. Generally, sports clubs promote health through their supply of physical activities and exercise. This chapter (see Table 3.6) has shown that the majority of sports clubs in Belgium believe that their offered sports meet the health-enhancing standards. On the other hand, it does appear that Flemish sports clubs slightly less agree upon the perception that it is their task to offer health-enhancing physical activities compared to the average European sports club. In addition, sports clubs could/should also use their health-promoting potential to raise importance on a balanced nutrition, a restriction on alcohol and smoking, sexual well-being, etc. Although Flemish sports clubs are also willing to take on this broader role, this is still not expressed enough in terms of policy and specific actions (Claes et al. 2017b).

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Chapter 4

Denmark: High Participation at the Expense of Democratic and Social Engagement?



Karsten Elmoose-Østerlund and Bjarne Ibsen

Abstract Voluntary organised sports in Denmark is characterised by relatively high participation rates among both children and adults, indicating that Danish sports clubs have a significant potential to contribute to public welfare. In this chapter, the contribution of Danish clubs to four societal functions is examined. The results show that Danish clubs contribute to health promotion, social integration, democratic decision-making and involvement as well as voluntary work, but, most often, the clubs do not work strategically to accomplish or promote these contributions. This is illustrated by the findings that relatively few Danish clubs offer health-enhancing programmes, work strategically to increase the participation of socially vulnerable groups or have strategies to recruit and retain volunteers. The contribution of Danish clubs to public welfare lies mainly in connection to the sports and social activities offered by the clubs that are open to the general public and in which many Danes are active. Four potential explanations for these mixed findings are elaborated in the chapter, including the role of the good framework conditions provided for Danish clubs, the few political demands attached to relatively generous public funding schemes, the existence of many small clubs and the potential trade-off between participation and engagement.

4.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

This chapter provides an overview of the history of voluntary organised sports in Denmark and the political goals for sports with reference to the societal functions of sports clubs treated in this book. The chapter also offers a description of the funding structure for sport.

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4.1.1 *History and Political Goals for Sports*

In 1849, the new constitution, the Danish Constitutional Act, ensured the people's right to form associations and organisations, which prepared the ground for an expansion in civil engagement. The period towards the end of the nineteenth century saw the rise of substantial popular movements from which the values and traditions of many associations are derived. The popular movements had an enormous political significance as democratic partners and opponents in the development of the Danish welfare state. The popular movements included the gymnastics and rifle shooting movement, the sports movement and the creation of work-based sports clubs (Ibsen and Habermann 2005; Ibsen and Ottesen 2003).

The formation of the welfare state led to a drastic increase in government support for sports, from 1945 to 1970, combined with relatively little political involvement in the field. The creation of a monopoly on national football pools in 1948 (including the lottery in 1989) and the enactment of the Leisure Act in 1969 remain vital to the economic and political autonomy of national sports organisations and local sports clubs, respectively (Kulturministeriet [Ministry of Culture] 2018).

Sports clubs in Denmark are supported with reference to their societal functions, including health promotion, social integration and promotion of democratic norms and values (e.g. Kulturministeriet 2016). The political aims and objectives are, however, general and vague with few specific requirements for sports clubs.

The Act on the Allocation of Financial Support to Non-formal Adult Education and Youth Activities (Leisure Act) states that the aim of the law is, "... to promote an understanding of democracy and active citizenship (...) [and to] strengthen the members' ability and desire to take responsibility for their own lives and to participate in society in an active and committed manner" (Kulturministeriet 2018). Thus, there is a general aim of promoting a pluralist society in which citizens' active participation is promoted.

Since 1972, Sport for All has been the general political goal for sports in Denmark. However, this has not been associated with specific measurable targets for participation by disadvantaged groups, such as people with disabilities, people with a migration background, etc. Sports organisations and clubs are expected to work for the integration of these target groups in sports. These goals are stated in the framework agreements between the Ministry of Culture and the sports organisations (Kulturministeriet 2015) but with no precise aims.

In 2014, the two major sports organisations agreed to work to increase sports participation under the heading 25-50-75: in 2025, more than 50% of the population shall be a member of a sports club and 75% shall be physically active. The sports organisations' goals have been elevated to be the government's goal for sports (Kulturministeriet 2016). In 2016, 39% of the adult population were found to be members of a sports clubs, and 61% were found to be physically active (Pilgaard and Rask 2016).

Voluntary organised sport in Denmark is characterised on the one hand by a great independence from the state but on the other hand is an integral part of the Danish

welfare model. The lack of precise targets associated with government objectives reflects the relationship between government and voluntary associations, which is based on a respect for autonomy but also on trust that associations will act in the spirit of integrating all members of society.

In Denmark there are three main umbrella organisations for sports: the National Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation of Denmark (DIF) that developed from the English sports model, the Danish Gymnastics and Sports Association (DGI) that developed from the popular gymnastics movement and the Danish Association for Company Sports (DFIF) that organises sports clubs based around workplace communities. For more than 100 years, there has been a competition internally between the sports organisations for political attention and public funds. At the same time, there has also been competition between voluntary organised sports providers and other providers of sports and physical training. This includes exercise activities in evening schools (adult education classes) and, more recently, private sector fitness and sports centres.

4.1.2 The Funding Structure for Sports Clubs

As mentioned before, the legislation in Denmark makes it easy to form associations, including sports clubs. Firstly, there is a legal right in the Danish constitution permitting free voluntary association. Secondly, the Leisure Act obliges municipalities to either (1) provide sports clubs and leisure associations with access to indoor and outdoor facilities owned by municipalities free of charge or against the payment of a minor fee or (2) to reimburse sports clubs and leisure associations with two-thirds of the costs of renting privately owned facilities (Kulturministeriet 2018). This applies to clubs offering activities to members aged 25 or under. The same act provides economic funding from local government to clubs and associations (typically an amount for each member aged 25 or under).

The 98 municipalities in Denmark manage publicly owned sports facilities and cover most of the costs for private non-profit facilities, which constitute a large part of the sports facilities in Denmark. A sports facility statistic shows that in 2018 one multifunctional sports hall (of more than 800 m²) existed for every 3668 inhabitants, 1 football pitch existed for every 1247 inhabitants, 1 tennis court for every 2723 inhabitants and 1 swimming pool for every 18,770 inhabitants (Facilitetsdatabasen – idrætsanlæg i Danmark 2018). The free use of these facilities and the reimbursement of two-thirds of the cost of renting the privately owned ones for club members aged 25 or under accounts for approximately 80% of the total public funding for sports.

Municipalities also provide economic funding to clubs and associations in the form of a fee for each member aged 25 or under. In the municipalities that pay the lowest fee per member, clubs receive EUR 3–4 per member, while in the municipalities that pay the most, the clubs receive EUR 10–15. The municipalities can also choose to financially support sports activities for adults, and, in most municipalities,

all members of sports clubs can use the municipally owned facilities free of charge. It has been estimated that the free use of facilities and the funding based on membership numbers amount to about half of the income of clubs (Ibsen et al. 2015).

To be eligible for subsidised use of facilities, clubs must be democratically organised, have a purpose in accordance with the Leisure Act (but it is not clarified what is meant by this) and must provide annual accounts (Kulturministeriet 2018). Almost none of the municipalities have specified plans or stated specific demands for clubs in order to promote the objectives stated in the Leisure Act.

The national sports organisations receive a percentage of the total revenues of the national lottery each year. The Act on Distribution of Profits from Lotteries and Horse and Dog Betting states that 70% of the lottery gambling revenues must be distributed to the national sports organisations – DIF, DGI and DFIF – from the Ministry of Culture (Kulturministeriet 2017).

There is almost no direct – or indirect – financial support from the state to local sports clubs. Clubs benefit indirectly if they take part in the activities of national sports organisations, which have been funded by central government. Local sports clubs can apply for money from a government fund to promote specific purposes, but the total amount of funding given is insignificant in comparison to the funds distributed from municipalities to clubs and from the state to the sports organisations.

Another legislation area affecting clubs permits people who do voluntary work to receive around EUR 650 per year to cover expenses without being taxed. This represents a subsidy to organisations supported by volunteers.

In sum, Danish sports clubs receive substantial amounts of public funding both in the form of facilities and direct funds as well as in the form of funding for sports organisations that support the clubs. Few specific demands are attached to the public funding, and sports clubs as well as sports organisations have a high degree of autonomy. Public funding for voluntary organised sports is provided with reference to the societal functions of sports clubs, including health promotion, social integration and democracy. These topics will be treated in the following sections of this chapter.

4.2 Structure and Context

It is estimated that in Denmark around 16,000 voluntary sports clubs exist and that 9 out of 10 are members of at least 1 of the 3 major sports organisations, DIF, DGI and DFIF (Ibsen 2006). Our description of Danish sports clubs draws on data collected among the clubs that are members of at least one sports organisation.

The population of sports clubs is highly diverse with many small clubs and fewer large clubs (see Fig. 4.1). Almost half of the clubs are small with 100 members or fewer, but at the same time, 15% of the clubs are large with more than 500 members. The fact that in Denmark it is easy to form sports clubs and the requirements for public funding are few could potentially help explain the existence of the many

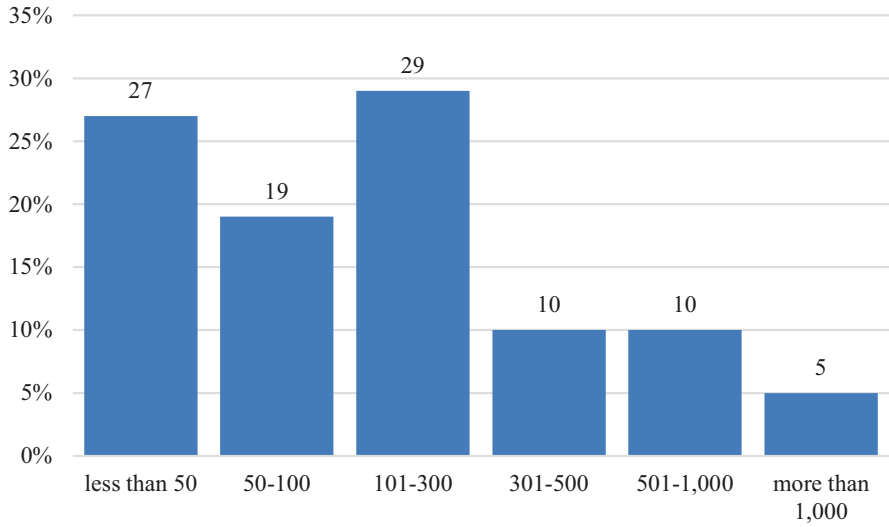


Fig. 4.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 3536$)

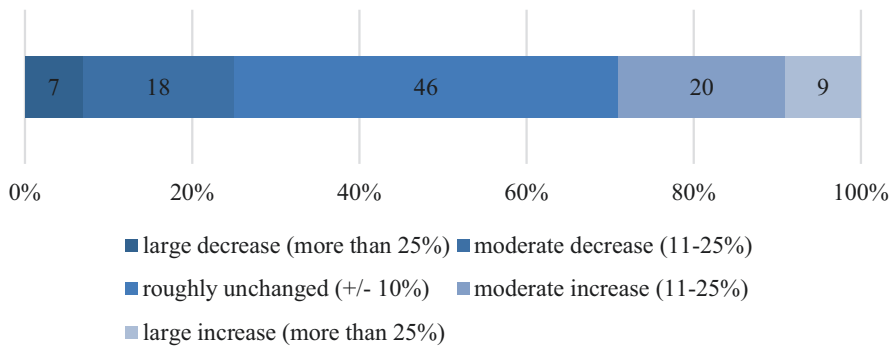


Fig. 4.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 3393$)

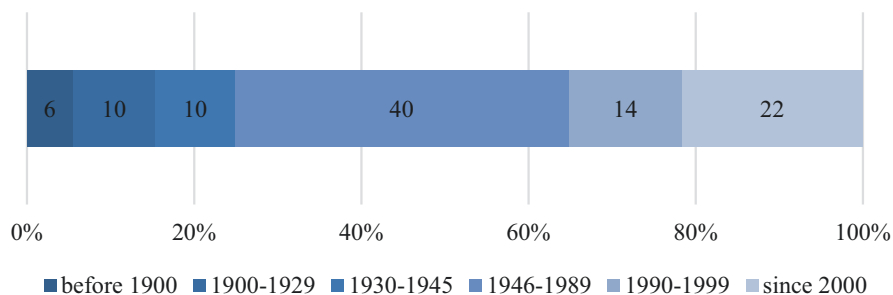
small clubs. However, it should be noted that we also find high percentages of small sports clubs in most other European countries (Breuer et al. 2017).

Despite discussions about a potential membership crisis for sports clubs, we find no evidence of such a crisis in Danish clubs – at least not looking at the period from 2010 to 2015 as illustrated in Fig. 4.2. Almost half of the clubs have roughly unchanged membership numbers in that period, and, in fact, more clubs have experienced an increase (29%) than a decrease (25%) in membership numbers. A study from 2010 finds the same general tendency in the period from 2005 to 2010 (Laub 2012).

The relatively stable and mainly positive membership development is also partly reflected when clubs report to which degree they find the recruitment of members to be a problem. Table 4.1 shows how 36% of the clubs find it to be no problem or only

Table 4.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, $n = 2875$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 12 | 24 | 28 | 27 | 9 |

**Fig. 4.3** Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 1980$)

a small problem, while 36% regard it as a big or a very big problem. The remaining 28% find member recruitment and retention to be a medium problem. The higher percentage of clubs reporting big or very big problems (36%) than clubs experiencing large or moderate decrease in membership numbers (25%) could be interpreted as an indication that even though most clubs are successful in recruiting and retaining members, it can be experienced as a challenge for some clubs.

Even though two-thirds of the Danish sports clubs have existed for at least 25 years – one in four even since before World War II – new clubs have also consistently been formed in the not too distant past (see Fig. 4.3). In fact, more than one in five sports clubs have been formed since the turn of the millennium. This shows how dynamic the population of sports clubs is. Changes constantly occur in that some clubs cease to exist, while others are formed. Again, this dynamism could be connected to the fact that in Denmark it is easy to form sports clubs.

With many small clubs existing, it hardly seems surprising that a clear majority of Danish sports clubs (75%) are single sport clubs with only one sports activity (see Fig. 4.4). However, it is worth noting that even though multisport clubs are usually bigger than single sport clubs, large and small clubs are present in both categories.

The range of sports activities offered by Danish sports clubs is highly diverse. The width of the activity supply can be illustrated with examples such as dog training, water-skiing and flying with model airplanes. However, very few clubs offer these activities, and from Table 4.2 it becomes apparent that some activities are clearly more popular than others. Football and gymnastics are offered by 15% of the clubs, badminton by 13%, shooting sports by 9% and handball by 8% of the clubs. It is worth noting the relatively high proportion of clubs that offer petanque (5%), which is due to the large number of clubs that offer activities for seniors.

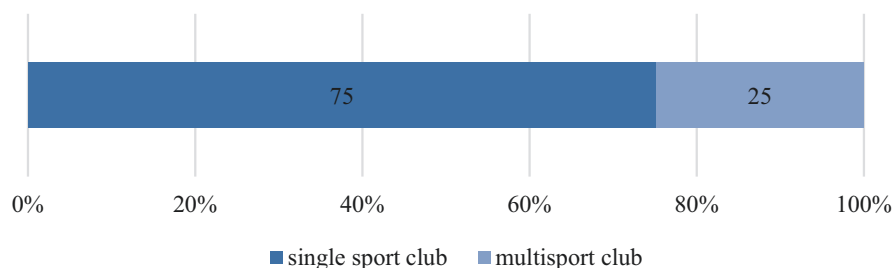


Fig. 4.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 3330$)

Table 4.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 3631$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|-----------------|----|
| 1 | Football | 15 |
| 2 | Gymnastics | 15 |
| 3 | Badminton | 13 |
| 4 | Shooting sports | 9 |
| 5 | Handball | 8 |
| 6 | Dancing | 7 |
| 7 | Swimming | 6 |
| 8 | Tennis | 6 |
| 9 | Cycling | 6 |
| 10 | Petanque | 5 |

Table 4.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 2914$, public facilities $n = 2912$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 2905$, share of revenues $n = 2513$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for using public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 26 | 71 | 41 | 15 |

Turning to the framework conditions for sports clubs included in Table 4.3, we find that most clubs (71%) use public facilities for their activities and that around one in four clubs use own facilities. Besides this, 41% of the clubs use privately owned or private non-profit facilities (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017). The fact that the percentages of clubs that use the three facility ownership forms amount to more than 100% shows how some clubs use a range of facilities with different ownership forms.

Forty-one percent of the sports clubs that use public facilities pay a usage fee, which makes Denmark the SIVSCE country in which the fewest clubs pay a usage fee. This is likely to be because Denmark is the only country of the ten in which national legislation ensures that sports clubs are granted access to publicly owned

Table 4.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 2805$, financial situation $n = 2846$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 37 | 25 | 17 | 12 | 9 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 30 | 30 | 20 | 13 | 7 |

sports facilities free of charge or with the payment of a minor usage fee. The free or subsidised use of facilities is a form of indirect public funding that is not included when 15% of the Danish clubs estimate that 15% of their total revenues come from public funding. The main source of revenue reported by Danish clubs is the membership fee (Ibsen et al. 2015).

As one might expect from the relatively generous funding schemes for sports clubs in Denmark, most clubs seem unchallenged by the availability of facilities and the financial situation (see Table 4.4). Around one in five clubs reports to have big or very big problems, while around three in five clubs report to have no or only small problems in both regards.

Another potential explanation for the few financial problems reported by Danish sports clubs could be that seven in ten clubs are operated completely on a voluntary basis and that only 8% of the clubs pay wages to a manager (Table 4.5). This result feeds into discussions about professionalisation in sports clubs (e.g. Cuskelly 2004; Hoekman et al. 2015) by showing that paid work is present in some Danish clubs but absent in most.

Looking at Fig. 4.5, we also do not find strong evidence of a more general professionalisation tendency in Danish sports clubs. One in ten clubs has increased their numbers of paid staff from 2010 to 2015, while 6% has decreased the same number. Arguably this could be interpreted as a sign of increasing professionalisation. However, it is still worth noting that for most clubs (84%), roughly no change has happened in the number of paid staff within the last 5 years. Furthermore, the number of volunteers has also increased in more clubs than it has decreased (see Sect. 4.6).

The large diversity in the population of Danish sports clubs presented in this paragraph should be considered in discussions about the societal functions of sports clubs. Targets and efforts regarding health promotion, social integration, democratic participation and volunteering must take this diversity into consideration. All clubs can potentially fulfil important societal functions, but most likely the contribution will be very different according to the structure and context of the clubs.

Table 4.5 Paid staff and paid manager/s in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 3199$, paid manager/s $n = 3006$)

| | Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | 30 | 8 |

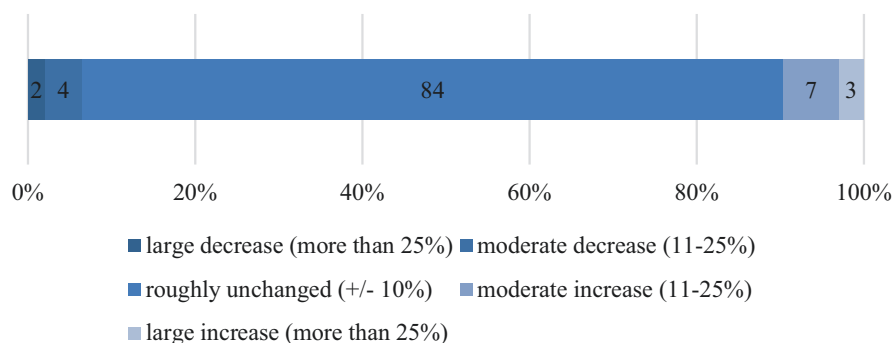


Fig. 4.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 1266$)

4.2.1 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

Health promotion is a central political objective for Danish sports clubs (Kulturministeriet 2016). The clubs are expected to contribute to a healthier population, but, as is generally the case in Denmark with the political objectives for sports clubs, no specific demands are attached to the funding.

When asking the club representatives for their agreement with statements regarding health promotion, it is apparent that most clubs (81%) mainly agree that the sports offer they provide for their members is health-enhancing, while only 3% mainly disagree and 15% are undecided (Table 4.6). Since most sports activities involve physical movement, the most surprising result is perhaps that not all clubs agree, but this could be because some activities offered in Danish sports clubs involve limited physical movement (e.g. billiards, petanque and shooting sports) or that some clubs are not aware of their health-enhancing role.

More specifically asked about whether the clubs offer health-enhancing physical activity programmes, indicating a more structured approach to health promotion, almost half of the clubs still mainly agree, while 40% are undecided and 11% mainly disagree. Jointly, these results indicate that most sports clubs see themselves as contributors to health promotion but that significantly fewer work with health promotion in a more structured manner by offering health-enhancing programmes.

Since most sports activities offered by sports clubs involve physical movement, the frequency of participation by members in the activities of their respective sports clubs is relevant when examining the contribution of sports clubs to health promotion. In Fig. 4.6, we can see that most members of Danish sports clubs can be

Table 4.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 2836$, sports disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 2888$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offer health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 5 | 6 | 40 | 33 | 15 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 2 | 1 | 15 | 46 | 35 |

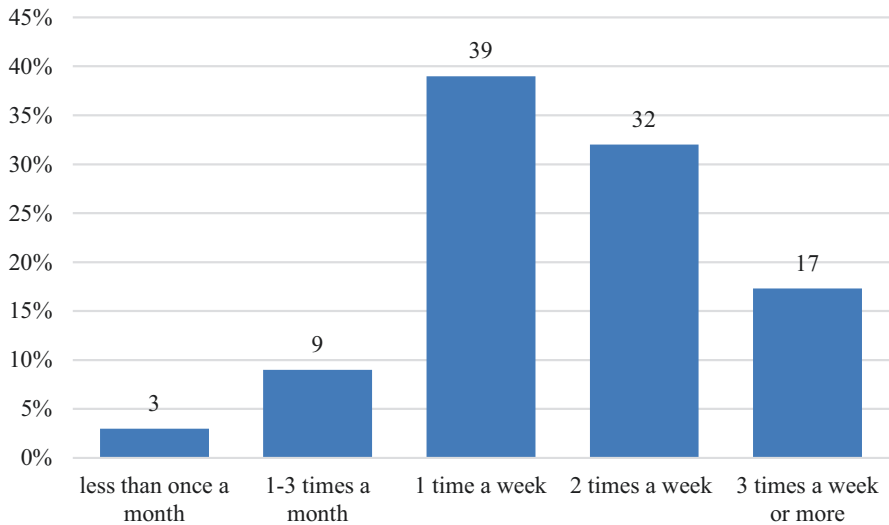


Fig. 4.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 2269$)

regarded as regularly active. Only 12% practise sport in their club less than once a week, 39% do so once a week, while almost half practise sport two times a week or more. From a health perspective, this frequency of participation will for most members not be sufficient to meet the WHO recommendation of at least 30 minutes physical activity every day. However, it is a significant contribution that is most often supplemented by other forms of physical activity. National research on sports and exercise in Denmark shows how almost three in four sports club members supplement the sports participation in clubs with sports and exercise in other contexts (Pilgaard and Rask 2016).

Table 4.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, *n* = 2432)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 36 | 20 | 44 |

Another indication whether sports clubs in Denmark can function as arenas for health promotion can be connected to the possibility of participating in noncompetitive sports activities. This is not to claim that competitive sports cannot be health-enhancing, but since many people are not motivated by the competitive element of sports, the need for noncompetitive offers to meet a broader demand seems evident. In that regard, it is interesting that 44% of the Danish members report to have never participated in competitions and that a further 20% do not do so anymore (Table 4.7). This sets aside Denmark from most other SIVSCE countries (except Belgium) as the one in which the fewest members are engaged in competitive sports. One possible explanation for this finding is that noncompetitive gymnastics and fitness activities are offered by many Danish clubs.

From a health perspective, this result can cautiously be regarded as a positive sign that sports clubs are arenas for sports participation and exercise relevant for a broader segment of the population than in many other countries. This is backed by the results from the latest Eurobarometer that shows how Denmark (and Germany), with 23% of the adult population being sports club members, is second when it comes to sports club membership surpassed only by the Netherlands with 27% (European Commission 2018).

In summary, Danish sports clubs see themselves as fulfilling an important role regarding health promotion – as is also the political expectation. This is backed by the regularity of the participation by the members and the frequency of participation in noncompetitive sports offers. However, it is unclear to what extent sports club can, do and are willing to take up a more structured approach to health promotion to increase their contribution by promoting health-enhancing physical activity programmes. The lack of a structured approach to health promotion in most sports clubs corresponds with the absence of specific political demands or guidelines regarding what constitutes health promotion from a sports club perspective.

4.3 Social Integration

There is a strong political belief in the potential of sports clubs to foster social integration. It is often mentioned that sports club represent an arena well suited to (1) foster integration of different population groups, especially socially vulnerable groups such as migrants and disabled, and (2) to foster binding communities with emotional commitment between the members (Kulturministeriet 2016). In this chapter, both expected functions regarding social integration are considered.

4.3.1 *Integration of Different Population Groups*

When asked for their attitude towards integration, three out of five Danish sports clubs agree that they aim to offer sports to as many population groups as possible, while only one in ten disagrees with this statement (Table 4.8). Asked specifically for the integration of socially vulnerable groups, the agreement of clubs that they strive for integration drops to around one in three clubs, while still only a minority of clubs (13%) disagrees. More than half of the clubs (54%) are undecided.

The difference in how the clubs respond to the two attitudinal questions on social integration could be interpreted as an indication that most clubs view themselves as open to all social groups (as is also a requirement for public funding) but that significantly fewer clubs are committed to work for the integration of specific population groups, including socially vulnerable groups.

Turning to the representation of selected population groups in Danish sports clubs, Table 4.9 shows that 58% of the clubs have no people with disabilities (whether physical or mental) in their membership, while 46% have no migrants (first or second generation). Whether this indicates that these clubs are, in practice, not open for the groups in question, or whether it simply indicates that these groups have not sought to join these clubs is impossible to conclude from the available data. However, we know from other studies that the participation of disabled in Danish clubs declines with the severity of their handicap (Østerlund et al. 2014), indicating that barriers to the integration of disabled in sports clubs exist. Regarding migrants, Denmark has, from a European perspective, relatively few migrants (Eurostat 2015), which could partly explain why many clubs have no migrant members.

As for the two remaining population groups in Table 4.9, 19% of the clubs have no elderly (65+ years) in their membership, while 6% have no women. Conversely, in 22% of the clubs, more than half of the members are elderly, and in around one third of the clubs, more than half of the members are women. The most likely explanation for the ability of Danish clubs to attract elderly could be traced back to the opportunities to participate in noncompetitive sports activities that appeal to this group (see Sect. 4.3). As for the representation of women in most sports clubs, this is likely to reflect that Denmark is a country in which there is a relatively high level of gender equality (e.g. many women are active in the labour market). However, it

Table 4.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 2852$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 2858$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 5 | 5 | 31 | 41 | 19 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 6 | 7 | 54 | 24 | 8 |

Table 4.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 2799$, people with migration background $n = 2787$, elderly $n = 2909$, women $n = 3536$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 58 | 38 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| People with migration background | 46 | 46 | 6 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 19 | 32 | 17 | 10 | 10 | 12 |
| Women | 6 | 8 | 17 | 37 | 22 | 10 |

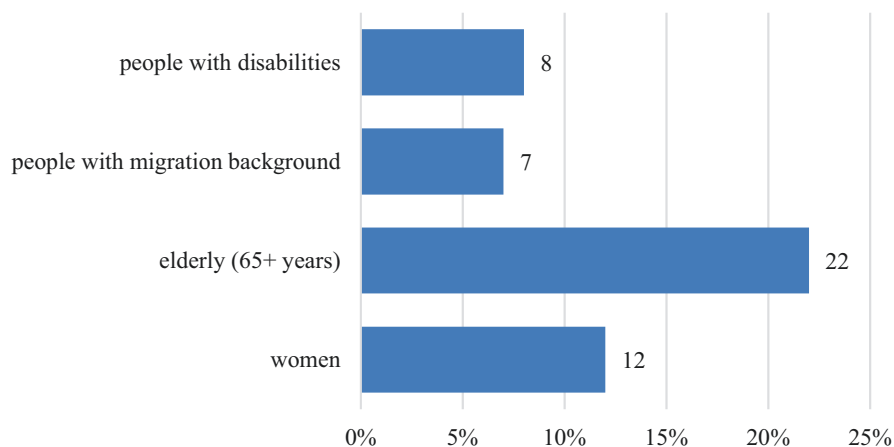


Fig. 4.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 2825$, people with migration background $n = 2826$, elderly $n = 2878$, women $n = 2845$)

is worth mentioning that men still outnumber women by around six to four (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017), indicating that there is still some way to go to achieve gender parity in sports clubs.

Turning from representation to initiatives, Fig. 4.7 generally shows that a minority of Danish sports clubs implement special initiatives to recruit members from within the four groups described above. Less than one in ten clubs have initiatives targeting disabled (8%) and migrants (7%) and 12% of clubs have initiatives specifically for women, while 22% target elderly (65+ years).

A likely explanation why a minority of Danish sports clubs implement special initiatives is that many clubs have been formed as a community for people with a shared interest in a sports activity. Formally, and most often also in practice, these clubs are open to all who share this interest – regardless of which population group they belong to. Additionally, though there is a strong belief in the ability of sports clubs to foster social integration of different population groups, no specific requirements are attached to the public funding in this regard. Thus, clubs are generally not rewarded if they work strategically to integrate one or more population groups that have the attention of politicians (most often socially vulnerable groups).

4.3.2 *Integration of Members into Sports Clubs*

Moving from the specific focus on the social integration of different population groups to a more general focus on social integration of members into sports clubs, we find that such integration is a central goal of almost all Danish sports clubs.

Table 4.10 shows how nearly all (96%) of the clubs agree that they set high value on companionship and conviviality – only 1% disagree. Sporting success and competition are also important to many clubs in that 45% indicate that they set high value on this aspect, while 23% disagree. The contrast between these two goals shows that many clubs value both but that companionship and conviviality are important to more clubs than sporting success and competitions. A plausible explanation as to why almost one in four Danish clubs does not agree that sporting success and competitions are important can be traced back to the widespread option to do noncompetitive sports in Danish clubs (see Sect. 4.3).

Although nearly all Danish sports clubs set high value on companionship and conviviality, the social participation of members vary (see Table 4.11). A clear majority of members are somewhat active in the social life, but a large minority of the members are not active at all. Twenty-nine percent report to never participate in the club's social gatherings, while 23% never participate in the informal social life, operationalised as whether they stay behind after training, matches or tournaments to talk to other people.

For those who participate in the social life, there are large differences in the frequency. The participation in social gatherings is generally less frequent than in informal forms of socialising. Besides the 29% that never participate in social gatherings, almost two-thirds (63%) of the members participate in social gatherings every 3 months or less frequent. Conversely, nearly the same percentage (61%) participates in the informal socialising after training, matches or tournaments at least once a month. A plausible explanation for this difference is that the possibilities for frequent informal socialising are better than for frequent participation in social gatherings, as these are likely to be hosted with some intervals.

Despite the variation in the social participation of members, close to four out of five members (78%) report to have made new friends through participation in the club (Fig. 4.8). This shows that the frequency of social participation is not a determinate for the formation of friendships. The results also illustrate that for most

Table 4.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 2883$, competitive sports $n = 2864$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 1 | 0 | 3 | 36 | 60 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 9 | 14 | 32 | 33 | 12 |

Table 4.11 Frequency of participation in the club’s social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 2506$, stay behind after trainings $n = 2403$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club’s social gatherings | 29 | 25 | 25 | 13 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 23 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 12 | 14 | 35 |

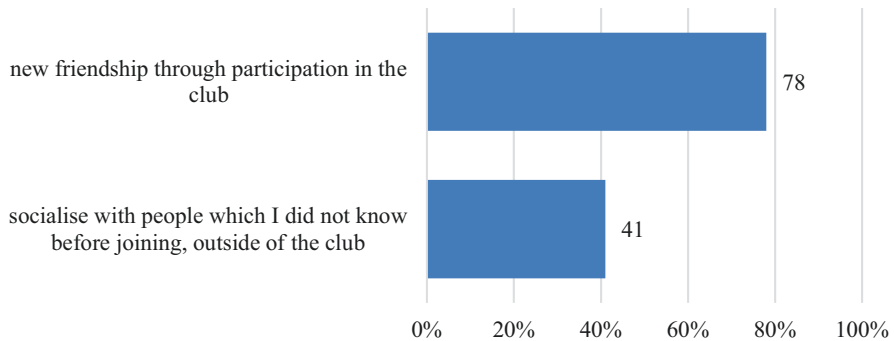


Fig. 4.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 2546$, socialise with people $n = 2561$)

members, the sports club is not only an arena for the maintenance of existing friendships but also an arena in which new friendships are formed.

When asked whether these new friendships are restricted to the club setting, 41% report that they not only socialise with new acquaintances in the club but also outside of it. This illustrates that the friendships formed in the club are split in two almost equally sized groups in context to whether they are restricted to the club setting or spill over into other life spheres. This result seems to back the political expectation that sports clubs can foster binding communities between members, but not all members experience this.

Another measure for the social integration of members in Danish sports clubs is the breadth of socialisation, here the number of people from the club that the members know by name (see Table 4.12). Only 1% report not to know any other people from the club by name, while a further 13% know one to five people. In contrast, seven out of ten members know more than ten people by name. This result indicates that for most members, there is some breadth to the club socialisation.

Table 4.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 2814$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 1 | 3 | 10 | 15 | 20 | 31 | 19 |

Table 4.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 2518$, most important social group $n = 2536$, respect me for who I am $n = 2045$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 4 | 2 | 19 | 18 | 56 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 21 | 14 | 24 | 22 | 19 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 3 | 2 | 15 | 26 | 53 |

A final aspect of social integration treated in this chapter is the attitudes of members. Table 4.13 reveals how a clear majority of members is proud to belong to the club (74%) and feel respected by other members for who they are (79%). Less agreement can be identified with the statement that the club is one of the most important groups I belong to. Forty-one percent of the members agree with this statement, while 35% disagree. Thus, although most members value their club membership and feel comfortable in the clubs because of the mutual respect, they are split in their evaluation of the importance of the club in contrast to other social groups. Provided that most people are attached to numerous social groups, this result hardly seems surprising.

Even though there is evidence in this chapter that support the political expectation that Danish sports clubs foster binding communities with emotional commitment between members, it is worth noting that on most of the presented measures, members of Danish clubs score lower than members from the other nine SIVSCE countries. Relatively, members of Danish sports clubs seem to be less socially integrated. One possible explanation for this finding is that a relatively high proportion of the Danish adult population is active in sports clubs (European Commission 2018). A higher participation rate could involve a trade-off with social integration. The noncompetitive activities offered by many Danish clubs do appeal to a broader segment of society, but they have been shown to foster less social integration than the more traditional competitive sports (Østerlund 2014).

4.4 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

In Denmark, the association – based on democratic principles – became an ideal for how to organise and work for common goals, when parliamentary democracy arose in the mid-1800s (Gundelach 1988). After World War II, the idea arose that associations are schools of democracy that can counteract undemocratic and authoritarian attitudes, which many in the interwar period had joined. This is the historical explanation for the fact that democratic education is among the primary objectives of public funding for sports clubs and other associations for children and young people (e.g. as reflected in the Leisure Act (Kulturministeriet 2018)).

A large majority of the sports clubs support this ideal and reply that the club strives to involve the members in the democracy of the club. Sixty-seven percent agree or totally agree that the club aims to involve members when making important decisions, and 62% agree or totally agree that the club delegates decision-making from the board to committees (Table 4.14). The answers can serve as an indication that the association democracy remains an ideal in most Danish sports clubs.

Previous studies of associations in Denmark have shown that leaders of voluntary associations find it difficult to engage members in the association democracy (Ibsen et al. 2013). The results from the member survey confirm this. Less than a quarter of the members (22%) in Danish sports clubs participated in the last general assembly (Fig. 4.9) and only around every third (31%) participated once every half-year or more often in other meetings for the members (Table 4.15).

The association democracy, however, also includes a more informal side, where members discuss association issues with each other and with the leaders and try to influence decisions. The member survey showed that more members in Danish sports clubs participate in the informal democracy than in the formal association democracy. Almost half of the members (47%) replied that they once every half-year or more often speak their mind to key persons in the club, and almost two out of three (63%) responded that they once every half-year or more often share their views with other members in the club (Table 4.15).

Figure 4.10 confirms the overall finding that a minority of the members in Danish sports clubs attempts to influence decisions that concern the club they are members of. Forty-eight percent had never attempted to influence decision-making, and only 27% had attempted to do so within the last 3 months.

Table 4.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making *n* = 2877, delegate decision-making *n* = 2855)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 2 | 10 | 21 | 49 | 18 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 4 | 11 | 24 | 49 | 13 |

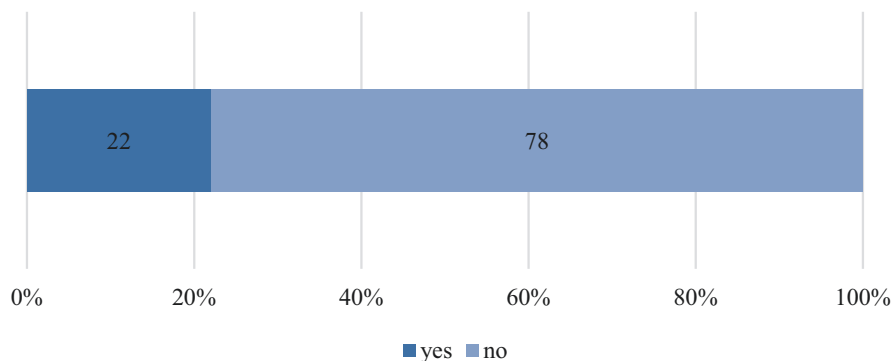


Fig. 4.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 2886$)

Table 4.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meeting $n = 2516$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 2366$, share my views with other members $n = 2358$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 46 | 22 | 13 | 9 | 6 | 3 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 32 | 20 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 11 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 25 | 12 | 11 | 13 | 17 | 22 |

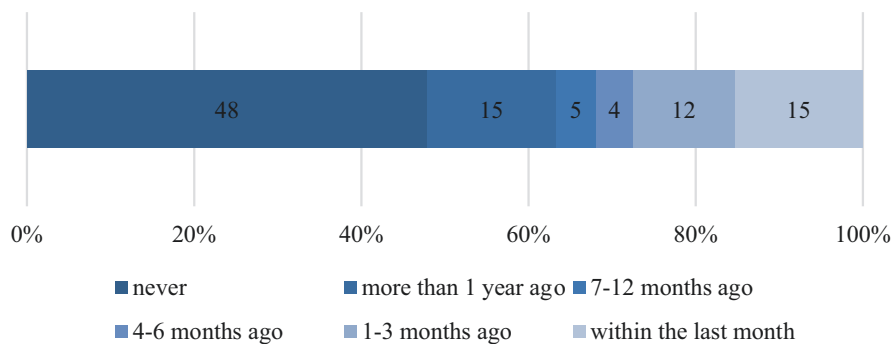


Fig. 4.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 2828$)

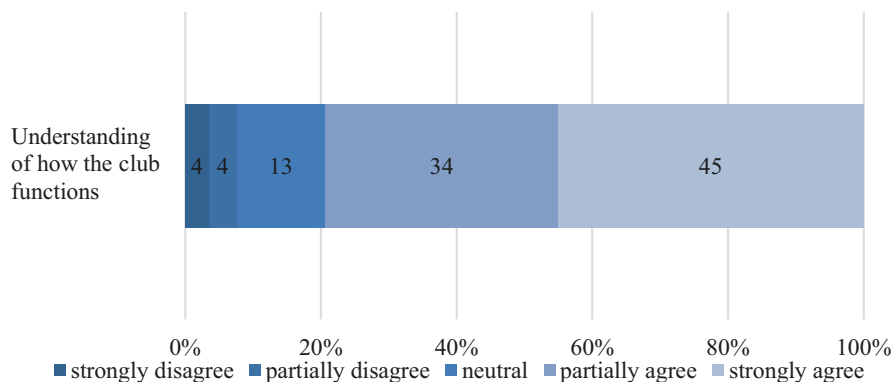


Fig. 4.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 2481$)

That many choose not to participate in democratic discussions, decisions and forums can be interpreted as a sign of alienation: that many citizens do not have sufficient insight into current issues and into how the political assemblies work. However, this does not seem to be a problem for the members of the Danish sports clubs. Four out of five members (79%) respond that they agree (partially or strongly) with the statement that they understand how the club functions (Fig. 4.11).

In summary, the analysis shows that, on the one hand, the democratic dimension of the sports clubs is an ideal in the clubs and an explicit goal attached to the public support. On the other hand, many members do not participate in the association democracy. This contradiction may be due to several factors:

Firstly, the political and organisational ideal of promoting members' democratic socialisation is primarily symbolic without political and organisational consequences.

Secondly, many sports club members in Denmark are members of a large sports club. We know that participation in association democracy decreases as the size of the association increases (Ibsen et al. 2019).

Thirdly, because many members of the Danish sports clubs have a weak affiliation to the club they belong to. Many members do not take part in sports competitions, do not participate in social gatherings and have a weak sense of we-ness in their attachment to the club. All these factors are negatively correlated with the participation of members in the democratic processes of the club (Ibsen et al. 2019; Østerlund 2014).

4.5 Voluntary Work

Even though research has pointed to an increasing professionalisation of sports clubs, which includes hiring more paid staff (e.g. Cuskelly 2004), this section clearly shows that voluntary work still makes up the most important resource that allows sports clubs to exist and offer sports activities to the members.

Table 4.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 2914$, members as customers $n = 2854$, demonstrating passion $n = 2874$, all members can be volunteers $n = 2907$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 6 | 10 | 15 | 33 | 35 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 39 | 34 | 17 | 7 | 2 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 3 | 11 | 31 | 43 | 12 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 4 | 7 | 8 | 43 | 37 |

Table 4.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 3199$, no fixed position(s) $n = 3094$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 12 | 23 | 26 | 25 | 15 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 44 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 9 |

The attitudes reported in Table 4.16 show how a clear majority of Danish sports clubs view voluntary work as an ideal. More than two-thirds (68%) agree that their club should be run exclusively by volunteers, while only 11% disagree. Furthermore, almost three out of four clubs (73%) reject the idea to see members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work, while only 9% agree. This fits well with the political belief in the importance of voluntary work not only as a resource for clubs and other voluntary associations but also as a type of engagement that has positive benefits for the individual as well as the society.

As we shall see later in this chapter, some sports clubs find it problematic to recruit volunteers. Nevertheless, 55% of Danish sports clubs agree that the members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done, while only 14% disagree. Hence, most clubs view their members as willing to contribute with voluntary work, and, from a club perspective, they are all invited to become volunteers regardless of their qualifications – at least in 80% of the clubs.

There are large differences in the total number of volunteers between clubs. Thirty-five percent of the clubs have no more than ten volunteers in fixed positions (e.g. board members, coaches/instructors and officials), and even more clubs (58%) have no more than ten volunteers in no fixed position (occasional volunteers, e.g. event volunteers). On the other hand, 40% of the clubs have more than 20 volunteers in fixed positions and 26% have more than 20 occasional volunteers (Table 4.17).

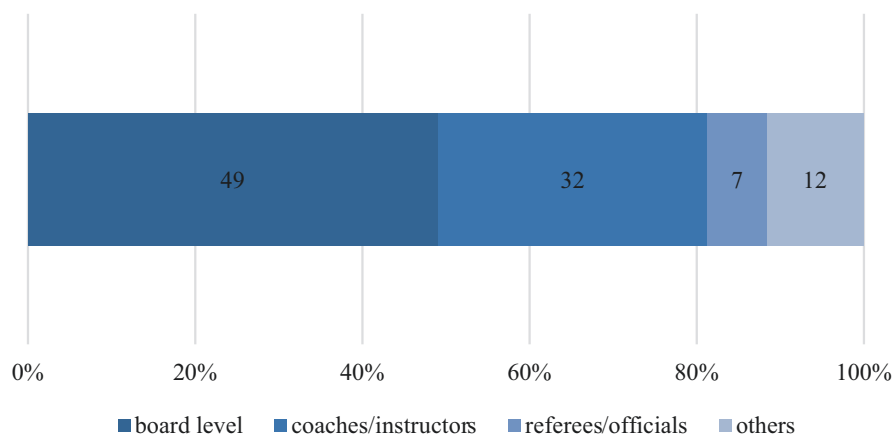


Fig. 4.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 3176$)

The large differences in the numbers of volunteers between clubs have to do with the work requirements, which is strongly associated with the size of the clubs and the activities offered (e.g. the type of sport and the number of participants in each team or group). The different balances between volunteers in fixed and no fixed positions reflect different ways of organising the voluntary work. In some clubs, few volunteers in fixed positions do most of the work, while in other clubs, much work is delegated to occasional volunteers. The fact that many Danish clubs have few occasional volunteers could reflect a more traditional way of organising the voluntary work, where few key volunteers contribute with most of the work.

Looking into how the volunteers in fixed positions are distributed regarding the type of work they do, Fig. 4.12 shows that around half are board members, one in three is a coach or instructor and the remaining one in five is either a referee/official (7%) or performs other tasks on a regular basis (12%). One explanation for the relatively many board members is the many small sports clubs that exist in Denmark (see Sect. 4.2). In small clubs, board level volunteers generally make up a higher percentage of the overall number of volunteers than in large clubs.

As mentioned previously in this chapter, some clubs find it problematic to recruit volunteers. Table 4.18 shows more precisely how many clubs find it problematic and whether there are differences according to different tasks. In context to the latter, the figures show that the percentage of clubs that find volunteer recruitment to be a big or a very big problem varies according to type of work. Thirty-eight percent report big or very big problems with the recruitment of board members, 30% with the recruitment of coaches/instructors, and 18% with the recruitment of referees/officials. A likely explanation for these differences could be the (perceived) workload connected to the three positions, where board membership and coaching/instruction positions are more demanding than the work as a referee/official. Furthermore, not all clubs need referees/officials and, hence, do not experience

Table 4.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 2857$, coaches/instructors $n = 2800$, referees/officials $n = 2556$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 11 | 25 | 26 | 26 | 12 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 17 | 26 | 27 | 21 | 9 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 47 | 19 | 17 | 12 | 6 |

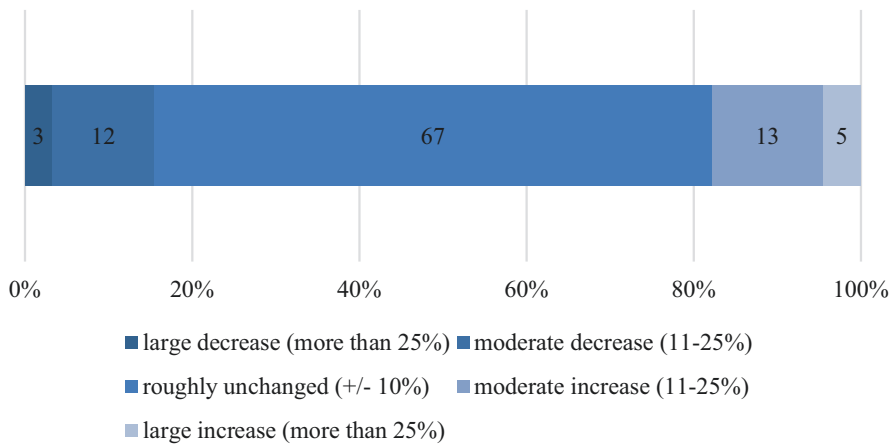


Fig. 4.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 2862$)

problems with recruitment in this regard. This seems especially relevant in a Danish context, where many sports clubs offer noncompetitive activities to their members (see Sect. 4.3).

Even though volunteer recruitment is problematic for many Danish sports clubs, it is worth mentioning that studies of voluntary work in Denmark has shown no decline in the percentage of sports volunteers in the period from 2004 to 2012 (Fridberg and Henriksen 2014). The latest figures even show a small increase from 12% to 14% of the population being active as sports volunteers from 2012 to 2017 (Rambøll 2017). Thus, volunteer recruitment can be difficult, but sports clubs generally seem to manage to attract enough volunteers.

Related to the debate about the development in the number of sports volunteers, Fig. 4.13 shows that two-thirds of the Danish sports clubs had experienced no or only small changes in the number of volunteers within the last 5 years. The remaining third of clubs is almost evenly distributed between decrease and increase, with

Table 4.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 2952$, social gatherings $n = 2952$, recruit through current network $n = 2952$, pay for training $n = 2952$, inform members $n = 2952$, inform parents $n = 2952$, benefits in kind $n = 2952$, recruitment outside $n = 2952$, management $n = 2952$, written strategy $n = 2952$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 3052$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 46 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 44 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 75 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 43 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 33 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 22 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 36 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 24 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 25 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 8 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 12 |

a few more clubs (18%) having experienced an incline than a decline (15%). This fits well with the overall tendency towards a constant number of sports volunteers in the Danish population reported above and serves as an indication that there is no immediate crisis regarding volunteer retention and recruitment in Danish clubs.

Table 4.19 shows how Danish sports clubs use different measures to recruit and retain volunteers. Apart from the 12% of clubs that do not do anything in particular, the remaining clubs agree to use at least one of the measures included, and many clubs use a combination of different measures. The most common measure used by three out of four clubs is to recruit through the network of current volunteers and members. This is an easy but often also effective measure. The downside can be that only those in the network of current volunteers and members in contact with these volunteers are asked for their contribution. However, one in four clubs is also outward oriented in the sense that it recruits volunteers from outside the club.

Strategic measures for volunteer recruitment recommended in theories related to human resource management (HRM; e.g. Iversen et al. 2018) are less frequently used in Danish clubs. One in four clubs has appointed a person with the responsibility for volunteer recruitment, and only 8% have adapted a written strategy for volunteer recruitment. It is more common for clubs to pay for volunteers to take training or gain qualification (43%) or to reward volunteers with benefits in kind (36%). Thus, some HRM measures are more common than others. The explanation that many clubs do not use the measures recommended in HRM theory could be that the measures are widely removed from the less strategic thinking that exist in many clubs, where the focus is on the day-to-day operation. Also, it could be that the general HRM recommendations cannot be directly transferred and are, therefore, difficult to implement successfully in sports clubs.

Table 4.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 1358$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 9 | 11 | 13 | 14 | 10 | 22 | 17 | 4 |

Table 4.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 866$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 33 | 28 | 19 | 16 | 4 |

So far, we have differentiated between volunteers in fixed and no fixed positions as well as according to tasks. The group of volunteers that were included in the member survey was, however, also asked to indicate how often they do voluntary work and how many hours they use.

Table 4.20 shows how there are large differences according to how often the volunteers contribute with voluntary work. Forty-three percent are active at least once a week, while one in three volunteers is active once a quarter or more rarely. This shows that for one group of volunteers, the voluntary engagement is regular, while for another group of volunteers, the voluntary engagement can be better described as occasional.

With regard to time use, the same split is visible in Table 4.21. One in five volunteers is very active and devotes more than 20 hours in an average month to voluntary work – equivalent to more than 5 hours per week. Conversely, one-third of the volunteers spends no more than 5 hours on an average month – equivalent to no more than 1 hour per week. This result shows that within Danish clubs, a minority of core volunteers are present in the sense that they devote much time for club work.

This paragraph has shown that voluntary work is still the most important resource for sports clubs and how the clubs view this as an ideal. Also, the results show that although many sports clubs find it difficult to recruit and retain volunteers, they are generally successful and show no signs of a decline in voluntary work. Therefore, if volunteering is viewed as a specific form of democratic participation and engagement for public welfare, the results underline the contribution of Danish sports clubs. One could argue that a broader recruitment of volunteers and a better distribution of tasks could increase this contribution by increasing the number of volunteers in clubs.

4.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the focus has been on four functions of sports clubs in society. We present the central findings for each function and then discuss coherently the potential explanations for the findings.

Health promotion: A clear majority of sports clubs offer health-enhancing physical activity to their members, and most members are regularly active – many in noncompetitive sports activities. Fewer clubs offer specific health-enhancing programmes.

Social integration: A minority of Danish sports clubs offer targeted initiatives for different population groups, including people with disabilities, people with a migration background, elderly and women. These groups are, however, not generally excluded – especially there are many elderly and women active in clubs. Most of the members participate in the social life in clubs and form social networks and emotional bonds to other members. However, there is also a large minority of members that are not social beyond the sports activity.

Democratic decision-making and involvement: A clear majority of Danish clubs aim to integrate members in the decision-making process and to delegate tasks. Despite this, around half of the members have never been involved in the member democracy (whether formal or informal).

Voluntary work: Danish clubs generally view voluntary work as an ideal even though many clubs find it problematic to recruit and retain volunteers. The results show no signs of a decline in voluntary work, and the findings underline the significant contribution of volunteers to the operation of sports clubs.

Turning to the potential explanations for the findings in this chapter, we have identified four:

Good framework conditions: It is easy to form sports clubs and to get access to sports facilities either for free or with a minor payment in Denmark. This corresponds well with the findings that Danish sports clubs experience few problems with finances and facilities. Likely, this is also an important part of the explanation for the ability of Danish clubs to attract many adult members.

Few political expectations: The good framework conditions for clubs come with political expectations that they deliver on health promotion, social integration and democratic involvement, but, apart from demands that clubs are democratically organised, few specific requirements are made. This coincides with the fact that few clubs work strategically with health-enhancing programmes and the integration of target groups. Potentially, the lack of specific demands for sports clubs to deliver on these issues could explain why only a minority of clubs work more strategically with these contributions to public welfare.

Trade-off between participation and engagement: Danish sports clubs attract a relatively high percentage of the adult population compared to other European countries. It is likely that this involves a trade-off with the engagement of members in democracy, social life and voluntary work. Especially the noncompetitive

activities offered by many Danish clubs have been shown to foster less social integration than more traditional competitive sports.

Many small sports clubs: Around half of the Danish sports clubs have less than 100 members. This could be part of the explanation why most clubs do not have a structured approach to increase their societal contribution. Often these clubs are concerned with the day-to-day operation and have fewer resources to develop specific programmes regarding health promotion and social integration.

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Chapter 5

England: A Long Tradition, Adapting to Changing Circumstances



Geoff Nichols and Matthew James

Abstract This chapter integrates results of the SIVSCE project survey of clubs and club members in England with other recent research. Results are from the SIVSCE surveys, unless otherwise indicated. The English context is naturally very similar to that of the UK's other home nations – Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, whilst the findings from this project have revealed some similar club sport trends in England, Germany, Belgium (Flanders), Netherlands and Denmark. For example, the bigger clubs in each of these countries appear to be increasing in size and recruiting more volunteers, whilst the smaller clubs are losing volunteers. This chapter interprets these findings by highlighting the broader contextual factors of history, state policy and wealth distribution. It also considers the apparent trend away from collective club-based sports participation towards more individual and informal sports participation and the policy implications of this regarding sport's role in delivering change in our communities. Nevertheless, this chapter clearly illustrates that sports clubs in England, as in other European countries, are almost entirely reliant on volunteers for governance and delivery roles. Clubs in England, such as the case studies later referred to, have retained a strong egalitarian ethos, which encourages volunteering and enhances social inclusion.

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5.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

The characteristics of English sports clubs include:

- A large number of sports clubs, which are mainly single sport and relatively small.
- A strong identity and connection with a locality.
- Volunteers fulfil nearly all the tasks required to make the clubs function.
- Club aims achieve a balance between providing rewards of conviviality and success in competition.
- A strong sense of independence from government.
- An expectation that national governing bodies of sports (NGBs) exist to represent the clubs' interests.

The English context is very similar to that in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Clubs do not regard themselves as vehicles for government policies but may have aims sympathetic to them and take advantage of associated grants. Expectations of the role of local government as being generally supportive of clubs, for example, through favourable prices and times for facility use, have been adjusted since 2010 as major cuts in local government budgets have made it impossible for them to sustain previous levels of support (Parnell et al. 2017). Central government's policy of promoting mass participation in sports, through Sport England, has been modified to focus on promoting physical activity in response to concerns with public health (Sport England 2016). The development of clubs, national governing bodies of sports (NGBs) and government policy in England can be understood with reference to historical influences. Government policy since the 1980s can be related to a typology of welfare states or, more precisely, the balance between state intervention and market forces. More recently, increasing inequality of wealth is related to time volunteering, time spent in leisure and sports participation (Veal and Nichols 2017). These broader contextual factors, of history, state policy and wealth distribution, help us understand sports clubs in England and differences between the ten countries in the SIVSCE project. This chapter starts to explore these.

5.1.1 Clubs

In England, there are approximately 72,117 community sports clubs (Barrett et al. 2018). This most recent estimate was made from clubs affiliated to 95 national governing bodies (NGB) covering 85 sports. The large majority of clubs are single sports. The clubs exist to express shared enthusiasms, normally for a specific sport. The majority of the work required is done by volunteers. Each club is based in a particular geographical location and can be contrasted with private sector clubs by not having an aim of making a profit.

As in other European countries, the clubs are almost entirely reliant on volunteers for governance and delivery roles, which normally overlap.

5.1.2 *National Governing Bodies of Sports*

In England, most community sports clubs affiliate and pay a fee to a national governing body, which represents their sport. NGBs developed as the collective representation of their affiliated clubs and initially to codify rules of sport. As England was one of the first countries in which sport became codified and thus exported sports such as football to the rest of Europe, many of these NGBs were formed in the late nineteenth century (Nichols and Taylor 2015). National governing bodies vary considerably in size. The four biggest are the Football Association, the Lawn Tennis Association, the England and Wales Cricket Board and the Rugby Football Union. These large NGBs are able to employ regional development officers to support their clubs and a larger cohort of paid staff. However, all NGBs include volunteers working right up to the national level, whom are likely to have developed through club and regional roles. NGBs produce web-based resources for their members and volunteers in the clubs. For example, the England and Wales Cricket Board (2019) produces advice on volunteer development. The NGB structure also supports competitions at different levels.

In England, government policy to promote sports participation has been implemented through NGBs agreeing “Whole Sport Plans” with Sport England. Sport England is a nondepartmental public body funded by the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport. It is responsible for distributing approximately 20% of the National Lottery proceeds. Sport England provided a total of almost GBP 500 million (approximately EUR 600 million) between 2013 and 2017 for 46 NGBs, within these Whole Sport Plans. In exchange, NGBs agree to raise participation by specific levels in their sport over a set period of time. These levels of participation were measured through Sport England’s annual Active People survey.¹ These participation targets, as a condition of Whole Sport Plans, are consistent with Sport England’s strategy. Thus, in March 2014, Sport England reduced funding of 11 NGBs in response to falling participation figures (Bond 2014).

The Active People survey measures all sports participation – not just that in clubs, so NGBs signing up to Whole Sport Plans must aim to raise participation inside and outside of the club structure. This gives these NGBs a role of promoting their sport in general – rather than just representing their clubs. However, the main influence NGBs have on participation is through the work of their affiliated clubs. The NGBs are thus in a position between their clubs, who expect them to represent them and support them, and Sport England, which can provide funds in exchange for promoting its policies.

As well as the 46 NGBs supported through Whole Sport Plans, over 100 other NGBs are recognised by Sport England. They are not supported directly but are able to bid for grants.

¹The Active People survey interviewed 165,000 adults aged over 16 each year and has been run since 2005/2006. It is probably the most extensive survey of sports participation in the world. It has been replaced by Active Lives, which measures a broader range of physical activity.

5.1.3 Government

As noted above, the national government implements its policies for promoting sports participation and, more recently, physical activity in general, through Sport England. Presently, policy aims are to promote participation by demographic groups who are currently underrepresented in terms of their engagement with sport and physical activity. This includes women, older people, disabled people and people from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Sport England 2016). An example is clubs that apply for Sport England funds for a programme to develop women's participation (see case study clubs in Nichols and James 2017).

Traditionally, local government has subsidised clubs through favourable charges for hiring or leasing facilities. However, major cuts to local government budgets since 2010 mean that the management of many local sports facilities has either been passed to one of an oligopoly of national companies (Findlay-King et al. 2018) or to a group of local volunteers or closed. Analysis comparing financial efficiency indicators of a sample of sports facilities in 2008 and 2016 suggests that in 2015 the facilities moved from being subsidised to being profitable (Ramchandani et al. 2018). If this sample of facilities is representative, it supports anecdotal evidence that local government facilities are charging sports clubs market rates (Murray 2019).

Thus, there is not a strong relationship between clubs and government policy. Moreover, research has shown that clubs have little knowledge of government policy, at national or local level (Harris et al. 2009). Clubs exist to represent their members' collective enthusiasm for a sport and provide the opportunities to play it. A more detailed description of the relationship between clubs, national governing bodies of sport and government can be found in the report of Work Package One of the SIVSCE project (Ibsen et al. 2016).

5.1.4 The Influence of History on the Characteristics of English Sports Clubs

The historical development of sports in England is useful in understanding differences and similarities across Europe.

England has been regarded as the birthplace of organised sports. The conditions facilitating this reflected England's early industrialisation. During the second half of the nineteenth century, several factors combined, including: the prominence of sports in the curriculum in the fee-paying schools; the need for common rules to allow schools and former pupils to play each other; the rational recreation movement which encouraged the introduction of codified sports to the mass of the population; a concentration of the population in urban environments; time free from paid work on Saturdays and the development of railways allowing for travel (Holt 1990). Holt attributes the embracing of football by the working class at this time partly to its ability to express a local sense of community that had been lost in the move from

a rural environment. This identification with place is retained by sports clubs today in all sports. The origins of sports in the upper classes led to a tradition of amateurism in which recreation was contrasted sharply with paid employment.

At the same time, the concept of volunteering changed in “the late 18th/early 19th century from informal and individualized charitable acts to organized formal volunteering under the guise of philanthropy” (Taylor 2005, p. 123). The historical circumstances explain the association of volunteering with unpaid philanthropy; the tradition of highly democratic structures of organisations established by working class people themselves and the tradition of mutual aid in such organisations, which were a collective response to poverty and insecurity. Thus, sports clubs today have their roots in these mutual aid organisations and retain an egalitarian ethos.

The development of sports clubs was independent of the state as part of a “mosaic of local civic institutions that developed in nineteenth-century Britain” (Schofer and Fourcade-Gourinchas 2001, p. 812). In this sense, they can be regarded as examples of associative democracy (Nichols et al. 2015a). Through association individuals group together into clubs to attain some purpose or govern some activity defined by them as important to their interests. Clubs are democratic, in the sense that all members are represented, but this is different to state provision. Political stability in England since these clubs and NGBs were established explains their continued sense of independence from the state, although, as discussed below, they may now apply for state grants. This would contrast with other countries in the SIVSCE study, such as Spain, Poland and Hungary, where the voluntary sector in sports was originally a reflection of the English model but was then brought under state control as political power was centralised. Although these countries have since experienced a liberalisation, the sport organisations have not had the consistent independence from the state so are more likely to be integrated into government policy. It is possible that a further consequence of a period of state centralisation is an undermining of a voluntary ethos, as it has been expected that the state, rather than mutual aid organisations, will provide for people’s needs.

The following sections reproduce findings from the SIVSCE project surveys of clubs and sports club volunteers in England. These illustrate the points above. Where possible, they have been compared with other survey results.

5.1.5 Qualification of the Methods

Before considering results from the SIVSCE club and member surveys in England, it is worth noting limitations of the survey methods. Firstly, we need to consider how representative the clubs are. In the English SIVSCE sample, 45.2% of clubs had Sport England’s Clubmark accreditation, compared to 19% of clubs in total. Clubmark is a recognition of a set of management practices being in place, and the accreditation process may take 2 years. These clubs are likely to be larger than average and with junior sections (Nichols et al. 2015b). They are more likely to have defined roles for volunteers, a volunteer strategy, equity policies and an expanding

membership. The distribution by sport was unrepresentative, discussed further in relation to Table 5.2. The inclusion of four very big clubs with membership over 1000, including one large motorsport club which is probably an umbrella organisation, will have inflated average club size and turnover. Treating these big clubs as outliers would have made the results more representative. As in any self-selecting sample, one has to consider the potential differences between those who respond and the whole population. In this case, members who responded are likely to be those most involved in the club, so with knowledge of its workings and with the strongest identification with the club.

The total sample sizes were 667 sports clubs and 717 members. These figures can be related to the numbers who responded to particular questions. For example, Table 5.15 Broader democratic participation of members is based on responses of 537 members. Implications of response rates are noted when considering particular results, as are qualifications relating to the phrasing of questions.

5.2 Structure and Context

The largest number of clubs is in the 101–300 categories. The median size of clubs is 112 members, which ranks joint fourth across the 10 countries in the SIVSCE study (Nichols and James 2017). The median is a more useful comparison with other countries than the mean as it reduces the influence of outliers (Fig. 5.1).

The most recent English club survey conducted in 2017 found the average club to have 120 adults participating in sports, 42 adults not participating in sports and 95 juniors, so a total of 257 members (Sport and Recreation Alliance 2018). The SIVSCE survey did not specify junior members or if they had to be participating in sports, so this may account for some of the differences. The 2017 Sport and Recreation Alliance (SARA) survey had a bigger sample – 1611 responses. In the SIVSCE survey, 66% of members were male. The uneven gender split of membership is common across the ten countries in the study.

Figure 5.2 shows that more clubs are increasing in size than are decreasing. It is difficult to attribute this to government policy, trends in sports participation, or perhaps the clubs in the sample are unrepresentative. Further analysis of the English sample shows that the bigger clubs were increasing in membership and the smaller ones decreasing. This trend was common with Germany, Belgium (Flanders), Netherlands and Denmark. Explanations may be that smaller clubs are merging or becoming unviable, as members leave.

The percentages of clubs reporting no problem or a minor problem with member recruitment (Table 5.1) suggest the clubs are relatively healthy

In England 72% of the clubs were founded before 2000 and 20% before 1929 (Fig. 5.3). The continuity of these older mutual aid associations reflects their historical development and their independence from government.

The SIVSCE club survey found 85% of English clubs to be single sport (Fig. 5.4); this was the third highest percentage across the ten countries in the study. As noted

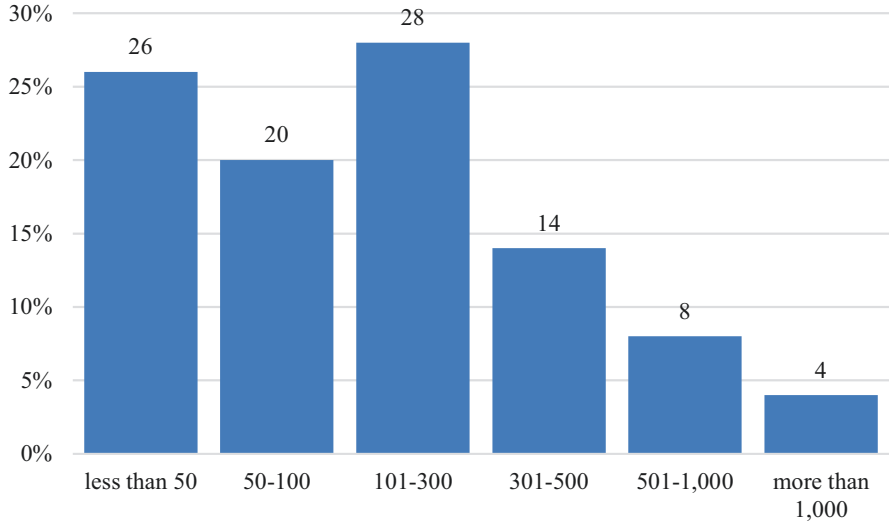


Fig. 5.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, *n* = 470)

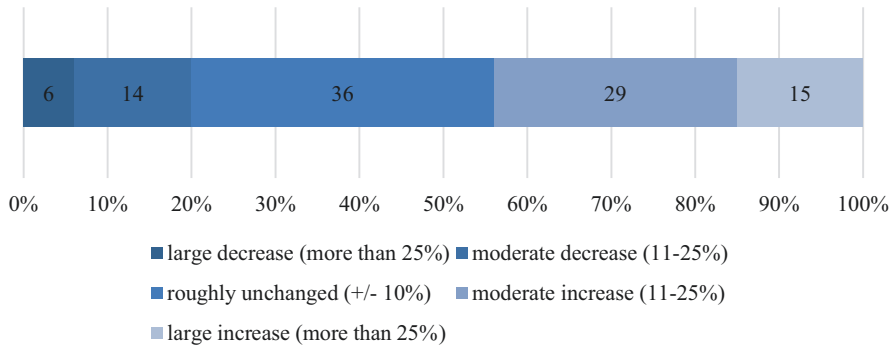


Fig. 5.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 482)

Table 5.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, *n* = 438)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 29 | 28 | 26 | 13 | 4 |

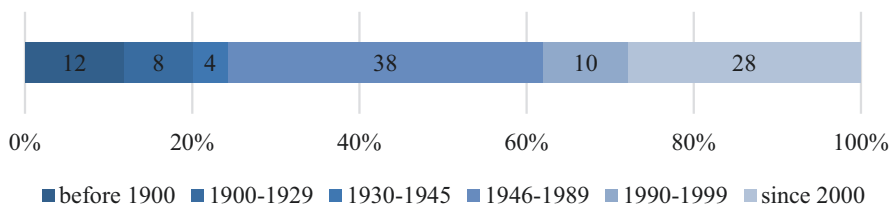


Fig. 5.3 Year of foundation (club survey, *n* = 339)

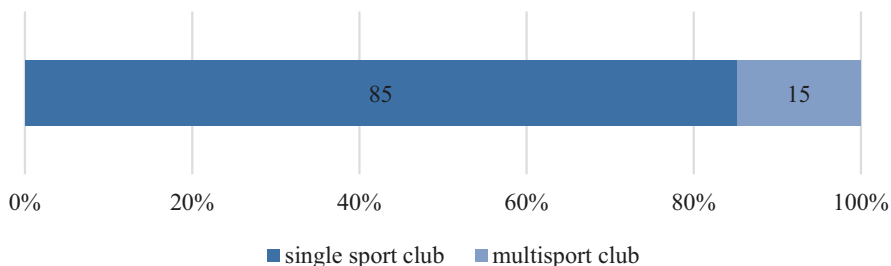


Fig. 5.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, *n* = 480)

Table 5.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, *n* = 580)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|--------------|----|
| 1 | Rugby | 19 |
| 2 | Basketball | 12 |
| 3 | Swimming | 8 |
| 4 | Motorsports | 8 |
| 5 | Gymnastics | 8 |
| 6 | Rowing | 7 |
| 7 | Football | 6 |
| 8 | Golf | 5 |
| 9 | Sailing | 5 |
| 10 | Table tennis | 5 |

above, the dominance of single sport clubs reflects the historical development of the clubs. Possibly multisport clubs make it easier for participants to switch sports as they get older or interests change. This is important as the type of sports participated in does change by age and life circumstances, as does sports volunteering (Nichols et al. 2019).

Table 5.2 shows the sample of clubs in the SIVSCE survey was unrepresentative of sports in England. A more reliable description of the distribution of clubs by sport is from the estimate of the number of clubs in England, conducted through the NGBs (Shibli and Barrett 2017). The ten most represented sports were football, 30% of clubs; cricket, 10%; bowls, 7%; tennis, 4%; table tennis, 4%; netball, 3%; rugby union, 3%; equestrian, 2%; cycling 2% and golf, 2%. Motorsports do not

appear in the top 20. The unrepresentative distribution of clubs in the SIVSCE survey by sport will have affected other results. A technical finding from the research was to confirm the difficulty of obtaining a large and representative sample of clubs in a survey of this nature in England. Notes of how the sample may have affected results are made below. A further club survey in 2017 (SARA 2018) was able to obtain a larger sample by closer cooperation between Sport England and the Sport and Recreation Alliance. In both 2015 and 2017, survey distribution was led by the Alliance.

Forty-one percent of clubs own their sports facilities (Table 5.3), ranking third across the ten countries in the study. Facility ownership is relatively high in England, but the cost of land and facilities would make this prohibitive for clubs established after 2000 and probably before. The proportion of clubs paying a fee for public facility use is the second highest in Europe. This reflects the independence of the voluntary sector from the state and the low level of welfare policies. The share of public revenues from public funding is the second lowest in the ten countries, although it would have been difficult for clubs in England to give an accurate response to this question. Public funding is most likely to be in the form of grants for specific programmes. In contrast, a subsidy for facility use will probably not be apparent. Although we are not able to see a trend in the results of Table 5.3, it is likely that as a consequence of cuts in local government budgets since 2010, clubs are having to pay more to hire public facilities.

Overall, the problems reported by English clubs were less than in other countries (Table 5.4). Eighteen percent of clubs reported a problem that would threaten their existence in the next 5 years. Nine percent of clubs reported this to be availability of

Table 5.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 439$, public facilities $n = 439$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 249$ and share of revenues $n = 366$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 41 | 57 | 90 | 6 |

Table 5.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 435$ and financial situation $n = 438$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 31 | 24 | 20 | 12 | 13 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 40 | 25 | 19 | 11 | 6 |

Table 5.5 Paid staff and paid manager/s in clubs (club survey, paid staff n = 462, paid manager/s n = 463)

| | Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | 37% | 19% |

facilities. As discussed above, this probably reflects the inability of local government to subsidise facilities or even provide them at all, as a consequence of cuts in budgets, as part of the policy of austerity followed by central government since 2010 (Parnell et al. 2017). This also reflects changed management practices (Findlay-King et al. 2018), in which traditional sports are less protected than they were by centre managers, whom are now more inclined to favour exercise classes that bring in more income for the facility (Ramchandani et al. 2018).

The results on the share of clubs with paid staff and paid management (Table 5.5) overstate the proportion of clubs with paid staff, partly because of the over-representation of golf clubs. The Sport and Recreation Alliance survey conducted in 2017 (2018) found that 22% of clubs had paid coaches. Other paid staff were 10%, other roles; 9%, administrative/committee role; 8%, paid referees/officials; 2% paid stewards/marshals and 1%, providing transport. Thus, the most significant named paid roles were coaches and officials, which reflects the professionalisation of these activities. Coaches will be required to take qualifications through courses they need to pay for and give up time for and so are more likely to ask for remuneration, and their services become marketable. Having coaches qualified at a particular level is a requirement of Clubmark accreditation. Clubs with this were over-represented in the 2015 SIVSCE survey and probably in the 2017 survey, as it was promoted via Sport England's Clubmatters website, and 51% had used this resource. Officials will also need to have taken training for qualifications. An interesting research question is if these roles have moved from being filled by volunteers to paid workers, and if this will undermine the traditional volunteer led ethos of the clubs. Further, it would be interesting to compare this across Europe where the SIVSCE study found that in many countries volunteers received remuneration, in the form of direct payments or tax allowances. This illustrates that the concept of a volunteer is socially constructed as it varies between countries. As noted, the concept of volunteering is historically based. In England, as in other countries, a defining characteristic has traditionally been a lack of material personal reward (Cnaan et al. 1996), but possibly this is changing.

Figure 5.5 supports the view that the number of paid staff is increasing, as 18% of clubs reported this was the case, compared to 8% reporting a decrease. It cannot be concluded from this that volunteers are being replaced by paid workers, as Fig. 5.13 shows more clubs are increasing the number of volunteers than decreasing them and Fig. 5.2 shows more clubs are increasing in size. Thus, more detailed analysis is required to show if the clubs that were growing in size increased paid workers proportionately more than volunteers. However, this would still not provide an accurate picture of the amount of work done by each group.

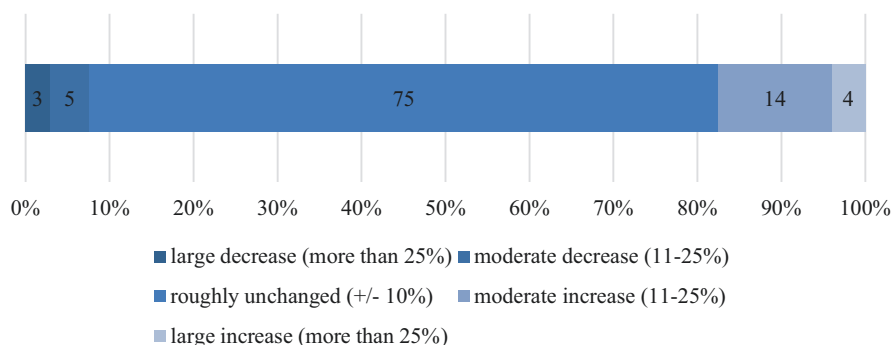


Fig. 5.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 275$)

Table 5.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 433$ and sports clubs disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 437$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 2 | 6 | 15 | 44 | 34 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 1 | 3 | 6 | 42 | 48 |

5.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

As noted above, clubs' aims include providing the opportunity for their members to play a sport and gain the social rewards of membership. Thus, whilst 78% may agree they offer health-enhancing physical activity programmes (Table 5.6), this is an outcome which has synergy with their main aims, rather than being the main reason the club exists. Promoting health may be the main aim of a health club, although these clubs also tend to be in the private sector and so have an overriding aim of profitability.

This question asked specifically about participation in sports in the club, so responses will not include other sporting activity outside the club (Fig. 5.6). This is important because active sports participants may engage in sports in different settings. Fifty-one percent take part twice a week or more, which shows the club is important in offering this opportunity. However, in England, analysis of the Active People survey between 2005/2006 and 2013/2014 shows a decline in participation in formal contexts, such as clubs, and an increase in informal participation (Harris et al. 2017). This means that whilst Fig. 5.6 appears to show the importance of the club for sports participation, it is possible that the same individuals also participate

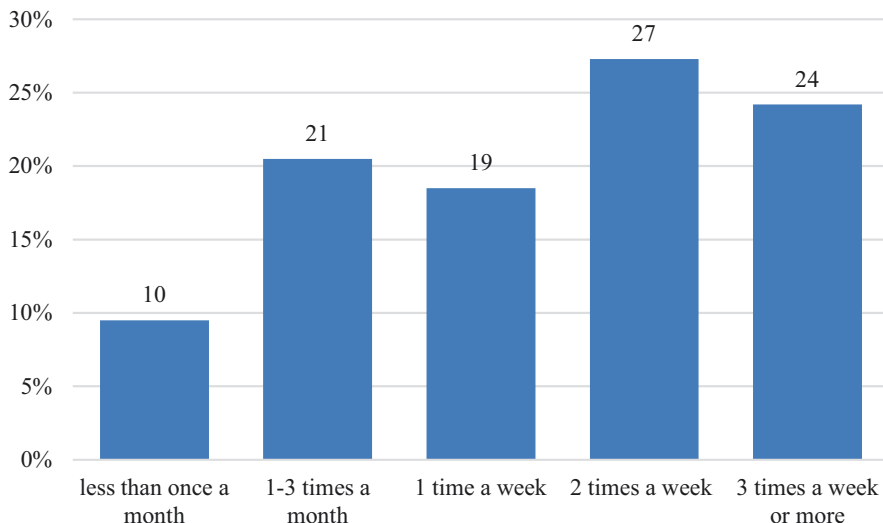


Fig. 5.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 454$)

Table 5.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 452$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 81 | 10 | 8 |

outside the club, so it would be interesting to know the relative importance of the club context. For example, it is possible that those who participate more frequently in the club also participate more frequently outside of clubs, as part of a general commitment towards fitness.

Table 5.7 shows most sports participation is competitive. This is expected, as the list of sports represented shows that most sports in clubs are competitive. As discussed below, social rewards of membership appear to be more important than winning in competition. Interestingly, in the English sample of club members only, 66% of respondents did sport in the club, compared to 89% who were members of the club. Thus, the club provides important rewards for members who only volunteer or who do not actively play sports. Surveys of clubs in England in 2011, 2012 and 2013 all showed about 30% of adult members were not sports participants (Sport and Recreation Alliance 2013).

5.4 Social Integration

Across the ten countries in the study, English clubs are generally less likely to have special initiatives for target groups (Nichols and James 2017). The target group most likely to have an initiative aimed at it is children and young people; however,

the options within the question included a concessionary membership fee, and this is common in clubs with junior members. English clubs have developed almost entirely independently from government and do not regard themselves as vehicles for government policies. As noted above, clubs are generally unaware of government policies (Harris et al. 2009). Clubs exist primarily to meet the needs of their members; to provide opportunities to play sports and to create the social rewards on conviviality. Table 5.10 from the club survey showed conviviality to be more highly valued as a club aim than sporting success. Clubs may aim to meet the needs of non-members, but this will depend on the values of leading members. For example, Northern Hope Gymnastics club, one of the case study clubs in England conducted for the SIVSCE project, ran special sessions for children who had been excluded from mainstream schools because of behavioural problems (Nichols and James 2017). These were challenging sessions to run but reflected the club founder's vision of gymnastics being a means to personal development of young people. Another English case study, Market Harborough Squash club, gave junior members free off-peak use of squash courts to promote use in school holidays. The same club ran a set of introductory sessions for women, influenced by Sport England's "This Girl Can" campaign (Sport England n.d.), and a request from local government to set up a scheme to promote squash to women.

In England, sports for the target groups specified in the SIVSCE research is often provided by specialist clubs or organisations. This applies especially for disability sports; an example would be the Riding for the Disabled organisation (which provides horse riding), although Sport England and Sport Wales encourage all clubs to be inclusive and Sport Wales provide funds for disability inclusion training. The merger of men's and women's clubs/sections has been encouraged which might be regarded as representing inclusion, although in some cases women may prefer a gender-specific club. It is possible that in other European countries there is a stronger overlap between the aims of clubs and government.

Thus although these responses appear to show 81% of clubs try to offer sports to as many population groups as possible (Table 5.8), this can be interpreted as clubs not actively discriminating against any particular group (although they would not be likely to report they did this anyway) rather than clubs actively looking to recruit members from different population groups. Fifty-eight percent say they strive to

Table 5.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 438$ and helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 434$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 2 | 7 | 10 | 49 | 32 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 4 | 10 | 28 | 44 | 14 |

Table 5.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 445$, people with migration background $n = 428$, elderly $n = 441$ and women $n = 470$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 26 | 64 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| People with migration background | 26 | 55 | 12 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 26 | 42 | 16 | 10 | 6 | 1 |
| Women | 7 | 15 | 23 | 33 | 11 | 11 |

help vulnerable groups integrate into the club; but again, clubs are unlikely to respond that they do not do this.

Again, Table 5.9 does not necessarily suggest clubs have aims of social integration. For example, only 34% of club members were female, so this is a more accurate overall view of gender representation. Across the ten countries, this uneven gender representation was common. A difficulty in interpreting Table 5.9 is that the distribution of demographic groups across the whole sample of clubs may conceal differences within individual clubs. For example, some clubs may be for specific groups, such as women or the disabled. If a club was dominated by one particular group, for example, a football club might be entirely from one ethnic minority, one could argue that the club was not integrated. The 11% of clubs who have more than 75% female members may be clubs with only female membership. Fifteen percent of English club members were aged over 65: the average across the 10 countries surveyed was 10%. The figure for people with migration backgrounds is probably inaccurate, as the wording of the question would not have enabled an accurate response: it asked one club member to report the number of club members who were foreigners, or if at least one of their parents was a foreigner or belonged to an ethnic minority. In England, it is unlikely the respondent would have known this information. Similarly, ‘disabled’ is not a clearly defined concept so difficult to ask details of.

Figure 5.7 shows the group targeted most by initiatives is women. The question Fig. 5.7 relates to asked if clubs had special initiatives to increase participation by these groups – as well as low income groups, which 29% had initiatives for. So low-income groups had more initiatives aimed at them than women. The prompted initiatives included activities, teams, cooperation, reduced membership fees, etc. The question covered a wide range of initiatives. For example, a club might have a women’s team, a club might be just for women, it might have a lower membership rate for over 65’s, it might have a toilet adapted for the disabled, or it might be a club comprised mainly of migrants – given the broad definition of this category described above. The report on Work Package 5 of the SIVSCE project (Piątkowska et al. 2017) gives more details on initiatives by population group through case study clubs. In England the most popular type of initiative for women/girls, children, the elderly, people with disabilities and people with migration background was targeted sports activities, which must mean specific teams or sessions. Fifteen percent of clubs had these for women, 29% for children, 4% for the elderly, 9% for people with disabilities (which was a surprisingly high figure) and 3% for people with a migra-

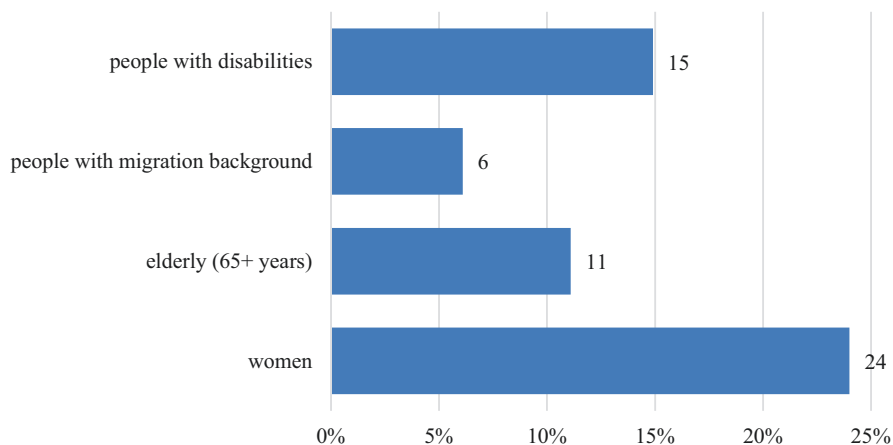


Fig. 5.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 524$, people with migration background $n = 524$, elderly $n = 524$ and women $n = 524$)

tion background. Any club with a junior section will have this type of initiative for juniors. The most popular initiative for people on low incomes was a concessionary membership fee, 21% of clubs; and this was the most common initiative for this group across the ten countries.

The case study clubs in England illustrated the types of initiatives involved (Nichols and James 2017). For example, at Market Harborough Squash club in Leicestershire, all junior members are allowed to use the court at no cost during the day. Juniors who come to the club coaching sessions get free off-peak membership. Juniors only start paying membership when they start playing in the club leagues or want to play in peak time. This membership is only GBP 8 per month. This means the courts are very popular with juniors in the school holidays. In the same club, influenced by Sport England's "This Girl Can" campaign (Sport England n. d.), the local authority contacted the club to set up a scheme to promote squash to women. The club's female coach provided a good role model of female participation, as she is a mother with three young children. She helped recruit women from local schools. Some had played squash before but others were new to it. One free session was offered and seven at the rate of GBP 3 each. If a woman attended all 8 sessions, she was given a free racket and ball; 14 participated regularly. A social event was also provided, and participants were given a free t-shirt. Eight joined the club and have competed in the club closed competition and joined special women's leagues, which the club developed to promote them playing.

These detailed examples show how a club can contribute to social integration and how this has synergy with the aims of the club, to increase membership and participation. These targeted sessions were dependent on a leading club member taking the initiative to develop them.

Table 5.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 435$ and competitive sports $n = 437$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 0 | 3 | 13 | 55 | 29 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 1 | 14 | 13 | 54 | 18 |

Table 5.11 Frequency of participation in the club's social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 578$ and stay behind after trainings $n = 571$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club's social gatherings | 11 | 21 | 28 | 20 | 10 | 5 | 4 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 11 | 4 | 6 | 12 | 18 | 16 | 34 |

Conviviality is more important than sporting success (Table 5.10). Social rewards of club membership are important and reflect the club as a social organisation.

Informal interaction seems to be more important than formal social gatherings (Table 5.11). This will depend on how many of each type of opportunity arises. One would expect social interaction in addition to sports participation to be most frequent in clubs that had their own facility. It would be least significant in clubs without their own facility and where participation was staggered, such as swimming, where a public pool is the most likely venue and participation is divided by categories of event. A 2009 survey of sports clubs (Taylor et al. 2009) found that the sports in which over 50% of clubs owned their playing facilities included sailing, tennis, golf, rowing and rugby union. Sports in which over 40% of clubs leased playing facilities, which would imply they could also use them for social purposes, included sailing, rugby union and cricket. Access to a social facility will also have affected the responses to the question on the importance of conviviality.

Figure 5.8 was in response to a question: 'I have made new friends through participation in the club'. It is unsurprising 95% of respondents agreed with this, as they will have joined the club to meet new people with a shared interest. The second question was: 'I socialise with people from the club, which I did not know before joining, outside of the club'. Again, we would expect most club members to respond positively, although we do not know if this socialising takes place in the club or outside of it. We can say that for 66% of members the club has enabled them to develop more social relationships.

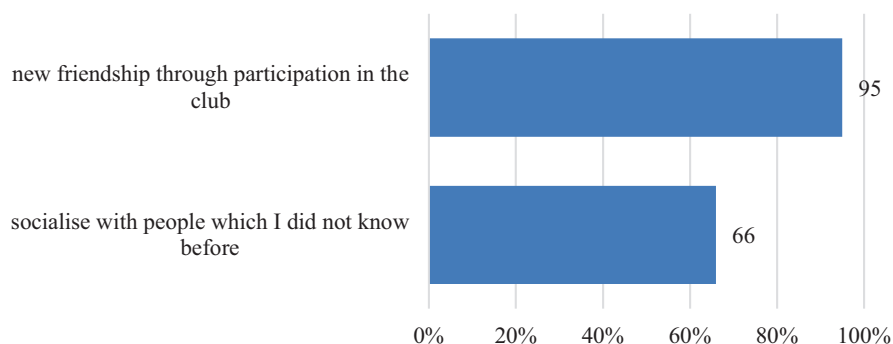


Fig. 5.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 606$ and socialise with people $n = 594$)

Table 5.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 628$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 0 | 1 | 5 | 10 | 25 | 35 | 25 |

Table 5.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 615$, most important social group $n = 614$ and respect me for who I am $n = 562$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 2 | 1 | 7 | 13 | 77 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 11 | 9 | 19 | 27 | 35 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 2 | 2 | 23 | 31 | 42 |

The number of people in the club known by name (Table 5.12) will depend on how many people there are in the club, as well as how important the club is as a source of social relationships. One could analyse this response by the number of people in the club: one would expect the bigger the club, the fewer the proportion of members were known by name.

The large number of members who are proud to be part of the club (Table 5.13) may reflect the self-selected sample: those most committed to the club being most likely to respond to a request to complete the survey. For these the club will be providing an important social function. The response to the question ‘other people from the club respect me for who I am’ would need to be compared to the same question asked about the home or work environment, to see how important the club is in this respect.

In considering the role of sports clubs in contributing to social integration one has to understand a balance in a mutual aid organisation of expressing ‘bonding’ social capital; that is, links between people who are similar in interests and demographically; and ‘bridging’ social; which would involve recruiting members and volunteers who are ‘different’ in these respects (Nichols et al. 2013).

5.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

Most respondents agree with both statements presented in Table 5.14. The response to the first statement depends on what the respondent defines as important. This is expected as clubs have a predominantly egalitarian ethos and do not adopt a rational systems approach to management, which involves a management hierarchy (Nichols 2017; Schulz et al. 2011). As in other responses to the club survey, we need to bear in mind these are being made by members who have the most involvement in the club.

Figure 5.9 appears to show a large proportion of members attending the last general meeting (Fig. 5.9). Analysis across the total sample of clubs in the study shows that club size has a relationship to member participation in the democratic process: participation is highest in the smaller clubs (Ibsen et al. 2019).

As in Table 5.11, participation in social events, the participation in club meetings will depend on how often meetings are held. Twenty percent have attended such a meeting in the last month (Table 5.15). The other two questions are aiming to find out how much people feel they can take an active part in club management. If a club member in England was asked about sharing views with other club members, it’s not clear how he or she would interpret the question. It is aimed at views about how the club is run, but the respondent may interpret this more generally; we do not know.

Again, this response (see Fig. 5.10) will reflect not only the member’s feeling that they can and should be actively involved in the club management but also the number of opportunities to do this. Forty-one percent have done this in the last 3 months.

Of those that have responded, 48% strongly agree they understand how the club functions (Fig. 5.11); however it is not clear exactly how they interpreted this question. Further research could ask questions that are more precise, for example, ‘I understand the procedures for electing members of the club committee within the club constitution’.

Table 5.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 438$ and delegate decision-making $n = 429$)

| | Don’t agree at all (%) | Don’t agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 1 | 8 | 8 | 59 | 24 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 5 | 18 | 15 | 52 | 10 |

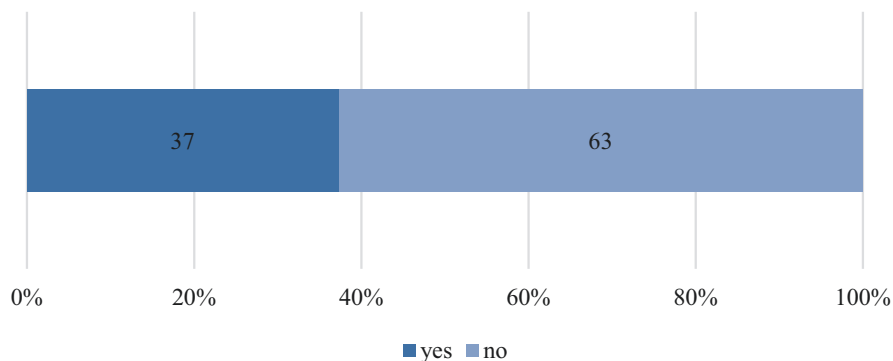


Fig. 5.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, *n* = 640)

Table 5.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings *n* = 556, speak my mind to key persons *n* = 537 and share my view with other members *n* = 563)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 31 | 26 | 9 | 13 | 15 | 5 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 17 | 14 | 9 | 15 | 17 | 28 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 9 | 7 | 7 | 15 | 24 | 38 |

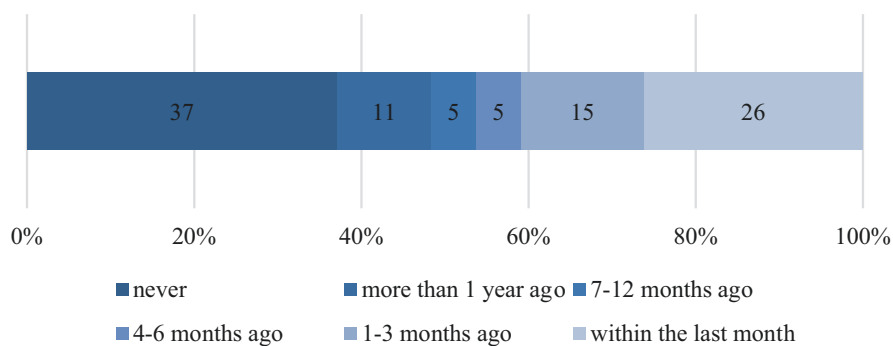


Fig. 5.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, *n* = 634)

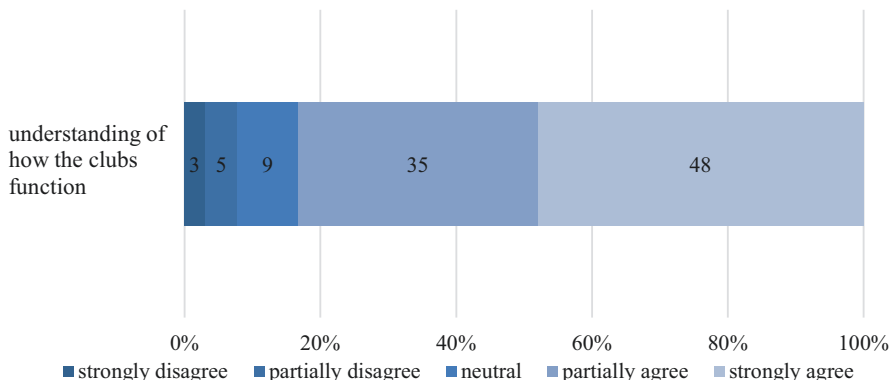


Fig. 5.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 603$)

5.6 Voluntary Work

Previous, and subsequent, research in England has studied the methods used to recruit volunteers, the number of volunteers in clubs, their roles, the time they contribute and the challenges they face (see Nichols 2017, for a summary).

Responses to the second and fourth statement in Table 5.16 suggest the club is viewed as a mutual aid organisation, with a moral obligation for members to volunteer and a willingness to allow them to do this. This contrasts to a programme management approach, in which volunteers are only accepted if they can meet predefined roles (Nichols et al. 2019). Only 9% of clubs had a paid manager; although if English clubs are typical, the most significant paid roles are coaches and officials. Therefore, this will affect responses to the first statement; 'our club should be run exclusively by volunteers'.

Table 5.17 shows clubs' reliance on volunteers. It would be interesting to estimate the number of volunteers as a proportion of club membership. This survey found that in England this was just under 20%. This is similar to the most recent survey of volunteering in sports clubs (Barrett et al. 2018) which; from a sample of 425 clubs; found an average of 100 adult participants; 77 junior participants; 44 non-playing members and 24 volunteers. The ratio of volunteers to members is likely to be higher if the club has a junior section and may also vary with the size of the club.

These findings (Fig. 5.12) broadly reflect other surveys in England, although board level is normally subdivided. The most recent survey of volunteers in English clubs (Barrett et al. 2018) found the most significant roles in clubs to be treasurer, 82% of clubs; chairperson, 82%; coach, 81% and secretary, 77%.

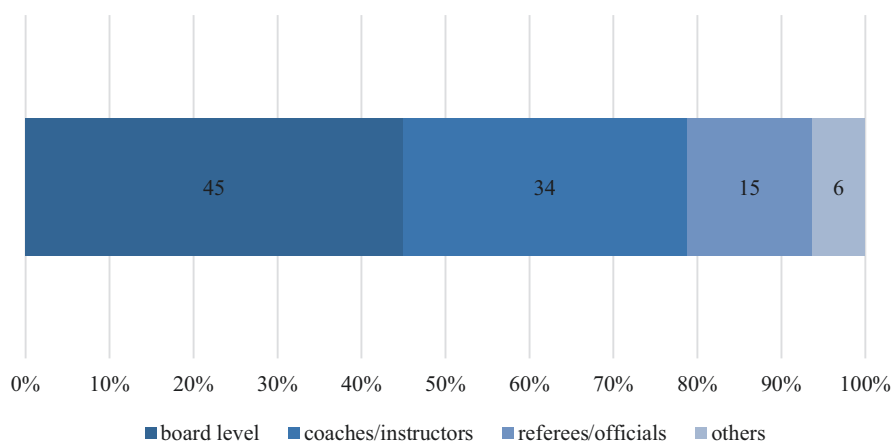
Adding up the big and very big problems (Table 5.18) suggests 20% of clubs are experiencing these for the different volunteer functions. A similar perception of problems with recruitment has been found since 2005 (Nichols et al. 2005). However, to what extent are these problems perceptual, real or getting worse? Pressures towards episodic volunteering – in small, time-defined blocks – and the

Table 5.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 449$, members as customers $n = 440$, demonstrating passion $n = 448$ and all members can be volunteers $n = 449$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 12 | 19 | 15 | 28 | 26 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 46 | 36 | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 3 | 8 | 13 | 53 | 25 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 1 | 4 | 3 | 43 | 49 |

Table 5.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 462$ and no fixed position(s) $n = 556$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 (%) | 6–10 (%) | 11–20 (%) | 21–50 (%) | More than 50 (%) |
|--|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 11 | 17 | 29 | 32 | 11 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 63 | 10 | 14 | 9 | 5 |

**Fig. 5.12** Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 462$)

impact on increasing inequality, which is associated with lower levels of volunteering, suggest it may be becoming harder to recruit volunteers for the core roles (Nichols 2017).

Table 5.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 432$, coaches/instructors $n = 429$ and referees/officials $n = 415$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 27 | 29 | 24 | 15 | 5 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 33 | 28 | 19 | 14 | 6 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 31 | 28 | 19 | 12 | 9 |

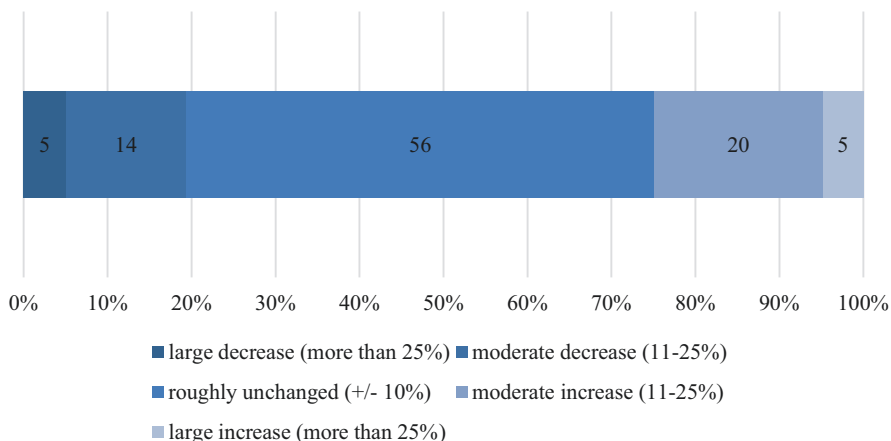


Fig. 5.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 438$)

In contrast to Table 5.18, reporting problems in recruitment, Fig. 5.13 suggests more clubs are increasing volunteers than decreasing them. Further analysis shows that in the English club sample, bigger clubs are more likely to be increasing volunteers and smaller clubs losing them. There is the same relationship between club size and membership; the bigger clubs are getting bigger. This relationship between size and membership is common to Germany, Belgium (Flanders), the Netherlands and Denmark.

Previous research has consistently found clubs reporting problems in recruitment of volunteers, for example, Nichols et al. (2005), although one has to be careful to distinguish this from an attitude of what Pearce (1993) called “martyred leadership”. The most recent survey of clubs in England focussed on volunteers and was able to relate vacancy rates for specific roles to how important the club felt the role was. For example, the roles felt to be most necessary, by over 80% of all clubs, were

Table 5.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 457$, social gatherings $n = 457$, recruit through current network $n = 457$, pay for training $n = 457$, inform members $n = 457$, inform parents $n = 457$, benefits in kind $n = 457$, recruitment outside $n = 457$, management $n = 457$, written strategy $n = 457$ and club does not do anything in particular $n = 542$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 65 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 43 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 72 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 54 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 25 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 23 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 29 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 23 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 23 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 18 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 9 |

chair, treasurer and coach. However, 7%, 11% and 16% of clubs, respectively, had vacancies for these roles (Barrett et al. 2018).

As one would expect, the main source of recruitment is current volunteers and members. The four case study clubs from England in the SIVCSE project (Nichols and James 2017) showed that successful clubs, in terms of volunteer recruitment, built an expectation of volunteering into membership through the initial contacts with new members. This finding was replicated in the further study of volunteers in English clubs, cited above (Barrett et al. 2018). This is reflected in the 25% of clubs, above, building volunteering in as an expectation of membership (Table 5.19).

Research in England (Shibli and Barrett 2017) has shown that smaller clubs are less likely to have people named to do specialist roles, and it is more likely that one person will cover a set of roles – if they are covered at all. The hardest roles to recruit for are chair, treasurer, secretary and coach. These all need a heavy commitment. The first three of these are open roles, where, to a degree, the work can be done when the post holder can do it. However, coaching requires a regular commitment. The almost complete reliance on volunteers reflects a historical tradition. The lack of financial rewards for volunteering, unlike some other European countries, reflects a socially constructed definition of a volunteer. This was discussed above, in the historical development of the idea of volunteering as philanthropic and contrasting with paid work (Taylor 2005).

Volunteer management reflects a balance between programme management in which roles are defined in relation to the club aims, people recruited to fill them, and membership management in which roles match the abilities and aptitudes of the volunteers. Programme management prevails in large complex events, such as the

Table 5.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 516$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of members | 8 | 10 | 19 | 16 | 8 | 16 | 18 | 4 |

Table 5.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 315$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 32 | 24 | 21 | 18 | 6 |

Olympic Games (Holmes et al. 2018). Sport England's advice to clubs is to analyse the roles required, but it also acknowledges one has to adapt to what volunteers are willing and able to offer.

Table 5.20 shows that for 38% of respondents volunteering occurs once a week or more. This may well be an underestimate as research has found that respondents tend to under-report acts of volunteering.

Table 5.21 appears to show an uneven distribution of volunteer work, with a few dedicated volunteers contributing the most hours. This is consistent with previous work in England, showing that 20% of the volunteers do approximately 80% of the work (Nichols 2005). These volunteers are the hardest to replace.

5.7 Conclusion

Community sports clubs in England provide a set of social functions. The social rewards of membership are important: Table 5.10 shows the importance of companionship and conviviality, which is more important than sporting success. The clubs provide an opportunity to play sports, which as a physical activity will have health benefits (see Table 5.6). However, if gaining health benefits were members' overriding aim, they would probably join a private gym or participate as individuals in activities such as running or cycling. We have noted a trend towards individual participation in these activities (Harris et al. 2017). The contribution of clubs towards social integration is not clear from these results. Section 5.3 suggests we need a more precise picture of the distribution of demographic groups by club, rather than across the whole sample. However, Fig. 5.2 shows the proportion of clubs with special initiatives for different groups. Whilst the largest number of these

is aimed at women, overall, women are significantly underrepresented in club membership, and this is common across Europe. We have illustrated special initiatives by examples from case study clubs (see Nichols and James 2017; Piątkowska et al. 2017), and this detail is useful in understanding them. The egalitarian ethos of clubs means they are likely to involve members in decision-making, and if members see them as a mutual aid organisation, they will feel an obligation to take part in this. As Sect. 5.4 discusses, the extent to which members take part in this depends on the opportunities offered and their motivation to do so. The research in the SIVSCE project does not necessarily imply a spillover effect from participation in clubs to participation in the broad political context; but this is another question. In England sports-related activity is one of the most significant areas for formal volunteering (Nichols 2017). It is interesting to consider the role of sports clubs in offering experience of and developing a commitment to volunteering. Again, is there an overspill to volunteering in society in general, or is volunteering restricted to a club or sport in general?

In the introduction, we noted that the development of clubs, NGBs and government policy in England can be understood with reference to historical influences going back to the codification of organised sports. The English model of sports organisation was exported to varying degrees to other European countries, as was the sport of football in particular. English government policy can be related to a balance between state intervention and market forces. In 1975 a White Paper on sports and recreation, under the Labour government, stated that recreation should be part of the general fabric of social services, but this was never followed by legislation requiring provision by local government (Veal 2010). From the Conservative government of 1979, state intervention has been generally reduced. As well as history and the changing political ideologies, a more recent influence has been the increasing level of inequality, which across Europe is associated with less time volunteering, less time spent in leisure and less sports participation (Veal and Nichols 2017). These broader contextual factors, of history, state policy and wealth distribution, help us understand differences between the ten countries in the SIVSCE project.

In England there appears to be a reduction in the number of clubs and a trend towards individual sports participation or in an informal context. A previous comparison of estimates of club numbers reported a decline from 106,423 in 2002 to 85,000 in 2009 (Nichols 2017). This decline is consistent with the 2017 estimate, which suggests a further reduction. The accuracy of these figures depends on how NGBs record club numbers; however a reduction in the number of clubs is consistent with trends away from sports participation in a formal context and towards informal participation (Harris et al. 2017). This is reflected in the growth of sports and fitness activities such as road running, recreational cycling and going to a gym. These activities do not require another person or team of people to co-produce the opportunity. Their growth in popularity is explained by the fragmentation of available leisure time, which conversely means it is harder to coordinate two teams of players being in the same place and time, as required in traditional team sports such as cricket and football. Apart from a change in the distribution of time available to play sports in, another explanation for this trend is the prevalence of a post-modern

condition, in which collective identity is replaced by individualism, exacerbated by a concern with “body maintenance and its surface representation” (Coalter 1999, p. 29). Structural determinants of class and gender are replaced by a “more fluid identity politics” (Spracklen 2011, p. 196). Further, the trend away from collective participation can be understood as reflecting a decline in social capital, described by Putnam (2000, p. 19) as “connections among individuals, social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them”. An interesting question is if these trends away from club participation are replicated across Europe? An implication of a trend away from participation in clubs within the NGB structure is that it is more difficult for government policy to influence participation or for clubs to be a vehicle for policies, such as increasing social inclusion.

Overall, the major strength of the SIVSCE project was the asking of comparable questions across clubs and club members in ten different countries. This has allowed comparisons to be made in a further chapter. This is also the only research that has managed to combine results at the level of the club and the members. Thus, for example, one can analyse which club characteristics are associated with volunteer satisfaction or member participation in club management. The very large data sets of clubs and members have allowed for inductive analysis of relationships between variables, within and between levels, which has been reported elsewhere (e.g. Ibsen et al. 2019).

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Chapter 6

Germany: Sports Clubs as Important Players of Civil Society



Svenja Feiler and Christoph Breuer

Abstract In Germany, about 90,000 sports clubs exist which allow a wide range of different population groups taking part in affordable sports offers. As such, German sports clubs can be regarded as the foundation for various sports-related areas, including mass sports and recreational sports, health sports, and competitive as well as elite sports. By providing both sports offers and nonsports offers (e.g. social gatherings) to their members, clubs fulfil important societal functions. The results of the underlying comparative European study, which took into account sports clubs as well as their members and volunteers, underpin these functions. The results of both the club survey and the member survey in Germany show that sports clubs play a vital role for the welfare of society because clubs are active in various societal areas which are on the political agenda and therefore play an important role in German sports policy. These areas include among others health promotion, social integration, social cohesion, education, democratic participation, and voluntary work. In their role as important players for the welfare of society, clubs can receive direct public support in the form of subsidies as well as indirect support such as the free or cheap usage of public sports facilities.

6.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

Germany is a Federal Republic with 16 states, numerous communities, and a total population of about 82.9 million inhabitants (Destatis 2019). The sport system in Germany is, similar to the political structure of the country, divided in organisations on three levels: the national level, the state level, and the community level. Almost 90,000 sports clubs (Deutscher Olympischer Sportbund [DOSB] 2018) are located at the basis of the sports system and are thereby the main provider for mass sports in Germany.

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Over the past decades, programmes and activities of sports clubs in Germany have changed due to various external influences. The traditional focus on competitive and elite sports has partly been replaced or supplemented by focusing on programmes for specific population groups, health sports, and collaborations (Breuer and Feiler 2017d; Nagel et al. 2015). Thereby, programmes offered by sports clubs are crucial for educational purposes, youth development, social matters, crime prevention, health, and the integration of different populations groups, e.g. migrants and disabled people, which brings sports clubs on the political agenda as policy implementers. In their role as mass sports providers and social integrative actors, clubs largely contribute to public welfare (Rittner and Breuer 2004), which is in turn valued by public institutions through direct subsidies, e.g. public funding for special projects addressing different population groups, health sports programmes, elite sports, and collaborations (Feiler et al. 2018b), and indirect support, like the free or cheap usage of public sports infrastructure (Heinemann 2005). Regarding the latter, almost two-thirds of the sports clubs in Germany use public sports facilities. From these clubs, about 50% have to pay a usage fee, which corresponds to about one-third of all German sports clubs. The other way round this means that the usage of public sports facilities is free for almost half of the clubs using them (Breuer and Feiler 2019). This type of indirect public support mainly takes place at the community level, since the provision of sports facilities is a core task of municipalities in Germany (Deutscher Bundestag 2014).

The integrative potential of sports clubs in Germany is further underpinned by the high level of organisation of club sports in Germany. The 90,000 sports clubs count about 27.4 million memberships, resulting in almost every third German inhabitant being a member of a sports club (DOSB 2018). A representation of such high population shares cannot be found in any other organisational form of the third sector in Germany, which stresses the integrative character of sports clubs for German society (Rittner and Breuer 2004) and legitimises public support.

Apart from the sports clubs, which are located at the basis of the sports system, also community sports confederations are situated on the local level. On the federal state level, 16 federal state sports confederations are responsible for the interests of local sports confederations and sports clubs. The 16 federal state sports confederations have set up diverse policies related to educational purposes, health promotion, and social integration. However, due to the federal structure of the country, each federal state sports confederation can set up its own policies and programmes. On the national level, the German Olympic Sports Confederation (DOSB) is the umbrella organisation for organised sports in Germany.

Overall, German sports policy is based on three main principles: autonomy of sports, subsidiarity of sports funding, and cooperative partnership between public institutions and sports organisations (Bundesministerium des Innern [BMI] 2019a). The history of Germany helps to understand the roles of governmental and non-governmental actors in the area of sports in general and for sports clubs in particular. The centralisation of sports in the Third Reich most likely led to Germany having no own ministry of sports today since there was a strong post-war concern to

re-establish sports as part of civil society (Bergsgard et al. 2007; Heinemann 1996). Consequently, the role of the national government is limited in terms of supporting grass roots sports in Germany. Instead, federal states and municipalities develop policies autonomously and have the greatest influence on sports in their respective region. The decentralisation of power is thereby a characteristic which results from Germany's history.

Consequently, different governmental levels fund different areas of sports. The national level is responsible for areas of national interest. Thus, funding from this level is only given to elite sports. The national sports budget amounted to about EUR 168.3 million in 2016 (BMI 2019b). On the other side, direct funds to sports clubs are mainly distributed from the community level and partly also from the federal state level. In this regard, the federal state level mainly supports competitive sports, e.g. clubs with squad athletes (Haring 2010). However, most of the direct public subsidies for sports clubs which are bound to various regulations that mainly reflect policy goals (for an overview of regulations, see Feiler et al. 2018b) come from communities and municipalities, where the funding of sports and particularly sports clubs is regulated by local sports policies (Langer 2006). Since Germany has numerous communities, sports policies on the local level can be diverse. Nevertheless, the core areas of sports policies across Germany and its communities have common underlying principles (Hockenjos 1995) and are related to similar areas like health promotion, social integration, youth sports development, core sports matters (e.g. sports equipment), facility funding, as well as collaborations with other organisations (e.g. schools, other sports clubs, health insurance). For example, if a sports club sets up programmes for women or people with disabilities, the amount of public subsidies from the federal state level increases (Feiler et al. 2018b). Thus, clubs which address policy goals such as the integration of disabled people by setting up certain sports activities are in a good position to receive public support, provided that the clubs applied for subsidies.

Apart from funding which is related to the above named activities or projects, sports clubs in Germany can receive basic funding, which is related to the number of club members, youth members, and qualified coaches (cf. Feiler et al. 2018b). Nevertheless, funding on all governmental levels depends on the available yearly budget and is not a legal obligation (Voigt 2006).

Overall, sports clubs in Germany are seen by public institutions as valuable actors in implementing policy goals such as health promotion, social integration, and youth development. Moreover, recent pressing societal issues, like, for example, the refugee wave coming to Germany in 2015, are addressed by sports clubs through different programmes and projects. In such cases, sports clubs can ask for public support from different governmental levels. Oftentimes, support will also be given to clubs through subsidies from sports confederations, either on the community or federal state level, which pass on public money to sports clubs (Haring 2010).

6.2 Structure and Context

Due to the large number of sports clubs in Germany, clubs are diverse with regard to different structural factors. One of these factors is club size, which is measured based on membership numbers. On average, the size of sports clubs in Germany in 2015 amounted to 365 members, which was comparable to sports clubs in Norway and Denmark (Breuer et al. 2017). However, club size of German sports clubs ranges from very small to very large clubs, with about one-third of clubs having between 101 and 300 members and about one-fifth being rather small clubs with less than 50 members. In contrast, about 7% of clubs have more than 1,000 members (see Fig. 6.1). Such large sports clubs are rather uncommon in many other European countries. In Germany, large sports clubs with more than 1,000 members and especially with more than 2,500 members are particularly found in large cities with more than 500,000 inhabitants (Breuer and Feiler 2017b).

Club size is a critical factor within the organisational capacity of voluntary sports clubs, not only in Germany (cf. Doherty et al. 2014; Wicker et al. 2014), and is related to the social functions of sports clubs, which are analysed in this book. For example, club size has been found, among others, to have a significant impact on the participation of members in organisational democracy, with participation being higher in smaller sports clubs (Ibsen et al. 2019). On the other hand, different studies found no significant effect of club size on volunteering (Schlesinger and Nagel 2013) and the decision to stop volunteering (Schlesinger and Nagel 2018). Moreover, the amount of time spent for volunteering has been found to decrease with increases in club size (Swierzy et al. 2018). Furthermore, clubs that have put a focus on offering health sports offers have been found to be rather larger clubs (Breuer et al.

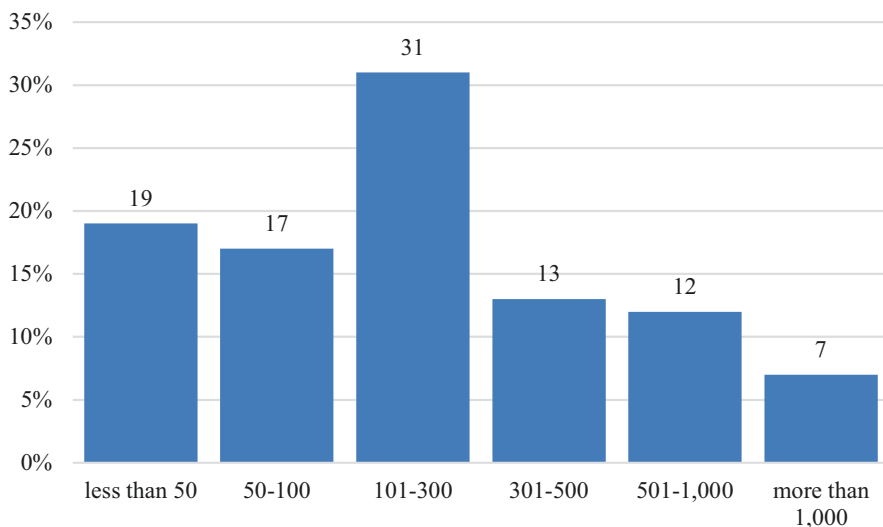


Fig. 6.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 20,513$)

2013b). Thus, in terms of volunteering and democracy, smaller sports clubs seem to be better positioned, while health sports are more frequently offered in large sports clubs.

Looking at the development of club size of German sports clubs over the last 5 years, about half of the clubs state that membership numbers have remained more or less stable. On the other hand, about one quarter of clubs both report to have experienced either decreases or increases in membership numbers, with 6% of the clubs in Germany stating to have experienced a large increase in members, while 5% state membership numbers have largely decreased since 2010 (see Fig. 6.2).

Sports clubs in Germany, as in other European countries, face different organisational problems. Since clubs would not exist without members, the recruitment and retention of club members is a problem that has been observed for many years in Germany, with a tendency of clubs reporting increases in the size of this problem (Breuer and Feiler 2017e). In 2015, about 7% of the sports clubs in Germany reported to have a very big problem in terms of the recruitment and retention of members, and almost one-fifth of the clubs rated the problem as big. On the other side, about 17% of clubs had no problem with retaining or recruiting members (see Table 6.1). Research found that the organisational capacity of sports clubs is related to organisational problems, for example, sports clubs which have a strategic policy and a higher share of women on the board reported smaller problems with recruiting and retaining members, while traditional sports clubs and clubs in larger communities reported larger problems (Wicker and Breuer 2013).

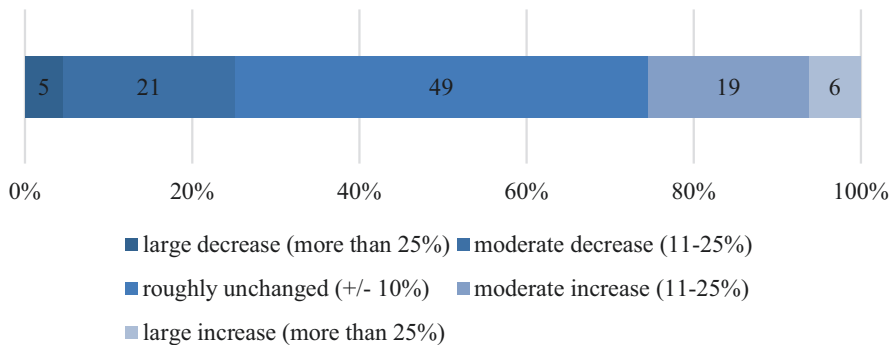


Fig. 6.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, n = 16,665)

Table 6.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, n = 15,087)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 17 | 26 | 31 | 19 | 7 |

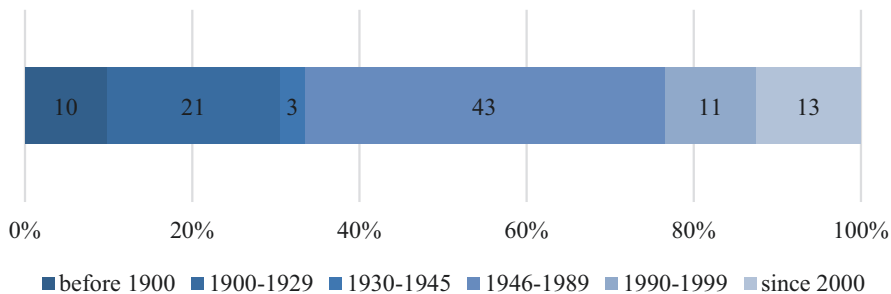


Fig. 6.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 16,735$)

Apart from club size, another characteristic of sports clubs is their age, respectively, their foundation year. Sports clubs in Germany have a long history and tradition. Every tenth German sports club has been founded before 1900, with a few clubs actually dating back to the thirteenth century (mainly traditional shooting clubs). Moreover, every fifth sports club was founded between 1900 and 1929. Not surprisingly, only few clubs were set up during the period of 1930 and 1945, with the World War II falling into this time. However, with the end of World War II, new sports clubs were founded, which resulted in more than 40% of today's existing sports clubs having foundation years between 1946 and 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell. In the years after the German reunification, more than one-tenth of the today existing sports clubs were founded, and a similar share of clubs (13%) stems from the period since the year 2000 (see Fig. 6.3).

A further characterising factor of sports clubs is the type in terms of offering sports. It is distinguished between sports clubs that offer only one single type of sport, e.g. swimming, and sports clubs that offer a variety of different sports, e.g. tennis, hockey, and judo. In Germany, the majority of sports clubs are single sport clubs, while 42% of the clubs offer different types of sports and are thereby characterised as multisport clubs (see Fig. 6.4). In Germany, single sport clubs are rather smaller clubs, while multisport clubs tend to have larger numbers of members (Breuer and Feiler 2017b). An explanation for the comparably high prevalence of multisport clubs in Germany could be that traditional gymnastic clubs have expanded over time and integrated new sports offers, e.g. ball sports, athletics, and swimming (Langenfeld 1986). Moreover, some clubs might have merged with other clubs from the same region.

As mentioned above, the variety of sports clubs in Germany in terms of size is large. In addition to the size and the type of clubs, sports clubs particularly differ according to the actual sports they offer. Sports clubs in Germany offer numerous different sports, from "A" like "Aerobic" to "Z" like "Zumba". The top ten offered sports from clubs in Germany in 2015 are presented in Table 6.2.

Almost one-third of all sports clubs in Germany state to offer health sports and football. With regard to football, this is not surprising since Germany is home to about 25,000 football clubs and almost 7.1 million memberships (DOSB 2018) which makes football the most popular sport in Germany, both on the grassroots as

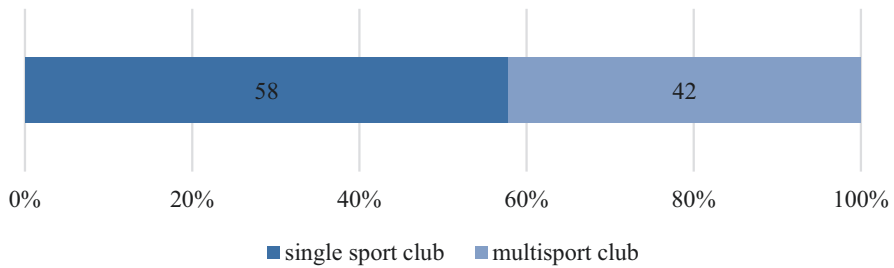


Fig. 6.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 17,464$)

Table 6.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 17,387$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|------------------------|----|
| 1 | Health sports | 30 |
| 2 | Football | 30 |
| 3 | Gymnastics | 23 |
| 4 | Apparatus gymnastics | 20 |
| 5 | Table tennis | 17 |
| 6 | Volleyball | 16 |
| 7 | Fitness/aerobics | 15 |
| 8 | Tennis | 14 |
| 9 | Track and field | 12 |
| 10 | Walking/Nordic walking | 11 |

well as on the professional level. In terms of health sports, an increasing number of sports clubs engages in this area. This could be a reaction of clubs to demographic changes in the German population, with the share of the elderly in the German population becoming larger (Destatis 2015), and the demand for health-enhancing sports offers thereby increasing.

Apart from football and health sports, about one-fourth of German sports clubs offer gymnastics, which also incorporates health-enhancing aspects. Gymnastics has a long tradition in the history of German sports clubs, with the establishment of the so-called Turnvereine (meaning gymnastics clubs) dating back to the nineteenth century (Heinemann and Horch 1981). Thus, the popularity of gymnastics in the organisational setting of sports clubs has remained until today. Moreover, one out of five German sports clubs provides the opportunity to practise apparatus gymnastics. Further frequently offered sports are table tennis and volleyball, which seem to be more popular in Germany than in other European countries (Breuer et al. 2017). But also fitness and aerobics, tennis, track and field, as well as walking and Nordic walking are offered by more than every tenth German sports club.

To provide the opportunity of offering all the different types of sports, an adequate sports infrastructure is necessary. In this regard, almost half of the sports clubs in Germany are in possession of own sports facilities (see Table 6.3). Compared to other European countries, the share of sports clubs having their own facilities is

Table 6.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees, and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 15,293$, public facilities $n = 15,309$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 9,846$, and share of revenues $n = 7,641$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 49 | 65 | 51 | 9 |

Table 6.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 14,891$, financial situation $n = 15,114$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 48 | 21 | 13 | 10 | 8 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 41 | 26 | 20 | 8 | 4 |

only higher in the Netherlands (Breuer et al. 2017). In addition to own sports facilities, about two-thirds of the sports clubs in Germany also use public sports facilities. From those clubs that use public sports facilities, about half of them have to pay a usage fee, meaning conversely that for half of Germany's sports clubs that make use of public sports infrastructure this usage is for free (see Table 6.3). The provision of public sports infrastructure for clubs for free or only for a low usage fee is part of the German sports policy and public funding regulations (Heinemann 2005) and is justified with the positive societal effects that sports clubs produce.

Related to public funding, it is evident that public subsidies are an important income source for German sports clubs. Apart from membership fees and donations, particularly public subsidies from the community or municipality are relevant to sports clubs: more than half of the German sports clubs receive subsidies from the local level (Feiler et al. 2018b). Overall, the share of direct public subsidies from different governmental levels makes up about 9% of all revenue the clubs receive (see Table 6.3).

As described above, German sports clubs use different kinds of sports facilities. The availability of sports facilities is compared to other problems that German sports clubs are facing, rather a moderate problem. While 8% of clubs perceive a very big problem due to the availability of sports facilities, almost half of the clubs see no problem in this regard (see Table 6.4). However, it is evident that structural factors play an important role in terms of the perceived size of the problem. Based on data from the *German Sport Development Report* (Breuer et al. 2013a), it was found that clubs which are situated in smaller communities perceive fewer problems due to the availability of sports facilities, while clubs in larger communities with more than 500,000 inhabitants perceive the problem to be larger. A similar effect

was observed for club size, with larger clubs seeing larger problems (Breuer et al. 2013a). The latter is likely to be the case since larger clubs offer more sports opportunities and therefore are in need of more sports facilities. Another interesting finding is that clubs that possess their own facilities have smaller problems due to the availability of sports facilities, while clubs that use public sports facilities have larger problems (Breuer et al. 2013a). An explanation is that clubs, which are using public sports facilities, have to share such facilities with other clubs and schools, which restricts their available usage time, while clubs that have their own facilities do not have to share them with others. Overall, the availability of an adequate sports infrastructure is vital for sports clubs in fulfilling their role as sports providers for a wide range of different population groups.

Similar to the problem of the availability of sports facilities, problems related to the financial situation of the club are averagely smaller in Germany than in most other European countries (Breuer et al. 2017). Nevertheless, 12% of the sports clubs in Germany perceive a big or very big problem due to the financial situation of the club (see Table 6.4). However, it needs to be considered that particularly sport-specific differences play an important role with regard to the perceived financial problem. For example, football clubs rate this problem averagely higher than clubs without football offers (Breuer and Feiler 2017c). An explanation is that football clubs, even in the low leagues, have large expenses for player payments, which are very unusual in other sports in Germany.

An important resource for sports clubs are the people that run the club, either on a voluntary (see Sect. 6.6) or paid basis. In terms of paid employees, it is found that almost half of the German sports clubs actually employ paid staff (see Table 6.5). Taking into account that one of the key characteristics of non-profit sports clubs is the running of clubs mainly by volunteers (Horch 1994), this figure might appear high. However, it needs to be considered that this number includes paid staff in four different areas: administration and management, sports and training, sports and competition, as well as other tasks. The largest share of paid employees in German sports clubs (about two-thirds of all paid staff) works in the area of sports and training, i.e. in the roles of coaches and instructors. Additionally, about one-fifth fulfil other tasks in the clubs, e.g. in the areas of facility management or maintenance work. Every tenth paid employee works in the management and administration of sports clubs, and only about 4% fulfil tasks in the area of sports and competition, i.e. as referees (Breuer et al. 2017).

In addition to the described areas in which paid staff work in sports clubs in Germany, about 8% of the clubs also employ a paid manager, mostly on a part-time basis (see Table 6.5).

Table 6.5 Paid staff and paid manager(s) in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 14,817$, paid manager(s) $n = 14,502$)

| Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager(s) (%) |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 49 | 8 |

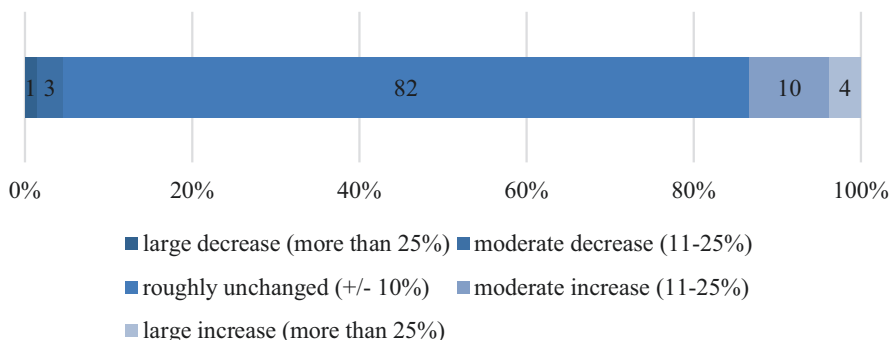


Fig. 6.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 10,030$)

Taking a look at the development of paid staff in sports clubs in Germany over the last 5 years, it becomes very clear that the number has remained unchanged in the majority of clubs (82%). However, about 14% of clubs report to have increased the number of paid staff, while only 4% of clubs rather employed less paid employees (see Fig. 6.5). Employing more paid staff might be a possibility to face the increasing bureaucracy in German sports clubs which volunteers are confronted with (Breuer and Feiler 2015).

6.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

As described in the previous section, about one-third of German sports clubs offer health sports. Apart from this measure, clubs were asked about their attitude towards health-enhancing sports offers. The results show that more than one quarter of the sports clubs in Germany agree or totally agree with the statement that the club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes. However, almost half of the clubs rather do not agree, and 25% are undecided. On the other hand, the majority of German sports clubs feels that their offered sports are suitable as health-enhancing physical activities (see Table 6.6).

Thus, despite the fact that more clubs do not have special health programmes than clubs having such offers, the large majority of sports clubs in Germany feels that their core sports offers are still valuable in terms of positive health effects. A reluctance to install special health sports offers, despite the fact that health promotion is a policy goal and can be subsidised, might have different reasons. First, clubs might not be willing to initiate such programmes if they are not in line with their club traditions and core club goals (cf. Garrett 2004). Second, clubs might not have the human or financial resources to offer health sports because such programmes call for certain prerequisites that need to be fulfilled (qualified coaches, sports equipment, etc.).

Table 6.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 15,208$, sports clubs disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 15,147$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 20 | 27 | 25 | 15 | 12 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 3 | 6 | 20 | 37 | 34 |

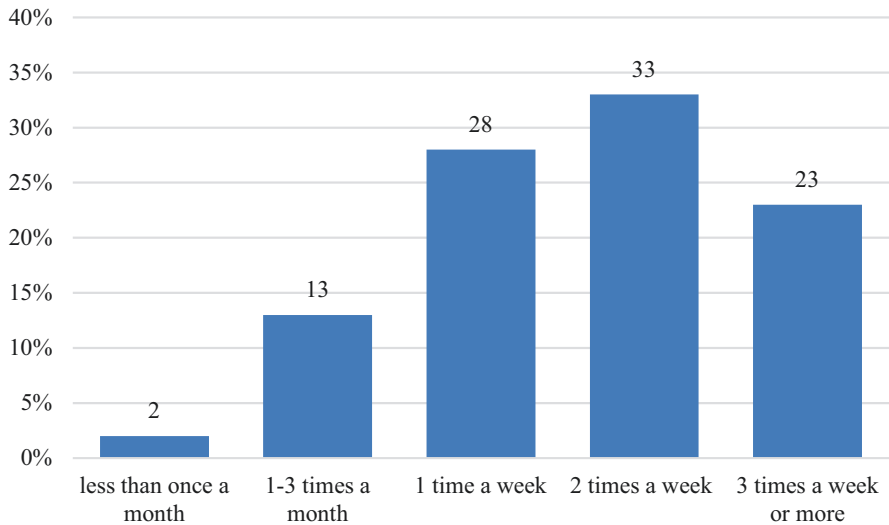


Fig. 6.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 1,900$)

Looking at the survey of sports clubs' members in Germany, the results show that about one-third of club members participate in club sports offers twice a week. Almost every fourth club member even takes part in club offers three times a week or more often and 28% state to participate once a week. Only a small share of club members participates on a monthly or less frequent basis (see Fig. 6.6). Thus, the majority of German sports club members are rather active regularly, which is a positive finding in terms of individual and collective health effects.

As shown above, more than half of the club members take part in club sports programmes twice or more times per week. Correspondingly, a similar share of members also takes part in sporting competitions, namely, 52% of the members (see Table 6.7).

Moreover, a quarter of all surveyed club members states not being active in competitions anymore, and 23% have never been active. Thus, although not taking part

Table 6.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 1,907$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 52 | 25 | 23 |

Table 6.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 15,313$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 15,063$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 8 | 12 | 23 | 35 | 24 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 1 | 7 | 30 | 44 | 17 |

in competitions, club members frequently take part in sports offers, showing that apart from competitive goals, members seem to follow other aims by taking part in club sports, e.g. social and health-enhancing goals. Thereby, sports clubs in Germany fulfil their role in being on the one hand the basis for talent development and elite sport promotion and on the other hand valuable actors for society by producing health effects through regular mass sports activities of the members.

6.4 Social Integration

Sports clubs in Germany differ largely from commercial sport providers due to their goals and philosophy. The main goal of sports clubs is to provide sports offers to their members. Due to relatively low membership fees (Breuer and Feiler 2017d, 2019), especially compared to other sports providers (Breuer et al. 2016), the formal entry barriers to sports clubs are generally low (although differences between different sports exist). This enables different population groups to participate in club sports offers. In this regard, about 60% of the sports clubs in Germany (totally) agree that their club tries to offer sports to many different population groups and that the club particularly strives to help socially vulnerable groups (e.g. migrants, low-income people) to become better integrated in the club (see Table 6.8). The aim of the majority of sports clubs in Germany to work also for social integration is obvious, has a long tradition, and can be related to the overall solidarity culture (Horch 1994) which has its historical background in the German Turnvereine (Nagel 2006).

However, the clubs' aim to work for social integration does not necessarily mean that different vulnerable population groups are automatically well represented in sports clubs. In the following, the representation of four population groups, namely,

Table 6.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 13,378$, people with migration background $n = 13,317$, elderly $n = 14,080$, women $n = 20,513$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 29 | 64 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| People with migration background | 22 | 54 | 17 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 7 | 25 | 33 | 23 | 10 | 3 |
| Women | 3 | 9 | 18 | 46 | 17 | 7 |

people with disabilities, people with a migration background, the elderly, as well as women in sports clubs is presented (see Table 6.9).

Almost one-third of sports clubs in Germany has no members with a disability, and in roughly two-thirds of the clubs, the share of disabled people among members lies between 1% and 10%. Considering that the population share of people with disabilities amounted to 9.3% in 2015 (Destatis 2017), people with disabilities seem to be underrepresented in sports clubs in Germany. However, compared to other European countries, the share of clubs with no disabled members is almost the lowest, with only England having proportionately fewer clubs with no disabled members (Breuer et al. 2017).

With regard to people with a migration background, the share of clubs with no such members amounts to 22%, and in more than half of the clubs in Germany, the share of members with a migration background is between 1% and 10%, while 17% of the clubs state that migrants make up between 11% and 25% of their members. On average, the population share of people with a migration background amounted to 21% in 2015, although large differences existed between the eastern federal states (former Eastern Germany – GDR) and the western part (Breuer and Feiler 2017a).

A different picture is evident for the following two population groups: women and elderly. Only small shares of clubs report to have no members from these two groups, while one-third of clubs reports member shares of the elderly between 11% and 25%, and almost a quarter of the clubs have member shares of people older than 64 between 26% and 50%. Pertaining to women, almost half of the clubs have a female share of members between 26% and 50%. Nevertheless, compared to the overall German population, women are still underrepresented in German sports clubs. This pattern is also found in sports clubs in many other European countries (Breuer et al. 2017).

To increase the share of members from the different population groups, various sports clubs in Germany have installed special initiatives. However, the shares of clubs with initiatives differ with regard to the different population groups. Pertaining to people with disabilities and people with a migration background, almost every fifth sports club has become active in setting up special measures for these two groups, while the shares of clubs with initiatives for the elderly and for women are higher: 38% of all sports clubs in Germany have set up special initiatives to increase sports participation of the elderly in sports clubs. Regarding women, 30% of the clubs have installed special initiatives. Thus, the two population groups which are to

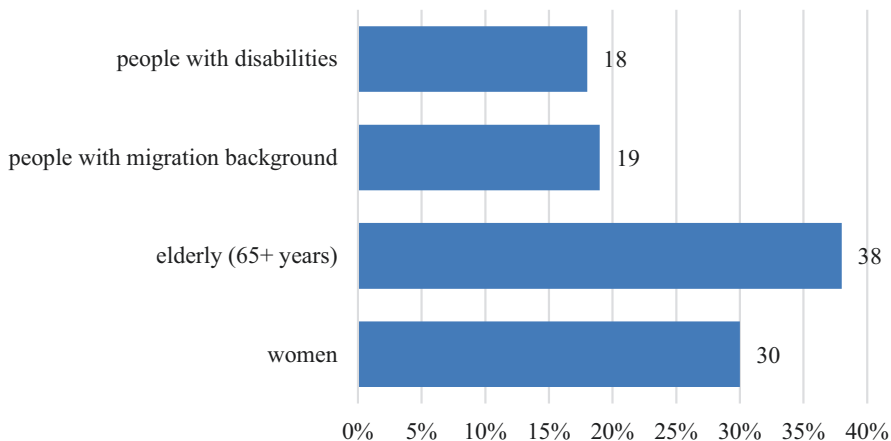


Fig. 6.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 12,766$, people with migration background $n = 12,750$, elderly $n = 13,146$, women $n = 12,290$)

Table 6.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 15,753$, competitive sports $n = 14,981$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 1 | 5 | 20 | 38 | 37 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 12 | 18 | 32 | 26 | 12 |

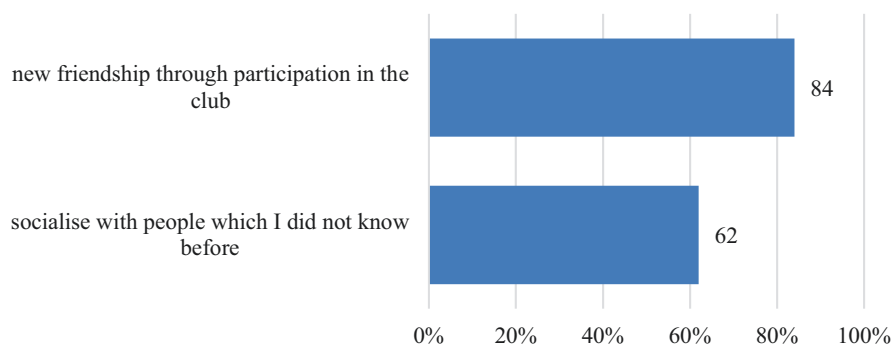
a larger extent underrepresented in sports clubs in Germany, namely, the disabled and migrants, are less considered with special initiatives than women and the elderly (see Fig. 6.7). Offering sports for people with disabilities usually calls for special equipment, facilities, and qualified coaches. Thus, a lack of these resources might prevent clubs from installing such offers.

Apart from special initiatives that aim to integrate different population groups in the clubs, the overall goal of social integration and fostering social aspects play a major role in sports clubs in Germany. This is due to their social orientation and the club goals that are based on the interests of their members. Apart from the key aim of offerings sports to their members, goals of sports clubs often focus on intangible benefits (Nagel 2006). Three quarters of the clubs in Germany (totally) agree to set high value on companionship and conviviality, while the share of clubs (totally) agreeing to set high value on sporting success and competition is with 38% comparably lower (see Table 6.10). Thus, the specific role of sports clubs for social integration, apart from traditional competitive motives, is underpinned.

The social orientation of sports clubs in Germany is well-received by their members, as the following numbers show: more than one-third of club members reports to stay behind after trainings, matches, or competitions to socialise and chat with other members at least once a week, and further 16% do this once every 2 weeks.

Table 6.11 Frequency of participation in the club's social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 1,967$, stay behind after trainings $n = 1,844$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|--|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club's social gatherings | 8 | 26 | 32 | 20 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches, or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 14 | 6 | 5 | 10 | 14 | 16 | 35 |

**Fig. 6.8** Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 1,882$, socialise with people $n = 1,858$)

On the other hand, 14% of the members report to never stay behind. Thus, this form of informal gathering is frequently used by the majority of members. Additionally, official social gatherings by the clubs are also well accepted by clubs members in Germany, although the frequency is lower than in the informal meetings (see Table 6.11). However, this might be due to the fact that official social gatherings probably do not take place every week but rather every month.

The importance of social aspects of sports clubs, apart from taking part in the sports offers, becomes further evident when looking at more results of the member survey: 84% of club members in Germany have made new friendships through the participation in the club, and 62% report to socialise with people they did not know before joining the sports clubs (see Fig. 6.8). Thus, new social relationships are formed based on the membership in sports clubs.

The importance of social relations among club members is further underlined by the fact that nearly no club members in Germany state that they do not know any other people from the club by name. In contrast, almost one-third of the club members know 21 to 50 members, and a further third knows more than 50 members by name (see Table 6.12).

Table 6.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 2,069$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 1 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 20 | 31 | 32 |

Table 6.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 1,848$, most important social group $n = 1,950$, respect me for who I am $n = 1,831$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 3 | 5 | 15 | 31 | 47 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 8 | 17 | 20 | 26 | 29 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 1 | 1 | 13 | 39 | 46 |

The strong relationship and emotional attachment of members to their sports club is well documented by the following numbers: more than three quarters of all club members in Germany (strongly) agree to be proud to belong to the club. Moreover, over half of the members also state that the club is one of the most important social groups they belong to, underpinning the great potential of sports clubs in terms of social cohesion. Apart from that, values like respect for other people are lived in sports clubs, which is proven by 85% of club members stating that other people from the club show respect for their own personality (see Table 6.13).

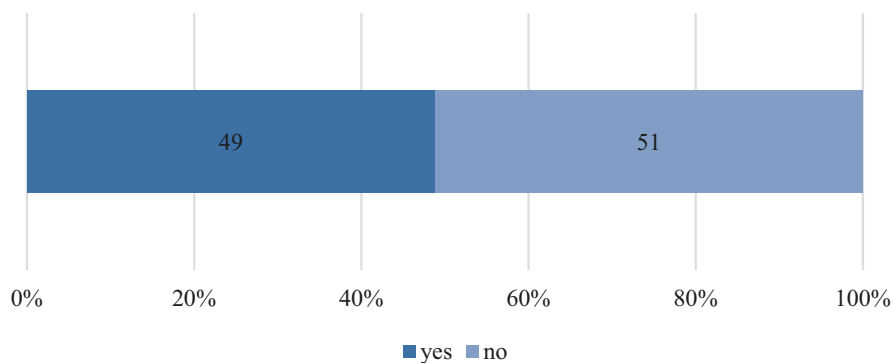
Overall, the results of both the club survey and the member survey in Germany underline the great social importance of sports clubs, and it becomes once more clear that sports clubs are a social phenomenon (Rittner and Breuer 2004). Club goals include, apart from offering sports programmes to their members, also intangible benefits for members, namely, the creation of social relationships. From the members view, club membership seems to be twofold, namely, goal-oriented in terms of participating in sports and value-oriented in terms of the appreciation for the social integrating atmosphere the clubs create (Klenk et al. 2017).

6.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

One of the key characteristics of voluntary organisations like sports clubs is their democratic structure. Clubs are communities of solidarity (Horch 1994), and members of sports clubs have the possibility to participate in decision-making since each member (usually aged 16 and older) has the right to vote in the yearly general

Table 6.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 15,291$, delegate decision-making $n = 15,063$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 1 | 4 | 23 | 42 | 30 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 18 | 20 | 28 | 23 | 11 |

**Fig. 6.9** Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 2,137$)

assembly. In this context, more than 70% of German sports clubs aim at involving members when making important decisions. This is not surprising since decision-making in sports clubs is based on democratic principles, meaning that members are eligible to vote annually in the general assembly. Moreover, about one-third of clubs delegate decision-making from the club board to committees. However, almost 40% rather do not delegate decision-making to lower club levels (see Table 6.14). This is most likely especially the case in smaller, single sport clubs where delegating is not necessary or useful.

As stated above, sports club members have the possibility to participate in decision-making processes, especially by taking part in the general assembly. According to the results of the member survey, almost half of the surveyed sports club members in Germany reported that they took part in the last general assembly (see Fig. 6.9). Although this result means that the other half of club members refrained from taking part in decision-making in the general assembly, the share of participants appears rather high. An explanation for the high share of members participating in the general assembly could be that rather engaged members took part in the member survey, whereas members that usually stay away from club meetings might have also stayed away from taking part in the survey. This assumption might be underpinned by results of a recent multi-level study that investigated democratic participation in voluntary sports clubs. The results revealed that members'

Table 6.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 1,933$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 1,725$, share my view with other members $n = 1,768$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 27 | 36 | 14 | 10 | 9 | 5 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 21 | 18 | 15 | 16 | 13 | 17 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 14 | 13 | 12 | 16 | 18 | 27 |

participation in association democracy is related to the overall activity of members in sports clubs, i.e. in voluntary work and social activities. Thus, members that are generally more involved in the club also take part more frequently in decision-making processes (Ibsen et al. 2019).

Apart from the yearly general assembly, sports club members have further possibilities of taking part in democratic processes, e.g. by participating in member or club meetings, by speaking out their opinion to responsible persons in the club, and by sharing their views with other members. In German sports clubs, members particularly talk with other members about their views several times within 1 month. This applies to 27% of the surveyed members. On the other side, a similar share of club members states to never participate in member or other club meetings, and every fifth club member also never speaks his/her mind to key persons in the club (see Table 6.15). Thus, German sports club members seem to prefer participating in rather informal meetings with other members than in more formal democratic structures where club officials are involved. It seems that talking to other members who are likely to be friends is easier for most members than giving their opinion to club officials. However, as described above, the general assembly as a formal meeting is visited by almost half of the surveyed members.

A slight reluctance to participate in decision-making processes of German sports club members is underlined by further results of the member survey: almost 40% of the club members report never having tried to participate in decision-making processes of their respective sports club. Another 12% of members state that it is over a year ago since their last attempt to influence decision-making in the club. On the other hand, every fifth sports club member has last attempted to take part in decision-making within the last month (see Fig. 6.10). Thus, there seem to be two extreme member groups, either never participating (39%) or frequently participating (36%).

Despite not being overly active in taking part in decision-making processes, the majority of German sports club members (about two-thirds) thinks that they understand how the club actually functions. On the other side, every tenth member does

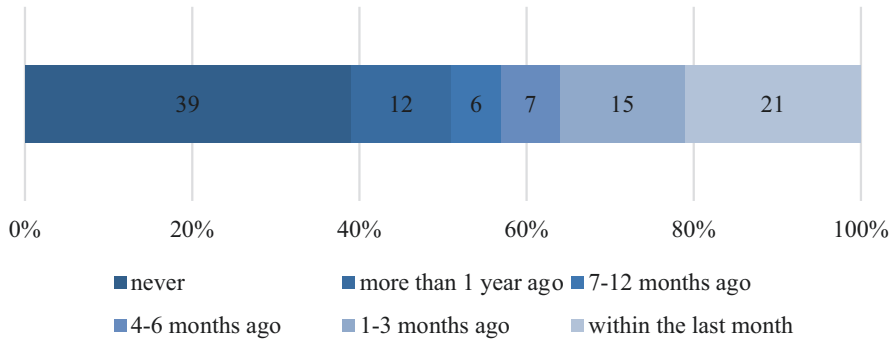


Fig. 6.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 2,084$)

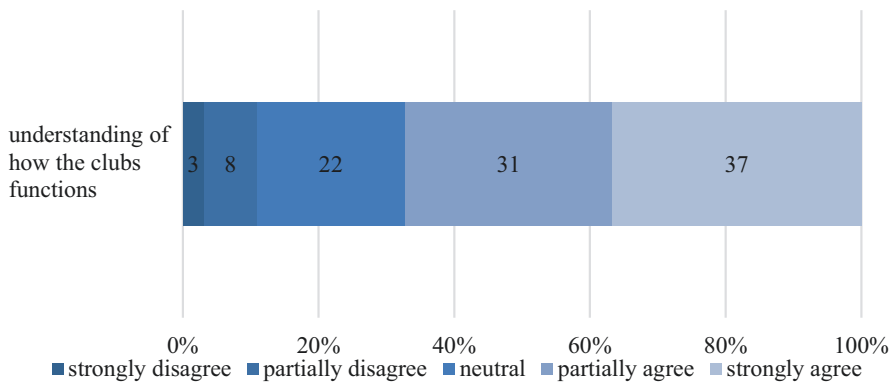


Fig. 6.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 1,926$)

not know how the club is run (see Fig. 6.11). It is likely that members which are not interested and do not care about the functioning of the club are mainly interested in making use of the sports club offers, i.e. they are rather goal-oriented than value-oriented.

Overall, the results show that democracy plays an important role in German sports clubs, which is not surprising since a democratic structure is one of the key constitutive features of sports clubs (Horch 1994). Nevertheless, not all club members seem to be interested in taking part in decision-making processes.

6.6 Voluntary Work

Voluntary work is a key resource for sports clubs. The importance of voluntary work for sports clubs is underlined by the clubs attitudes. About three quarters of the German sports clubs (totally) agree that their club should be run exclusively by

volunteers. Only 3% do not agree at all to this statement. Moreover, more than 90% of the sports clubs think that all members can do voluntary work, regardless of their qualification. Compared to other European countries, this attitude is stronger in German clubs (Breuer et al. 2017) and underpins that clubs could not exist without voluntary work and could not offer affordable club programmes. In line with this attitude is the refusal of three quarters of the German clubs towards the thinking that members are customers who cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work. This is likely to be due to the fact that sports clubs are member organisations where members receive mutual benefit from sharing common interests. These interests are reflected in the club goals. To achieve these club goals, financial and human resources are necessary. Particularly in cases of scarce financial resources, voluntary work can to a certain extent substitute money (Coates et al. 2014). However, not all clubs are of the opinion that their members demonstrate passion and energy for the necessary work: while 38% (totally) agree to this statement, almost one in five clubs rather does not agree (see Table 6.16). This dilemma is a typical free-rider problem (Anderson et al. 2004; Anheier 2014): all members benefit from voluntary work done by some of them and have thereby no incentive to contribute themselves.

Pertaining to the actual numbers of volunteers in German sports clubs, it first needs to be differentiated between volunteers in fixed positions, i.e. on the board level and the executive level (e.g. coaches), and volunteers in no fixed positions, i.e. voluntary helpers. Activities of voluntary helpers are typically parents driving to competitions, people helping with social events, baking cakes, etc. (Feiler et al. 2018a). On average, volunteers in fixed positions in sports clubs in Germany in 2015 made up about 13% of all members of the respective club, while volunteers in no fixed position amount to 17% of the sports clubs' members (Breuer et al. 2017).

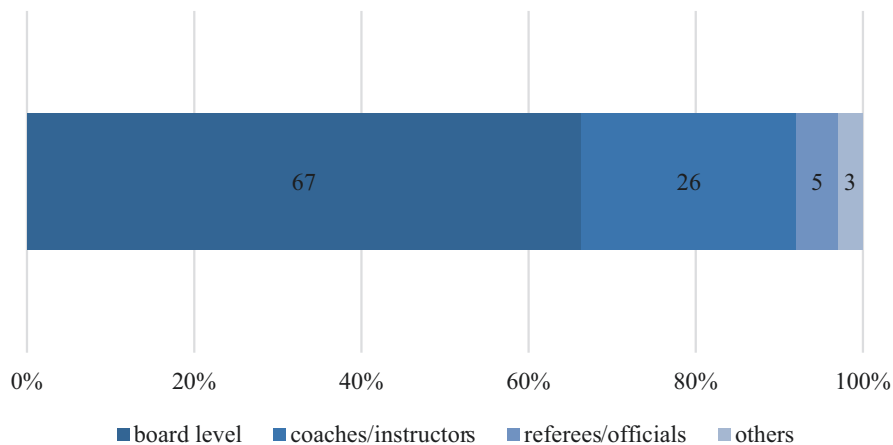
Looking at the distribution of the number of volunteers, about one-third of the clubs in Germany states to have between 11 and 20 volunteers in the club in fixed positions, while roughly a quarter each reports to have between 6 and 10 volunteers

Table 6.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 15,757$, members as customers $n = 13,566$, demonstrating passion $n = 14,043$, all members can be volunteers $n = 14,210$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 3 | 7 | 15 | 26 | 49 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 41 | 33 | 17 | 7 | 2 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication, and energy for the work that needs to be done | 3 | 16 | 43 | 25 | 13 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 1 | 1 | 4 | 27 | 67 |

Table 6.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 14,569$, no fixed position(s) $n = 14,600$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 10 | 26 | 33 | 23 | 8 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 22 | 18 | 21 | 25 | 14 |

**Fig. 6.12** Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 14,569$)

or between 21 and 50 volunteers (see Table 6.17). Of course, the number of volunteers is related to structural club characteristics, especially club size and club type.

In terms of volunteers in no fixed positions, about a quarter of the sports clubs in Germany state to have between 21 and 50 voluntary helpers, while 22% of the clubs report to have between 0 and 5 volunteers without a fixed position. Also here, numbers will differ depending on club size and type.

Taking a closer look at the kind of tasks that volunteers in fixed positions fulfil in German sports clubs (see Fig. 6.12), it becomes clear that the majority of these volunteers, namely, on average about two-thirds, work on the board level. Moreover, a quarter of the volunteers are coaches or instructors, while only 5% have a position as referee or official. Additionally, a small share of the volunteers fulfils other tasks (e.g. maintenance work or facility management). Looking at paid staff in fixed positions (as described in Sect. 6.2), the distribution is different: About two-thirds of paid staff work in the area of sports and training, i.e. as coaches or instructors, while only every tenth paid employee in German sports clubs works in the management, i.e. on board level (Breuer et al. 2017).

As mentioned above, volunteers are vital for the existence of sports clubs. However, the key problems that sports clubs are facing are related to the recruitment

Table 6.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 15,100$, coaches/instructors $n = 15,018$, referees/officials $n = 14,166$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 7 | 16 | 24 | 31 | 22 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 13 | 20 | 28 | 26 | 13 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 22 | 15 | 21 | 24 | 19 |

and retention of volunteers. More than half of the sports clubs in Germany reported in 2015 to have a big or very big problem due to the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level. Only 7% of the clubs reported no problem at all. But not only volunteers on the board level are hard to recruit and retain, also the binding and retention of voluntary coaches and instructors was reported as a big or very big problem by almost 40% of the German sports clubs and even 43% reported (very) big problems regarding the recruitment and retention of referees (see Table 6.18).

Problems with recruiting and retaining volunteers for sports clubs in Germany are not a new phenomenon. However, the severity of these problems has increased. A longitudinal study of sports clubs in Germany reveals that particularly the problem of recruiting and retaining volunteers on the board level as well as recruiting and retaining coaches and instructors have constantly increased over the last 12 years (Breuer and Feiler 2017e).

The development of increasing problems in terms of recruiting and retaining volunteers is underlined by the perceived development of the number of volunteers in German sports clubs over the last 5 years. Although two-thirds of the clubs stated that the number of volunteers remained more or less stable, every fifth sports club reported a moderate decrease (minus 11–25%) in volunteer numbers. A large decrease of the number of volunteers (minus more than 25%) was reported by 4% of the German sports clubs. On the other side, every tenth sports club reported a moderate increase in the number volunteers, and 2% reported a large increase (see Fig. 6.13). Overall, the share of clubs that reported a decrease in the number of volunteers over the last 5 years exceeded the share of clubs that reported an increase. This result is in line with the perceived increase of clubs' problems related to volunteers.

To address the scarcity of volunteers and the resulting problems for sports clubs, the clubs in Germany regularly take on different measures and initiatives to recruit and retain volunteers. An overview of these measures is given in Table 6.19.

The large majority of sports clubs in Germany, namely, 75%, encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally, i.e. through personal conversations. Moreover, clubs organise parties and social events for their volunteers to strengthen cohesion

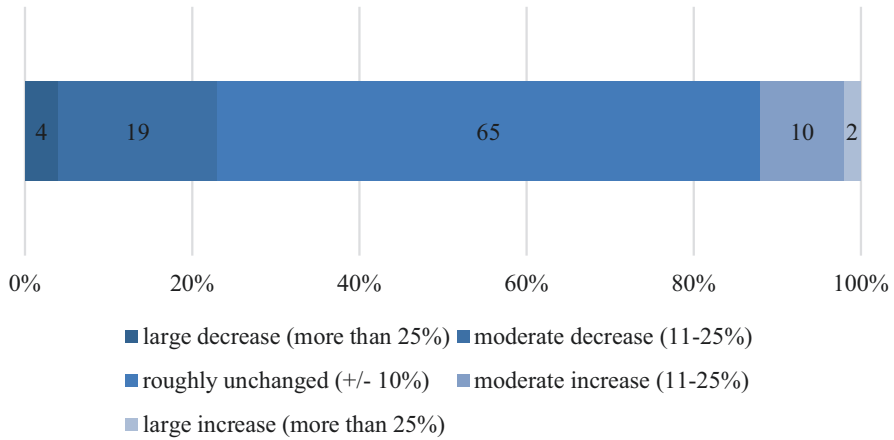


Fig. 6.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 14,481$)

Table 6.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 14,309$, social gatherings $n = 14,309$, recruit through current network $n = 14,309$, pay for training $n = 14,309$, inform members $n = 14,309$, inform parents $n = 14,309$, benefits in kind $n = 14,309$, recruitment outside $n = 14,309$, management $n = 14,309$, written strategy $n = 14,309$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 14,922$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 75 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 66 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 60 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 46 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 27 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 20 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 19 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 10 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 8 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 3 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 13 |

and the feeling of group identity. A further measure to retain volunteers is paying for their qualification. This measure is used by almost half of the German sports clubs. Moreover, about a quarter of the clubs inform their members that they are expected to volunteer, and every fifth club expects, this also from the parents of children that are members. Only less than a fifth of the clubs value the work of their volunteers with benefits in kind. Clubs might choose such measures as studies on the motives of volunteers in German sports clubs have shown that people engage in voluntary

work in sports clubs mainly because of the community orientation and less because of personal benefits (e.g. Braun 2003).

In terms of recruiting volunteers, about 60% of the clubs recruit through the networks of existing volunteers and members, whereas every tenth club tries to recruit new volunteers from outside the club. What strikes is that only few clubs (8%) have a staff member that is responsible for volunteer management and even a smaller share of clubs in Germany (3%) has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment (see Table 6.19). The latter is unfortunate since studies have shown that particularly a strategic policy and a responsible person for volunteer management can reduce problems related to the recruitment and retention of volunteers (Wicker and Breuer 2013, 2014).

Despite increasing problems for clubs related to sufficient volunteers, the frequency of voluntary work in German sports clubs is impressive. About 6% of the surveyed club volunteers stated to be active as a volunteer in their sports clubs 5 days a week or even more. Further 24% reported to volunteer for the club 2 to 4 days per week, and 17% were active once a week. Only 8% of the volunteers were active once a year or less (see Table 6.20). Thus, almost half of the surveyed volunteers reported to be active in voluntary work on a weekly basis.

Not only the frequency of volunteering is interesting to look at but also the number of hours spent by volunteers in fixed positions per month. The distribution of the monthly working hours of German sports clubs' volunteers reveals that almost a quarter of the surveyed volunteers report to work either between 6 and 10 hours per month, between 11 and 20 hours per month, or between 21 and 50 hours per month. Moreover, 5% of the volunteers report to do voluntary work of even more than 50 hours per month for their club (see Table 6.21). The results are similar to the results of a recent study on German football and track and field clubs which revealed an average of 23 hours of monthly voluntary work, in this case for volunteers in fixed and non-fixed positions (Swierzy et al. 2018).

Table 6.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 1,555$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 8 | 13 | 12 | 12 | 8 | 17 | 24 | 6 |

Table 6.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 975$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 23 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 5 |

Overall, it becomes once again clear that voluntary work is a key resource for sports clubs in Germany. The majority of clubs aim at running their club solely by volunteers, and only few clubs actually employ paid staff, especially for managerial tasks. However, recruiting and retaining volunteers are constant problems for sports clubs, which clubs try to address by installing different measures.

6.7 Conclusion

Overall, it can be concluded that sports clubs in Germany are the foundation for various sports-related areas: mass sports and recreational sports, health sports, and competitive as well as elite sports. By providing sports offers and nonsports offers to their members, clubs fulfil important societal functions. This well-known postulation is further stressed by the results of the underlying study, which took into account sports clubs in Germany as well as their members and volunteers. The results of both the club survey and the member survey in Germany show that sports clubs play a vital role for the welfare of society. This conclusion can be drawn since sports clubs are active in various areas which are part of sports policy (cf. BMI 2019a; Feiler et al. 2018b), such as health promotion, social integration, social cohesion, democratic participation, and voluntary work.

In terms of health promotion, more than 70% of German sports clubs are of the opinion that their sports offers are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity. Considering that more than 80% of the club members take part in the clubs' sports programmes at least once a week or more frequently, the overall function of sports clubs in terms of health promotion is evident. Thereby, clubs fulfil functions that sports policy is addressing, in this case health promotion. Moreover, offering health sports offers by sports clubs can be seen as a reaction to demographic changes in Germany, as the population share of the elderly is growing (Destatis 2015).

Regarding social integration, it became clear that the majority of sports clubs is aiming to provide sports offers to a wide range of different population groups. In this regard, 56% of German sports clubs (totally) agree to the statement that the club is trying to offer sports to as many population groups as possible (Breuer and Feiler 2017d). This applies particularly to socially vulnerable groups, such as people with a migration background and people with disabilities, which are also on the agenda of various sports policies on different political levels (cf., Feiler et al. 2018b). However, the results also showed that, compared to the respective population share, these two groups are still underrepresented in sports clubs in Germany. What should be considered in this regard, and particularly pertaining to people with a migration background and also refugees (which came to Germany in 2015 in great numbers), is that differences between different sports clubs exist: people with a migration background and refugees are far better and in greater numbers integrated in football clubs than in clubs providing other sports. For example, 56% of football clubs (single sport clubs only offering football) state that refugees take part in their normal sports offers, while only one-fifth of sports clubs without football offer such

opportunities to refugees (Breuer et al. 2018). Moreover, sports federations have set up various projects and programmes since 2015 to offer opportunities for refugees to take part in club sport. For example, the project “Willkommen im Sport” (“Welcome to sports”) has the goal to introduce refugees in Germany in the sense of a welcome-culture to sports and exercise offers of clubs (DOSB 2019).

Apart from offering core sports programmes, it became clear that sports clubs put high value on social cohesion, by promoting the feeling of community and conviviality. This attitude is a core goal of many German sports clubs (Breuer and Feiler 2017d; Breuer and Feiler 2019) and is well-received by the majority of sports clubs members, which join clubs following two main goals: participating in sports programmes and socialising with other club members. This aspect particularly distinguishes voluntary sports clubs from commercial sports providers since the socialising function is much higher in sports clubs than, for example, in commercial fitness centres (Ulseth 2004). In Germany, more than half of the surveyed club members stated that the sports club is among the most important social groups they belong to, which underlines the social integrative function of clubs. Moreover, clubs that put high value on conviviality report smaller problems related to the recruitment and retention of members and volunteers (Wicker and Breuer 2013).

In addition to their social function, sports clubs are often called schools of democracy due to their democratic structures and the possibilities for members to take part in decision-making processes. The results of the underlying study show that members in German sports clubs are slightly reluctant to participate in formal democratic processes where club officials are involved, while members are more active when it comes to speaking their mind to other club members. However, the majority of members feels well-informed about how the club functions, which implies a rather high involvement of club members with their respective sport club.

Lastly, sports clubs are voluntary organisations, implying that the key resource for sports clubs is voluntary work. The majority of sports clubs in Germany is of the opinion that their club should exclusively be run by volunteers. Taking into account that voluntary work is usually unpaid (except for a possible expense allowance), the value of voluntary work for society which is conducted every week in sports clubs in Germany is huge. Based on data from the *German Sport Development Report 2015/2016* (Breuer and Feiler 2017d), the total working hours of volunteers per month amounted to 22.9 million which were served by volunteers with the aim of attaining public welfare purposes. Taking the total working hours and an average hourly wage rate of EUR 15, the yearly added value of voluntary work in sports clubs in Germany amounts to approximately EUR 4.1 billion (Breuer and Feiler 2017d).

Despite the valuable work which is day by day conducted by volunteers in German sports clubs, clubs are increasingly struggling due to problems related to the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Particularly the problems of recruiting and retaining volunteers on the board level as well as coaches and instructors have increased over the past 12 years (Breuer and Feiler 2017e). Therefore, clubs need to find possibilities and measures to address these pressing problems. What could actually help is setting up long-term plans and a clear strategic concept for the club.

Research has shown that such measures are valuable to diminish volunteer problems (Breuer and Feiler 2017c; Wicker and Breuer 2013).

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Chapter 7

Hungary: Potentials for Civil Initiatives in Sports



Szilvia Perényi

Abstract The social functions of sports clubs were influenced by the changes in sports realised as part of the centrally driven policy efforts to develop sports since 2010. Along these and other changes that Hungarian sports went through before, sports clubs remained the traditional and basic units of the Hungarian sports sector even today. Their role in providing sporting opportunities for the public cannot be underestimated. Sports clubs, however, went through a professionalisation process as well, their daily operation became more business-like, and growth of paid personnel was noticeable. In this chapter, the four functions of sports clubs treated in this book such as health promotion, social integration, democracy and voluntary work are discussed.

Even though sports clubs in Hungary undoubtable contribute to public welfare in these areas, some challenges may also be mentioned as inequalities and limitations are still measured. It seems that clubs' services to society in Hungary and, through that, in Europe are valuable; however, special initiatives and programmes for targeting underrepresented groups could be beneficial. Therefore, sports clubs in Hungary hide an unrealised potential in further integrating not only vulnerable groups but also societal segments presently inactive in sports and physical activities.

7.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

In Hungary, similar to other European countries, the public, private and civil spheres are all present in sports on the national, regional and local level (Perényi 2013a). Even though Western European sports models have served as examples for organisational development, Central European countries maintained their culturally and historically grounded differences. In Hungary, organisational developments up until World War II and after the democratic changes in 1989–1990 created special historically determined political and economic environments for sports (Perényi and

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Bodnár 2015). In the new democratic era, changes in central policy and funding structure were very influential and created a new context for Hungarian sports. Therefore, the three major periods of the developments of sports clubs defined by Perényi and Bodnár (2015) can be complemented by a fourth period, which started in 2010 and a fifth following in 2017.

The first sports organisations were established during the late 1990s by aristocrats who worked to develop activities that they favoured, such as fencing and rowing. These first sports organisations were private companies, which were later re-established as joint-stock companies, but maintained their exclusive policy towards membership (Bodnár and Perényi 2012). The transition towards civil organisations with an inclusive theme was blocked by the Habsburg absolutism that followed the Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence (1848–1849). Therefore, political scenarios around the independence of the country allowed civil initiatives only after the Compromise in 1867, and the founding of the first sports club in Budapest was in 1875. Enhanced democratisation and the entry of working class or lower status populations in society into sports clubs arrived with the introduction and popularisation of football. This was followed by increased membership in a range of sports and clubs became more community-based. From the 1920s, there was considerable growth in clubs as they became expressions of community and identity. Although these identities were marked by ethnic, religious or occupational distinctions, and maintained another kind of exclusivity, they were more communally organised. Club membership, however, remained an option mainly for men. The wealthier and more powerful people maintained their prestige in sports by entering and succeeding in national and international competitive sports events (Perényi and Bodnár 2015). Additionally, clubs existed primarily in the capital, according to the official statistical survey of the time; close to half of competitive athletes represented the capital city of Budapest (Ghimessy 1935). This pattern was also related to the fact that sports facilities were built and international sporting events were held mostly in the capital.

A new period was initiated following World War II when the centralised state perceived the independence of clubs in all segments of society as a threat. State control was used to remove democratic decision-making, club formation on the basis of identity, and maintaining clubs as independent civil organisations (Perényi and Bodnár 2015; Szilágyi 2015). This indicates that the power change in the bipolar world after World War II led to widespread government involvement in Hungarian sport (Bakonyi 2004; Földesi 1996). In addition to this top-down approach to controlling sports during this era, there was a new emphasis on promoting success in elite high-performance sports (Földesi 1996; Gulyás 2016; Onyestyák 2013). The international success of athletes was used to promote and justify the existence of a left-wing system (Földesi 1996) and played a significant role in the formation of Hungarian national identity (Dóczy 2012). Giving priority to political and social prestige (Bakonyi 2004; Földesi 1996) also meant giving priority to central state support for sports that had a potential for winning medals in world events and the Olympic Games. This approach to state subsidies weakened the civil side of sports (Bakonyi 2004; Földesi 1996).

The economic and political changes that occurred between 1989 and 1990, when a vote-based democratic system in society was established after decades of the state-socialist era, created hopes for civil organisations and the development of sports. However, this did not occur, and the clubs and sports facilities deteriorated. The transition from state socialism to a free-market economy was sudden, and this meant that the status of sports changed from being centrally controlled and funded to being autonomous, democratic and responsible for self-funding solutions. This created several hardships for sports clubs. For example, their funding was reduced, and they were required to follow new tax laws applicable also to sports and similar organisations. The state companies that previously operated large sports clubs were privatised, and several sports facilities, sports fields or sports-related real estate were sold (Bakonyi 2004; Földesi and Egressy 2005). The awaited solutions for sports clubs did not occur as expected after the political changes (Földesi 1996). The number of clubs and members continued to decline – the 30% decline of clubs and the 42% decline of sports divisions by 1990 did not stop causing further reduction also in member counts. Additionally, the frequent change in governments during the first 20 years of democracy created a discontinuity in sports policy, which undermined attempts by civil organisations to define and build a stable environment for their state-civil relationships and functions (Perényi and Bodnár 2015).

The newly elected government in 2010 declared sports to be a strategic state sector. The structure of sports was changed, and increased funding resources were incorporated (Perényi 2013a), all of which were enacted in the new Amendments of the Sports Law (CLXXII Törvény 2011). This new law also reinforced the right of all citizens to access sports at all levels including leisure sports and sports for the disabled, furthermore, for the preservation of health.

Sports on the national level are currently governed by the state secretariat of sports within the Ministry of Human Capacities. The state secretariat coordinates national and international sports affairs representing the Hungarian government and acts as an interface for the civil sphere of sports. It prepares and coordinates legal regulations, national and international grant procedures. With the exception of the period between 2010 and 2017, it plans and handles government funding for sports and allocates it to the civil sphere. It also oversees three state-funded but independently operating organisations: the National Sports Institute; the National Sports Centres, restructured under the 2011 Act on Sport (CLXXII Törvény 2011; Perényi 2013a); and a national agency responsible for international and world events formed by the 2018 state statutory rule.

In the Hungarian sports sector, civil organisations (clubs, federations), non-profit private organisations (foundations) and profit-oriented enterprises (limited companies) can operate and provide sports services. The 2004 Act on Sport also defined sports enterprises as basic organisational forms in the sports subsystem. Within this framework, sports enterprises can choose from several legal forms. Limited companies and shareholder groups are allowed in competition sports, while in leisure sports, independent sole-traders and forms of joint companies are permitted operation. Sports clubs, federations and sports foundations represent the

non-profit sector in sport, along with non-profit limited companies (Perényi 2013a; Perényi and Bodnár 2015; Szilágyi 2015).

Ten years into this change of the legal environment, the option for clubs to re-register as not-for-profit companies or form their own companies was used so that approximately 200 such organisations existed among over 12,000 non-profit civil organisations in sports in Hungary (Perényi et al. 2015). The non-profit companies operated as municipality outsourcing companies also managing municipality sporting facilities. In addition to such not-for-profit and for-profit organisations, there have also been cases when sports clubs became majority owners of these companies. As part of this professionalisation process, the daily operation of the organisations became more business-like, and paid managers in most cases became responsible for administering these quasi-sports clubs (Perényi and Bodnár 2015). Atypical employment forms became more frequent: independent sole-traders, joint companies and the new taxing form for sports professionals called “echo” make it difficult to divide full- or part-time employment and contractual forms from each other (Gósi 2017). Coaches and referees often use these forms for remunerations because they are partners for sports organisations, but neither can they be counted as employees nor as volunteers.

Despite these changes, sports clubs are still the traditional and basic units of the Hungarian sports sector (Bakonyi 2004; Földesi 1996; Földesi and Egressy 2005; Perényi and Bodnár 2015). They can be formed as civil initiatives by an association of ten individuals, according to its legal statutes, and must be registered in court (II. Törvény 1989 and the recently modified Civil Law 2011; CLXXV Törvény 2011). Clubs have their own bank accounts and are subject to tax payments. Nevertheless, the professionalisation can be well-tracked in large multisport clubs. Full-time managers and office staff are generally present, while the volunteer role remained for club presidents and board members and event volunteers. Most clubs attempt to appoint economically or politically influential individuals to their boards with the hope of additional support for their programmes (Kozma et al. 2016).

Sports organisations receive funding from the state budget and from grants, and they have their own resources from donations, sponsorship, events and membership fees. The state budget is distributed by the state secretary for sports. The allocation follows the elite performance, international success and talent management logic, which provides the dominant proportion of funding to Olympic and Paralympic sports (Csurilla et al. 2017) and a minority of resources to sports for all causes. Funding for leisure sports have been marginal, receiving only 1.9% of all sports-related funding in 2011 (Perényi 2013a) – a percentage that remains the same today.

Sports organisations, including sports clubs and federations, may receive funding from three main funding schemes: (1) team sports talent management programmes called TAO, (2) programmes for traditional Olympic success sports and (3) programmes for developing non-Olympic sports. A new financial support scheme (TAO), started in 2011, allowed private companies to receive tax reductions if they give funding to clubs, federations, municipalities, non-profit sports companies, sports companies, sports foundations and the Hungarian Olympic Committee (HOC). The use of support has two limiting criteria: to finance sports programmes

targeting youth aged under 18 and only within six team sports –football, basketball, handball, ice hockey and water polo, up to 2017, and volleyball from 2018. Received funding is to be used for costs of teams at competitions; wages and training of sports professionals; rental, reconstruction and construction of sports facilities; or the purchase of sports equipment – all pending approval by the national sports federation. As a result of the TAO scheme, there was an increase in sports facility construction that resulted in new sports halls, swimming pools, artificial football fields,] and ice hockey arenas. Also, facilities planned in connection with the withdrawn 2024 Budapest Olympic bid are being built and there are plans to have them completed. Among other, this involves an arena for track and field, reconstruction of a kayak-canoe venue and ice-sports surfaces as well.

Special sports development funding programmes were enacted to run between 2014 and 2020. These programmes allocate state funding to 16 traditionally successful Hungarian Olympic sports, such as fencing, kayak-canoe, swimming, gymnastics, judo and wrestling (Sterbenz et al. 2013). However, 18 non-Olympic, mostly outdoor leisure sports-oriented organisations still lacked central funding solutions (Perényi and Bodnár 2015). Indirect funding provided to clubs through the national coaching association, and the coaching excellence programme gives resources to fund wages of coaches performing at the elite level with their athletes.

Local municipalities also play a role in funding sports clubs. They provide reduced rental fees for clubs and team sports can use TAO sources for facility rental. The scope of funding offered to sports by a municipality is not regulated centrally (Gyömörei 2014). It is always up to the mayor of a settlement to determine how much funding is allocated to sports. Kozma et al. (2016) found that municipalities more closely aligned with the acting governmental parties provide higher levels of funding for sports.

The political expectations regarding the four functions of sports clubs treated in this book such as health promotion, social integration, democracy and voluntary work will be analysed in detail in the next sections. The importance of sports participation among the general public, or integration of vulnerable groups such as the disabled into sports, or the role of volunteers can be tracked in sports policy and in public speaking, but the lack of enough attention to these issues is also reported. Lack of opportunities and integration for people with disabilities (Gál et al. 2014), underrepresentation of female participants (Béki 2017; Gál and Földesi 2019) or coaches (Bodnár 2012) and underdevelopment in managing and recognising volunteers (Perényi 2018) can also be tracked in research of recent years.

7.2 Structure and Context

The number and composition of sports clubs reflect political and societal changes in Hungary. For example, the number of clubs declined after the political changes in 1989/90: the national sports strategy stated that until 2006 the number of sports clubs registered at sports federations was reduced to one third (around 1500), while

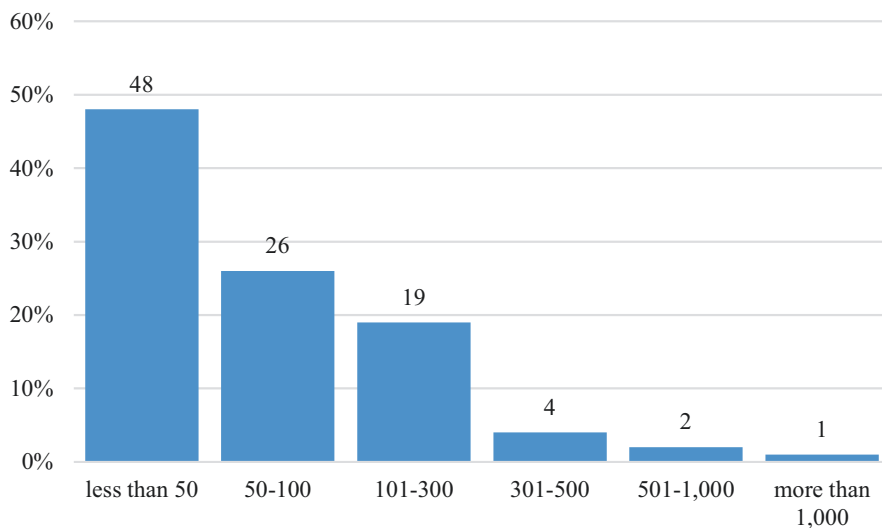


Fig. 7.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 791$)

the number of sports clubs with a leisure sports focus was approximately 7500. Non-profit sports companies during this period were approximately up to 100 (Resolution 2007). By 2014, the number of non-profit sports organisations grew by close to 30% ($N = 12,541$) and included sports foundations and non-profit companies ($N = 171$), which almost doubled during that time (Perényi et al. 2015) (Fig. 7.1).

Considering the size of club membership in Hungary, the small clubs with fewer than 100 members are in majority: Over 74% of the 791 clubs participating in this survey are rather small, and only 7% of clubs register more than 300 members. Therefore, the size of Hungarian clubs is different from the SIVSCE survey average (Breuer et al. 2017). The results show a prevalence of small clubs in Hungary which is explained by the recent changes in the importance given to organised sports and is a result of new funding channels available for clubs in team sports (Perényi 2013a). A trend for forming new clubs can be observed on the one hand, in leisure sports as, for example, runners participating in the Budapest marathon and half-marathon events belong to clubs and in team sports where small on division youth sports clubs were founded, on the other hand (Perényi 2015).

In terms of change in membership over the past 5 years, 39% of the clubs experienced no change in their membership, 17% reported a decrease, and 45% reported a moderate or large increase. For the majority of clubs in Hungary results show a growth trend in terms of membership (45%), which puts Hungarian clubs over the SIVSCE survey average of 36%. Overall, the membership development is more positive in Hungary than in a number of other European countries: a dominant number of clubs reported increasing or unchanged numbers for membership over the past 5 years in this survey (Fig. 7.2). This positive result is mostly explained by the

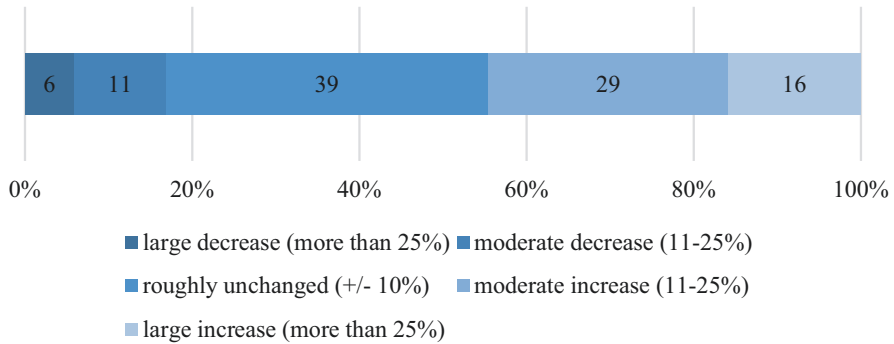


Fig. 7.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 807$)

Table 7.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, $n = 669$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 20 | 19 | 36 | 18 | 7 |

supportive structural conditions for sports during the past decade, which includes special attention given to youth sports and the retention of consistently successful talent managing units (Table 7.1).

Interestingly, only a quarter of the clubs surveyed in Hungary identify recruitment or retention as a big or very big problem; 36% refer to it as a moderate problem, and 39% report that it is not a problem.

The results are given a different focus if considering that the Eurobarometer (European Commission 2014, 2018) reports both sports participation and sports club membership in Hungary as one of the lowest in European countries. It seems that clubs in Hungary do not perceive the overall low sports participation and low sports club membership of the population as a problem of their own. Their role in attracting inactive people to be members is not clearly understood by them at any level, or it may not be seen as their responsibility (Fig. 7.3).

The year that sports clubs were founded may provide us with additional information about the clubs’ embeddedness in local communities and about their sports programme profile. Clubs founded before the political changes in Hungary constitute the core of well-established, traditional and mostly multisport clubs with larger memberships. These are the clubs that suffered the most due to instability following the political and economic changes (Földesi 1996). Clubs in this survey mainly represented clubs established after the political changes in 1989/90 (71%), out of which 48% were founded after the year 2000. Interestingly between 2003 and 2012 the growth of newly founded clubs was over 10% (Perényi and Bodnár 2015). Clubs established before the state-socialist turn after World War II represent only 8% of the clubs in this sample. This typology, with respect to several national

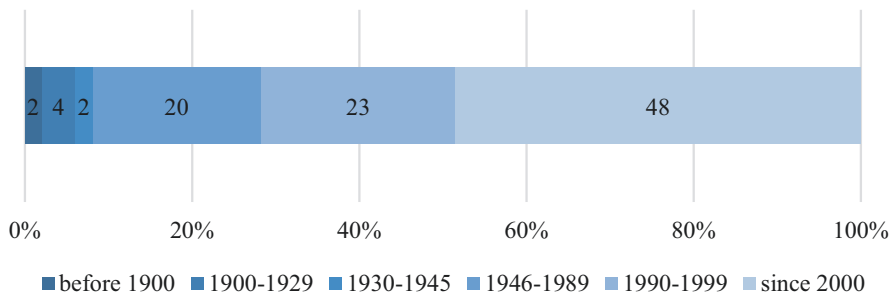


Fig. 7.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 646$)

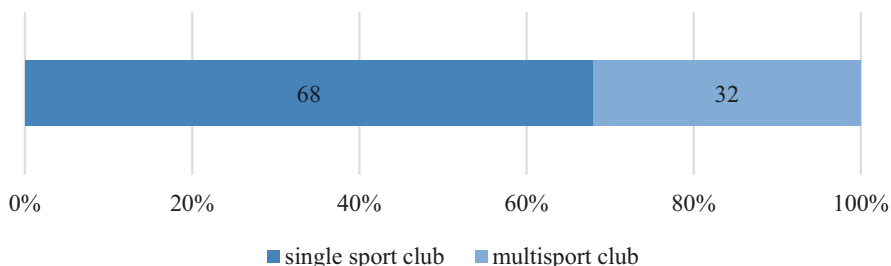


Fig. 7.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 811$)

characteristics, is similar to other state-socialist countries, such as Poland with its similar historical, political and economic situation (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017) (Fig. 7.4).

Clubs were also classified as single sport or multisport clubs. In this survey 68% of the clubs in Hungary offered only one sport and 32% offered two or more sports to their members. Large multisport clubs funded by state-owned companies suffered a crisis in Hungary following the 1989/90 political and economic change as the privatisation of state companies did not permit continued funding of sports clubs (Földesi 1996). On the other hand, as a result of postmodern change, during the recent years civil initiatives for leisure sports enhanced the number of small and single sports clubs (Perényi 2013b) (Table 7.2).

The most frequently offered sport by Hungarian clubs was football, which is very similar to patterns in other countries. This similarity is also seen in results from the national youth sample, which found football to be the most popular sport played by the Hungarians between the ages of 15 and 28 (Perényi 2010). The popularity of football is registered across Hungary even though the country is widely seen as being on the periphery of the European football scene (Szerővay et al. 2016). Football was followed by table tennis (10%) in this study. Four sports – cycling, swimming, track and field and hiking – were offered by 9% of clubs. Two other team sports, handball (8%) and basketball (7%) along with karate (7%) and shooting sports (7%), were represented among the top ten of most offered sports by clubs. The high representation of hiking within the sample (9%) is interesting, and it may

Table 7.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 930$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|-----------------|----|
| 1 | Football | 21 |
| 2 | Table tennis | 10 |
| 3 | Cycling | 9 |
| 4 | Swimming | 9 |
| 5 | Track and field | 9 |
| 6 | Hiking | 9 |
| 7 | Handball | 8 |
| 8 | Shooting sports | 7 |
| 9 | Karate | 7 |
| 10 | Basketball | 7 |

Table 7.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 678$, public facilities $n = 679$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 502$, share of revenues $n = 726$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|--|
| 28 | 74 | 63 | 28 |

be due to clubs giving more attention to social inclusion and volunteering which may have increased their willingness to participate in the survey. Also to be noted is that only three out of the six so-called TAO sports are among the top ten offered sports in this sample, and water polo, ice hockey and volleyball are not among the top ten. Water polo is not in the top ten despite its great international success in competitions and despite the fact that, together with ice hockey, water polo received enhanced funding through the TAO funding scheme right from the start of this funding programme (Table 7.3).

In Hungary, the majority of the clubs use public facilities (74%), and 28% reported an own ownership of facilities. It is interesting that these results are similar to those from Norway (70%) and Denmark (71%), but fall below in comparison to Poland, the other state-socialist country in this survey, where 91% of the clubs use public facilities. In Hungary, the new facility development programme allowed for construction of facilities by clubs as well; this may explain the results in Hungary.

Two-thirds of the clubs in Hungary using public sports facilities reported that they pay a fee for their use (63%). Problems related to the condition and the shortage of sports facilities in Hungary were addressed by the introduction of TAO funding. This financial support for usage allowed the construction of new and reconstruction of old facilities, and it provided funds to pay for facility rentals for so-called TAO sports (Géczi and Bardóczy 2017). Oftentimes, however, sports clubs pay reduced fees, which may apply to smaller clubs in individual sports, and these small clubs may even use sports spaces in primary or secondary schools.

Clubs reported that 28% of their revenues come from public resources. This puts Hungarian clubs in the higher average group along with Polish clubs receiving 41%

Table 7.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 654$, financial situation $n = 665$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sport facilities | 14 | 13 | 26 | 24 | 23 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 6 | 10 | 32 | 27 | 25 |

Table 7.5 Paid staff and paid manager(s) in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 748$, paid manager/s $n = 764$)

| Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 35 | 15 |

of their revenues from public resources. Additionally, the share of public subsidy of clubs in Hungary grows by the size of the club and by the number and the kind of sports they offer (Gösi 2017; Perényi and Bodnár 2015). Larger clubs, but also single sport clubs in team sports, therefore may have higher subsidies (Table 7.4).

It seems that the severity of financial and infrastructural problems go hand in hand in Hungary. Over 80% of the clubs stated that problems with the availability of sports facilities and financial problems are moderate or great. One quarter of the clubs reported that both infrastructure unavailability and a shortage of financial resources have become a very big problem for them. This is identical with the situation in Poland.

The shortfalls reported in both of these areas underline the relevance of Hungarian reforms implemented in 2011 in relation to sports funding and the renovation and development of sporting infrastructure. As stated previously, the poor and neglected sports infrastructure was handled by a strategic central action plan in Hungary, but mainly for team sports. At the time of the survey (2015), Hungary was 4 years into the reforms and still only one quarter of clubs reported no or small facility problems and 16% felt the same about their financial situation. Results show a continued and growing need for sports facilities in team sports as well as individual sports (Table 7.5).

Some voluntary sports clubs have paid staff. This applies to 35% of the clubs, reinforcing a slow but initiated professionalisation track in this civil sector stated by Perényi and Bodnár (2015). Most paid personnel can be found in the sports and training area, such as coaches. The professionalisation of the coaching occupation in Hungary was present even in the beginning of the nineteenth century, when also formal education for coaches became available and training and qualifications for coaches gained high importance (Bodnár and Perényi 2012). The other area of positions that are most frequently filled by paid staff is administration and management.

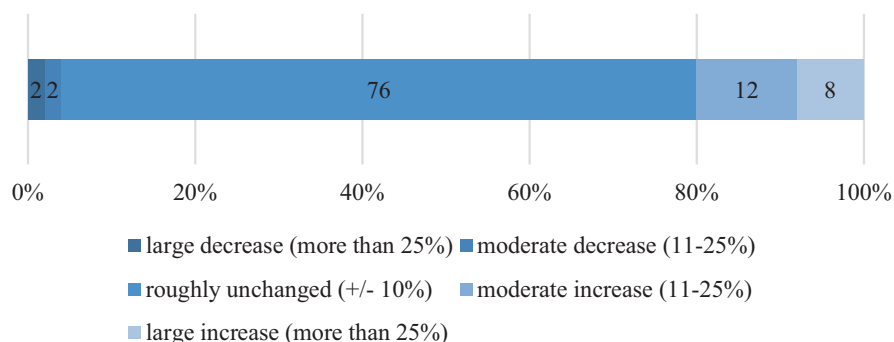


Fig. 7.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 504$)

Additionally, 15% of clubs run their daily operation with a full- or part-time paid manager. It should be noted that the sports civil sector human resources segment is relatively underdeveloped with regard to both voluntary and paid staff. In comparison to civil organisations in areas other than sports in Hungary, a national study shows, for example, that the rate of paid staff per club is lower (0.58) in sports organisations than the whole non-profit sector average of 2.55 (Perényi et al. 2015).

The development of the number of paid positions in clubs during the last 5 years is unchanged in three quarters of the clubs. Moderate or larger increases were identified for 20% of the clubs, as indicated in Fig. 7.5. This indicates that the trends of the started professionalisation in clubs started earlier.

7.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

It seems that Hungarians are among the least physically active people in the European Union. According to the Special Eurobarometer on Sports (European Commission 2018), 33% of Hungarians take part in sports regularly or with some regularity, which is below the EU average of 40%, and there is 9% increase of those never exercise. National surveys in Hungary reported sports participation rates between 9% and 26% of the total population (Földesi et al. 2008) and of 35% for youth in the 15–29 age range since the year 2000 (Perényi 2010, 2013a; Székely 2018) (Table 7.6).

In relation to the attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity, it can be stated that regardless of clubs' profile, they feel that the sports offered by them are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity. With this statement, close to 90% of clubs agree or totally agree; only a small proportion (up to 3%) indicate disagreement. Similarly, clubs indicate that they are committed in their efforts to offer these programmes, with 88% of Hungarian clubs expressing a positive attitude in this matter. The reason that clubs agree on both statements may be related to the

Table 7.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 660$, sports clubs disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 663$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 1 | 2 | 8 | 22 | 66 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 1 | 1 | 5 | 13 | 81 |

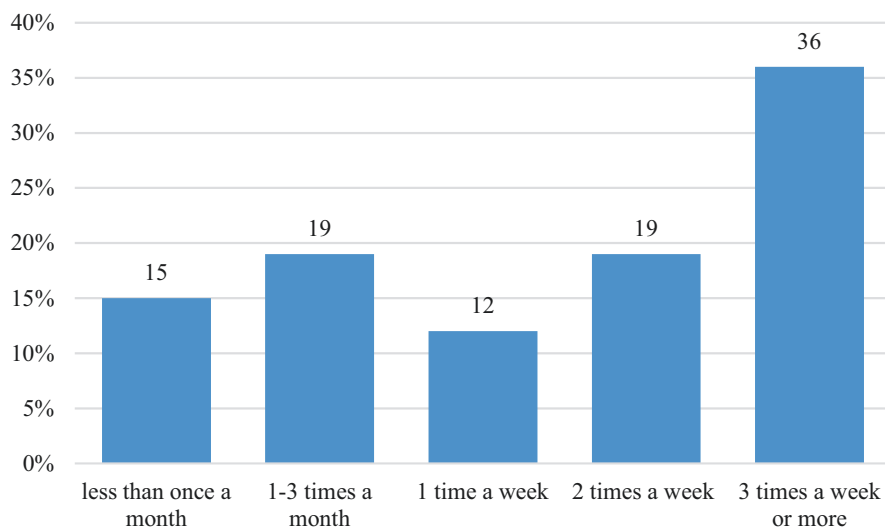


Fig. 7.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 527$)

general belief that sports at all levels make a valuable contribution to preventive health and health enhancement (Frenkl et al. 2010). Furthermore, sports are related to overall personality development (Borosán 2016), and it can reduce the social security cost for the population (Ács et al. 2011). From the health perspective of the population, the low participation rates mentioned above are alarming. Thus, a health-related focus of sports clubs makes a valuable contribution to society.

In regard to the results in Fig. 7.6, the distribution of the number of occasions for sports participation shows quite a variety. Thirty-four per cent of members indicated sports involvement three or less times a month, 12% once a week, while 19% participate in sports in their club two times a week. Thirty-five per cent of the members engage in sports activities three or more times a week.

It seems that Hungarian club members' sporting frequency is high in this sample as over half of the members (55%) participate in their club's training programmes two or more times a week, indicating the possible competition sports focus for them. But also outlining that sports clubs can be arenas for regular sports participa-

Table 7.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 519$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 59 | 16 | 25 |

tion and efforts for recruiting more sports club members could contribute to the improvement of overall public health (Table 7.7).

Participating in competitions seem to be high among Hungarian sports clubs' members (59%); however, it consolidates around the European SIVSCE average of 62%. Additionally, 16% of the members in Hungarian clubs competed in the past, and one quarter have never competed in sports. This result, 75%, is in line with the performance, competition-oriented nature of Hungarian clubs stated in previous research by Földesi (1996), Földesi et al. (2008) and Perényi (2010). It may also be that club members participate in the increasing number and types of leisure sports events and festivals in recent years (Perényi 2013b; Perényi et al. 2017). Therefore, sports clubs may be a potential place to work for health initiatives and offer more leisure activities both with competitive and non-competitive nature.

7.4 Social Integration

Social integration programmes in Hungary mainly target people with disabilities (Tóthné and Gombás 2016) and ethnic minorities, specifically the Roma population (Dóczy and Gál 2016). Their representation among the sports participants is lower, but special initiatives by the state and local communities currently exist (Perényi 2013a). There are examples for clubs that maintain their division for wheelchair fencers or basketball players and provide integrated training opportunities for disabled athletes (Piątkowska et al. 2017). However, most clubs lack such programmes. A general reach out for vulnerable groups on the club level is still awaited (Dóczy and Gál 2016).

It is also to be added that not only the classical vulnerable groups are underrepresented but also youth (15–28 years old) as up until 10 years ago club membership was below 1% among the total population of young Hungarians (Perényi 2015).

In terms of attitudes of sports clubs towards social integration of different population groups, 57% of the Hungarian clubs strongly agree with the statement of trying to offer sports to as many population groups as possible. There are also 23% of clubs that agree with this effort meaning that 80% of clubs have a positive attitude for offering sports to all segments of society as shown in Table 7.8.

Concerning the intentions toward vulnerable groups, results show less commitment to implementation. Only 32% of the clubs agree strongly with the statement that their club strives to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated into their club. Additionally, another 31% of Hungarian clubs are also on the positive side when considering actions for social integration. All together 63% of Hungarian clubs support social integration proactively. Clubs with an unclear opin-

Table 7.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 662$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 658$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 3 | 3 | 14 | 23 | 57 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 7 | 7 | 23 | 31 | 32 |

Table 7.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 696$, people with migration background $n = 683$, elderly $n = 704$, women $n = 791$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 65 | 30 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| People with migration background | 46 | 41 | 8 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 43 | 39 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Women | 11 | 12 | 25 | 35 | 11 | 7 |

ion in this matter make up one quarter of the clubs in Hungary. With these results Hungary is above the European average (Table 7.9).

In case of people with disabilities, 65% of the clubs do not have members belonging to this group, which is higher in comparison to the European average in this survey. One-third of the clubs indicated that their membership includes 1–10% people with disabilities. Sports policy giving special attention to people with disabilities started by the year 2000, which resulted in integrated opportunities for example in fencing and establishing new clubs specialising services for the disabled (Perényi 2013a; Tóthné and Gombás 2016).

People with ethnic or migration background make up 1–10% of the members in 41% of the clubs and 46% of the clubs do not count any members from this group. It is important to mention that there are 8% of the clubs that reported 11–25% of their members belong to an ethnic minority group (or migration group). The absence of people with migration or ethnical background in Hungarian clubs is higher than the European average (36%), however, lower than that of Poland (71%). The result is reinforced by previous findings as participation in sports of youth with ethnic minority background is below the average; it is 23% in comparison to the total youth population (35%) in 2008 (Perényi 2010).

The proportion of clubs without members above the age of 65 is the third highest in Hungary (43%) after Poland (57%) and Spain (54%). Clubs counting elderly members between 1% and 10% of their total members make up 39%. Only 5% of the clubs have at least half of their members representing people over 65. Results of Hungarian clubs in connection to the elderly members are below the survey average. Other surveys in Hungary reported similar results about the discrepancies of integration of the elderly in sports. Senior citizens' sports participation was measured to be one of the lowest in Hungarian society (Földesi et al. 2008).

Among the special groups, the representation of women in sports clubs is the most satisfactory. But still a clear majority of clubs have a majority of male members, which is line with previous findings in Hungary as sports participants are predominantly men both in the total population (Földesi et al. 2008) and in the youth population (15–28) as well (Perényi 2010). Furthermore, inequality in sports can be noticed along other socio-democratic variables as the higher educated, people living in larger settlements (Kozma et al. 2015) and those owning a higher economic capital or having a student status are most likely to participate (Földesi et al. 2008; Perényi 2010). Male dominance can also be noticed among sports professionals such as coaches (Bodnár 2012).

In comparison to other vulnerable groups, only 11% of clubs reported no female members. One quarter of clubs reported their female members to be up to 25%, and another 35% have female members up to 50%, while a large proportion in comparison to the other target groups have more than half of their members from the female population (18%). The differences across groups can be explained by the fact that more and more women and young girls do sports across all levels and they can be considered less of a vulnerable group than the other groups; female athletes are more successful at the Olympics (Kovács et al. 2017), and an increasing number of women participate in leisure sports events such as running (Perényi 2015).

In terms of the clubs having special initiatives reaching out for different population groups, Hungarian clubs show a noticeable effort. In targeting the groups outlined in Fig. 7.7, Hungarian clubs perform far above the European average. In relation to people with disabilities, 40% of the clubs reported efforts as opposed to the European average (20%). In reference to people of ethnic minorities or with migration backgrounds, this result is 36% compared to the European average of 18%, while in connection to the elderly, 40% of Hungarian clubs act compared to the 25% of European average. People over 65 are offered for example special sporting activities and concessionary membership fees, which are also offered to young people when joining clubs in Hungary (Breuer et al. 2017). A similar noticeable difference can be found in the favour of Hungarian clubs in relation to women as well (61% to a 33% survey average). The initiatives include special sporting activities, such as female teams and divisions. Initiatives for women and young girls are more noticeable. As a result of TAO funding, female teams in ice hockey, football and volleyball increased. In leisure sports both women's sports day and female running events became popular (Table 7.10).

In light of the focus on elite sports performance inherited from the past, Hungarian clubs have an unexpected balance in attitudes about the importance of companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions. The percentage of clubs that agree or totally agree to set high value on companionship and conviviality is 65%. Similar results were found in these categories in the response given to sporting success and competition with 69%. This unanticipated balance on these values shows that in Hungarian clubs the consideration of the importance of these values is high.

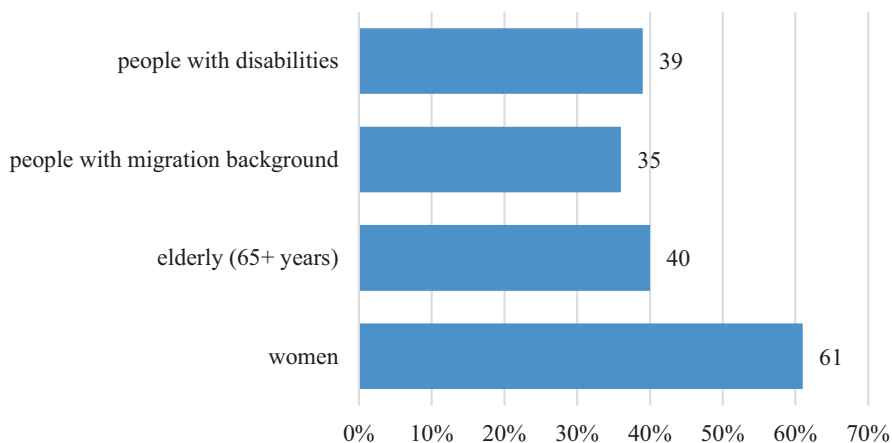


Fig. 7.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 626$, people with migration background $n = 613$, elderly $n = 631$, women $n = 664$)

Table 7.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 654$, competitive sports $n = 659$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 4 | 8 | 22 | 35 | 30 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 5 | 9 | 17 | 34 | 35 |

It must be added, however, that considering the value placed on companionship and conviviality by clubs is the lowest among the participating countries in this research.

Member participation in the club's social gatherings in Hungary is close to the survey average. Approximately one-fifth of the members participate in such gatherings at least once a month; however, 50% participate never or once a year in comparison to the European average of 38%.

A more noticeable difference can be detected in relation to staying behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club. Only 31% of Hungarian club members get engaged in such social interaction once every 2 weeks or more in comparison to the European average of 51%. With this result, Hungarian clubs show the lowest proportion in the survey sample.

In relation to the ability of clubs to provide members with social communities in which members can experience social interactions and develop human relations, it was found that 88% of the members in the examined Hungarian clubs stated that they made new friendships through participation in the club. These relations exist mostly within the context of activities in the club and in relation to the sporting

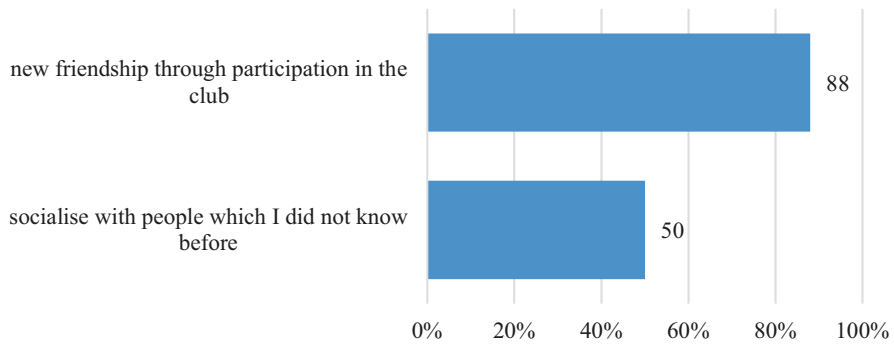


Fig. 7.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 547$, socialise with people $n = 519$)

Table 7.11 Frequency of participation in the club’s social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 507$, stay behind after trainings $n = 475$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club’s social gatherings | 23 | 26 | 23 | 12 | 7 | 3 | 6 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 14 | 10 | 13 | 13 | 18 | 8 | 23 |

activity. Half of the members also reported that they started interactions with people which they did not know before through these activities as is outlined in Fig. 7.8.

The width of social interaction can be described by the proportion of people that members know by name. The results show that people participating in clubs make acquaintance with other members; over 70% of members of Hungarian sports clubs know more than ten other members by name. Interestingly, this result is below the survey average and might have some connection to the fact that Hungarians are less likely to stay behind after practices to socialise with other members (Table 7.11). Another potential explanation could be the high prevalence of small clubs in the Hungarian sample, which could limit the number of people the members know by name (Table 7.12).

Besides looking at the relationship of members to each other in this research, their feelings for their club was also measured (Table 7.13). It seems that Hungarian club members feel very strong about their club; the majority (73%) strongly agrees that they are proud that they belong to their particular club. Together with those who partially agree with the statement, 90% of the members express positive feeling for being proud. This result is the highest in European clubs in this sample (Van der Roest et al. 2017). This result, however, is not complemented with similarly high

Table 7.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 577$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 0 | 3 | 6 | 18 | 29 | 28 | 17 |

Table 7.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 550$, most important social group $n = 545$, respect me for who I am $n = 496$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 1 | 1 | 7 | 17 | 73 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 9 | 8 | 17 | 35 | 31 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 1 | 2 | 10 | 28 | 60 |

results in relation to the club being the most important social group of members; Hungarian club members were on the survey average in this regard.

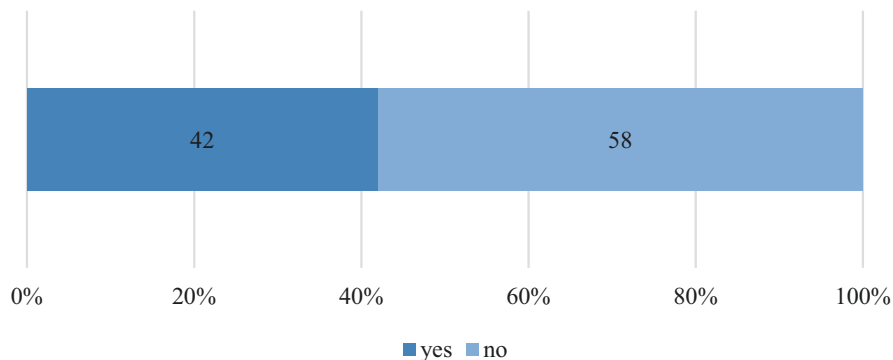
The high prevalence of experienced respect from other members is noticeable in the Hungarian data. Hungarian members gave the highest proportion of feeling respected by other members (60%), when comparing to the European mean of 45%. This may be connected to the local embedding of clubs and homogeneous membership composition.

7.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

In regard to democratic decision-making processes, it can be stated that the opportunity for people to exercise democracy is reflected by the high number of non-profit civil organisations in sports; out of the over 64 thousand civil organisations covering 18 different societal areas, close to 20% operate in connection to sports (Perényi et al. 2015). The same report, using data provided by the central statistical agency in reference to the year 2014, also found that an approximately equal proportion of the over 12,000 non-profit sports organisations operate with a competition (44,7%) and with a leisure sports (43,8%) focus. Close to 90% of these non-profit sports organisations are still sports clubs, 9% are foundations, and 1% are non-profit companies if considering the organisational forms (Perényi et al. 2015). Therefore, the form of non-profit companies allowed by the Sports Law enacted in 2004 (Évi I 2004) did not result in a large change in the composition of non-profit sports organisations. Clubs as organisational forms are still dominant,

Table 7.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 671$, delegate decision-making $n = 646$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 2 | 6 | 18 | 41 | 33 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 37 | 20 | 15 | 20 | 8 |

**Fig. 7.9** Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 599$)

which also provides opportunities for assembling and democratic decision-making for members of society.

Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement was described by clubs' efforts of involving members when making important decisions. In this respect, 74% of the clubs agree or totally agree that they aim to involve members and just a minority (8%) had a negative opinion, as Table 7.14 shows.

We can find an almost opposite opinion when responses for the delegation of decision-making from the board to committees were examined. Only 8% of the clubs totally agreed with the statement and another 20% was also positive about it. It is noticeable that a large proportion of the clubs either did not agree (57%) with such democratic procedures or could not formulate an opinion (15%). It may be the case that coping with the procedures of democratic decision-making is only formal, as when it comes to actual involvement of members in the issues of the clubs, the board demonstrates a rather territorial practice. Important decisions are not delegated to the committees. This phenomenon may be due to the enhanced level of formal and technical requirements toward clubs in administering state funding; special knowledge in handling tasks is needed and the completion of such tasks might not be trusted to committees (Fig. 7.9).

In Hungary, as elsewhere in Europe, clubs have their yearly general assembly where conclusions of the previous year, future plans and positions are discussed and

Table 7.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 523$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 508$, share my view with other members $n = 513$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 31 | 28 | 18 | 8 | 4 | 11 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 24 | 17 | 16 | 11 | 14 | 18 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 16 | 14 | 13 | 9 | 16 | 33 |

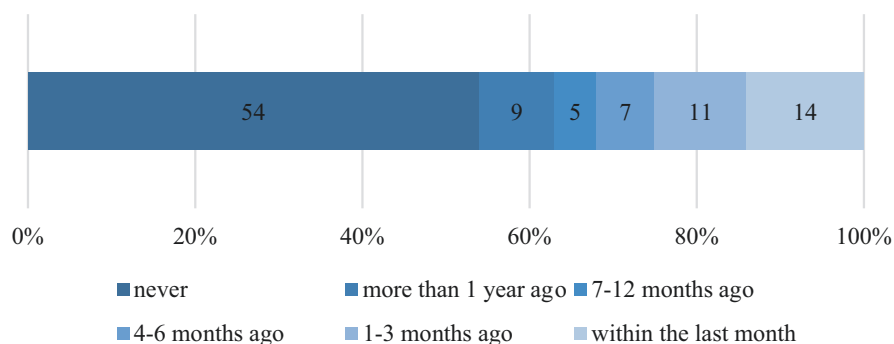


Fig. 7.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 584$)

decisions are made. Similar to other European countries, also in Hungary, the attendance of the last general assembly remains below 50% (42%) (Table 7.15).

Members seem to be rather inactive also in other forms of occasions designed for democratic expression. For example, 31% of members never participate in member meetings or other club meetings; 24% of members never tell their opinion to any persons in key positions of the club. It seems that people easier share their opinions with other club members quite actively (33%), and only 16% of members never discussed club issues with others. However, the opinion of club members about the club could also be taken not as a contribution with a view of making the club a better place for members but as a criticism toward the clubs' leadership. It may discourage members from expressing their opinion.

In terms of attempts made to influence decision-making in the club, this survey revealed that over half of the members (54%) never tried to influence any matters in the club. One quarter of respondents stated that their last attempt to influence decisions was within three months (Fig. 7.10). This phenomenon may have its roots back in years when civil initiatives were not only unsupported but have been blocked by the political authorities during the end of the nineteenth century but also during the state-socialist era (Perényi and Bodnár 2015).

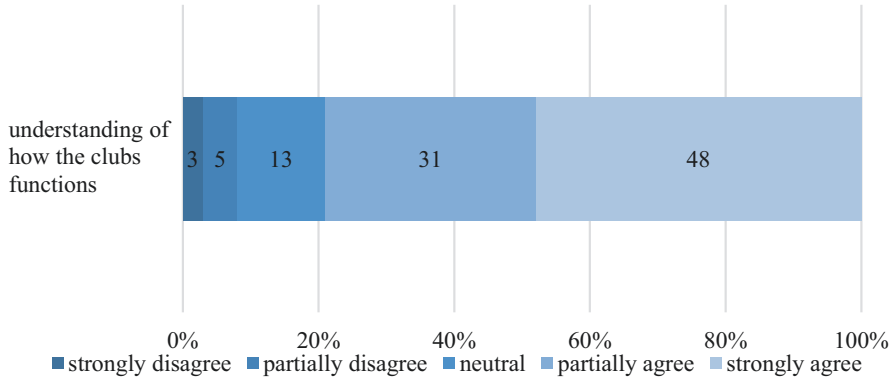


Fig. 7.11 Member’s knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, n = 513)

Regardless of most members’ absence from the general assembly and their reluctance of attempts for decision-making influence, they feel that they understand how the club functions (79%). And only 9% disagree with the examined statement (Fig. 7.11).

7.6 Voluntary Work

Volunteering in Hungary, based on the results of the Special Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity (European Commission 2014), was slightly below the 7% European average with a figure for Hungary of 6%. In case of youth, 17% of the Hungarians volunteer, mostly in sports clubs, in comparison to the EU average of 24%. It was also found that among the volunteers, sports is one of the most frequent choices besides culture or education related activities. National surveys on volunteering reported different results according to targeted age, sample size or time period. Results found with different methodology showed that 40% of the total population got engaged in some sort of volunteering (Czike and Kuti 2005), while some years later results ranged between 13% and 30% (Géczi 2012). Behind volunteering most researchers found goodwill and strive for social contribution as a drive (Czike and Kuti 2005; Géczi 2012).

The attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work are described in Table 7.16. Clubs with agreement and disagreement with exclusive volunteer leadership are almost the same with 39% and 41% consequently, while one-fifth of the clubs does not have a clear opinion on the issue. The majority of the clubs in the Hungarian sample (71%) also think that the club should not consider members as customers that could not be expected to contribute with voluntary work, only 13% are of the opposite opinion, and 17% was not able formulate an opinion on this issue. In this regard, results found nationally are identical with the European average results, showing a strong civil identity within the function of the existing clubs in Hungary.

Table 7.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 689$, members as customers $n = 673$, demonstrating passion $n = 702$, all members can be volunteers $n = 700$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 24 | 15 | 20 | 17 | 24 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 56 | 15 | 17 | 9 | 4 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 3 | 2 | 12 | 30 | 53 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 4 | 2 | 8 | 18 | 68 |

Table 7.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 748$, no fixed position(s) $n = 879$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 35 | 28 | 24 | 11 | 2 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 53 | 14 | 17 | 12 | 4 |

The clubs are of the opinion that their members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done. Eighty-eight per cent of the surveyed clubs agreed with this statement, along with the low proportion of no clear opinion (12%) and 5% in disagreement with this statement. It must be emphasised that Hungarian clubs' satisfaction with their volunteers is among the highest. Also, the clubs in Hungary believe that all members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications; all together 86% of clubs agree or strongly agree with this statement. This result, once again, is the highest for Hungarian clubs among the participating nations (Breuer et al. 2017). In this respect it seems that clubs may accept and appreciate all help they can get. The competition-oriented clubs need help in relation to their events, while leisure sports oriented clubs need volunteers for their daily operations (Table 7.17).

The civil initiative and involvement can also be described by the composition of human resources of a club. The total number of volunteers in fixed and not fixed positions was also asked. Specifically, in fixed positions 35% of the clubs have up to 5 volunteers, 28% have between 6 and 10 volunteers and 24% between 11 and 20 volunteers; more than 20 volunteers in fixed positions can be found in approximately 10% of the clubs. In case of volunteers in no fixed position, over half of the clubs have up to 5 volunteers, other volunteer number categories are represented by more or less 15%, but clubs with above 50 volunteers can be found only in 4% of clubs.

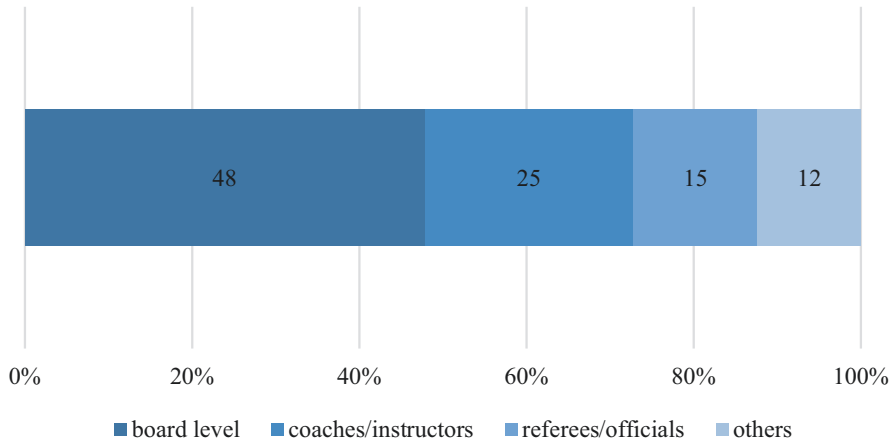


Fig. 7.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, *n* = 711)

Both of these results should be evaluated in the light of the fact that the majority of the clubs that participated are small. The results may also reflect a trend or a possible tradition for clubs not to have many volunteers in no fixed positions. This may also have relations to reluctance for delegation of tasks or fear of losing position or power by employed personnel or by volunteers in fixed positions. Such fear from volunteer contribution may be caused by the fact that calls for volunteers often times put emphasis on easier job market entry as a benefit for volunteer contribution (Fig. 7.12).

Volunteers in fixed positions mostly serve on the board level, which refers to 48% of volunteers in fixed positions, while 25% are coaches or instructors, 15% are referees, and the remaining 12% are completing other tasks in connection to preparing practices or competitions, organising travel or accommodation or managing fields or uniforms. The high proportion of board members may also be explained by the high prevalence of small clubs in the sample but also by the fact that positions of referees and even coaches are not perceived as traditional volunteer roles.

Problems associated with the recruitment and retention of volunteers do not lay heavily on the shoulders of the Hungarian clubs with regard to any of the three tasks in Table 7.18. Only about one quarter of the clubs perceived recruitment and retention as a big or a very big problem. There are some, but not substantial differences within the categories. It seems that the recruitment and retention of referees/officials was considered the least problematic as 65% of the clubs feel no or only small problems with that. In comparison, in case of board level volunteers and coaches, around half of the clubs reported no issues with recruitment and retention. A medium or bigger problem was reported by 50% of clubs (Table 7.18). This result may seem contradictory given that the general volunteering rate in Hungary is low. A possible explanation might be that the coach and referee position is not perceived as a real

Table 7.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 656$, coaches/instructors $n = 645$, referees/officials $n = 616$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 25 | 24 | 30 | 15 | 5 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 30 | 21 | 21 | 19 | 9 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 44 | 20 | 17 | 13 | 6 |

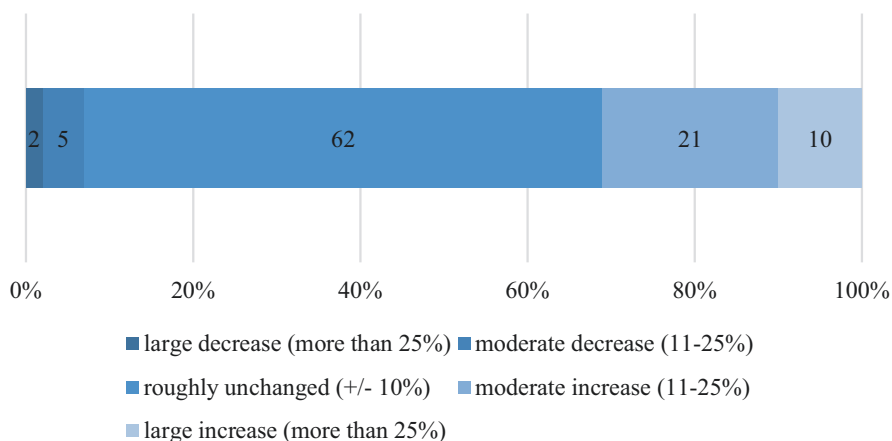


Fig. 7.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 707$)

volunteer role, additional to the fact that in sports, parents provide assistance to clubs without realising it as a volunteer contribution (Fig. 7.13).

Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years was also examined in this study. The concerns for volunteer involvement raised in Europe (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017) cannot be clearly tracked in Hungary. Only 7% of clubs reported a large or moderate decrease in volunteer numbers, which is below the survey average of 15%. It can be emphasised that the highest percentage of clubs experiencing an increase in the number of volunteers was measured in Hungary over the past 5 years in comparison to other countries in the survey: Thirty-one per cent of the clubs reported a moderate or large increase in their volunteer numbers to the survey average of 15% (Breuer et al. 2017). The increase may be explained by postmodern changes in society but also the increased attention that sports gets in the media in relation to its strategic sector nature – increased funding, new facilities and

Table 7.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 747$, social gatherings $n = 747$, recruit through current network $n = 747$, pay for training $n = 747$, inform members $n = 747$, inform parents $n = 747$, benefits in kind $n = 747$, recruitment outside $n = 747$, management $n = 747$, written strategy $n = 747$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 853$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 38 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 31 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 57 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 13 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 25 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 21 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 21 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 8 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 21 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 4 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 19 |

international events. Also, the Fina World Championships in 2017 created a hype around volunteering in sports (Perényi 2018) (Table 7.19).

The actions taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers showed that more clubs in Hungary make efforts in volunteer recruitment than in volunteer retention. The proportion of clubs recruiting within their existing networks are the same as the survey average, while clubs that encourage and motivate volunteers verbally are below, 38% in comparison to the average of 55%.

On the efforts on recruitment, 21% of the Hungarian clubs reported that the club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management, and an even lower proportion has a written strategy outlining recruitment procedures. The clubs in Hungary use the capacities of their members and the parents of their members more often as they are both expected to contribute to the implementation of their clubs' activities (57%). Recruitment from outside networks is rare (8%) and it is below the survey average (14%).

The rewarding side, as mentioned, is weak. The verbal encouragement is present in 38% of the clubs and 21% rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind. Payment for volunteers to take training or gain qualification is used as a reward in 13% of the clubs, which, similarly to Spain and Poland, is far below the average (33%). This result on one hand can be a result of lack of resources such as funding for trainers or location for the training or the lack of time and interest expressed by volunteers. The organisation of social gatherings again is below the survey average of 45%. Only 31% of Hungarian clubs organises parties or social gatherings for their volunteers. It seems clubs are more understood as places for practice than socialising. The proportion of clubs, however, not getting engaged in anything in particular with

Table 7.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 389$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of members | 14 | 19 | 18 | 18 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 5 |

Table 7.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 179$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 29 | 23 | 22 | 16 | 11 |

regard to volunteer recruitment (19%) are only slightly above the survey average of 13% (Table 7.20).

The distribution of the frequency of voluntary work reported by volunteers in Hungarian clubs is more or less balanced over the predefined categories. It is to emphasise, however, that more than half of the volunteers gets engaged with supporting the clubs at least once in every 3 months, 18% once a month, 7% bi-weekly and only one quarter helps at least once a week. Regular volunteers contribute 2–4 days a week (10%) or 5 days a week or more (5%) (Table 7.21).

In an average month of a season, 29% of the volunteers in fixed positions contribute up to 5 hours a month of voluntary club work, which is the most frequently contributed time in the predefined categories. Twenty-three per cent of the volunteers reported to use 6–10 hours and 22% of clubs' volunteers help 11–20 hours in an average month. There are also a large proportion of volunteers that contribute more hours per month: Twenty-seven per cent of the volunteers can count 21 or above hours of volunteer contribution. The rather balanced dispersion across volunteer hours may reflect the diversity in the social position of volunteers or the needs of clubs distributed throughout different club sizes.

7.7 Conclusion

As part of the non-profit sector, sports clubs in Hungary are important platforms for civil initiatives and democratic decision-making. They are also sites for the exchange of sporting services, and they provide physical and sporting activities in local communities within both leisure and competitive sports. Sports clubs are also social melting pots for women, people with disabilities, the elderly or people with ethnic or migration backgrounds. Hungarian sports clubs also contribute to

public welfare in the areas of health, social integration, democracy and voluntary work.

Clubs offer a range of physical activities starting from health-enhancing physical activity through grass roots sports up to competition and elite sports. Clubs are dedicated to offer these activities and they not only feel that their sports disciplines are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity, but they are committed to provide local communities with their services in relation to sports. The value of their contribution to public health is unquestionable as the raising public health issues are present in society and as low participation rates are also severe in the country. On the other hand, clubs do not consider low sports participation as a problem of their own. Initiatives targeting underrepresented groups or offering maintained membership for athletes retiring from their sport are not in the view of club's policy. Opportunities in connection to services offered on lower levels of sports, including leisure sports or in roles different from training and competing such as volunteering or spectating can only rarely be found in practices.

It can be stated that sports clubs' role is also important in Hungary as they are open to including members from any segment of society, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion or occupation – but the measures of sports participation show social inequalities. Exclusion is not noticeable in policy or attitude of clubs at all. However, inclusive calls could be more visible in communication or programmes. Beside the importance given to ability and performance, as the majority of the clubs are seen as a place for elite and competitive athletes to develop, clubs could do more to match the contemporary trends towards more individualistic and non-competitive sports. The reason being that after the age of 18, club membership declines in clubs that focus on competition sports. As leisure sports organisations have limited ability and capacity to offer sporting services for citizens in older age categories, for example, and many people participate in sports or do physical activities more outside of organisational (club) affiliation, there could be a potential for gaining new members. Even though the values and social benefits associated with sports proved to be grounded in the life and activities of clubs and realised through club membership in general in Hungary, becoming a member of a sports club is under-utilised, and not an option for the majority of people in communities. Discrepancies may also be noticed as club loyalty is not fully capitalised by the vast majority of clubs that do not strive to retain members through the life course, for example. Young athletes tend to drop out of sports and their club membership shortly after a decline in their sports performance and/or their increased age or as a result of an injury. Clubs are limited in offering continued participating opportunities in lower divisions or leisure sports with or without competition elements. Young athletes terminating their competitive sporting career drop out of the view of their childhood club; and their contribution to roles in club management or volunteering become limited.

Clubs function as civil organisations with democratic decision-making procedures. Even though most clubs in Hungary aim to involve members in decision-making procedures, the majority of members does not participate in the general assembly of clubs. It is also not characteristic for members to participate in member meetings or other club meetings or speak their mind to key persons in the club

and share their views with other members in the club. Members hardly make attempts to influence decision-making in the club, but they feel that they have enough knowledge about how the club functions. This may be connected to the fact that the majority of clubs does not delegate decision-making from the board to committees. The withdrawal of members from self-expression may have its roots in historical events when activities of civil organisations were blocked or prohibited. This reflex is combined today by the complexity of financial procedures and importance given to politics of relations; both may make members feel incompetent to formulate opinions.

This phenomenon may also have an effect on how much and in what role members volunteer for sports clubs. Most volunteers are in fixed positions and are serving with tasks on the board level, but fewer serve in committees or help in daily operations. Many clubs with volunteer programmes expect their members and the parents of their athletes to contribute to the activities of the club and find the members to be enthusiastic and dedicated in their contributions. Most clubs are also open to receive any kind of help and from anyone willing to offer support, regardless of job qualifications. In terms of rewards and benefits, the recruitment of volunteers gets more attention than the retention of volunteers. Unlike clubs in other European countries, clubs in Hungary more rarely use the benefit of training and qualification for their volunteers, and less frequently organise social gatherings to strengthen club identity.

The social functions of sports clubs are influenced by the changes in sports realised as part of the centrally driven efforts to develop sports since 2010. Regardless of these efforts, some challenges may also be mentioned mainly around the scope and the distribution of funding. For example, the central funds dominantly reach the big clubs, and the successful clubs in team sports and traditionally also successful individual sports. Clubs without these characteristics hope that funding comes from the municipality level. The allocation of funds to clubs from municipalities is, firstly, not automatic; secondly, it does not include all clubs; and thirdly, it also supports elite success. Clubs with athletes representing sports with potential at national and international competition levels may have greater chances of receiving funding and funding at higher levels. Most clubs do not receive this support. Those clubs supported may receive a portion of their yearly budget, of which a part would be spent on the use of sporting facilities. The use of funding is closely monitored. In cases where the club is able to access additional income through providing public services, the funding in the following year may be lowered by the municipality.

Also, the attitude of municipality leaders towards sports is a critical factor in the funding and development of sports on the local level, even today. In cities where the city leadership prefers and supports sports, both sports facilities and sports programmes become part of the city strategy and were used in city marketing; thus their funding is more generous to develop sports and provide health-enhancing physical activities for their communities. With few exceptions, sporting facilities in general are not owned by sports clubs. The ownership of these facilities is attached to municipalities or the state. Their operation is managed by municipality-owned companies or by schools. Accordingly, sports clubs are obliged to pay rent when using

school or municipality sports halls or fields. The sports facility problem was well addressed by the TAO programme, new facilities are built, and old ones renovated all around the country.

The patterns of the results in this survey place Hungary in the same group with another former state-socialist and a Mediterranean country, Poland and Spain. It must be noted, however, that among the members of country clusters, large deviations may occur. For example, the reported proportion of clubs using public facilities may be higher in these countries in comparison to other countries included in the survey, but deviations of even 20–30% may occur among nations of former state-socialist countries. In some cases, the patterns of results in Hungary are more similar to countries in the sample such as Norway, Denmark or the Netherlands. This phenomenon requires deeper analysis, and further research about the historical context and specific system characteristics of clubs' social roles and functions in these former state-socialist countries, and their communities.

Sports clubs in Hungary may further contribute to health promotion, social cohesion and democratic participation with special initiatives and programmes. Their role in promoting public welfare in Hungary and, through that, in Europe could be more developed. Sports clubs in Hungary hide an unrealised potential for further integrating not only vulnerable groups but also societal segments presently inactive in sports and physical activities. Clubs could more effectively communicate their openness to receive members' opinion in their democratic decision-making and could be more conscious in delegation of decisions to committees and invite members to participate in the procedures and actions or simply express an opinion before making final decisions. They also could reach out more for local community and by providing services could gain new members. Call upon vulnerable groups and make efforts to comfort them in their needs or involve them in the clubs daily activities as participants or volunteers.

Sports in Hungary is facing a double challenge: new initiatives and developments fighting the instincts inherited from the past in the operation of sports clubs for a more inclusive and community-based sports and trends of individualisation and postmodernity of citizens wanting to be fitter and more active, but not necessarily within the boundaries of sports clubs.

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Chapter 8

Netherlands: Sports Clubs at the Heart of Society and Sports Policy



Jan-Willem van der Roest, Resie Hoeijmakers, and Remco Hoekman

Abstract Sports clubs in the Netherlands have an important societal position. They play a role in the everyday life of many Dutch people, and they are increasingly asked to take up roles in public health promotion and societal integration. Given their characteristics, it is not surprising that sports clubs are ascribed these roles in policies. On average, Dutch sports clubs have a relative large organisational capacity, because they have relatively large numbers of members and volunteers and they often possess their own sports facilities. These traits make them interesting potential partners for national and local policy-makers from different policy domains. Sports clubs also ascribe this societal position and role as policy partner to themselves. However, this chapter also shows that Dutch sports clubs are still mainly focused on organising their core sports activities, which is challenging enough for many clubs. Policy initiatives aimed at strengthening sports clubs could help to enrich their societal functions. In addition, this chapter illustrates that clubs have difficulty to get their members active in democratic decision-making and volunteering. New ways of designing the volunteering positions are needed to maintain the clubs' strengths.

8.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

With a quantity of 23,870 (Nederlands Olympisch Comité * Nederlandse Sport Federatie [NOC*NSF] 2018), sports clubs are, and always have been, the core of sports activity in the Netherlands. From the beginning, at the end of the nineteenth century, sports clubs were mainly run by the elite and could not yet count on

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governmental contributions. Sports clubs had become networks in which like-minded people connected, such as in the context of religious and/or political beliefs. After World War II, the local governments wanted sports to become a more democratic phenomenon and demanded sports clubs to abolish the balloting committees in order to receive a subsidy (Stokvis 2010). Everybody who wanted to become a member should have the opportunity to do so. Since the 1960s and 1970s, the expectations towards sports clubs with regard to their functions for society increased. Sports clubs were urged to offer more services, for example, in playing a role in the integration of ethnic minorities into society and for health promotion (Van der Werff et al. 2015). Furthermore, traditional bonds, mainly by religion, that initiated the establishment of different sports clubs in municipalities lost a great part of their social meaning and as a result sports clubs merged. It is also from this period onwards that sports clubs are no longer the only context of sports participation. As a result of the individualisation and health orientation, people started to participate in sports outside of sports club. In the last decades, the growth in sports participation in the Netherlands is mostly related to sports participation in fitness centres, informal groups, or alone (Hoekman and Breedveld 2013). Despite these processes of individualisation, participation in voluntary work remains high in the Netherlands, also with regard to voluntary work related to sports (European Commission 2018). Under the income law, volunteers working for sports clubs can receive compensations up to an amount of EUR 1700 per year.

Based on the number of sports clubs in the Netherlands, they still are the key sports providers, even though the amount and variety of commercial sports providers that offer sports activities is increasing. Sports clubs receive support from the government, related to the provision of public services in communities. So although, on the one hand, sports clubs are characterised by a great independence from the state because of their autonomy, there is, on the other hand, a strong link with the government. The government support comes with conditions, and it seems that these conditions are becoming more demanding over time. The commercial sector is still hardly regarded as a partner for the government in setting up policies and interventions (Hoekman and Breedveld 2013; Hoekman and Reitsma 2018).

With regard to sports policies, the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sports (VWS) is responsible for the national policies on sports and regularly includes sports clubs in these policies. The national government supports sports primarily because it promotes social values and contributes to key government objectives in the fields of prevention and health, youth policy, education, integration, communities, safety and international policy (Hoekman and Breedveld 2013). Local governments play the most important role for local sport. Ninety per cent of government spending on sports is provided by local municipalities (Van den Dool and Hoekman 2017). Most of the local sports budget is spent on sports facilities, by providing these facilities against reduced fees to sports clubs. Without these reduced fees for sports facilities and additional subsidies of municipalities to sports clubs, sports clubs would have a hard time balancing their budget. Apart from this financial support of the local government, for most sports clubs, the membership fees are the main means of income. In addition, there are revenues from sports activities, catering services, events and subsidies (Lucassen and Van der Roest 2018). In the Netherlands, sports clubs are not

subsidised directly by the national government but through national governing bodies for sports or through municipalities. Sports federations provide support to their clubs, while clubs at the same time transfer money to the federations. As from first January 2019, sports clubs can apply for a subsidy to cover parts of their investments in making their sports facilities more sustainable and accessible.

In light of several regulatory responsibilities which are decentralised to the jurisdiction of municipalities, local sports clubs are recently being stimulated to participate in policy programmes aiming to enhance active living and social cohesion (Hoekman and Reitsma 2018). Municipalities persuade sports clubs to fulfil a wider role within the community in exchange for the reduced fees that sports clubs pay to use the municipal sports facilities (Van der Werff et al. 2015). With this, the responsibilities and tasks of sports clubs have widened over time. Sports clubs are now encouraged to develop and employ activities that do not only benefit their members but also the (local) community. For example, they are invited to play a central role in communities that face demographical transition (Van der Roest et al. 2017a). This is visible in policy on the local level as well as on the national level.

Recently, VWS, the Municipalities and Sports Association (VSG) and the sports federations (NOC*NSF) have joined forces and signed a National Sports Agreement together with social organisations and companies. By supporting providers, by encouraging children to exercise more and more effectively and by making sports facilities more attractive and accessible, the coalition focuses on strengthening sports providers, involving everyone in sports and contributing with sports to a healthy population and unity in society (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid, Welzijn, and Sport [VWS] et al. 2018). Within this National Sports Agreement, sports clubs are often mentioned and positioned as an important policy partner. In addition to the above, the government aims to achieve a positive sports culture by preventing undesirable behaviour at and around the clubs. With the agreement, the coalition wants to remain sports and exercise providers to fulfil their societal obligations. Neighbourhood Sports Coaches are financed by the government on the national and local level who will help people who currently experience barriers to engaging in sports. They will also help sports providers, among which sports clubs, to provide better services to these people. Furthermore, Neighbourhood Sports Coaches will help sports providers strengthen their position through cooperation. This means cooperation within their own branch of sports, cooperation with other sports or cooperation with partners from, for example, education, welfare organisations, childcare and companies. Furthermore, the NOC*NSF, sports federations, sports councils and municipalities pay attention to club support in order to strengthen the sports clubs in the Netherlands.

In general, we conclude that the sports clubs in the Netherlands have a central position in local sports policies and national policy programmes. Although sports clubs are financially supported by the government, they are autonomous. Voluntary sports clubs in the Netherlands profit from high levels of participation in voluntary work and the Dutch culture of working together. Sports clubs are of great value to the Dutch sporting landscape and are central in the sports infrastructure in the Netherlands.

8.2 Structure and Context

The Netherlands is characterised by high sports membership rates. The Eurobarometer shows that the Netherlands ranks at the top with regard to the participation in sports clubs. In the Netherlands, 27% of the population are members of a sports club, compared to the European average of 12% (European Commission 2018). Furthermore, the Netherlands is densely populated with more than 400 inhabitants per square kilometre (PopulationPyramid 2018). Consequently, the membership size of sports clubs is relatively large in the Netherlands. The Netherlands has almost 24,000 sports clubs (NOC*NSF 2018). Almost half have 300 members or more (47%, see Fig. 8.1). In fact compared to other European countries, most large clubs (with more than 500 members) are found in the Netherlands (30%). Only 55% of all Dutch sports clubs can be described as small clubs with a membership number up to 300. Larger sports clubs are more often team sports with own facilities, whereas smaller clubs tend to offer more often individual sports and have more often no facilities of their own (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017).

In 2017, the number of sports club memberships (of all sports federations affiliated to NOC*NSF) amounted to 5,194,000 spread over 4,368,000 people (NOC*NSF 2018). In recent years, these numbers are quite stable, despite various programmes to stimulate sports participation. As Fig. 8.2 shows, within the last 5 years, the same amount of sports clubs have experienced an increase in total membership (30%) as clubs that have experienced a decrease (29%). The clubs where the number of members increased are mainly team sports, larger clubs and clubs with own facilities (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017).

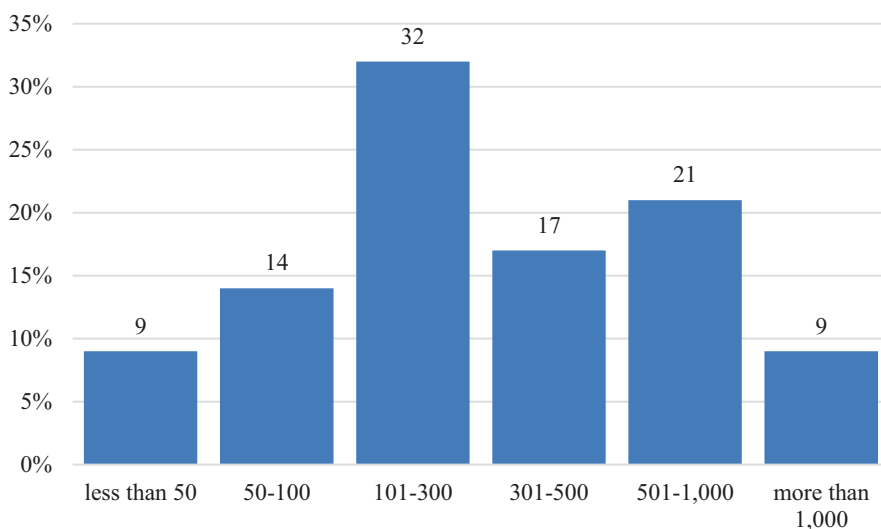


Fig. 8.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 1015$)

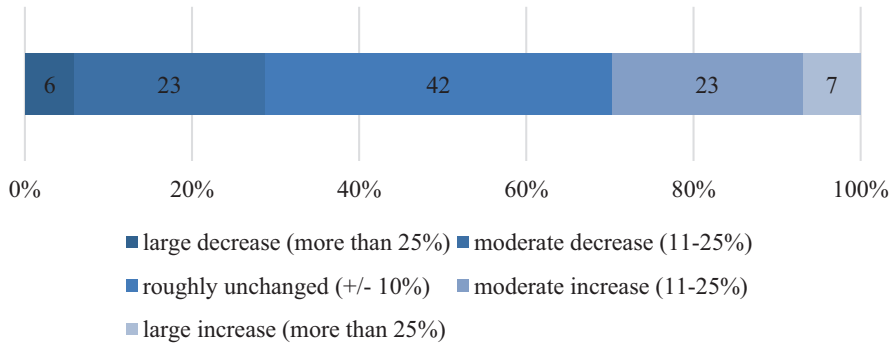


Fig. 8.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 1010)

Table 8.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, *n* = 933)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 24 | 25 | 32 | 15 | 3 |

Although sports clubs form the backbone and stronghold of the sporting landscape in the Netherlands, they are not without concern and experience serious challenges. In the Netherlands, three quarters of all clubs had experienced (somewhat) difficulties with regard to recruitment and retention of members within the last 5 years (see Table 8.1). A third of the Dutch clubs regard the membership development as a threat to the future of the organisation (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017). In particular, clubs that already have experienced a decrease in membership in recent years consider problems with recruitment and retention of members as a threat to the survival of the organisation. Five per cent of the board members of clubs expect these problems within 1 or 2 years (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017).

Sports clubs in the Netherlands have a long history. Although it is uncertain when the first sports club was founded, it is known that the oldest field sports club in the Netherlands that still exists dates from 1875 (Van der Werff et al. 2015). The first soccer club was founded in 1879. Almost two out of three clubs were founded between 1946 and 1989 (59%; see Fig. 8.3). Only 7% of all Dutch sports clubs are younger clubs that have been founded since the turn of the millennium. Compared to other European countries (with an average of 30%), this percentage is the lowest in the Netherlands.

In the Netherlands, it is not very common for a sports club to offer several types of sports. A vast majority of the sports clubs are single sports clubs, providing only one sport for their members (91%; see Fig. 8.4). Only one out of ten sport clubs is a

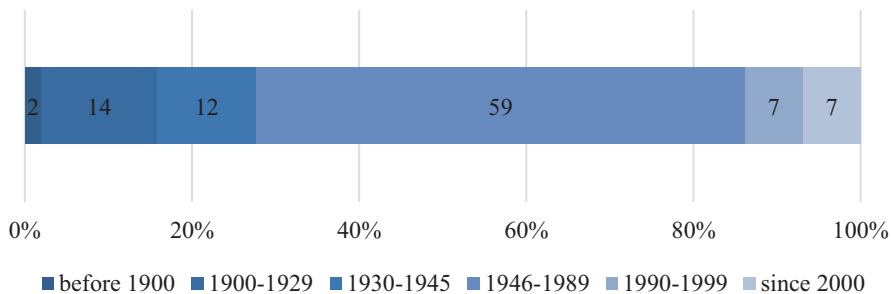


Fig. 8.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 1005$)

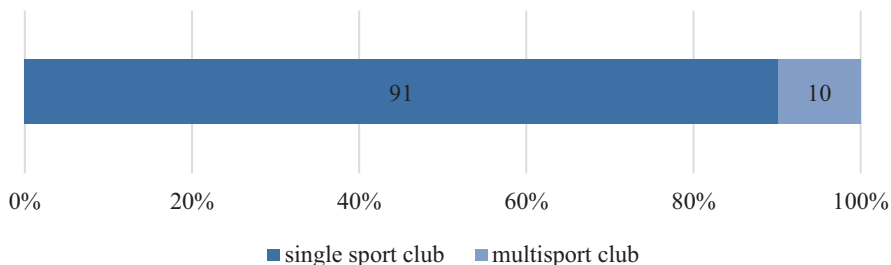


Fig. 8.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 1001$)

Table 8.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 1000$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|------------------------|----|
| 1 | Football | 25 |
| 2 | Tennis | 13 |
| 3 | Korfball | 6 |
| 4 | Volleyball | 6 |
| 5 | Track and field | 5 |
| 6 | Swimming | 5 |
| 7 | Boules | 4 |
| 8 | Handball | 4 |
| 9 | Gymnastics (all sorts) | 4 |
| 10 | Basketball | 4 |

so-called multisport club in which two or more sports can be practised. Although Dutch sports clubs are mostly single sports clubs, they have on average more members than sports clubs in other countries. It might be more important in other countries to start a multisport club to reach a proper size to function as a sports club, than is the case in a dense country with a high membership rate, such as the Netherlands.

The most commonly offered sport in the Netherlands is football, which one in four Dutch clubs offer to their members (see Table 8.2). Besides football, a mixture of team and (semi-)individual sports are popular like tennis, korfball and volleyball.

Table 8.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 933$, public facilities $n = 933$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 511$, share of revenues $n = 895$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 53 | 55 | 96 | 5 |

Table 8.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 933$, financial situation $n = 933$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 60 | 15 | 12 | 9 | 4 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 54 | 21 | 17 | 6 | 2 |

With regard to facility usage, the number of Dutch sports clubs making use of club-owned (53%) and publicly owned facilities (55%) is nearly the same (see Table 8.3). The Netherlands has a high proportion of clubs that use own facilities. Nearly all clubs that use public facilities report that they have to pay a usage fee. It is common for municipalities to charge a reduced fee for using public sports facilities. Direct financial support in the form of monetary subsidies is low. Only 5% of the total revenues of sports clubs come from public money. Most sports clubs profit from the indirect subsidies of municipalities to sports clubs by providing the sports facilities for a reduced fee.

Looking at the problems related to the availability of sports facilities, almost two out of three clubs state they have no problems in this area. Thirteen per cent of Dutch sports clubs face substantial problems (see Table 8.4). Especially the clubs without own facilities, often the indoor sports, do not always have access to the sports facilities at the desired hours (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017). They often have to deal with other users and/or have to make arrangements with the manager of the sports facility (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017). A similar picture can be seen regarding the severity of problems regarding the financial situation of sports clubs. It is especially the outdoor sports and the clubs with their own facilities that have a positive financial result every year and have the ability to pay unforeseen expenses (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017).

Sports clubs thrive on volunteers, though half of the Dutch sports clubs now employ paid staff (51%; see Table 8.5). However, the proportion of paid staff in the Netherlands is low. Paid staff are particularly employed in positions related to the area of sports and training. Only 6% of the clubs employ a paid manager in a leading position.

Table 8.5 Paid staff and paid manager/s in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 971$, paid manager/s $n = 961$)

| Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 51 | 6 |

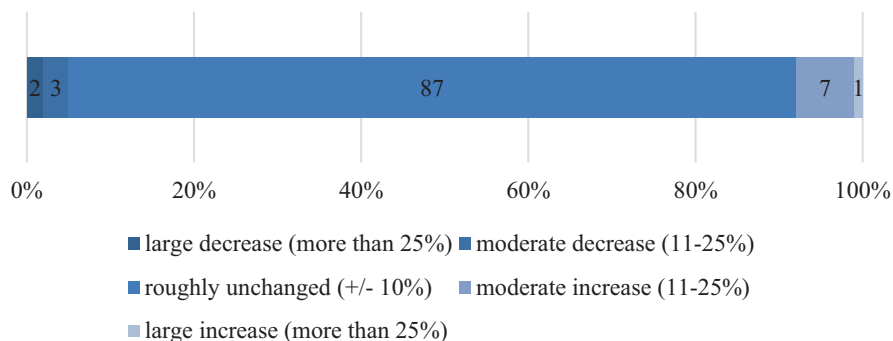


Fig. 8.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 784$)

Looking at the development of paid staff within the last 5 years, the vast majority of Dutch clubs have the impression that the number of paid staff has been roughly unchanged (87%; see Fig. 8.5). Only 5% of clubs indicate a large or moderate decrease in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years and 7% of the sports clubs signal a moderate increase. In total, one fifth of the sports clubs state that they have too few qualified employees. Especially larger clubs and team sports indicate that they have too few qualified employees (Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017).

With a long history of sports clubs and a high percentage of sports club memberships, the Netherlands has an evident sports club culture. Sports clubs are well rooted in society and hold a central position in sports policy. Within sports policy, high expectations of sports clubs’ potential to contribute to society at large are expressed. However, with the limited professionalisation of sports clubs, it has to be seen whether sports clubs are capable to live up to these expectations.

8.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

In the Netherlands, studies have identified the healthification of national sports policy (Stuij and Stokvis 2015). This illustrates the enlarged focus on the external benefits of sports. Sports is more about increasing the health of the population than it is about sports in itself. Similar processes have been identified at the level of local authorities. Hoekman and Van der Maat (2017) conclude that improving the health of the population is the main goal of local sports policy. As voluntary sports clubs are important cooperating partners of local sports policy, this focus on health also

Table 8.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 937$, sports clubs disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 937$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 2 | 8 | 32 | 42 | 16 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 2 | 3 | 16 | 53 | 26 |

has an impact on them. Local authorities persuade local sports clubs to increase their societal meaning and contribute to the broader goals of local sports policy.

In 2015, we asked for the opinion of board members of the sports clubs on topics related to health-enhancing physical activity (see Table 8.6) to see what function they ascribe themselves in this regard. In the Netherlands, half of the sports clubs seem to be committed on offering health enhancing physical activity programmes. One out of ten clubs does not agree (at all) with this statement, and a third of all Dutch sports clubs have no clear opinion on this issue, meaning that approximately half of the clubs do not have a commitment to health promotion. This indicates that the function ascribed to sports clubs in policy related to health promotion does not suit every sports club in the Netherlands. Other research showed that 13% of the sports clubs are involved in projects to increase peoples' health or healthy lifestyle (e.g. healthy sports canteen, lowering alcohol consumption; Van Kalmthout and Van Ginneken 2017). These numbers clearly illustrate that not all sports clubs have the desire or abilities to live up to the expectations from policy. This might be related to problems that clubs face in finding volunteers, which makes it more difficult to organise additional activities in the neighbourhood or at schools (van der Werff et al. 2015).

However, it is not only the special programmes particularly developed for health-enhancements provided by the sports clubs that contribute to people's health. Regular participation in sports activities at sport clubs can as well enhance a person's health. Most Dutch clubs (79%; see Table 8.6) feel that the sports activities they offer have a health-enhancing character. Only few do not agree (at all; 5%) with this statement or have no clear opinion (16%). This means that the majority of the sports clubs in the Netherlands are convinced that participating in the sports they offer is improving people's health. When looking at motives of people to practise sports, 80% of the Dutch population mentions health-related benefits (Van den Dool 2019). However, health-related motives are most common for sports participants outside of the sports club context.

As the health-enhancing value of sports clubs is related to the sports practices within sports clubs, it is good to note that not all members of sports clubs are necessarily participating in these sports activities. People can be affiliated to the club in different ways: as sports participants, as members, as board members in the

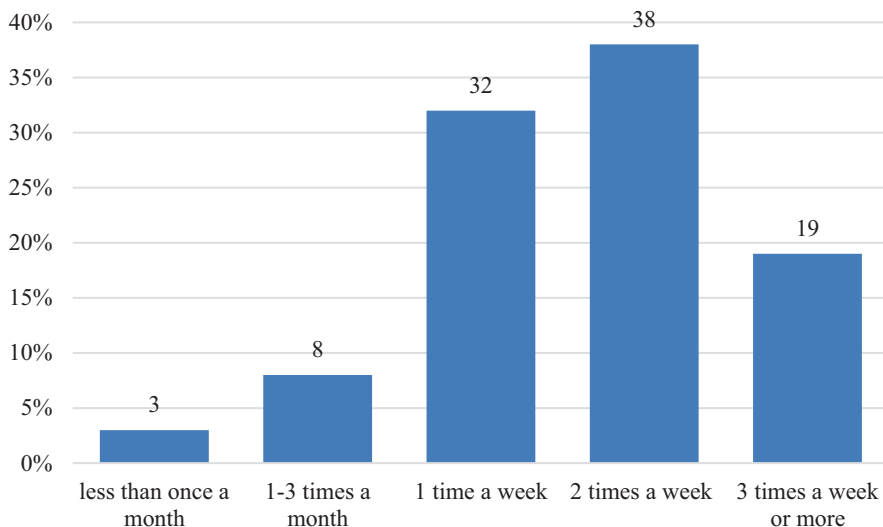


Fig. 8.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 1287$)

decision-making process and as volunteers. In 2015, 70% of the individuals affiliated to a club in the Netherlands actually participated in sports in the club (Van der Roest et al. 2017b). There can be a large variation in the frequency of their participation: some are intensively involved in the sports activities, and others participate occasionally. In the Netherlands, 57% of the individuals affiliated with a club participate in sports two times a week or more (see Fig. 8.6). A third of the individuals affiliated with a club take part in a sports activity once a week, meaning that most members of sports clubs participate in sports regularly.

Many sports club affiliates also take part in sports activities outside of their sports clubs. Almost half of the sports club affiliates do sports outside of any organised setting alone (Breuer et al. 2017). And one out of five practise sports outside of any organised setting with friends and/or family and one out of five attend a privately owned gym/fitness centre. Just 14% only exercise or participate in sports in the sports club.

In the Netherlands, more than two thirds of the club members are taking part in competitive sports, and one out of five have participated in competitive sports (see Table 8.7). It is only one out of ten who never have participated in competitive sports at all, meaning that it is quite common for members of sports clubs to participate in competitive sports activities in their clubs. In addition to sporting activities, 88% of the sports clubs offered other activities for their members, mostly social activities such as festive activities (Van der Werff et al. 2015). Most of the activities organised by the clubs are exclusively for their members. However, 77% of the sports clubs have organised activities that were open to non-members as well (Van der Werff et al. 2015).

It seems that health promotion has become an important aspect of Dutch sport. On the one hand, improving the health of the population is one of the main goals of

Table 8.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 1298$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 69 | 21 | 9 |

Dutch sports policy. Also, the Dutch population and sports clubs in general increasingly value sport as a means to improve people's health.

8.4 Social Integration

The prominent position of sports clubs in Dutch society makes the organisations important partners in the government's social integration policy. Given the high percentage of people who are active in sports clubs in the Netherlands (European Commission 2018), it is of great importance to policy-makers to get people with all sorts of backgrounds active in sports clubs. In the latest policy that was developed by the Dutch government in cooperation with local councils and sports organisations, inclusion is the key theme (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid et al. 2018). The policy aims at enlarging representation of various groups in sports clubs, both in sports participation as in volunteering. They do so by increasing the social accessibility of sports clubs (Ministerie van Volksgezondheid et al. 2018).

At the club level, a paradox has emerged around the integration of different population groups. At the one hand, a large share of club representatives (65%; see Table 8.8) indicate that they try to offer sports to as many population groups as possible. On the other hand, a large group of clubs does not necessarily strive to help socially vulnerable groups to integrate in their clubs; they are undecided on this matter (46%; see Table 8.8). This seems to reflect the notion that sports clubs are open to anyone who wants to join, as long as the new entrants assimilate within the existing situation (Elling et al. 2001). Evaluations of earlier Dutch policies that aimed at social integration of minority groups also found that sports clubs try to recruit new members, irrespective of their background. At the same time, many sports clubs still acknowledge that they are relatively homogenous (Elling et al. 2018; Hoekman et al. 2011).

However, much has changed in the last 50 years, when sports clubs were still relatively homogeneous. Nowadays, many clubs can be characterised as open clubs (65% can be classified as open to some extent; Van der Roest et al. 2017a) that are an important site in everyday lives (Elling et al. 2018). Open sports clubs offer new types and forms of sports that are more accessible to social groups that usually did not participate. Examples include fitness and health offers for parents of youth members who are usually too busy to find time for sports participation and football fitness initiatives for retired football players (NOC*NSF n.d.).

Apart from these innovative sports offers, sports clubs that have their own facility at their disposal can use this facility for non-sports-related activities as well. In doing so, they can attract social groups to their clubs who are not interested in

Table 8.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 937$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 937$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 2 | 8 | 26 | 50 | 15 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 3 | 9 | 46 | 35 | 8 |

Table 8.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 943$, people with migration background $n = 936$, elderly $n = 947$, women $n = 1015$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 38 | 57 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| People with migration background | 22 | 62 | 10 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 11 | 44 | 22 | 10 | 7 | 6 |
| Women | 2 | 12 | 21 | 39 | 20 | 6 |

actively engaging in sports. Examples of this kind of innovation include day care centres in sports clubs' facilities or offering meals to the elderly in the neighbourhood (L'abée 2018).

According to Elling et al. (2018), the social diversity in Dutch sports clubs has increased in recent years, even though they note that this fact cannot always be substantiated with hard numbers. The current representation of different population groups in Dutch sports clubs is presented in Table 8.9. Women and elderly people seem to be well represented in sports clubs. For people with a migration background and people with a disability, it appears to be more difficult to participate in sports clubs. The majority of clubs (84%; see Table 8.9) have less than 10% of people with a migration background among their members, while 22% of the Dutch population has a migration background (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek [CBS] 2016). For people with disabilities, research has consequently found that they are underrepresented in sports clubs (Brandsema et al. 2017).

Research into the limitations that clubs experience in integrating people with a disability has found that clubs put forward that they lack the right volunteers (trainers, coaches and supervisors) to help these people to become active in their clubs (Elling et al. 2018). Spaaij et al. (2020) show that this kind of argument could be an example of self-victimisation of club administrators. In bringing forward the barriers and challenges the club faces, they resist the call for more diversity in the club.

Only a small share of clubs have special initiatives for different population groups. Research in the SIVSCE project has found that Dutch clubs consequently are among the countries with the least special initiatives for these different groups (see Fig. 8.7, cf. Breuer et al. 2017).

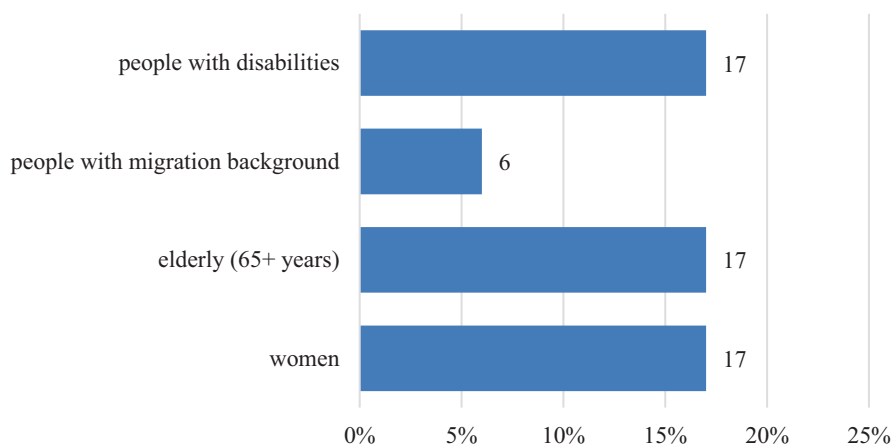


Fig. 8.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 951$, people with migration background $n = 951$, elderly $n = 951$, women $n = 951$)

Table 8.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 934$, competitive sports $n = 934$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 0 | 0 | 3 | 44 | 53 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 1 | 4 | 25 | 51 | 19 |

This is striking, given the relative big size of sports clubs in the Netherlands compared to other countries, as was observed in Sect. 8.2. One could expect that given the larger size, clubs are better equipped to cater for (the needs of) different population groups (cf. Wicker and Breuer 2014). However, in the Dutch case this does not compensate for a generally lower tendency of clubs to have these initiatives. Possible explanations for the limited tendency are hard to confirm. Dollee (2017) found that, in the case of disability sports, many sports clubs are not aware of the fact that they are not accessible to people with a disability.

The high value on sporting success and competition (70% agree that this is an objective for the club; see Table 8.10) does not necessarily mean that Dutch sports clubs put less emphasis on companionship and conviviality (97% of Dutch clubs sets high value on these values, see Table 8.10). Dutch sports clubs on average show high agreement on statements regarding these objectives, whereas other countries that also put emphasis on sporting success (England, Hungary, Poland) devote less attention to companionship and conviviality (Breuer et al. 2017).

The coincidence of these objectives might be explained by the fact that Dutch sports clubs possess their own facility relatively often compared to clubs in other

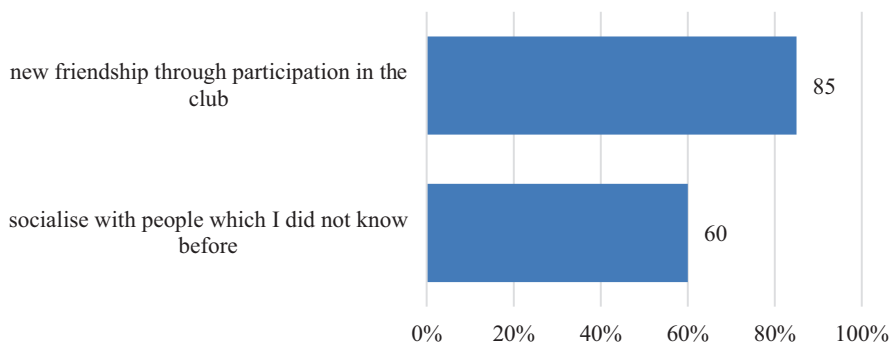


Fig. 8.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 1571$, socialise with people $n = 1557$)

Table 8.11 Frequency of participation in the club's social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 1514$, stay behind after trainings $n = 1521$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club's social gatherings | 15 | 27 | 27 | 18 | 6 | 3 | 5 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 8 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 15 | 18 | 46 |

countries (Breuer et al. 2017). Dutch clubs have the possibility to organise social gatherings in their own facility and open their club houses for social moments after training, matches or tournaments.

The large share of people who stay behind after their sports activities clearly has a socialisation effect on the members. Many respondents indicate that they have made new friendships and indicate that they socialise with people they did not know before (85% and 60%, respectively; see Fig. 8.8). However, it must be noted that even though many people socialise at the club, the percentage of people who socialise with others they did not know before is only average compared to other countries. This could reflect the relative homogeneity that still characterises Dutch sports clubs (Van Bottenburg 2007; Van Haaften 2019) (Table 8.11).

The modest extent to which Dutch club members socialise with others they did not know before brings questions about the bridging capacity of these clubs. Among sociologists, there is debate whether clubs and associations can promote bonding as well as bridging social capital, as suggested by Putnam (2000).

Nevertheless, Dutch sports clubs clearly fulfil an important role in promoting bonding social capital. As was mentioned before, Dutch sports clubs have a lively

Table 8.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 1657$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 0 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 16 | 34 | 42 |

Table 8.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 1606$, most important social group $n = 1610$, respect me for who I am $n = 1517$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 1 | 3 | 24 | 42 | 29 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 6 | 20 | 30 | 32 | 13 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 1 | 3 | 18 | 59 | 19 |

social life to offer to their members and clubs take a rather central position in Dutch everyday life. This finding also emerges from Table 8.12, where 42% of the members and volunteers indicate that they know more than 50 people by name in their clubs.

It goes without saying that the large share of big clubs in the Netherlands (Fig. 8.1) is probably related to this figure.

Dutch sports club members are quite demure when it comes to questions of pride or social belonging. In comparison to other countries, only few members and volunteers strongly agree with the statements in Table 8.13 (29%, 13% and 19%, respectively). The Netherlands comes last in all international comparisons in the SIVSCE study when it comes to pride, the importance of the social group and the extent to which they feel respected by others. However, this is only the case when these matters are sorted on those who strongly agree with the statement. The fractions of respondents who disagree with the statement are very comparable to other countries in the study (Van der Roest et al. 2017b). Therefore, possible explanations for the modest strong agreement with the statements should be found in methodological issues rather than substantive differences within sports clubs.

Dutch sports clubs clearly play a role in social integration. They create or foster large social networks in which people can socialise and make new friends. However, their prominent role in society and their large size can also produce expectations among policy-makers to which they cannot yet live up to. Representation of different population groups is modest, and few clubs have special initiatives to try to offer their sports to specific groups. New policies to make clubs more open could change this characteristic in the future.

8.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

Democratic decision-making is one of the main characteristics of voluntary associations in general (Smith 2000). In many countries, the democratic element is one prerequisite for the public funding of these organisations. Yet, only relatively small amounts of members participate in formal democratic decision-making in the Netherlands (Ibsen et al. 2019).

The reasons for not participating in the club's democracy are of course diverse. The distinction and the interplay between individual characteristics and organisational characteristics are important to consider in this respect. Ibsen et al. (2019) have shown that individual characteristics and club size are the most important elements in whether one participates or not. The attitude of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making barely makes a difference in explaining variation between clubs. This partly explains why a majority of Dutch sports clubs agrees that they aim to involve members in making important decisions, but only a minority of members participates in democratic decision-making.

Whether decision-making is delegated among committees yields mixed results. In almost half of the clubs (48%; see Table 8.14), decision-making is decentralised to some extent. Interestingly, a quarter of club administrators are undecided whether decisions are delegated to committees. It is unclear what this exactly means, but it might indicate that delegation of decisions to committees in these clubs is only limited to smaller decisions or bound within specific rules and frameworks.

Figure 8.9 shows that more than one third of members in the surveyed clubs have participated in the last general assembly. It is likely that this figure gives an overestimation of the average number of people really present at general assemblies, as the people who have responded to this survey are probably more inclined to attend. Figures from the Dutch Sports Clubs Panel, which are based on judgements made by club administrators, show average attendances of approximately 28% (Van der Roest et al. 2016).

The Netherlands is among the countries that score the lowest on attending the general assembly, which could be due to the fact that Dutch sports clubs are quite big. Earlier research has indicated that organisational size is one the most important indicators for the percentage of members attending the general assembly (Ibsen and Seippel 2010; Thiel and Mayer 2009; Van der Roest et al. 2016; Wicker et al. 2014).

Table 8.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 934$, delegate decision-making $n = 934$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 0 | 2 | 9 | 58 | 31 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 6 | 22 | 25 | 41 | 7 |

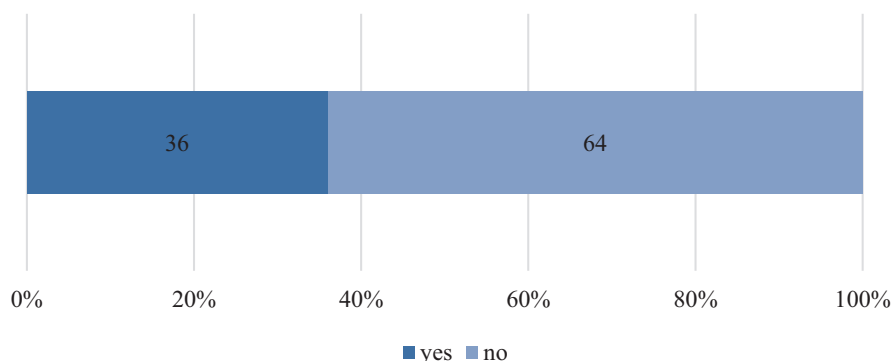


Fig. 8.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 1712$)

Table 8.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 1556$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 1465$, share my view with other members $n = 1472$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 31 | 31 | 19 | 8 | 6 | 6 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 25 | 14 | 14 | 15 | 13 | 19 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 16 | 9 | 11 | 15 | 18 | 31 |

This probably also goes for the broader democratic participation options members have if they want to influence the organisation's course. One could hypothesise that as clubs become bigger, members become increasingly detached from the club (cf. Van der Roest 2016).

Table 8.15 shows that participation in other meetings than the general assembly is only occasional for most members. Almost two thirds of the members (62%; see Table 8.15) visit a meeting only once a year. Furthermore, the extent to which members share their views with either key persons or other members is quite dispersed over the different categories. For some members (32% speak their mind to key persons at least once a month; see Table 8.15), it is quite natural to try to influence decision-making, but others will hardly or never engage in these issues (25% never speak their mind, 14% only do so once a year or less; see Table 8.15).

The limited extent to which members and volunteers try to engage in the democratic process in their clubs is also apparent in Fig. 8.10, where almost half of the respondents (47%) indicate that they have never tried to influence decision-making in the club. Slightly more than a quarter of the respondents have done so in the last 3 months.

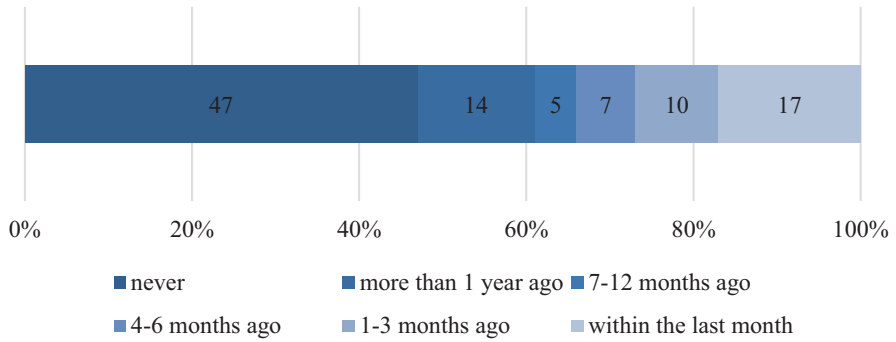


Fig. 8.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 1683$)

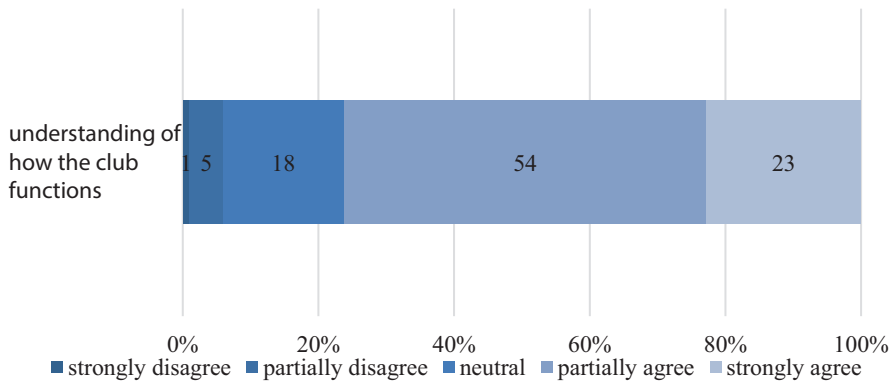


Fig. 8.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 1579$)

In order to influence decision-making in sports clubs, one needs to understand how the club functions. Even if members do not regularly try to influence decision-making, it is important that they at least have some understanding of how the club works. They need to have a basic understanding of the democratic structure of the club, but they also need to have an understanding of the design, execution and evaluation of the activities in the club (Van Eekeren 2016). Van Eekeren argues that this is necessary to obtain legitimacy and to live up to the societal expectation to create public value in sports clubs.

A large majority of members and volunteers acknowledge that they indeed understand how the club functions. Only a minority of 6% indicates that they do not understand. When the Dutch numbers are compared to the other countries in the SIVSCE survey, it is again striking that only 23% strongly agree with the statement, compared to an average of 42% in all countries (cf. Van der Roest et al. 2017b) (Fig. 8.11).

Overall, Dutch sports clubs do not stand out in international comparison when it comes to democratic decision-making. The attendance at the general assemblies is relatively low, while the scores on informal ways of decision-making are around the average. A possible explanation for these scores can be the relatively big size of sports clubs in the Netherlands, which influences the extent to which members participate. The question that pops up is whether Dutch sports clubs have a low participation rate in general, for example, in the extent to which its members volunteer for the club.

8.6 Voluntary Work

Voluntary work is one of the most important resources for sports clubs. Ten per cent of the Dutch population is active as volunteers within sports, and sports clubs are highly dependent on them. In total, 84% of all clubs had volunteers active in their club in 2015 (De Heij 2018).

As became clear in the previous section, sports clubs in the Netherlands have a limited percentage of members who are active in the club's decision-making and democracy. The relatively big club size of Dutch clubs could potentially also mean that they face problems regarding voluntary work. After all, the increased heterogeneity that comes with increased size could make it more difficult for members to identify with the club and become active as a volunteer (Wicker et al. 2014). However, bigger clubs also might be better equipped for developing strategies to recruit and retain volunteers. Therefore, it is interesting to first examine the attitudes of sports clubs' administrators towards voluntary work.

As becomes clear from Table 8.16, administrators in sports clubs believe voluntary work is central to sports clubs. This is no surprise, as almost all administrators themselves are volunteers. More than half (54%) of the respondents even think that

Table 8.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 954$, members as customers $n = 954$, demonstrating passion $n = 954$, all members can be volunteers $n = 954$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 4 | 20 | 22 | 31 | 23 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 49 | 38 | 9 | 4 | 1 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 1 | 8 | 25 | 53 | 13 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 2 | 4 | 6 | 43 | 46 |

Table 8.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 971$, no fixed position(s) $n = 961$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 5 | 10 | 15 | 27 | 43 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 22 | 16 | 19 | 25 | 18 |

clubs should be run exclusively by volunteers. An even bigger share of administrators (87%) think that members cannot be seen as customers, which implies that they will promote volunteering in the club at least to some extent. The disagreement on this statement is quite big, in comparison with other countries in the SIVSCE study. Only Norwegian administrators show a bigger disagreement on this statement (88%, Breuer et al. 2017).

This could be a sign of the volunteering culture that seems to be present in Dutch sports clubs. International comparisons find that the percentage of people who actively engage in voluntary work in sports clubs are highest in the Netherlands (Curtis et al. 2001; Dekker and De Hart 2009; European Commission 2018; McCloughan et al. 2011). For example, the European Commission (2018) has found that 19% of Dutch citizens engage in voluntary work that supports sporting activities.

From Table 8.17, the volunteering culture is further explicated. In 43% of the clubs, more than 50 members are volunteers in a fixed position. The number of volunteers in not fixed positions, the so-called episodic volunteers, is more dispersed over the categories. Episodic volunteers have become more prominent and more important in many associations these days (Cnaan and Handy 2005).

Still, many of the tasks in sports clubs are performed by volunteers in fixed positions. This is not surprising given the continuous activities that most sports clubs offer. In most cases, coaching teams and athletes or governing the club from a board position requires continuity.

Figure 8.12 shows that indeed board members and coaches/instructors make up for a large share of fixed volunteers. Almost half of the fixed volunteers are active in either of these tasks. A quarter of volunteers in fixed positions are active in other tasks. Examples of these other tasks could consist of committees or tending the bar.

The volunteering culture that becomes apparent here does not mean that the Dutch sports club sector is free of problems. On the contrary, problems in the recruitment and retention of volunteers are increasingly a theme among media outlets, policy-makers and researchers. Among sports clubs' administrators, it is also the most important theme for many years (Van Kalmthout 2014) (Table 8.18).

Finding appropriate volunteers at the board level is indicated as one of the biggest challenges by clubs. This is not surprising, given the continuous nature of the work and the desired qualifications one needs to have to volunteer at this level. Improved technical demands and the growing size of the average Dutch sports clubs possibly limit the number of people who believe they can serve on a board. Furthermore, only few clubs have made voluntary work in boards more accessible

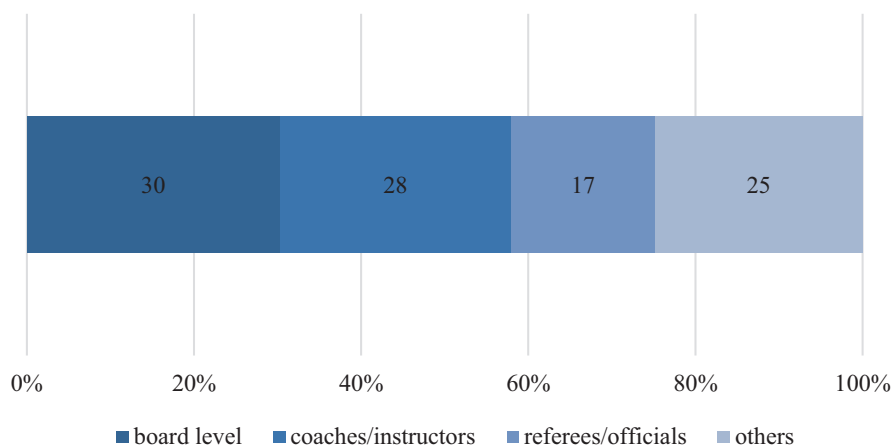


Fig. 8.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 970$)

Table 8.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 933$, coaches/instructors $n = 933$, referees/officials $n = 933$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 18 | 26 | 29 | 20 | 7 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 33 | 24 | 28 | 12 | 2 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 38 | 20 | 21 | 18 | 4 |

in terms of flexibility. Ter Haar et al. (2017) argue that modernisation of functions in the board is necessary if clubs want to attract the right people for these positions.

Even though finding volunteers is indeed a problem for sports clubs, recent developments show relatively little development in this matter. Contrary to popular thought, sports clubs do not rapidly lose volunteers. Figure 8.13 shows stability in two thirds of the clubs, while the proportion of clubs with decreases and increases in volunteers is balanced.

Sports clubs can take a multitude of measures to recruit and retain volunteers. These measures range from deploying paid staff and remunerating volunteers to encouraging and motivating volunteers verbally. The most widely used measure to recruit volunteers is using the network of current members and volunteers to find new volunteers. In comparison with other countries in our study, Dutch clubs relatively often have a written plan to recruit volunteers, and they seldom reward volunteers with benefits in kind (cf. Breuer et al. 2017).

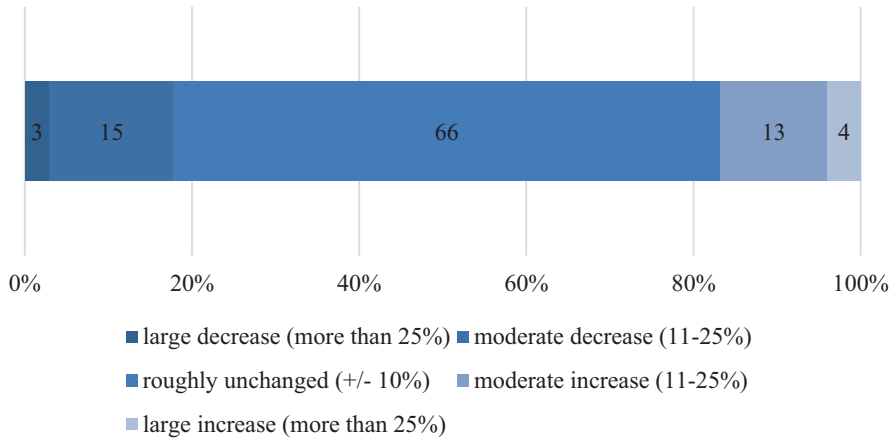


Fig. 8.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 948$)

Interestingly, the two respective measures that Dutch clubs relatively often and relatively seldom take are among the measures that Østerlund (2013) found to be among the most effective ways of recruiting volunteers. Developing a specific strategy (11%, relatively high compared to other countries) is quite effective, while rewarding volunteers with material incentives (16%, relatively low compared to other countries) is also found to be a good way to recruit volunteers (Table 8.19).

Another quite effective way of making sure the club has enough volunteers is to oblige members and parents of youth members to volunteer. Although one could argue when volunteering becomes obligatory it is no longer volunteering, many clubs use this means to ensure they have enough volunteers. Half of the clubs inform members that they are expected to contribute, while 39% inform parents of children that they should contribute to the club. Unfortunately, we have no information on the type of tasks or the frequency to which these obligatory volunteers contribute.

The volunteers who have participated in the survey are quite active volunteers. More than half of the volunteers in the sample (55%; see Table 8.20) volunteer more than once a week.

In Table 8.21, the image of active volunteers is confirmed. A remark that must be made is that Table 8.21 only deals with volunteers in fixed positions. In this sense, it is not surprising that half of them spend more than 10 hours per month on their tasks. Six per cent even spend more than 50 hours on their voluntary work.

Voluntary work is a crucial resource for sports clubs in the Netherlands. Many clubs are dependent on the voluntary efforts that are made by their members and volunteers. Although clubs are not free of problems in recruiting and retaining their volunteers, many clubs seem to maintain a sufficient number of volunteers to run their clubs. This does not mean that new recruitment and retention measures are not necessary. Modernisation of board positions and rewarding volunteers with material incentives are among the most prominent measures Dutch clubs still have to take in order to stay vital.

Table 8.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 957$, social gatherings $n = 957$, recruit through current network $n = 957$, pay for training $n = 957$, inform members $n = 957$, inform parents $n = 957$, benefits in kind $n = 957$, recruitment outside $n = 957$, management $n = 957$, written strategy $n = 957$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 957$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 66 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 51 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 72 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 44 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 49 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 39 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 16 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 19 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 15 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 11 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 8 |

Table 8.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 1319$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 4 | 8 | 11 | 14 | 7 | 25 | 26 | 4 |

Table 8.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 948$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 28 | 23 | 23 | 20 | 6 |

8.7 Conclusion

Sports clubs in the Netherlands have an established position within Dutch society, they constitute an institutionalised part of everyday life, and they fulfil a central position in Dutch sports policy. This chapter has shown that Dutch sports clubs have a relatively big size, measured by the total number of members. Another striking feature of Dutch sports clubs is the fact that they often possess their own facilities. In other countries, most sports clubs are dependent on public facilities, limiting their

opportunities to freely organise activities and to generate their own income. In the Netherlands, these structural features partly shape the way clubs are organised.

Dutch sports clubs are important partners for national and local governments in sports policy and increasingly in other domains as well. On the national level, the value of sports clubs is acknowledged not only in sports policies but also in prevention and health as well as social and educational policies. Municipal sports budgets are largely spent on sports facilities that are used by sports clubs. In addition, sports clubs are recognised as valuable partners for sports policy and in connection with this also for other domains. To illustrate, health promotion has become an important aspect of Dutch sports and one of the main goals of local sports policy. Also, the Dutch population and sports clubs in general increasingly value sports as a means to improve people's health.

The roles that are ascribed to sports clubs are not surprising given their characteristics. The organisational capacity that comes with their size, their volunteers and the ownership of facilities makes them interesting potential partners. Sports clubs often confirm this image by applying for subsidies and grants that underline their societal value. Partly, they are forced to do so because of declining fixed subsidies. However, it is questionable whether sports clubs can live up to the expectations of governments. This chapter shows that sports clubs – despite the image they try to present – are still mainly focused on organising their core sports activities.

It seems that organising these sports activities is still challenging enough for many sports clubs. Overall, clubs struggle to get their members active in democratic decision-making, both formally and informally. Furthermore, societal developments call for Dutch sports clubs, as other European clubs, to design their volunteering positions in new ways. Trends such as flexibilisation and individualisation ask for more flexibility in volunteering positions. At the board level, the increased need for specific expertise and an increased demand for accountability further hamper the availability of suitable board members.

Overall, to live up to the societal functions regarding social integration and volunteering, Dutch sports clubs need to be strengthened. The National Sports Agreement appears to be a step in the right direction. Above all, this agreement tries to make the voluntary sports sector more inclusive, and it tries to support sports clubs in their core competencies. This could lead to a situation in which clubs more automatically incorporate diversity in their sports and volunteering activities, enabling them to strengthen their societal position.

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Chapter 9

Norway: The Ambiguity of Sports Clubs and Nonsports Social Functions



Ørnulf Seippel

Abstract Sports clubs have a central position in Norwegian societies, and research shows that 93% of Norwegian youth have been member of a sports club. The clubs' main purpose is obviously to provide sports to their members. The sports clubs, public authorities and sports organisations have, however, expectations to the clubs pointing beyond sports: They should enhance public health, they should help social integration, they should be builders of democracy, and they should enable voluntary work. In this chapter, I present facts on the extent to which sports clubs fulfil such functions and discuss why they do and not do so. On the one hand, sports clubs obviously contribute in all these four fields. On the other hand, contributions to these social functions are side effects to their main activity: sports. In many instances, this leaves us with a misfit between declared policy aims and what the clubs actually do to fulfil these social functions. So, even though sports clubs do fulfil important social function besides organising sports, there is clearly a potential for more. At the same time, there is a dilemma where increasing sports clubs nonsports functions might be detrimental to the organisations of sports.

9.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

At the heart of the Norwegian sports, we find 11,409 local clubs. To understand how these clubs work and how they eventually fulfil various social functions, we have, as a start, to know the context within which they operate. One of the characteristics of this context is that it contains a mixture of sports organisations and public policy actors, and we find, in many instances, close bonds between these two sectors.

In Norway, a set of national sports representative organisations was established between 1861 and the 1920s. These represented traditional sports, such as shooting and skiing, as well as new sports imported from England, most notably football, and gymnastics from Germany and Sweden. In the 1920s, a separate set of workers'

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sports federations was established as a reaction to the bourgeois profile of the existing federations. Thus, from 1924 to the end of World War II, there were two sets of organisations with two sets of competitions leagues. These merged after World War II.

Today, sports clubs are organised in the *Norges idrettsforbund og olympiske og paralympiske komité* (Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF)), an umbrella organisation organising all 54 national sports federations. These 54 federations organise and manage particular sports. In each of Norway's 19 counties, regional confederations (*idrettskrets*) serve as collective bodies for sports (e.g. *Oslo idrettskrets*). Traditionally, larger federations also have regional organisation at county level (e.g. *Oslo Fotballkrets*), while smaller federations could have regional levels of organisation to cover larger areas of the country (more counties). The smallest sports all depend on the regional confederations.

At the municipal level, there are approximately 366 sports councils. The sports councils form part of NIF's organisational structure and consist of all sports clubs in a municipality that are members of NIF. The purpose of the sports council is to secure and promote sports clubs' interests vis-a-vis the municipality.

Thus, there are two parallel structures of sports – sports and geography – linking the local clubs and NIF: the sports federations at national and regional level and the county levels of confederations and municipal level of local sports councils.

At national government level, the Ministry of Culture is responsible for sports, through the Department of Sports and Policy (DSP). State-funding is based on incomes from national lotteries – *Norsk Tipping* has organised the national lotteries since World War II – and in 2018, their budget is EUR 288 million (NOK 2.8 billions). Given that foreign commercial lotteries attempt to enter the Norwegian market, the situation and organisation of this form of funding is threatened and under discussion.

EUR 160 million (NOK 1.56 billion) of this state funding is spent on grants for facility construction. Sports clubs and municipalities can apply for grants of roughly a third of the cost of building sports facilities. It is expected, as a rule of thumb, that a third of the cost are covered by the club(s) and a third from the municipality. Facilities funded through this arrangement have to be open to the public for at least 40 years and should not generate profits for the owners. A proposal from a sports club would need to be integrated into the plans of a municipality. The application would go through a county level of sports organisation to the DSP.

For decades there has been a discussion of the role and size of NIF as the umbrella organisation and a critique of too many resources ending up in a central bureaucracy. In the late 1990s, it was decided that 10% of the national government funding would be distributed directly to clubs through the local sports councils at the municipal level. In 2018, about one fourth of the state funding for sports, EUR 73 million (NOK 710 millions), are distributed through NIF, but this is, reflecting this critique, a lower proportion than previous years.

The most recent statement of the state sports policies is found in the latest (Kulturdepartementet 2012) series of three White Papers. The aims are to strengthen voluntary sports, develop a sound relationship between the voluntary sector and

public sector and promote Sport for All. Groups of special importance are youth, the disabled and those not active. The White Paper emphasises several goods coming from sports participation: fun and enjoyment, health, social integration, organisational learning and democracy. Sports clubs play an important role in achieving these aims and may apply for funding to provide activities for the targeted groups. Clubs participation is, however, entirely voluntary. National government policies are also aimed at providing possibilities for those operating outside sports clubs.

Municipalities are the largest public contributors to sports (Kulturdepartementet 2012), and they play an important role in providing sports facilities for the clubs. There are 426 municipalities, and there are significant differences in local sports policies, because municipalities vary in size, organisational structure (where the responsibility for sports is placed), financial means and the extent to which they are concerned with sports. Even though most clubs use facilities for free or low fees, there are differences between municipalities when it comes to whether clubs have to pay for the use of facilities, and if so, how much they pay.

9.2 Structure and Context

In Norway, there are 11,409 sports clubs in 54 sports federations. Traditionally, a minority of the members have been in a majority of small clubs, whereas a majority of members are in a minority of large clubs (Seippel 2003). Today, it seems that the population of clubs is threefold: one-third have 100 members or fewer, one-third have between 100 and 300 members, and the final third have more than 300 members (Fig. 9.1).

For the last 50 years, Norwegian sports has been going through an enormous growth (Goksøyr 2008). The last decade has, however, seen several challenges to this growth. We see more serious competitors to sports clubs (e.g. fitness) and more people exercising on their own (Breivik and Hellevik 2013). Modern sports are about to be more professionalised which is reflected both in terms of economic costs and knowledge required for participation. Increased levels of immigration also raise the question of how sports clubs developed (Strandbu et al. 2017, 2017). The general impression is very much that sports clubs are under pressure.

To capture the effect on these recent challenges for membership numbers, we asked our clubs about the development in memberships over the last 5 years, and the results are all over in favour of growth rather than decline. About half the clubs are at the same level as 5 years ago, 16% experience a decrease (13% only moderate), and about one-third of the clubs have increased their memberships (Fig. 9.2).

To further understand the situation of Norwegian sports clubs when it comes to recruitment and retention of members, we have asked them how problematic this challenge is for them.

We can interpret the results from Table 9.1 both pessimistically and optimistically. The pessimist would say that less than one fourth of the clubs (23%) report that recruitment/retention of members is no problem – that is, for 77% of the clubs,

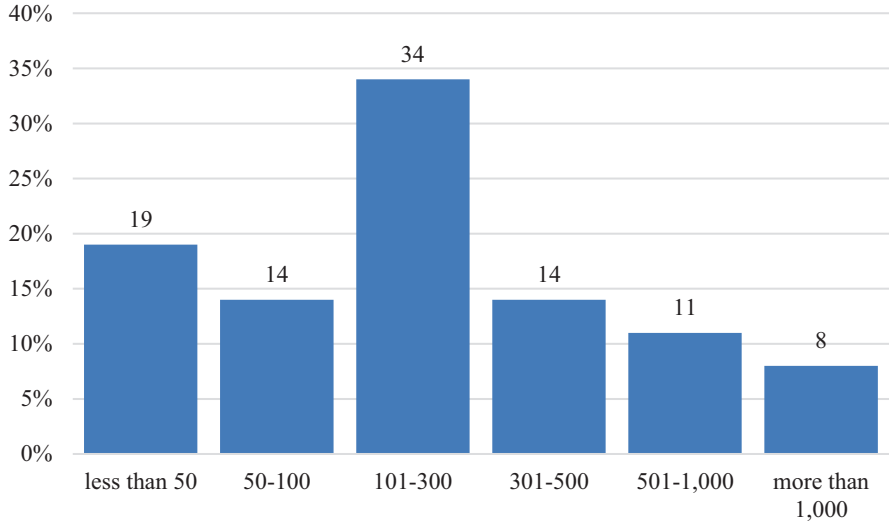


Fig. 9.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, *n* = 453)

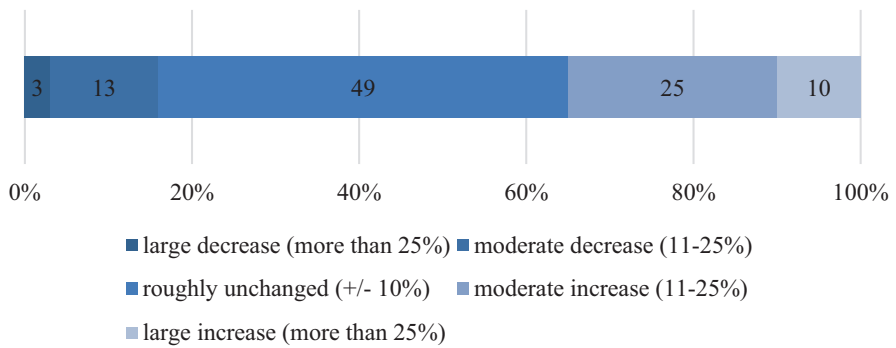


Fig. 9.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 464)

Table 9.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, *n* = 441)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 23 | 24 | 37 | 12 | 4 |

member recruitment and retention is at least to a certain extent a challenge. The optimist could emphasise that only 16% of the clubs say that recruitment/retention of members is a big or very big problem. All in all, sports clubs seem to do well with member recruitment and retention although there are some problems.

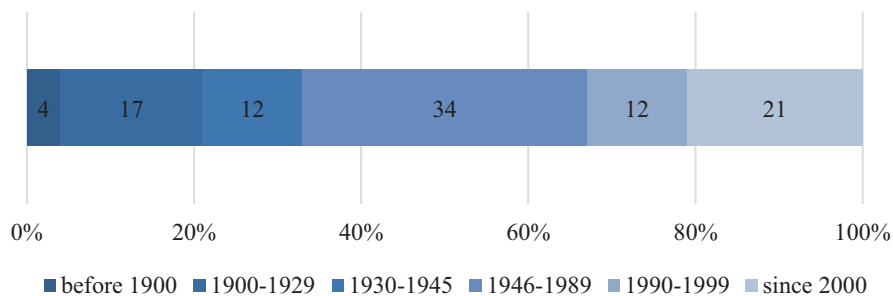


Fig. 9.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 307$)

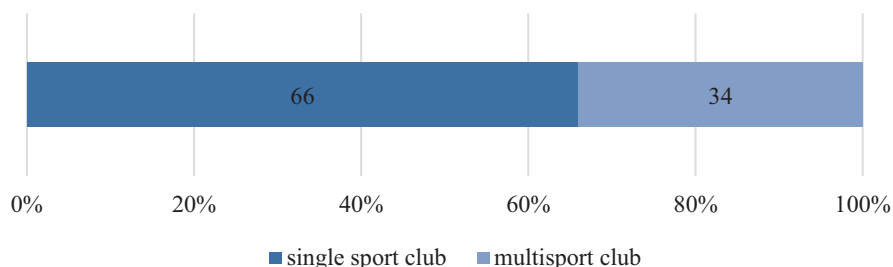


Fig. 9.4 Single or multisports club (club survey, $n = 474$)

The birthday of Norwegian organised sports is usually set to 1861 (Goksøy 2008), yet Fig. 9.3 shows that only 4% of the clubs date from the twentieth century. Apart from this small proportion of old clubs, 34% are post-war clubs (1946–1989), while 21% are post-2000 clubs (Fig. 9.4).

We have seen (Fig. 9.1) that two-thirds of Norwegian sports clubs are relatively small (< 300 members), and this is also reflected in their organisational structure where close to two-thirds of Norwegian sports clubs are single sports clubs (Table 9.2).

Norwegian sports clubs have some clear commonalities with European sports clubs and some Nordic peculiarities. Football is what Norwegians have in common with most other nations, and Norway is even ranked as the second most football interested (proportion of members, spectators, TV watching, etc.) nation in the world (Kuper and Szymanski 2014).

The nordic-ness of Norwegian sports comes with winter sports – particularly skiing – as the second largest sport. Skiing is mostly practised outside the club context, so this club organised skiing is underestimating the real ski participation rate (Tables 9.2 and 9.3).

The most important state policy tool in Norway for sports is funding of facilities. But the state is not the only contributor, so the funding of sports facilities mostly

Table 9.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 499$)

| Rank | Sports | % |
|------|--|----|
| 1 | Football | 31 |
| 2 | Skiing (Nordic and alpine) | 22 |
| 3 | Handball | 16 |
| 4 | Fitness/aerobic and walking/Nordic walking | 14 |
| 5 | Track and field | 13 |
| 6 | Swimming | 9 |
| 7 | Shooting sports | 8 |
| 8 | Gymnastics (all sorts) | 8 |
| 9 | Apparatus gymnastics | 7 |
| 10 | Hiking | 6 |

Table 9.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 443$, public facilities $n = 443$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 311$, share of revenues $n = 391$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 43 | 70 | 53 | 17 |

involves several actors – clubs, municipalities, the state – and the result is a mixture of ownership structures. Forty-three per cent of the clubs use facilities that they own themselves, and 70% of the clubs use public facilities. Fifty-three per cent, however, have to pay for the use of these public facilities. The interaction between public policies and sports clubs is also shown in the fact that 17% of revenues come from public funding (Table 9.3).

Even though one-half of all state funding for sports and a substantial part of municipality support go to sports facilities, the demand for sports facilities is still reported to be larger than the supply. Close to one-fourth of the clubs report big or very big problems with sports facilities, 37% say that this is a medium or small problem, whereas 40% have no complaints about facilities.

The financial situations of the clubs are less of a serious problem, and only 14% say that this is a big or very big problem. Almost identical to the facility issue, 39% report finances as a no problem, whereas a larger proportion of clubs (46%) tell that finances are a small or medium problem (Table 9.4).

One of the most discussed trends in modern sports is the apparent professionalisation of sports (Seippel 2019). Yet, how far this process actually has come is often less clear and probably varies both within and between nations. For the Norwegian case, 29% of the clubs report to have paid staff (in SIVSCE defined as those who receive taxable pay from the club), and 17% of the clubs have paid manager/managers. Given that a large proportion of the members belong to a few large clubs, this probably implies that a large proportion of members do sports in a relatively professionalised club (i.e., in clubs with employees) (Table 9.5; Fig. 9.5).

Table 9.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 439$, financial situation $n = 440$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 40 | 21 | 16 | 13 | 11 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 39 | 26 | 20 | 8 | 6 |

Table 9.5 Paid staff and paid manager/managers in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 452$, paid manager/s $n = 454$)

| | Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | 29 | 17 |

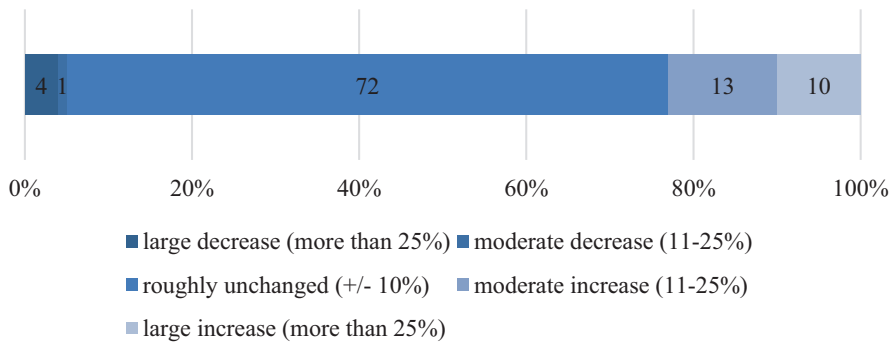


Fig. 9.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 233$)

To investigate whether professionalisation is an increasing trend, an indication could be an increase in paid staff in sports clubs. Twenty-three per cent of Norwegian sports clubs confirm such a process, 72% report a status quo, whereas only 5% indicate fewer employees than 5 years earlier (Fig. 9.5). So, more than four times as many clubs experience professionalisation than de-professionalisation. All in all, there is a certain level of professionalisation that might affect a large proportion of Norwegian athletes, and that is on the rise.

9.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

There is a well-known public interest, also in Norway, in using voluntary sports clubs as policy tools, and among the aims of such policies is health promotion. To understand how the clubs relate to this challenge, we have asked them both what the clubs themselves think about their involvement in health issues and the extent to which they factually contribute to physical activity.

Sports clubs' primary purpose is to organise sports and research indicates that there is a certain scepticism and resistance to being used as a policy tool (Fahlén et al. 2014; Skille 2010). Yet, public policies often imply some type of funding, which of course are attractive to sports clubs, so clubs agree to take part in such endeavours. An interesting question is how reluctant this participation is: How many sports clubs are actually committed to such policies?

Table 9.6 answers this question; 10% of the clubs are undecided. We furthermore see that there are few clubs (7%) that really are negative to clubs offering health-enhancing programmes but also that only 39% of the clubs wholeheartedly support this position. Finally, almost half of the clubs (44%) agree with the statement (but then not totally). The scepticism indicated in previous research is then supported (Fahlén et al. 2014; Skille 2010): no strong resistance, a large group of clubs committed but perhaps not enthusiastically and a somewhat smaller group totally in agreement with sports clubs being health providers.

When answering a reminiscent question of clubs suitability to take on health-enhancing activities, a majority of the clubs (54%) totally agree with their clubs being suitable, and 36% only agree. Overall, a clear majority of sports clubs see themselves as suitable and committed to health-promoting programmes (Table 9.6).

When looking at how often sports club members factually participate in sports in their clubs, we find that almost half (48%) of the members take part three times a week or more. One-quarter of the members (26%) are active two times a week, 12% once a week, and the rest (14%) are active more infrequently. All in all, we find a relatively high level of activity, implying that sports clubs could be seen as a significant contributor to public health (Fig. 9.6).

Traditionally we think of sports clubs as organising competitive sports, whereas many of their recent competitors (e.g. fitness centres) offer a wider or different

Table 9.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 436$, sports disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 443$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offer health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 2 | 5 | 10 | 44 | 39 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 1 | 3 | 6 | 36 | 54 |

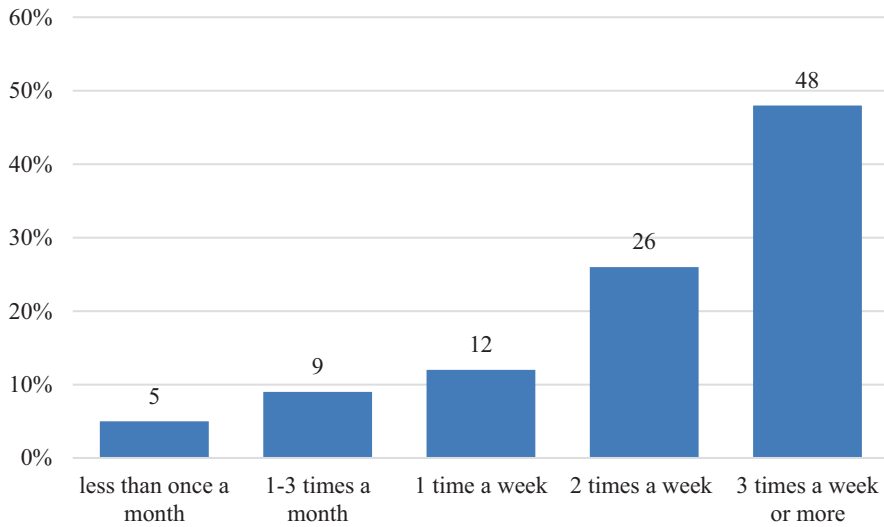


Fig. 9.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 718$)

Table 9.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 735$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 72 | 16 | 12 |

palette of activities. An interesting question then becomes how much of the sports club activity still is traditional competitive sports. We have asked the club members, and the results point clearly in the direction of competition as vital: 72% report to compete, 16% have competed previously, and only 12% have never competed (Table 9.7). This points to the still strong position of competitive sports and the strengths (the clubs organise something attractive) and weaknesses (the selection of activities is perhaps a bit narrow) of traditional sports clubs.

On the one hand, there is a relatively strong support for sports as health-enhancing. This is probably because those representing sports clubs are in favour of good health and want to contribute – who does not? – and there is an obvious potential for promoting and strengthening health through sports. On the other hand, we get an indication of the centrality of competition for those partaking in club sports. There is no necessary contradiction between health and competition, but neither is there any strict coherence: competition is at times unhealthy. The relation is somehow ambivalent: first sports and then health for many of those taking part. This ambivalence is probably one of the reasons for the widespread but also, for many clubs, not total, support for the role of clubs as health apologists.

9.4 Social Integration

Social inequality is on the political agenda in most Western nations (Aaberge 2016; Piketty 2014), and even though inequalities are smaller in Norway than in many other nations, inequalities nevertheless seem increasingly present in Norwegian sports clubs where groups from lower social classes are underrepresented (Strandbu et al. 2017). A timely question becomes how the clubs themselves look at this challenge.

We have studied two sides of this question, and we first simply asked for the scope of clubs' approaches to vulnerable groups: whether clubs try to reach as many groups as possible (Table 9.8). About one-fourth of the clubs totally agree that they do so; further 50% agree that they try to reach out to as many as possible. Only 9% disagree with this position.

Making the question a bit more concrete – to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated – the picture becomes less welcoming: only 10% totally agree and 35% agree. The group of undecided doubles and the negatives (not agree and not agree at all) triples when the question is concretised.

So, a general trend for sports clubs' social commitments seems to be that they in general are very positive to inclusion of as many social groups as possible, yet at bit more sceptical when they are asked whether they really strive to integrate various groups.

Sport for All is an overall aim of Norwegian sports policies at most levels (Norges idrettsforbund og olympiske og paralympiske komité [NIF] 2015; Kulturdepartementet 2012), and from this comes the more definite challenge to include specific groups that previously have had lesser opportunities to take part in sports. We have asked the clubs for the level of participation of four such groups.

Norway is seen as a country with, relatively, low gender inequality. Table 9.9 shows that few clubs – 5% – do not have women in their clubs, yet we do not know what types of clubs these 5% are. Twenty-three per cent of the clubs, on the other hand, have a majority of female members.

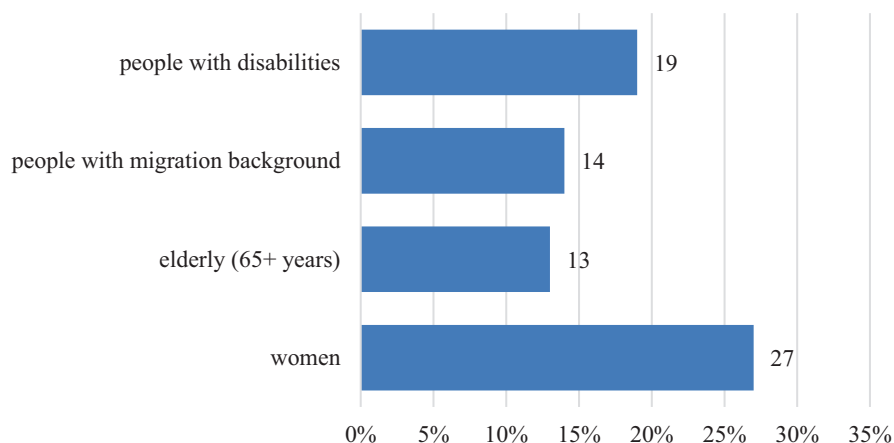
Previously there were sports federations working primarily with disabled sports, yet for more than 10 years, the clubs have been responsible for including disabled athletes in their clubs. One per cent of the clubs are mainly for disabled (with more than 75% of the members being disabled), whereas one-third (35%) of the clubs

Table 9.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many groups $n = 441$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 441$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 3 | 6 | 15 | 50 | 26 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 7 | 19 | 30 | 35 | 10 |

Table 9.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 441$, people with migration background $n = 439$, elderly $n = 444$, women $n = 453$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 35 | 59 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| People with migration background | 21 | 59 | 16 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 28 | 47 | 16 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Women | 5 | 8 | 18 | 46 | 13 | 10 |

**Fig. 9.7** Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 433$, people with migration background $n = 436$, elderly $n = 430$, women $n = 437$)

have no disabled members. Fifty-nine per cent of the clubs have a low proportion of disabled athletes: between 1 and 10%.

About one-fifth (21%) of the clubs have no members with migrant background, while 2% of the clubs have a majority of members with migrant background. Fifty-nine per cent have between 1 and 10% minority members, 16% 11 and 25% minorities and 3% 26 and 50%. Previous research finds that minority girls have a particular low participation rate in sports clubs (Strandbu et al. 2017).

The aim for sports policies have mostly been related to children and youth (NIF 2015; Kulturdepartementet 2012). This has made some researchers claim that sports clubs should be more for elderly people (Breivik et al. 2011). This makes it timely to study the extent to which elderly people are excluded from organised sports. Twenty-eight per cent of the clubs have no members above 65, and only 5% have a majority of elder members.

A certain level of integration and inclusion will be reached without special efforts, but given that there are special interests behind and policy tools related to most groupings, an interesting question is how many clubs actually have special initiatives for integration of specific groups. Figure 9.7 shows most clubs do not have special initiatives. The most common is to have initiatives for women (27%)

Table 9.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 438$, competitive sports $n = 438$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 0 | 1 | 5 | 44 | 50 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 7 | 31 | 20 | 32 | 9 |

Table 9.11 Frequency of participation in the club's social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 942$, stay behind after trainings $n = 930$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club's social gatherings | 20 | 28 | 25 | 14 | 8 | 3 | 2 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 17 | 5 | 7 | 11 | 19 | 15 | 26 |

and disabled persons (19%). About the same proportion of clubs (13 and 14%) are concerned with the integration of minorities and elderly.

The question of social integration points in specific directions (above, inclusion of groups) but also in a general direction and regardless of specific groups: Does the club actually emphasise the social life of the club? One of the long-living conflicts of Norwegian sports is whether to prioritise grassroots or elite sports (Goksøyr and Hanstad 2012; Seippel et al. 2016), and an interesting indicator of the emphasis on the social life of sports clubs is to investigate social priorities compared to other priorities as, for example, elite sporting success.

For our first and very general question – whether clubs set high value on companionship and conviviality – the clubs are almost all positive (Table 9.10): 44% only agree, whereas half totally agree. Fewer clubs state that they set high values on sporting success and competition. Only 9% totally agree with such statements, 32% agree, and together 41% of the clubs report sports success and competitions as important. One fifth of the clubs are undecided, whereas 38% reject competition and success as prioritised. Taken together, answers to these two questions point towards the social aspects as important in sports clubs, both when asked directly and when compared to elite sports.

That the clubs claim to prioritise the social aspects of club life is not the same as the members actually taking part in social gatherings, so a question should be whether the members actually take part in the social life of the clubs. Table 9.11 gives two glimpses into the social life of the clubs. First, one-fifth never take part in

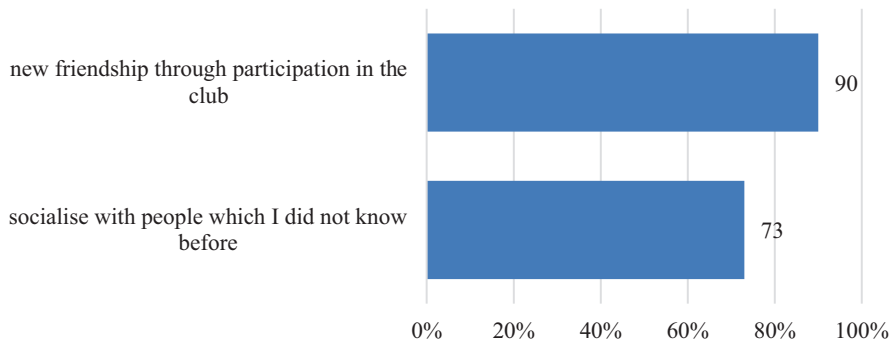


Fig. 9.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 992$, socialise with people $n = 980$)

Table 9.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 1037$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 1 | 2 | 6 | 8 | 19 | 38 | 25 |

the club’s social gatherings, 28% do so once a year and further 25% twice a year. That is, around three out of four of the members do not take part in much social gatherings, whereas a minority does so to a high extent. When asking about the everyday social life of the clubs – like staying behind after trainings and matches – this gives a more social picture: 26% socialise in this way at least once a week and 15% every two weeks. Still, 29% do not have much social life connected to the participation in their club’s activities in the sense that they participate once every half-year or less. All in all, it seems as it is in the everyday social life close to the sports activities – non-organised sociality – that is the arena where the social life of sports clubs thrive: not necessarily gatherings organised for social purposes.

The members of the sports clubs were also asked a list of more concrete questions (Fig. 9.8) about their social links related to their sports club participation, and we see that 90% have got new friendships during their sports club participation and 73% socialise outside of the club with people they did not know before joining. Here we see that sports clubs are conducive to social networks that reach beyond the clubs themselves.

An indication of the quality and intensity of the social relations in a club would be how many co-members you actually know the name of. Table 9.12 shows that more than 90% of the club members know the name of six or more co-members and only 3% knows the name of two persons or fewer.

Table 9.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 992$, most important social group $n = 994$, respect me for who I am $n = 911$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 1 | 2 | 11 | 21 | 65 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 13 | 15 | 22 | 24 | 26 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 1 | 1 | 15 | 29 | 54 |

Finally, we asked a set of questions about the relations between the members and the club as such (Table 9.13). Eighty-six per cent partially agree and strongly agree that they are proud to belong to their club, half the members report that the club is one of the most important social groups they belong to, and more than 80% think that other people from the club respect them.

How are the above findings to be explained? We find that both Norwegian official sports policies and sports clubs themselves all the way declare that they are very much in favour of social integration, both in general as aiming for a thriving social life and with respect to inclusion of specific groups. When it comes to the more practical sides of this integration, the commitment of the clubs is lower, and what appear as more important social relations are embedded in the everyday life of the clubs and less in organised social settings aiming for specific policies.

This ambiguity – the high support but lower practical fulfilment – does partly come from the organisational structure of sports clubs; they are voluntary, and they are organised and function in small local groups (often in larger clubs) which makes it hard to implement ideas from outside and/or above. Sports clubs are loose organisations (Orton and Weick 1990; Seippel 2019) which explain the tendencies for misfits between high visions and still high but lower success rates for social inclusion. It is also reflected in the fact that the most important social arena in Norwegian sports clubs is the daily activity – around trainings and matches – and not the formal social arrangement. In short, sports clubs have a high social potential, but it is a bottom-up life, which is difficult to decide and manage from above (from central part of the clubs and from outside the clubs, like sports federations, public policies).

9.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

Even though the main aim of sports clubs is to organise sports, public funding of sports in Norway is also based on the idea that participation in sports clubs somehow has political and democratic implications (Kulturdepartementet 2012). There is also a long tradition for organising sports in democratic organisations, even though the level of democratic functioning has been questioned (Enjolras and Waldahl

Table 9.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 439$, delegate decision-making $n = 438$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 1 | 6 | 12 | 57 | 24 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 4 | 16 | 13 | 53 | 14 |

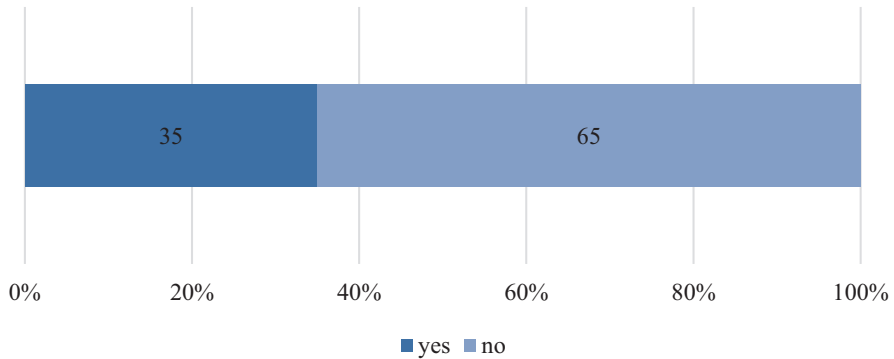


Fig. 9.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 1092$)

2009). This makes it relevant to see what sports clubs themselves think about such issues and whether members actually take part in and understand these potential democratic services.

As for many of the non-sportive social functions of sports clubs' existence, most clubs approach their democratic potentials with a positive but also a bit indifferent attitude. For both the questions we asked – whether the clubs involve members and delegate decisions (Table 9.14) – there is clear majority confirming that their clubs do so, but there is two and three times more that agree than totally agree with these statements: Is it an aim the clubs sympathise with more than an aim they prioritise? This interpretation is supported when comparing the two questions in Table 9.14: more clubs support the less committal “our clubs aims to ...” than the more demanding “our club delegates decision-making ...”.

If we move on to actual participation in decision-making, we find that one-third of the members factually did take part in the last general assembly (Fig. 9.9).

For less formal decision-making (Table 9.14), the participation is higher. Once a month or more often, 19% take part in member meetings, 42% speak their mind to key persons in the club, and 56% share their views with other members (Table 9.15).

For more proactive influence, 45% (Fig. 9.10) say they have tried to influence decision-making within the last 3 months. So, there is a certain participation in either formal and informal decision-making in the sports clubs, and there is a certain amount of members that participate regularly in democratic decision-making.

Table 9.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 983$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 966$, share my view with other members $n = 975$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 28 | 23 | 17 | 13 | 13 | 6 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 16 | 12 | 14 | 15 | 18 | 24 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 12 | 9 | 10 | 14 | 21 | 35 |

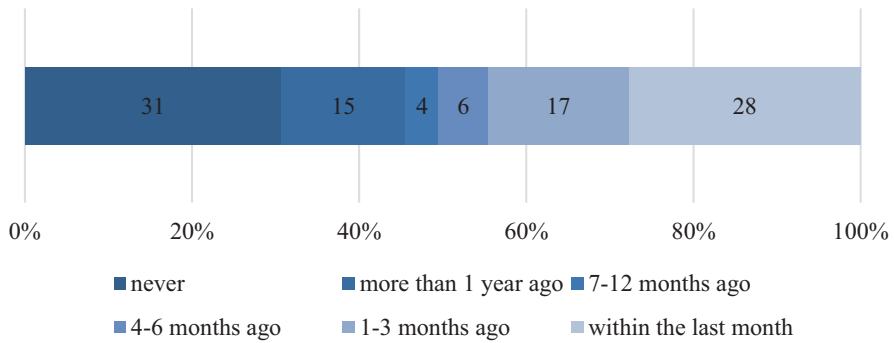


Fig. 9.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 1058$)

Whether the members participate in democratic processes or not could depend on their knowledge of how the club functions. Roughly half of the members (48%) report a thorough understanding (strongly agree), whereas one-third (34%) partly do so (Fig. 9.11).

Both public actors, sports organisations and the clubs themselves have strong beliefs in the political and democratic potential of sports clubs. Several clubs also delegate efforts to this endeavour, and there is a certain participation in meetings and decision-making among members. There is, however, a certain misfit between the potential and the factual participation. The main reason is probably simple and the same as when it comes to other social functions assigned to sports; for those participating in sports, the participation is primarily about sports and less about health and politics, which effects should, from the point of view of members, come as side effects.

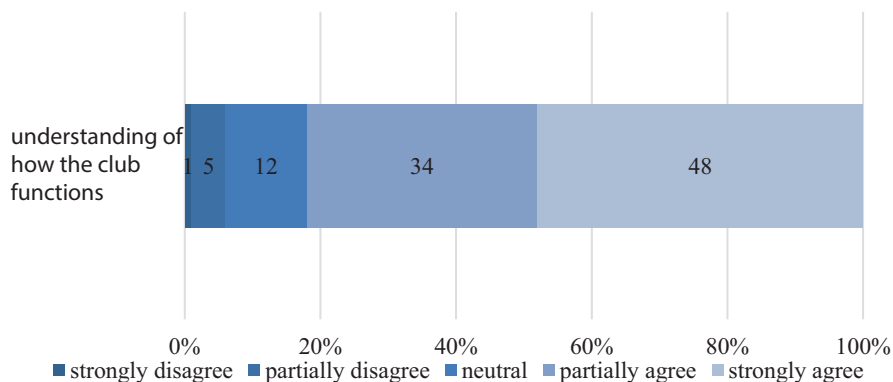


Fig. 9.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 967$)

9.6 Voluntary Work

Voluntary work is the backbone of sports clubs all over Europe, and Norwegian sports clubs like to proclaim that they have a special and strong tradition for volunteering. They even got a specific word – *dugnad* – for volunteering. Yet, the situation for voluntary organisations appears (again) as ambiguous. On the one hand, the level of volunteering in sports clubs is indeed high (Enjolras and Wollebæk 2010). On the other hand, we often hear complaints about the lack of volunteers. This raises a question about the situation for volunteering in Norwegian sports clubs, and we ask four sets of questions. What do the clubs think more principally about volunteering and the role of their members? What is the situation: How many are volunteering, how much and in what types of tasks? Do the clubs consider the situation as problematic? What do Norwegian sports clubs do to meet the challenges related to volunteering? (Table 9.16)

We have looked at two (correlated) aspects of how the clubs look at the role of volunteers in their sports clubs in general.

First, should the clubs be run by volunteers exclusively? More than half (57%) of the clubs thinks so (agree or totally agree), while one-quarter disagree. This indicates that even though there is a strong support for the place and centrality of volunteers in Norwegian sports clubs, there is also a not ignorable proportion of sports clubs that question the centrality of volunteers.

A second question concerns how the clubs look at their volunteers. Coherent with the view that volunteers should be central, few clubs look at members as simply customers that could not be expected to contribute valuably to the clubs. The clubs also consider their volunteers as dedicated, passionate and energetic, and they think that they are all, regardless of qualifications, able to somehow contribute to their clubs.

From Table 9.17, we see that a higher percentage of the clubs have no or very few occasional volunteers compared to the percentage that have no or very few regular

Table 9.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 446$, members as customers $n = 443$, demonstrating passion $n = 444$, all members can be volunteers $n = 447$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 7 | 18 | 17 | 30 | 27 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 56 | 32 | 7 | 5 | 1 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 1 | 9 | 22 | 54 | 14 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 1 | 3 | 6 | 36 | 55 |

Table 9.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 454$, no fixed position(s) $n = 477$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 8 | 15 | 24 | 27 | 27 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 39 | 8 | 13 | 19 | 21 |

volunteers. This indicates that many clubs rely mostly on volunteers in fixed positions and have no or close to no volunteers that do not have a fixed position (board, trainer, official, other).

For those in fixed positions (Fig. 9.12), we see that the largest group of volunteers are at the board level (41%), whereas there is also a considerable group (34%) volunteering as (fixed) coaches and trainers.

Table 9.18 shows how problematic the clubs experience the recruitment and retention of various types of volunteers. If we look at the proportion saying problems are big or very big together, board volunteers seem to be the largest problem (26%), whereas 20% report coaches/instructors to be a problem, and 19% have problems with referees and officials. All in all, between one-fourth and one-fifth of the clubs report serious problems with the recruitment and retention of one (or more) groups of volunteers.

Even though Norwegian sports clubs seem to do rather well, the impression is often that it is getting harder and harder to recruit volunteers. Findings in Fig. 9.13 question this impression for the last 5 years: for most (two-thirds) clubs, the situation is as it was; for 20%, it has improved; and for 13%, it has worsened. So, the overall picture is stability, and if there are tendencies for change, they seem to be towards the better.

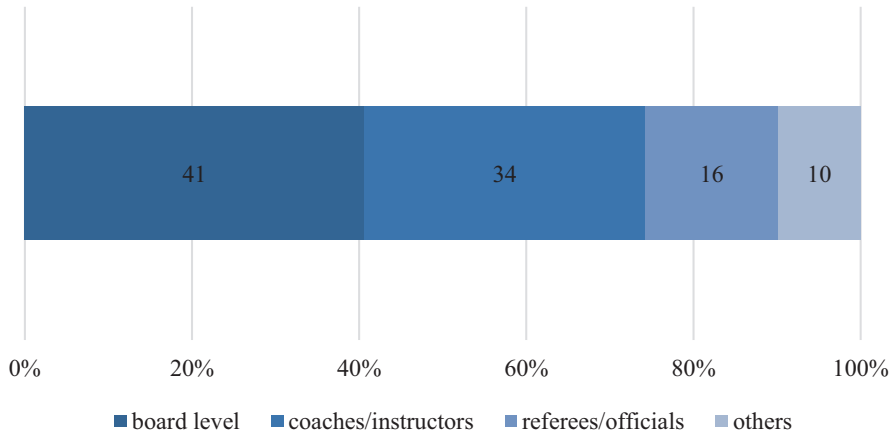


Fig. 9.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 451$)

Table 9.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 439$, coaches/instructors $n = 436$, referees/officials $n = 421$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 15 | 26 | 33 | 21 | 5 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 19 | 28 | 33 | 16 | 4 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 25 | 24 | 32 | 15 | 4 |

Even though the situation for volunteers seems positive (Fig. 9.13), several clubs (Table 9.18) also report problems. A follow-up question then is what the clubs do to recruit and retain volunteers.

Table 9.19 reports answers to this question. The two most common measures are rather commonsensical: to recruit through the networks of current volunteers and members (74%) and to encourage and motivate volunteers verbally (60%).

Four measures are taken by around 40% of the clubs. In line with the most common measures, clubs say that they inform parents (45%) and communicate that volunteering is expected of members (41%). Two more measures are more specific: paying members for extending their qualifications (47%) and organising parties and social gatherings for volunteers (40%).

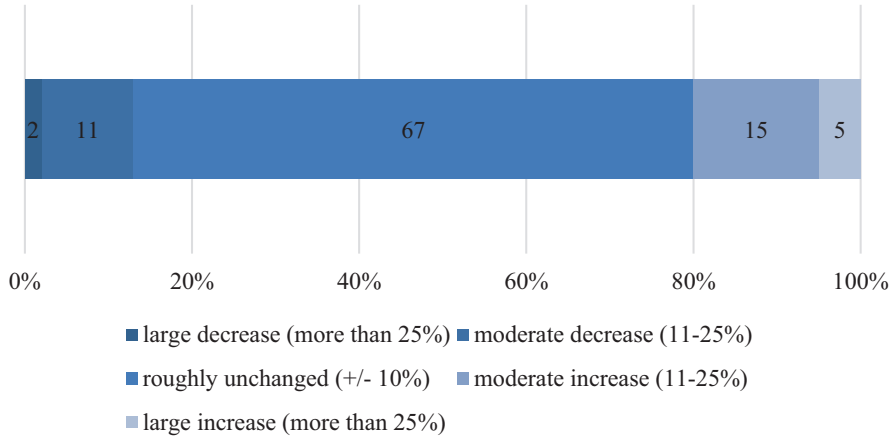


Fig. 9.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 441)

Table 9.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally *n* = 453, social gatherings *n* = 453, recruit through current network *n* = 453, pay for training *n* = 453, inform members *n* = 453, inform parents *n* = 453, benefits in kind *n* = 453, recruitment outside *n* = 453, management *n* = 453, written strategy *n* = 453, club does not do anything in particular *n* = 470)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 60 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 40 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 74 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 47 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 44 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 45 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 29 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 15 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 8 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 4 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 6 |

Still, a considerable number of clubs (29%) say that they reward their volunteers with benefits in kind. The more institutionalised measure – having a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management – is found in 8% of the clubs.

In short, we could say that most of the clubs follow the obvious routes, informing and communicating among known and potential volunteers, whereas also several

Table 9.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 960$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 9 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 8 | 14 | 25 | 5 |

Table 9.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 602$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 23 | 25 | 24 | 20 | 8 |

clubs take action that is more concrete: helping members with qualifications, rewarding those volunteering and having specific persons responsible for recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Table 9.20 shows a wide spread in the frequency of volunteering: a few are very active (5% at least five times a week), a much larger group (25%) volunteers two to four times a week, and 14% helps out once a week. The rest is (relatively) evenly spread out on lower frequency levels.

For the intensity of volunteering (Table 9.21), there is a minority of 8% volunteering more than 50 hours a month, whereas there is around one-fourth at each of the lower intensity levels: 0–5, 6–10, 11–20 and 21–50 hours per week.

Volunteering is often assumed to be in decline, yet our findings do not support such pessimistic verdicts. The belief in voluntary organisations is strong, most clubs seem to assume that volunteers have the competencies necessary to run and develop Norwegian sports, many people volunteer, and clubs are relatively satisfied with the situation. This status quo goes together with a tendency to more professionalisation and a more diverse and shifting sports landscape (more commercial fitness, more exercise outside organised sports), and this probably gives the impression of more dramatic shifts than those actually taking place.

9.7 Conclusion

There are great expectations towards Norwegian sports clubs, both from public authorities that help fund the sports clubs (Kulturdepartementet 2012) and from the sports federation functioning as an organisational infrastructure to help the clubs (NIF 2015). These expectations cover a wide spectrum of issues. The crux of it all

is obviously that sports clubs should organise sports activities for their members, but besides, we find a long list of possible social functions that sports clubs could fulfil. We have looked closer at four such issues in this chapter: health promotion, social integration of various social groups often less included in sports, democratic and political issues and volunteering.

A first finding is that these issues have high priority also among Norwegian sports clubs. Sports clubs seem to think that they are part of a tradition and that they should and could help with health promotion, that sports clubs have a role to play with respect to social integration and that participation in sports clubs could have positive political and democratic repercussions. As such, sports clubs are clearly in line with the official public discourses. There are two reasons for this coherence between public and sports policy aims. First, these aims are all very traditional, mainstream and not controversial. Second, it seems obvious that sports clubs without costs and special efforts should be able to help with health issues, social inclusion and organisational and political capacities.

In this chapter, we report the extent to which Norwegian sports clubs deliver and contribute to these social functions. We find that they provide physical activity to have a positive health effect; they organise sports where various kinds of people might meet up and interact, and the clubs have a democratic organisation structure where members are welcome and supposed to participate. To give a concluding and overall answer to the question of how successful the sports clubs are with respect to these social functions is, nevertheless, difficult. On the one hand, Norwegian sports clubs' contributions – number of members, level of physical activity, the reported inclusion and the participation in decision-making – to social and political functions are obviously significant. On the other hand, it is clear that the acclaimed attitudes and the assumed potentials are higher than the clubs' factual priorities and achievements. This is the finding for all three social functions in focus here: one is doing well, and one could do better. The claim that sports clubs' ability to fulfil such social functions is deteriorating nevertheless finds no support in our data.

This raises two further questions: Why do sports clubs not contribute more with something that seems so easily within reach? How could sports clubs contribute more to these social functions?

The main reason for not doing more than what comes more or less by itself is the fact that the social functions studied in this chapter are side effects for the sports clubs. They organise sports: health, integration and political involvement come along while doing sports – to a certain extent. To contribute more to such social functions, the sports clubs must change their prioritisations in the direction of these social functions.

To make the clubs contribute more to these social functions, it is useful to identify the hindrances that at present limit further efforts. What makes Norwegian sports clubs special is volunteering as the central resource, loose links between the central part of the club and its groups and often weak links without much authority between the club and these specific groups. Given that almost all sports play out in a concrete group, not in the club (hub) as such, it becomes difficult for the central club to implement specific policies. They cannot decide that local units have to

devote more of their scarce resources and volunteers' free time to something for which they might lack both interests and competencies and which, nevertheless, is not their main reason for volunteering in sports. This rift between societal and political ambitions coming from outside and the more limited and narrow perspective on what goes on inside a sports club is more or less in the nature of voluntary organisations and makes it difficult to use them as policy implementers and to increase their fulfilment of policy implementations.

To increase the sports clubs' capability to fulfil such social and political function, the dominant response seems to be some kind of professionalisation and bureaucratisation. Those working with health promotion and social integration need more knowledge on relevant issues, and the central organisation needs more authority to make those running the activities respond to policy signals. The most obvious way to achieve this is by more formal knowledge and education and employees more devoted to such tasks. Professionalisation along these lines is already present in many nations' sports (Seippel 2019) where both sports organisations and public policy actors push for a wider responsibility for sports clubs. There is, however, a dilemma when it comes to how professionalisation and bureaucratisation could help without undermining some of the strengths in the traditional way of organising sports in voluntary organisations (Seippel 2010).

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Chapter 10

Poland: Small Local Sports Clubs with High Social Engagement



Monika Piątkowska and Sylwia Gocłowska

Abstract Nowadays sports clubs in Poland perform many social functions; it is influenced by country historical political situation. Currently, as a result of the system transformation, Polish local sports clubs have an autonomy and belong to the non-governmental sector. Their activities are focused on promotion and development of sports, mainly sports for everyone and sports for children and youth. The majority of clubs are young, single sport organisations, and over half of the clubs are situated in small- or middle-sized communities. Polish clubs often report financial problems, even though the proportion of direct funding towards them is the highest in all studied countries. Polish clubs seem to show an integrative and open nature. The majority of clubs report that they try to offer sports to as many population groups as possible and strive to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated. One of the most important challenges of many Polish sports clubs is to recruit and retain human resources. Polish volunteers in sport clubs are by far the most active in all researched countries. The largest proportion of volunteers undertake administrative and management tasks. In this chapter we try to show, discuss and compare those results with other European countries.

10.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

Sports clubs in Poland have developed from the late nineteenth century onwards. In a similar way to other areas of social life, sports in Poland has been slowly undergoing transformation (Chełmecki and Wilk 2013).

Events related with World War I and II had a significant influence on understanding of the current functioning of sports clubs in Poland; the foundations of Polish sports were still created during the partitions. The first clubs were established in Galicia, in particular, in Lviv and Krakow. However, Polish athletes could not perform under the white and red flag. At that time, sports was one of the few

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phenomena that connected Poles under partition. Regaining independence by Poland in 1918 after 123 years of partitions provided an impulse for the development of sports. There were established or reactivated associations and sports clubs whose task was to prepare athletes for competitions at an international level (Stokłosa and Wójcik 2018). In 1918, on the reconnected territories of Poland, there was no organisation coordinating the activities of a few sports clubs or being responsible for organising competitions (Szczepłek 2018). During the interwar period, when Poland restored its sovereignty, there was a development of political, economic and social life. Sports participation and organisations were based on free social engagement, without any influences from the authorities of the newly formed state. In the second half of the 1920s, sports movements could count on national ideological and financial support. Before World War II, sports clubs were created by political parties; many of them belonged to the Polish Socialist Party (Gawkowski 2008). World War II shattered the achievements of the sports movement – there were losses in people as well as in sports infrastructure. During the post-war times, there was another outbreak of spontaneous activity in reconstructing sports clubs, which played a role in integrating social life (Kamiński 2016). At that time, mainly working class unions and youth clubs were reactivated. The next step was a substantial intervention of the state in the form of a central steering model. The authorities noticed a possibility to disseminate communist ideas in sports for propaganda aims. During that period, sports clubs were established mainly at national work places and were financed by trade unions (e.g. military or police clubs and clubs at manufacturing plants or mining clubs). During that time the state did not expect any serious citizenship engagement in club activity (Chełmecki and Wilk 2013; Piątkowska 2016).

In the early years of Communist rule in Poland, sports was not crucial for the emerging communist government (Markiewicz 2015). During the time of Polish People's Republic, the activity in the field of physical culture was strongly influenced by the machinery of state and depended on the political situation of socialistic countries (Lenartowicz and Jankowski 2014). Krawczyk (1997) indicated that in Poland at the end of the 1990s, despite the existence of certain sports structures formally independent of the state (such as national Olympic committees, national sports federations or sports unions, associations, and clubs), their autonomy was very limited in practice. Entities responsible for sports in Poland both in professional and amateur scopes were completely dependent on the state for reasons such as not having their own facilities (they were national) and other necessary infrastructure (Krawczyk 1997). Lenartowicz (2016) indicates that professional and recreational sports in Poland was then directly and indirectly financed by the state and was used for disseminating the communistic ideology; at that time there was no way to speak about sports organisations independent of the state. So-called grassroots sports were mainly organised by union movements and prevalence of physical recreation was insufficient. Very popular were centres and clubs of Towarzystwo Krzewienia Kultury Fizycznej (TKKF, eng. The Society for the Promotion of Sports and Physical Activity); special units developed for popularisation of sports and physical recreation among the Polish society (Kunicki 1997). They integrated the society of sports and recreation movements.

After 1989, a transformation from a planned to a market economy created market conditions for new entities to function, including sports clubs. Sports in Poland rapidly became commercialised, especially in towns and cities. Simultaneously non-profit organisations started to develop leaving space for social engagement. At that time municipalities and regions were given much more autonomy (Act on Municipality Self-Government 1990). Since then, local government is obliged by law to provide for professional and public sports, in cooperation with non-governmental organisations (Piątkowska and Gocłowska 2016).

Currently, as a result of the system transformation, Polish sports clubs regained their autonomy (in accordance with legal norms) and are in the non-governmental sector (apart from sports clubs being members of professional leagues). In the vast majority, they are associations, to the benefit of which members of local societies work, mainly voluntarily. The state withdrew from the managerial function and controlling sports clubs, however, still supporting and co-financing sports clubs. Nowadays sports clubs are not used by the state apparatus for political aims; their main aim is the social integration of local societies and the dissemination of physical culture among children and youth. These changes were expressed in a new model of the organisational structure in Poland. It indicates a subsidiary character of state institutions as well as democratic independence of sports associations (Krawczyk 1997).

Sports clubs, especially those functioning locally, serve numerous social functions as they play a key role in the social inclusion in local communities. The state regards physical culture as a way to increase citizens' health and fitness and observes its educational role, which in turn builds positive personal models. It is worth emphasising that the vast majority of local sports clubs operating in schools are managed by physical education teachers and parents of students.

10.1.1 Funding Structure and Sports Policy Towards Sports Clubs

Currently the Polish system is based on two co-existing and cooperating sectors of governmental and non-governmental organisations (Piątkowska 2015). Sports clubs operate on the lowest level of non-governmental structure as they are basic units that carry out aims and tasks related to sports in local communities. The policy for sports in Poland is specified in the Sport Development Programme until 2020 (PRS 2020) developed by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism (Ministerstwo Sportu i Turystyki, MST). Its main aim includes two components – activities related with creating conditions (infrastructures, offer, organisational structures) for promoting physical activity and promoting the healthy and active lifestyle (MST 2015b).

However, in accordance to own standards, central bodies do not run the policy directly focused on sports clubs. The undertaken activities are focused on promotion and development of sports; mainly sports for everyone and sports for children

and youth (Piątkowska and Gołowska 2016). In accordance with the new policy of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, a support for sports clubs should mainly come from local authorities which know the non-governmental organisations functioning in a local environment (MST 2015b).

Despite a lack of direct policy focused on sports clubs, Polish government runs a series of supporting activities targeted at entities organising sports locally; beneficiaries of which are most often sports clubs. In this area, the government orders realisation of public tasks on the basis of subsidiary and support for non-governmental organisations in the course of tenders. An example of such cooperation is an implementation of governmental programmes for development of sports for everyone by the Foundation for Development of Physical Culture (FRKF). It is a state-owned foundation with a statutory aim of undertaking, supporting and co-financing initiatives aimed at the development of physical culture (Piątkowska and Gołowska 2016).

Thus, one can state that despite less impact of central bodies in relation to local sports clubs, numerous programmes and competitions for sports clubs exist. For example since 2016 the Polish Ministry of Sport and Tourism has implemented the Club programme in which local sports clubs can benefit from direct financial support. Each year the budget for sports clubs in the Club programme is rising; from approximately EUR 3, five million in 2016 to EUR 9, three million in 2019. However, this form of support organised by the government seems to be insufficient, considering the number and needs of sports clubs. What is more, clubs face formal and substantive barriers in order to achieve financial support. First of all, only non-governmental organisations appointed for promoting sports activities may apply for the subsidies. It is also recommended that they operate nationwide, declare engagement of volunteers in the daily functioning of the club and are able to submit their own contribution to the programme. The complexity of procedures concerning the application for financial resources is a difficulty in obtaining support. The obligation of own contribution surely disqualifies sports clubs that do not run business activity and do not have financial incomes, which would secure a fee required by competition regulations (Piątkowska and Gołowska 2016).

Financial and organisational support for sports clubs comes also from local governments, which finance activities of sports clubs from own budgets. In case of this level, there is no requirement of own contribution, and the amount of donations in many self-governments is discretionary and depends on sports achievements of clubs (Piątkowska 2016). Great support from local government involves unpaid or limited paid use of public sport facilities.

10.2 Structure and Context

The average size of Polish sports clubs in terms of membership numbers amounts to 112. When looking at the distribution of club size by categories of membership numbers, it is clear that the average number of members is affected by a high number of relatively small clubs (Fig. 10.1). More than 70% of the clubs report having 100 members or fewer. The proportion of very large clubs, with more than 1000

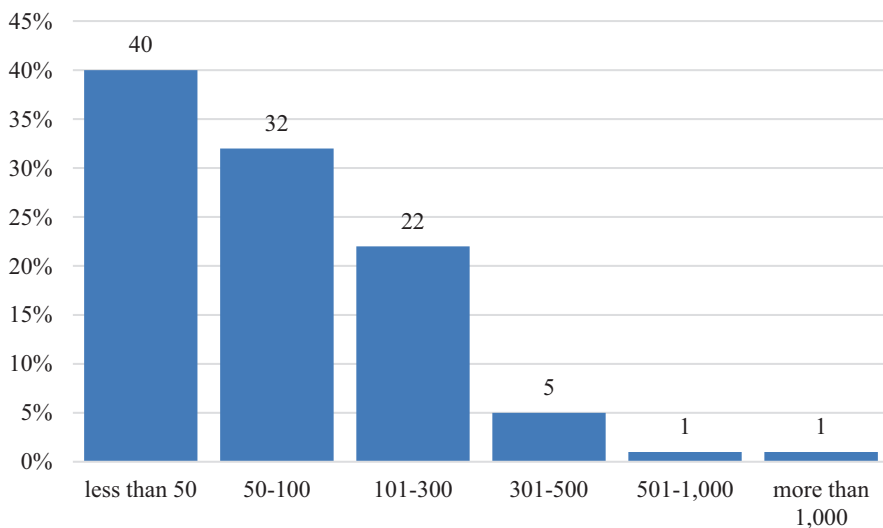


Fig. 10.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 444$)

members is very small (around 1%). This situation is similar in the majority of European sports clubs, for instance, proportion of small clubs is also relatively large in Switzerland (66% of all clubs report having 100 members or less). This is not a surprising fact as over half of the clubs are situated in small- or middle-sized communities with less than 50,000 inhabitants. In Poland, we can find even very small communities with less than 500 people living, which are home to 6% of the sports clubs.

Regarding the membership development, every third club agrees that the number of members has stayed relatively stable during the last 5 years (Fig. 10.2). Around half (49%) of the Polish clubs in fact report a moderate to large increase in membership numbers. This result is much higher than the European average (36%); it might be explained by the fact that the majority (64%) of Polish sports clubs are young as they have been founded since 2000. Around 15% of clubs seem to be threatened with moderate or large decrease in number of members.

As far as the problem with recruitment and retention of members is concerned, Polish clubs do not perceive it as a big challenge ($M = 2.8$ measured on a 5 point scale with 1 = no problem to 5 = a very big problem). Only one fourth of the sports clubs faces big or very big problems in this area (Table 10.1). About one third of the clubs report a medium-sized problem. Around 40% of the clubs state no problems or only small problems related to the recruitment and retention of members. It relates well to the overall positive membership development in most Polish clubs.

Taking a look at the age of the sports clubs in Poland, it must be noted that three quarters of all clubs have been founded since 1990 after the fall of the communist-led government (Fig. 10.3). The majority of the clubs are young since their establishment has been after the turn of the millennium. The same situation is found in Hungary and Spain.

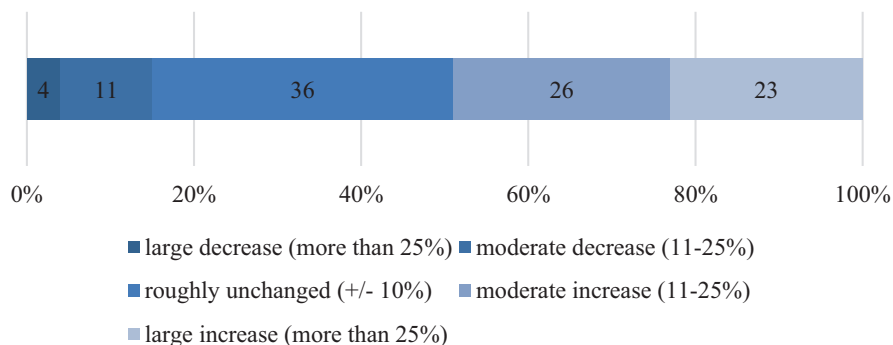


Fig. 10.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 443$)

Table 10.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, $n = 349$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 17 | 23 | 36 | 18 | 6 |

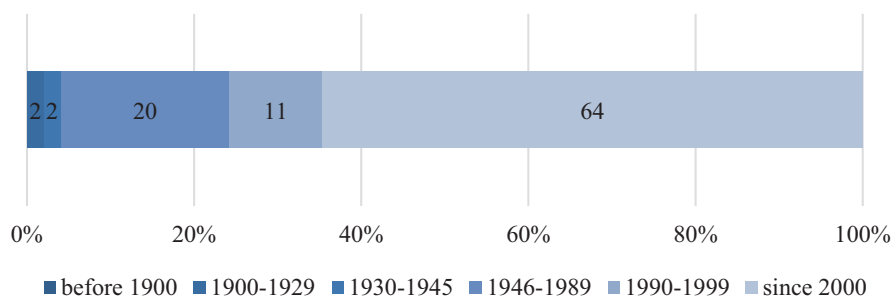


Fig. 10.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 339$)

The majority of Polish sports clubs (73%) tend to be single sports clubs with one main sports activity (Fig. 10.4). For all included countries, the split between single sport and multisport clubs is roughly three-quarter single clubs to one-quarter multisport clubs.

An overview of the ten most often provided sports across the Polish sports clubs (no matter if single or multisport clubs) can be seen in Table 10.2. The most often provided sport is football offered by 30% of sports clubs. As far as the offer is concerned, less popular are volleyball, swimming and fighting or combat sports. This statement stands in line with the studies conducted by the Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics (CSTS) in Poland. Invariably, in Poland, the most popular sports

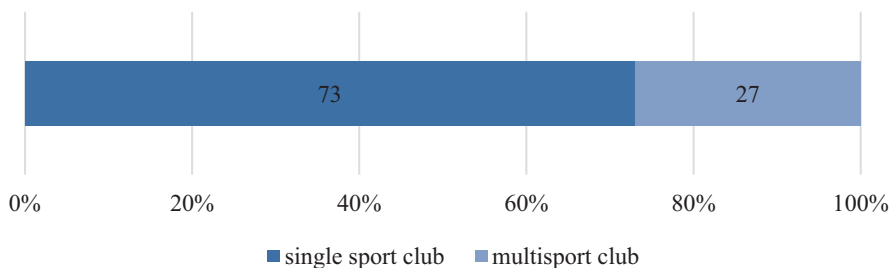


Fig. 10.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, *n* = 453)

Table 10.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, *n* = 514)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|------------------------|----|
| 1 | Football | 30 |
| 2 | Volleyball | 12 |
| 3 | Swimming | 9 |
| 4 | Fighting/combat sports | 9 |
| 5 | Shooting sports | 7 |
| 6 | Track and field | 7 |
| 7 | Running | 6 |
| 8 | Basketball | 6 |
| 9 | Gymnastics (all sorts) | 5 |
| 10 | Table tennis | 5 |

are team disciplines (58% of practising persons), of which: football – 40% (together with beach football and futsal – 48%; Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017). Results of the CSTS study (Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017) indicate that the football section is run by 45% of sports clubs. It is interesting that in Poland the percentage of people practising fighting and combat sports is relatively higher than in other European countries. This might be explained by the rising interest of Polish people in these disciplines, which is coincident with the nationwide report (Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017), as well as increasing numbers of private federations of multimartial arts.

Having a look at the characteristics of the resources of sports clubs provides some interesting additional information. With regard to the use of club-owned and public-owned sports facilities, it is evident that in Poland the proportion of clubs using public facilities is very high (Table 10.3). More than 90% of the sports clubs make use of public facilities; the highest percentage in comparison to all studied countries. More than half of Polish clubs are obligated to pay fees for the usage of

Table 10.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 357$, public facilities $n = 358$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 326$, share of revenues $n = 381$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|--|
| 19 | 91 | 56 | 41 |

Table 10.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 352$, financial situation $n = 354$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 18 | 21 | 24 | 18 | 20 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 8 | 12 | 28 | 28 | 25 |

public facilities. However, it must be noted that the analysis of direct public subsidies relative to all revenue the sports clubs received in 2014 shows that in Poland the proportion of direct public funding is outstandingly high. Almost 41% of the total revenues came from public money.

Conversely, the share of clubs that use their own sports facilities is relatively low with only one fifth doing so. Poland together with Spain represents the countries with the smallest proportion of clubs in possession of own sports facilities. Therefore, the availability of facilities seems to be a big challenge for Polish sports clubs. Nearly 40% of the sports clubs report big or very big problems in this area (Table 10.4). Again Poland and Hungary and Spain represent countries with the largest proportions of clubs with very big problems in availability of sports facilities.

Even though the proportion of the clubs that receive public funding is very high, their financial situation is clearly a challenge for them. More than half of clubs report very big or big problems in this area. In contrast, only 8% of clubs declare no problems at all with the financial situation. Together with Hungary, Poland represents the highest percentage of clubs that reported problems with financial resources among all European countries. It is worth to mention that for instance in Belgium only 7% of sports clubs declared a big or very big problem with their financial situation.

The analysis of human resources in Polish sports clubs shows that 60% of clubs employ paid staff to help with the operation of daily activities (Table 10.5). The proportion of paid staff relative to members is 5%, and it is higher than in other European countries. However, similarly to Belgium and Switzerland, about three-quarters of all paid staff members work as coaches, instructors or physical education

Table 10.5 Paid staff and paid manager(s) in clubs (club survey, paid staff *n* = 418, paid manager/s *n* = 431)

| Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 60 | 9 |

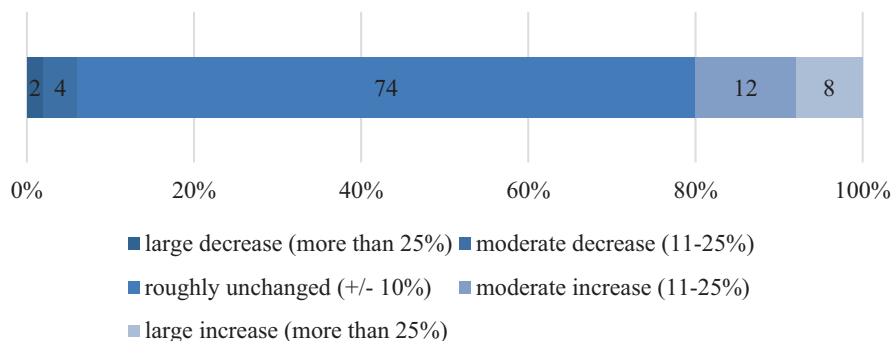


Fig. 10.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 309)

teachers who get additional wages; only a small proportion of clubs are led by a paid manager, either in a full-time (5%) or part-time (4%) position.

Regarding the development of paid staff, the majority of the clubs are in agreement that within the last 5 years the number of paid staff has been relatively stable. One fifth of sports clubs report a moderate or large increase in the number of paid staff (Fig. 10.5).

Summarising the results of our studies concerning structural characteristics, most of the sports clubs in Poland are characterised by a low number of members in comparison to other European countries. More than 70% of the clubs report having 100 members or fewer. Generally small and medium sports clubs operating in rural areas exist in Poland. What is more, clubs are young; mostly established since the turn of the millennium. The majority of the Polish clubs are single sports clubs. A significant majority of Polish sports clubs focus on competitive sports, while only a small percentage of clubs state that their activity is not focused on sports competition.

It is important to note the fact that sports clubs, in the vast majority, do not have their own sports infrastructure, using public facilities, often for remuneration. In order to promote physical activity in local environments and use the social potential and social integration of local societies, the government realised the programme of developing new sports infrastructure, so-called Orliki (Biernat et al. 2017). Within the scope of the programme, 2604 modern, safe, generally accessible and free of charge sports and recreation complexes were built in communes all over Poland. The facilities are multifunctional sports fields built in the areas which most lacked the infrastructure. According to this idea, self-governments employ local sports animators and create local centres of integration for various social groups. After the

completion of building the infrastructure, the government launched a new programme called Nasz Orlik; the aim of which is a use of fields in order to encourage societies to use the infrastructure. The programme assumes training for animators and coaches as well as volunteers working at Orliks, along with the initiative to use the facilities as a social space strengthening social bonds. Sports clubs in numerous communes can use the available infrastructure free of charge (Gołdys et al. 2014; MST 2015a).

Despite the realisation of construction of multi-functional fields all over the country, for many clubs availability of sports facilities is a medium, big, or very big problem. Polish clubs are among clubs that most often report financial problems from those studied, even though the proportion of direct funding towards sports clubs is the highest in all studied countries. The report shows that in recent years, concerning the condition of Polish non-governmental organisations, the number of financial sources of these organisations is increasing (Adamiak et al. 2016). However, we must note that the main sources are still funds for the realisation of public tasks from self-governmental and public administration resources as well as membership fees.

10.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

Offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes is an important topic for Polish sports clubs. A majority of the clubs agree to be committed to offering such programmes (Table 10.6); this applies to around 65% of the clubs. But it is not only special programmes particularly developed for health-enhancement that are provided by the sports clubs. Sports clubs are also convinced that the sports disciplines that they offer have health-enhancing effects; more than 85% of clubs agree or totally agree with this statement. The possible explanation for this result could be due to numerous initiatives implemented by the state in order to promote and popularise physical activity among Polish people. This results from a new strategy of the Ministry of Sport and Tourism: the Sport Development Programme up to 2020

Table 10.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 345$, sports clubs disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 355$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 8 | 8 | 20 | 46 | 19 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 8 | 1 | 5 | 42 | 44 |

(MST 2015b). Its aim is to develop the habit of undertaking physical activity sufficiently often and intensively in order to enjoy life in health for longer and thus to increase the level of life satisfaction. It is also worth paying attention to the fact that the majority of analysed sports clubs realise the aim of promoting physical activity among children and the youth. This may also result from the fact that the largest share in the structure of Polish sports clubs are student sports clubs, being associations established and run by or at public schools. In 2016, there were around 6000 student sports clubs, and their percentage in the structure amounted to 40% (Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017). This is supported by national statistics of the Polish Central Statistical Office concerning membership in sports clubs. Children and youth aged up to 18 predominate among persons practising sports in sports clubs – 71% (Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017).

It is also interesting to see how respondents are active as sports participants in their respective sports clubs. It is clear that a lot of respondents take part very frequently (Fig. 10.6). More than 50% of all the respondents that reported to be active in sports take part three times a week or more in a sports activity in their sports club. This result is the highest among all European countries. In Belgium, Denmark and the Netherlands, less than one fifth of the respondents participate three times a week or more. Only 6% practise sporadically 1-3 times a month or less.

The high frequency of sports participation might be explained by the fact that most of the clubs focus on competitive sports. The majority of the respondents reported that they participate (78%) or participated in the past (10%) in competitive sports (Table 10.7).

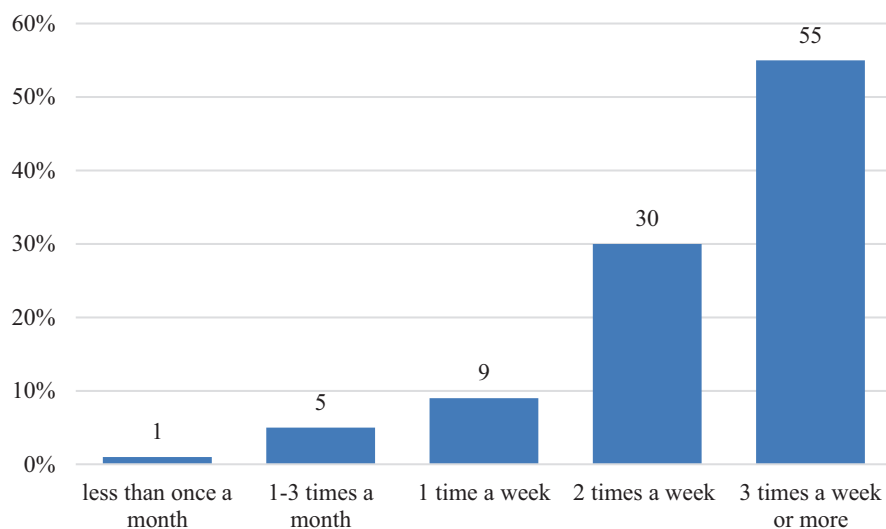


Fig. 10.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 279$)

Table 10.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 343$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 78 | 10 | 13 |

The percentage of the sports-active respondents in Poland who participate in competitive sports is much higher than the European average (62%). As depicted in the national statistics of 2016, 48% of the sports clubs competed at the national level, in both youth and senior sport systems (Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017).

10.4 Social Integration

As far as social integration is concerned, it is interesting to see how different groups are represented and what are the Polish clubs' attitudes in this regard. These groups include people with disabilities, people with a migration background, the elderly (i.e. people who are 65 years or older) and women.

Polish clubs appear to show an integrative and open nature. The majority of them (70%) report that they try to offer sports to as many population groups as possible (Table 10.8); this result is in line with the European average (68%). However, the percentage of clubs with a particular focus on helping socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated is lower in Poland than in other countries. Nearly 60% of the clubs agree or totally agree that their club strives to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated into their club.

This attitude of openness is not reflected in the membership percentage of vulnerable groups (Table 10.9). Around 70% of the clubs report not having any members with disabilities; this percentage is one of the highest in all studied countries. One in four sports clubs states that they have a membership proportion of disabled people of between 1 and 10%. This number is the lowest in comparison to other countries.

As for the representation of people with migration background in sports clubs, the percentage is even lower than in the case of the previous group. About three quarters of the sports clubs estimate that they do not have any people with a migration background among their club members. A membership proportion of migrants of between 1 and 10% is reported by nearly a quarter of clubs. European statistics on migration and migrant populations indicate that Poland, out of 10 other countries, had the lowest number of migrants in 2017 (5.5 per 1000 citizens; Eurostat 2017).

The third population group the clubs were asked about were the elderly, i.e. people aged 65 or older. The analysis reveals that this population group is more frequently represented within sports clubs than the first two population groups described (Table 10.9). Approximately one third of the clubs in Poland report that

Table 10.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 356$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 346$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 8 | 7 | 14 | 46 | 24 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 9 | 7 | 25 | 39 | 19 |

Table 10.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 374$, people with migration background $n = 362$, elderly $n = 378$, women $n = 444$)

| | 0% | 1-10% | 11-25% | 26-50% | 51-75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 70 | 26 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| People with migration background | 74 | 24 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 57 | 33 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Women | 17 | 17 | 20 | 30 | 10 | 6 |

they have between 1% and 10% of members being elderly. A bit more than half of the clubs do not have any elderly persons among their club members.

As for women, only 17% of the Polish sports clubs report that they have no females among members. It is visible that the proportion of male members is larger than the proportion of females in clubs. Approximately three clubs in ten report that they have membership proportions of women of between 26% and 50%. Studies revealed a low representation of women in sports clubs (28%) in comparison to other countries (e.g. Norway 40%, Denmark 39% and Germany 38%). This statement stands in line with the national statistics, where the share of girls and women practising sports in sports clubs amounted to 25% in 2016 (Centre of Sport and Tourism Statistics as well as Regional Research Centre of Podkarpackie Voivodship and Social Surveys and Living Conditions Department 2017).

Besides reporting the representation of members within selected population groups, the clubs were asked if they were taking special initiatives (e.g. activities, teams, cooperation, reduced membership fee, etc.) to integrate people of the four population groups. The results show that the most common are specific programmes targeted at women offered by 40% of clubs (Fig. 10.7). Fewer clubs take special initiatives for the elderly and people with disabilities. People with migration background are not addressed frequently by sports clubs; this group is a special focus for only 10% of the clubs.

The clubs' board members were also asked about their opinion on different management issues and values that the clubs follow (Table 10.10). The vast majority of sports clubs set high value on the social aspects connected to doing sports. Almost nine out of ten clubs (86%) mainly agree that they set high value on companionship

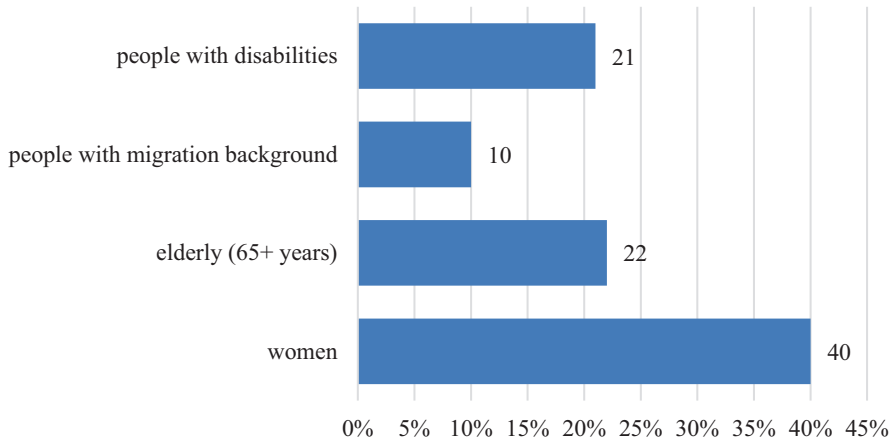


Fig. 10.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 324$, people with migration background $n = 324$, elderly $n = 349$, women $n = 334$)

Table 10.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 350$, competitive sports $n = 355$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 5 | 1 | 7 | 49 | 37 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 6 | 3 | 7 | 44 | 41 |

and conviviality. Sporting success and competitions are also important for most of the clubs. Around 85% of the clubs agree that these aspects are of central interest, which corresponds well with the high prevalence of members active in competitive sports.

Data on social life of the Polish clubs' members is of interest (Table 10.11). The frequency of participation in the club's social gatherings is very high in Poland; only one in ten members has never taken part in any social gathering. Around half of the members declare that they participate at least once every three months or more often.

As far as the interaction with other members and volunteers is concerned, more than a third of the respondents stay in the club after training, a match or tournament to talk to other people from the club at least once a week (Table 10.11). The percentage of members who never participate or participate very rarely (once a year or less) in this sort of socialisation amounts to around 20%.

Sports clubs appear to be important arenas for the creation of new relationships; an emotional commitment of members has also been examined (Fig. 10.8). More

Table 10.11 Frequency of participation in the club’s social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 405$, stay behind after trainings $n = 415$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every three months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every two weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club’s social gatherings | 11 | 17 | 23 | 15 | 15 | 9 | 11 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 13 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 19 | 13 | 37 |

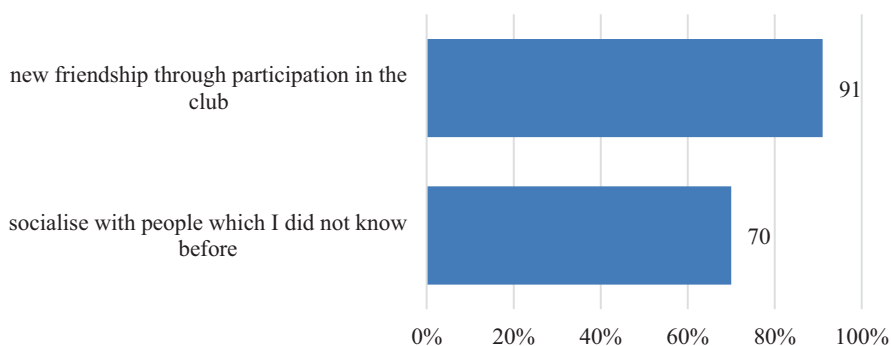


Fig. 10.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 419$, socialise with people $n = 397$)

than 90% of the members state that they have made friends through their participation in the club. Seven out of ten respondents reported that they socialise with people they did not know before joining their respective clubs.

The respondents were also asked how well they are acquainted with other members. It is striking that the percentage of respondents who know more than fifty people by name is so low and amounts to 12% (Table 10.12). More than 40% of the respondents declare to know by name at least 20 people in the club. This might be explained by the fact that the majority (72%) of the Polish clubs are small as they report having 100 members or fewer.

The next examined aspect was the attitude of members towards social life in the club. Table 10.13 shows that a vast majority of Polish respondents are proud to belong to their club; nearly 85% of the respondents strongly or partially agree with this statement.

The respondents were also asked to rate the importance of the sports club relative to other social groups. For seven out of ten respondents, the club is one of the most important social groups to which they belong.

Table 10.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 453$)

| | None (%) | 1-2 people (%) | 3-5 people (%) | 6-10 people (%) | 11-20 people (%) | 21-50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 1 | 2 | 8 | 15 | 33 | 30 | 12 |

Table 10.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 422$, most important social group $n = 409$, respect me for who I am $n = 364$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 9 | 3 | 4 | 15 | 69 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 9 | 8 | 11 | 28 | 44 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 6 | 4 | 9 | 26 | 55 |

The last aspect concerning the attitudes of members towards social life in the club is whether the people affiliated with sports clubs feel respected for who they are by the other people from the club. The vast majority of the respondents (81%) mainly agree that they feel respected for who they are, while only 10% mainly disagree.

As far as social integration is concerned, Polish clubs seem to show an integrative and open nature; the majority of clubs report that they try to offer sports to as many population groups as possible and strive to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated. This shows that while analysis reveals a significant number of the clubs agree to work for structural interaction of different population groups, shortcomings remain; with a significant number of clubs not having members within the selected target groups, nor working strategically with structural integration in the sense that they have a specific focus on taking initiatives targeted at the integration of one or more target group(s). This may result from the fact that sports clubs mostly do not undertake activities (although they would like to) aimed at social integration and representation of various social groups.

Polish clubs set high value on companionship and conviviality and are clearly a good setting to create and foster social networks among their members. The frequency of participation in the club's social gatherings is very high in Poland in comparison to other countries. A vast majority of the Polish members identify with their club.

10.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

Another essential aspect describing the current situation of Polish sports clubs is democratic decision-making and involvement of members in the daily operation of the club. Most of the sports clubs strive to engage own members in decision-making (nearly 80%). The share of club members which disagree that the club they belong to aims to involve members when making important decisions amounts to 14% (Table 10.14). This result is relatively high in comparison to other European countries (e.g. the Netherlands 2%, Switzerland 4%). This might indicate that Polish members are rather uninvolved in important decisions within the clubs.

Nevertheless, the above-mentioned attitude is not displayed in the figures regarding delegating decision-making from the board to the committees. Only in almost three out of ten clubs decision-making is delegated (Table 10.14). Around 70% of the clubs are undecided in this aspect or mainly disagree with the statement.

It is also interesting to have a look at data regarding participating in democratic decision-making by the clubs' members. Just over 40% of the respondents attended the last general assembly convened by the club (Fig. 10.9).

Apart from the annual general assembly, club members have the opportunity to participate in less formal meetings to express their opinions about the operation of the club. This can be done through taking part in member or club meetings. Nearly

Table 10.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making *n* = 354, delegate decision-making *n* = 343)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 7 | 7 | 9 | 59 | 18 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 11 | 22 | 36 | 26 | 5 |

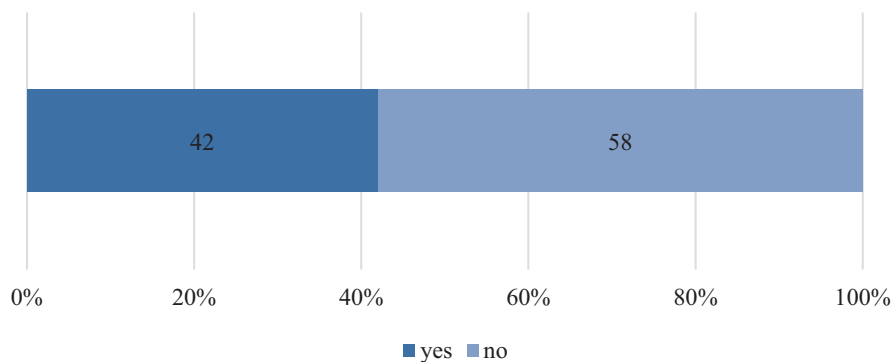


Fig. 10.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, *n* = 475)

Table 10.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 382$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 378$, share my view with other members $n = 410$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every three months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 30 | 18 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 16 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 20 | 12 | 8 | 8 | 14 | 37 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 12 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 51 |

30% of the respondents report their attendance in such meetings at least once a month (Table 10.15). At the same time nearly half of them participate either once a year (or less) or never in club meetings.

Informal ways of democratic participation is more common among club members in Poland (Table 10.15). Around half of the respondents report that they speak their minds to key persons in the club at least once a month or more often; one fifth of the members never do so. The proportion of people who share their views with other members of the club is relatively high; more than 60% of the respondents do so at least once a month or more often.

Even though the proportions of members who either speak their mind to key persons in the club or share their views with other members in the club are relatively high, the number of people who made an attempt to influence decision-making in the club is low (Fig. 10.10). Nearly 40% of members have never tried to influence decision-making in the club. At the same time nearly one third of them were active in this field within the last month. Poland and Spain have the largest proportions of respondents who are most active in these kinds of democratic procedures.

Apart from the aspect of how to influence decision-making, it is also important to understand how the club functions. This is particularly relevant because sports clubs are democratically organised, which means that members and volunteers have the opportunity to decide on how the club should be run. More than half (55%) of the respondents strongly agree that they know how their club is run (Fig. 10.11). Poland shares first place in this regard among other European countries. Simultaneously only 14% disagree with the statement. This might be explained by the fact that most of the Polish sports clubs are relatively small.

Most sports clubs strive to engage own members in decision-making. At the same time, it is of interest to note that despite members stating they want to take full responsibility for the club's functioning, only around half of the club members take part in general meetings and nearly 40% of members have never tried to influence decision-making in the club. The report concerning the condition of Polish non-governmental organisations shows that only around half of the members are involved

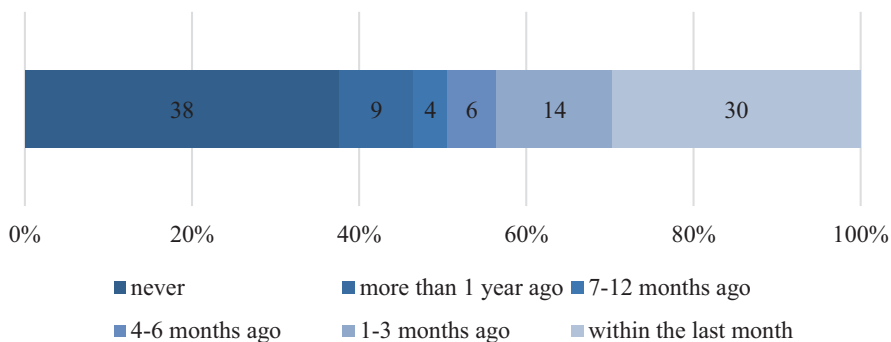


Fig. 10.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, *n* = 464)

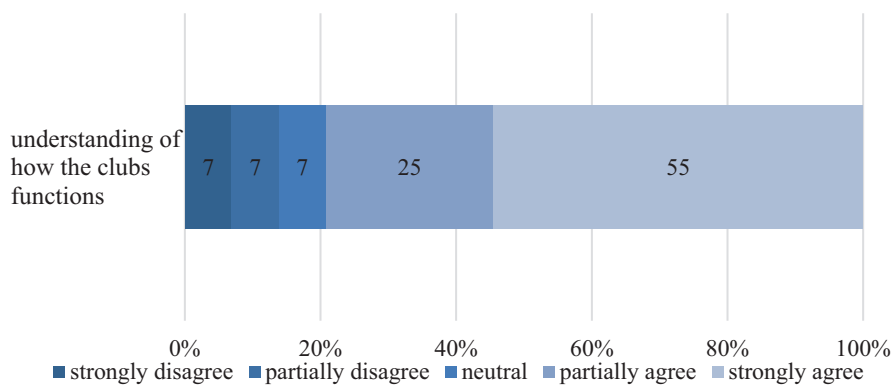


Fig. 10.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, *n* = 394)

in the associations functioning (not only sports ones), while the rest remain passive and do not take part in their activities (Adamiak et al. 2016). As far as our studies on sports non-governmental organisations are concerned, the percentage of engaged ones is higher, which can result from the specificity of the sports sector. Poland (similarly to Spain) has the largest proportion of respondents who are most active in democratic procedures, while Denmark and Switzerland have relatively few respondents that seek to influence decision-making – whether formally, through the annual general assembly and other meetings, or informally, by talking to key persons and other people from the club about club affairs.

10.6 Voluntary Work

Having human resources is one of the most important challenges of many Polish sports clubs (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017). Voluntary work is crucial for sports clubs for the way in which they manage their activities. Poland is considered a

Table 10.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 371$, members as customers $n = 359$, demonstrating passion $n = 379$, all members can be volunteers $n = 385$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 20 | 33 | 25 | 13 | 9 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 25 | 45 | 19 | 8 | 3 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 8 | 6 | 17 | 44 | 26 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 12 | 3 | 5 | 48 | 32 |

country with low percentage in engagement in sports volunteering (14%; Eurostat 2015).

Table 10.16 displays average values of agreement of the clubs' boards to questions regarding volunteers. A vast majority of Polish clubs (70%) do not consider members to be only customers who cannot contribute to voluntary work. At the same time above 50% of those clubs do not agree that the club should be run exclusively by volunteers; only 9% of clubs totally agree with that statement. It is the lowest rate in all studied European countries. A possible explanation of this fact might be a high rate of the number of paid staff relative to members (5%). It is much higher than in most European countries in which the number is about 1%. These differences can be interpreted by the relatively short history of sports clubs in former authoritarian regimes and there being less tradition of volunteering in sports clubs in these countries.

The great majority of all Polish clubs (80%) are of the opinion that all members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications. Disagreement is displayed by 15% of sports clubs. Members who are passionate about the work that needs to be done are particularly found in 70% of the clubs.

In Poland less than 20% of the total number of members of a club volunteer in fixed positions and 13% volunteer in no fixed position. According to Table 10.17, only 1% of the clubs have more than 50 volunteers in fixed positions and 2% in not fixed positions. The vast majority of clubs have less than 10 volunteers in fixed and not fixed positions.

Within their roles as volunteers in fixed positions, the clubs' volunteers fulfil different tasks within sports clubs that can be assigned to four areas (Fig. 10.12). Looking at the distribution of volunteers between areas, it can be seen that the largest proportion of volunteers fulfil administrative or management tasks (53%). More than 20% of volunteers in fixed positions are coaches and trainers, whereas 14% of volunteers belong to referee staff or officials.

Table 10.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 418$, no fixed position(s) $n = 487$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0-5 | 6-10 | 11-20 | 21-50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 30 | 34 | 28 | 8 | 1 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 53 | 22 | 16 | 8 | 2 |

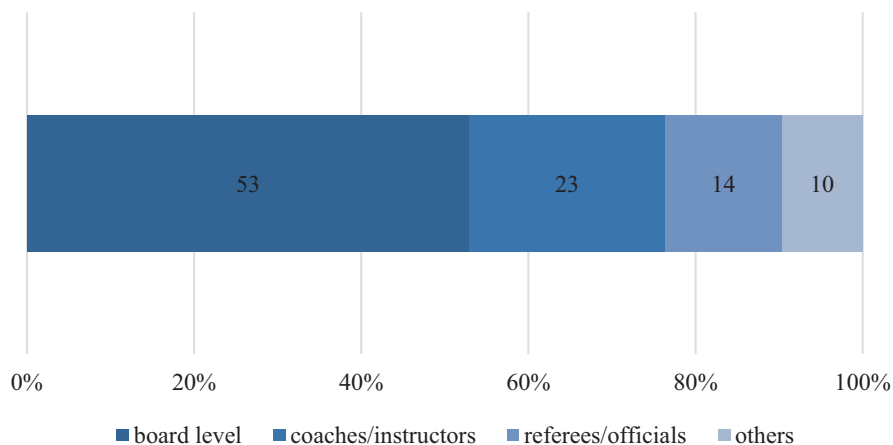


Fig. 10.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 390$)

Regarding problems with recruitment and retention of volunteers in Polish sports clubs, recruiting members on the board level and coaches is not an existential problem for one in five clubs. For 34% of the clubs, recruitment and retention of referees is not a problem at all. For more than 20% of clubs, those problems are of little significance (small problems).

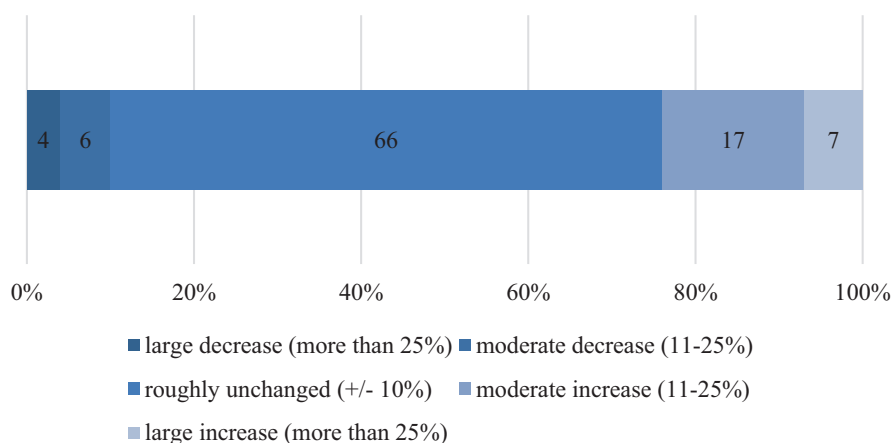
At the same time in each category of volunteers presented in Table 10.18, more than 20% of sports clubs claim that recruitment and retention is a big or very big challenge for them. The most essential problem is to recruit coaches and instructors.

About two out of three clubs report that the number of volunteers has not changed during the last 5 years (Fig. 10.13). In total, 10% of clubs claim that they lost more than 11% of volunteers while almost one in four clubs observed at least a similar increase of volunteers. This might be explained by the fact that the majority (64%) of Polish sports clubs are young as they have been founded since 2000.

A majority of the clubs use different measures to recruit and retain volunteers (Table 10.19). The primary way to recruit volunteers that clubs implement is to inform members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work; 46% of the clubs do so. Another popular attempt is informing parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work; 37% of the clubs claim they do that.

Table 10.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 347$, coaches/instructors $n = 347$, referees/officials $n = 324$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 23 | 26 | 27 | 18 | 7 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 23 | 23 | 23 | 20 | 12 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 34 | 21 | 24 | 14 | 7 |

**Fig. 10.13** Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 388$)

To cope with the problem of recruitment and retention of volunteers, Polish clubs pay special attention to present staff. Almost half of the clubs (45%) encourage and motivate their volunteers verbally.

Quite a popular attempt in order to recruit volunteers is searching for proper people through the networks of current volunteers and members. Almost the same proportion of the clubs inform parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work. Not much above 10% of the clubs try to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members.

In order to retain volunteers, about one out of five clubs arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity, and 16% of them reward their volunteers with benefits in kind.

In Poland, it is not very common that sports club have a written strategy for volunteer recruitment (1% has one). In contrast, almost one in five clubs from Switzerland and Germany implement that kind of strategy. A less frequent measure

Table 10.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 409$, social gatherings $n = 409$, recruit through current network $n = 409$, pay for training $n = 409$, inform members $n = 409$, inform parents $n = 409$, benefits in kind $n = 409$, recruitment outside $n = 409$, management $n = 409$, written strategy $n = 409$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 469$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 45 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 23 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 34 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 7 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 46 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 37 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 16 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 11 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 8 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 1 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 14 |

Table 10.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 288$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every six months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2-4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|--|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of members | 14 | 14 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 11 | 22 | 12 |

than in other countries is also paying for volunteers to take training or gain qualification, only 7% of clubs undertake that action. This might be explained with the fact that many small clubs in Poland do not have sufficient resources for that kind of actions.

Members of sports clubs volunteer with different frequency (Table 10.20). A little less than a quarter of the volunteers do their work 2-4 days a week. The most involved volunteers participate in the club's operation five days a week or more. They represent 12% of the volunteers.

Together, volunteers being active once every 6 months or once a year, represent about 30% of all volunteers. About one out of ten volunteers is involved in club tasks once every quarter while 11% of volunteers report that they are active once a month.

Polish volunteers – with an average of 292 hours spent on volunteering in sports clubs each year – are by far the most active in researched countries. On average the

Table 10.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 172$)

| | 0-5 | 6-10 | 11-20 | 21-50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 16 | 18 | 21 | 27 | 19 |

European volunteers spend 173 hours on voluntary work in the club. A little less than 20% of the volunteers in fixed positions spent more than 50 hours on their volunteering activities in an average month in a season (Table 10.21). More than two out of ten volunteers spent approximately 21-50 hours helping to run the club.

In total, more than one third (34%) of volunteers spent less than 10 hours on unpaid activities in sports clubs. Medium engaged volunteers in fixed positions, who spend about 11-20 hours in an average month in the season represent 21% of the total number of volunteers.

Data analysis reveals that the great majority of all Polish clubs are of the opinion that all members can volunteer regardless of their qualifications. In comparison to other studied European countries, Polish volunteers in sports clubs spend significantly more hours for voluntary work; the amount of 292 hours is much higher than the average for other countries. Nearly half of the sports clubs expect from their members voluntary work, while only 1% of the clubs have a strategy of acquiring and keeping volunteers. A lack of formal activities and oriented politics can have an influence on the fact that Poland has one of the lowest ratios of participation in voluntary work on fixed and not fixed positions when compared to other countries. What is interesting, the study shows that more clubs report a relative increase of the number of volunteers than a decrease. The results stand in line with national statistics according to which only one fifth of Poles are engaged in voluntary work for non-governmental organisations (Adamiak et al. 2016). The percentage of volunteers among Poles has remained almost unchanged since 2012. At the same time, the number of foundations and associations that use services of volunteers systematically increased (2006 40%, 2015 61%). However, associations and foundations preoccupied with sports use work of volunteers less often among all NGOs. Poland is a country in which volunteering plays a minor role in society. There might be a correlation with the late dissolution of the authoritarian regime and the general lack of tradition for volunteering among Poles. However, sports clubs offer an important opportunity for volunteering. Non-governmental organisations preoccupied with sports, tourism, recreation or hobby are the most numerous segment of the Polish non-governmental sector (Adamiak et al. 2016).

The most popular activity aimed at recruiting volunteers is informing members about such need. Not many clubs undertake other and more formalised activities, having an influence on an increase of the number of volunteers. This may result from the fact that only 8% of clubs have a person responsible for recruiting, retaining and managing of volunteers.

10.7 Conclusion

The sports system appears to be the result of a combination of the structures established under the authoritarian regimes after World War II and a change of organisational structures and policy governance, influenced by the sports systems and sports policies in other EU countries in the years following a shift to democracy (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017). Polish sports clubs started their dynamic development only after the collapse of communism in 1989 (Krawczyk 1997).

Despite barriers in creation and development of association structures in sports deriving from history, sports clubs are developing and drawing experiences from other and better developed clubs.

The results of the club and member survey provides clear evidence that sports clubs contribute to public welfare in the Polish society, as they foster health promotion, social integration, democracy and volunteering.

Offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes is an important topic for the majority of the Polish sports clubs. Sports club members are mostly very active as sports participants within the club context. The high frequency of sports participation might be explained by the fact that most of the clubs focus on competitive sports.

Turning to social integration of members, the results show that Polish clubs seem to display an integrative and open nature. The majority of clubs report that they try to offer sports to as many population groups as possible, striving to help socially vulnerable groups to become better integrated into the clubs. Sports clubs are also important places for fostering companionship and conviviality. Even though they focus mainly on competitive sports, social values are also of importance to them.

Polish club members are very active in democratic procedures as they seek to influence decision-making – whether formally, through the annual general assembly and other meetings, or informally, by talking to key persons and other people from the club about club affairs. This can be explained by the fact that the majority of clubs are small organisations functioning in small local communities, in which the active participation and engagement of members are necessary for the clubs to survive.

Voluntary work is an important resource that allows sports clubs to exist and to offer interesting programmes to their members. Polish volunteers are by far the most active in all researched countries. However, there are areas where volunteer engagement is low. The largest proportion of volunteers undertake administrative and management tasks, while in other fields there is still space for volunteer involvement. Even though the majority of the clubs report that the number of volunteers has not changed during last five years, they still struggle with the recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Presented characteristics of volunteers in sports clubs in Poland can help to promote and share good practices of volunteering; especially as Poland is considered a country with short historical tradition of volunteering in sports clubs.

This study can be the start of a discussion into the role of sports clubs in Poland. Consideration should be given into what activities could be undertaken in order to utilise the potential of sports clubs and what supporting activities could be proposed by local governments in order to promote the above-mentioned functions of contemporary sports clubs.

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Chapter 11

Spain: Conviviality, Social Relationships and Democracy at the Basis of Spanish Sports Clubs' Culture



Ramon Llopis-Goig and María P. García-Alcober

Abstract This chapter provides an overview of the main functions of sports clubs in Spanish society with regard to social integration, democratic involvement and voluntary work. At the European level, Spanish sports clubs are among the front-runners in terms of presence of people with disabilities, at the average when it comes to people with migrant background and far below the average concerning people over 65 years old and women. Talking about democratic involvement and engagement for the community, most of the clubs try to involve members when making important decisions and delegate decision-making from the board to their committees. On the other hand, their members report the democratic culture and freedom of expression they enjoy in their clubs. With regard to voluntary work, only one third of Spanish sports clubs have more than ten volunteers in fixed or non-fixed positions, although they tend to agree that voluntary work should continue to play a fundamental role in sports clubs. This is consistent with their lower repertoire of recruitment and retention of volunteers' strategies, which, in turn, is connected with the fact that they are among the youngest and smallest sports clubs in Europe.

11.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

In Spain, the first sports clubs were established later than in other European countries, specifically, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The creation of clubs was closely associated with foreign professionals and specialists, who came to this country, and with young people, who went to other European countries to study and

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later returned with new habits, including sports. Together, these factors brought English sports into Spanish society and introduced the idea of a democratically run, volunteer-based sports club (Heinemann 1999).

When the Franco regime (1939–1975) took power at the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), the conception of sports changed radically because it no longer formed part of civil society and was assimilated into the structure of the authoritarian state. The political authorities appropriated sports as part of the one-party control over society, and, thus, sports organisations were controlled by a state body set up in 1938, the National Sports Delegation. The subordination of sports clubs to the state apparatus led to the end of their autonomy and the liberal democratic approach to clubs as peer-based associations. Club officials were appointed by bodies that ultimately had to answer to the state. In their statutes, clubs had to acknowledge their subordination to the provisions and authority of the National Sports Delegation (Pujadas and Santacana 2003; Santacana 2011).

During the transition to democracy, sports also began to experience a process of democratisation. The first half of the 1980s saw the rapid construction of a lot of sports facilities, and municipal governments began to promote Sport for All, which led to a booming sports movement in Spanish society. At the beginning of the 1990s, the enactment of a new Sports Law (Law 10/1990 of 15 October) regulated the responsibilities and functions of the state with regard to sports (Puig et al. 1999). Sports clubs were defined as private associations made up of private individuals or legal entities whose purpose is to promote one or more sports, encourage members to engage in these sports and foster participation in sporting activities and competitions (Llopis-Goig 2017). Sports clubs could be divided into three types: elementary sports clubs, basic sports clubs and Sports Corporations. Elementary sports clubs have a simple legal structure and are dedicated to practising sports and participating in competitions at local or regional levels. Basic sports clubs have more complex legal structures because they have their own legal personality and articles of association that reflect specific operating regulations (Lera-López and Lizalde-Gil 2013). Both may participate in sports competitions if they sign up with their correspondent entities (Llopis-Goig et al. 2017). On the other hand, clubs that take part in official professional or state-level sports activities have to become Sports Corporations (SAD, Sociedad Anónima Deportiva), which is the way the Sports Law separates professional sports from non-professional sports (Llopis-Goig 2016).

The first feature of the Spanish model for sports clubs is collaboration between the state and the clubs: the state provides resources to sports clubs in exchange for the clubs' promotion of public sports participation (Llopis-Goig and Vilanova 2015). Moreover, the state is not merely an ancillary promoter of the clubs' activities because it is also involved itself in providing a wide range of opportunities for sports practise. Thus, the model can be viewed as interventionist because the clubs' collaboration with the state causes them to depend on the state's financial support (Burriel and Puig 1999; Rodríguez 2008). However, since the 1992 Olympic Games, sports clubs have grown in importance and gained autonomy within the Spanish sports system, despite the state's unquestionable dominance as a supplier and financial backer of numerous sporting activities. Nevertheless, the state's role has recently

been reduced in response to the economic crisis and public budget cuts (Llopis-Goig 2016).

The second feature has to do with decentralisation. Thus, after the adoption of the Spanish Constitution in 1978 – where Article 148.1 allows the 17 regions of Spain, the *Comunidades Autónomas*, to promote sports – the country saw a rapid increase in sports legislation at the regional level. By the 1990s, all 17 of Spain's regions had adopted their own sports laws, with specific provisions on sports associations presented in decrees, ordinances, plans and programmes. Over time, these different legislative developments, as well as the historical and cultural differences among the various regions, have given rise to territorial heterogeneity in Spanish sports. Although this heterogeneity makes it difficult to generalise, the regions tend to manage their own sport support services, provide funding to clubs and federations at the regional level, construct facilities, organise competitions and support training and research. With regard to the sports clubs, the regions hold annual calls for grant proposals to which they can present their projects. The awarding of a grant is not always guaranteed, and the amount depends on the economic resources of the regional government. The awarding of these grants legally obligates the recipients to fulfil the grant requirements.

Finally, the third feature of the Spanish sports model is what some have called municipalisation. Municipalities subsidise sports clubs in their territory, and they play a decisive role in the construction and management of local sports facilities and the development of sports programmes for all ages. They also cover the costs of running local facilities. By law, town councils serving populations of more than 20,000 inhabitants have the obligation to provide sports services to their citizens (according to the Law regulating Local Tax Authorities 7/1985 of the second of April Chap. III article 26). Municipalities typically hold annual open and competitive calls for proposals to subsidise the activities of the city's sports clubs and the top-tier clubs. The criteria for funding vary, but they could include the number of teams the club has, the promotion of women's sports, participation in public interest campaigns, etc. In this way, the municipality allocates funds to sports clubs that are contributing to its objectives. This funding is accompanied by a legal obligation to fulfil grant conditions. Clubs do not automatically receive subsidies.

11.2 Structure and Context

This section offers a description of the main structural characteristics of Spanish sports clubs, as well as the degree to which they have experienced changes in the past 5 years. It focuses on aspects such as club size, membership development, year of foundation, sports offered and paid staff, in addition to findings about the sports facilities used and the public funding received.¹

¹ It should be taken into consideration that the surveys on which the data presented in this chapter

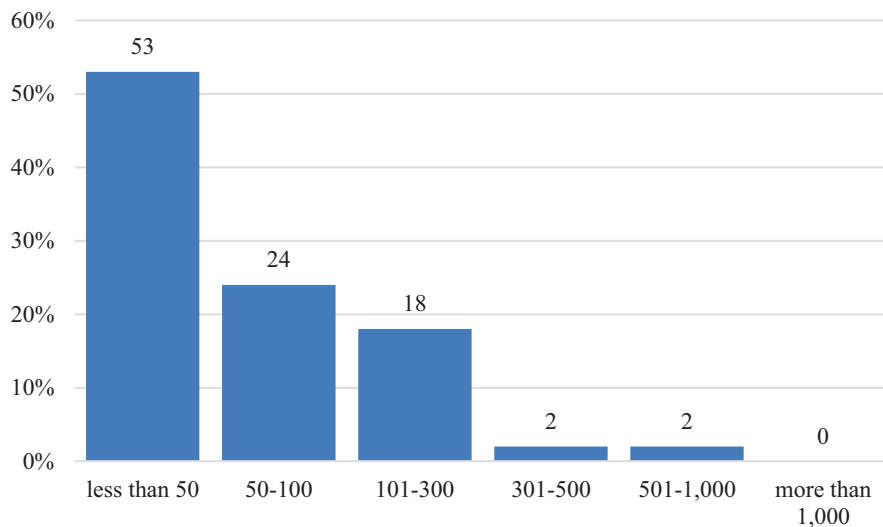


Fig. 11.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 528$)

Spain is among the European countries with the smallest sports clubs. The average number of Spanish club members is 168, which is below the average of the 10 countries studied in the SIVSCE project, being 239. Another characteristic of Spanish sports clubs is the high heterogeneity in their size (demonstrated by a higher standard deviation), in contrast to the greater uniformity presented by other European countries. As Fig. 11.1 shows, more than half of the Spanish sports clubs (53%) have less than 50 members, 24% have from 50 to 100 members and the rest have more than 100 members.

As Fig. 11.2 shows, 46% of Spanish clubs have increased the number of members in the past 5 years, which seems coherent with their smaller size and, therefore, with their higher expectations for growth. Furthermore, 38% state that the club's size has remained stable, whereas 17% have experienced a reduction of more than 10%.

The Spanish sports clubs are not especially concerned with recruitment and retention of members: only 18% claim that this is an important problem. In Spain, more than one third indicate that it is not a problem, whereas 45% consider it a small or medium problem, as the data included in Table 11.1 indicate.

Regarding the age of the clubs, the Spanish sports clubs are among the youngest in Europe. In fact, 73% were founded after the year 2000, which is a higher percentage than what was found in the other countries included in the study. Of the remaining 27%, 10% were created between 1990 and 1999 and 16% between 1946 and

stem from a sample of sports clubs and their members and volunteers from six Spanish regions that together represent 46.9% of the country's population. More information about the Spanish sample can be found in the chapter devoted to the technical characteristics of the survey in this book.

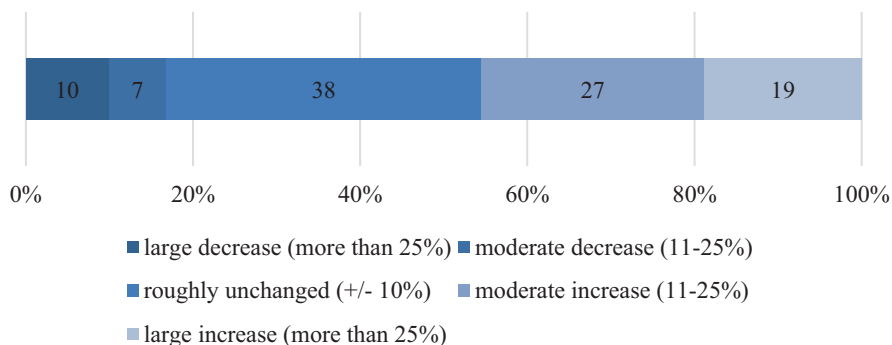


Fig. 11.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 523)

Table 11.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, *n* = 426)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment and retention of members | 36 | 20 | 25 | 12 | 6 |

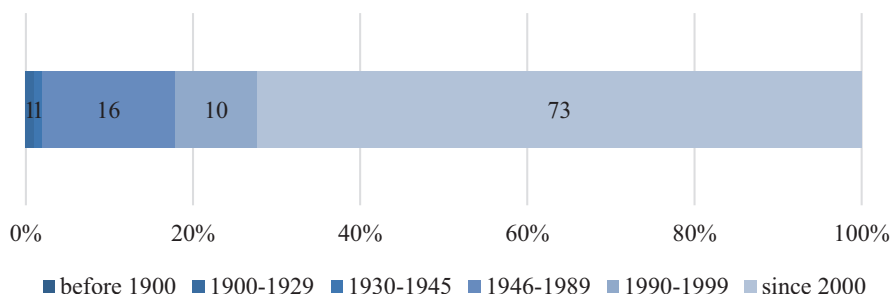


Fig. 11.3 Year of foundation (club survey, *n* = 445)

1989 (Fig. 11.3). It should be kept in mind that from 1939 to 1975, both participation in and creation of clubs and associations were conditioned by the restrictions on freedom imposed by the dictatorial regime governing the country. With the transition to democracy, an increase in the interest in sports and a genuine associative boom took place and maintained their intensity until recent years.

In terms of the sports offered, 78% of the Spanish clubs offer one sport to their members (Fig. 11.4). This proportion fully corresponds to the European average. In Spain, 22% of the clubs are dedicated to more than one sports discipline.

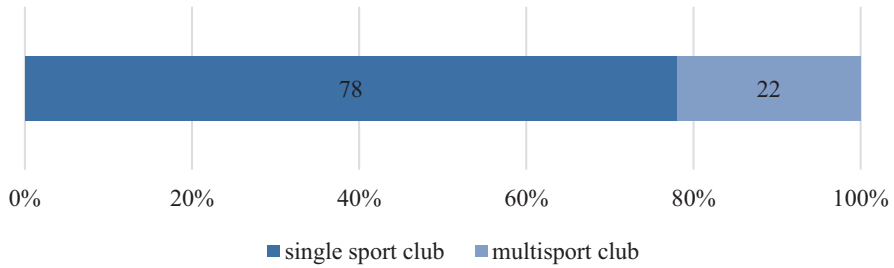


Fig. 11.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 561$)

Table 11.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 616$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|------------------------|----|
| 1 | Football | 12 |
| 2 | Cycling | 11 |
| 3 | Track and field | 9 |
| 4 | Walking/Nordic walking | 9 |
| 5 | Basketball | 8 |
| 6 | Hiking | 8 |
| 7 | Fighting/combat sports | 6 |
| 8 | Swimming | 6 |
| 9 | Gymnastics (all sorts) | 5 |
| 10 | Triathlon | 5 |

The sport most commonly offered by the Spanish clubs is football (12%), which is also the case in the other European countries. A very similar proportion of Spanish clubs are dedicated to individual or semi-individual disciplines, such as cycling (11%), track and field (9%), walking (9%) or hiking (8%) (Table 11.2).²

Regarding the use of facilities, two thirds of Spanish clubs (64%) use public installations, which is closer to Central European countries than to Eastern European countries. However, Spanish clubs have fewer facilities of their own, given that only one out of ten owns the installations they use (see Table 11.3).

In addition, among the Spanish clubs that use public facilities, 48% point out that they must pay a fee, and this percentage is clearly inferior to what is found in other European countries, such as Belgium, England or the Netherlands, where nine out of ten clubs do so. However, it should be taken into consideration that in Spain, the payment for using public facilities differs considerably among the different regions.

Along with the inscription quota, private sponsorships or income from ticket sales to the events organised, sports clubs get part of their financing through direct public subsidies. Apart from providing sports facilities, this is one of the main ways in which the state supports recreational sports. In the case of Spain, 11% of the sports clubs receive public funding, a lower percentage than the European average

²Walking and hiking differ from the path the person takes. Hiking involves walking from a lower to a higher elevation, whereas walking means trekking a path without too many hurdles, which is less effort than hiking.

Table 11.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 433$, public facilities $n = 433$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 275$, share of revenues $n = 383$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 10 | 64 | 48 | 11 |

Table 11.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 418$, financial situation $n = 426$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of sports facilities | 28 | 11 | 15 | 18 | 29 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 24 | 15 | 26 | 21 | 14 |

and closer to the so-called conservative welfare states than to countries with social-democratic or post-communist traditions.

The availability of sports facilities is a big or very big problem for 47% of the Spanish clubs and a small or medium problem for 26% (Table 11.4). These values mean that the situation of Spanish clubs is similar to that of Eastern European countries. Furthermore, the clubs' financial situation is a big or very big problem for more than one third of the Spanish clubs (35%). In addition, for 41%, it is a small or medium problem, whereas only 24% of clubs do not consider it a problem. In this case, the Spanish clubs' situation is also closer to that of Poland and Hungary, although in both countries, more than half of the clubs perceive the economic situation as an important problem.

Although there is a strong presence of volunteers in sports clubs, they usually also have paid workers, that is, people who receive taxable compensation in exchange for the work they do. In Spain, 29% of the sports clubs have paid workers (Table 11.5), but only 8% have a paid manager, which is one point below the European average (9%).

Coinciding with the situation in more than three quarters of the European clubs, specifically 78% of them, 72% of Spanish clubs affirm that the number of paid staff members remained roughly unchanged during the past 5 years (Fig. 11.5). Only 13% point out that it has increased. By contrast, a similar proportion (14%) has observed a decline.

In summary, Spain is among the European countries with the smallest sports clubs – more than a half of them have less than 50 members – and its clubs are also characterised by their youth: three out of four clubs were founded after the year 2000. On the one hand, two thirds of Spanish clubs use public facilities, and only

Table 11.5 Paid staff and paid manager/s in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 495$, paid manager/s $n = 504$)

| | Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|--|------------------------------------|--|
| | 29 | 8 |

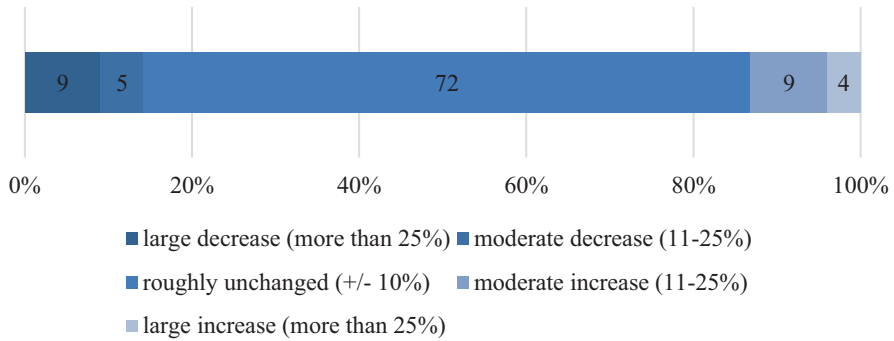


Fig. 11.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 191$)

one out of ten owns the facilities they use. Perhaps because of this, the availability of facilities is considered a big problem for around half of the Spanish clubs. On the other hand, three out of ten of the Spanish clubs have paid workers, a proportion that has remained roughly unchanged in the past 5 years. Finally, one out of ten of the Spanish clubs receives public funding, and around one third of them consider their financial situation to be a big problem.

11.3 Sport Participation and Health Promotion

Sports clubs play a role in promoting the community’s health, and this section addresses this issue. The analysis is carried out in three fields. First, the clubs’ commitment and predominant attitudes towards health promotion are examined. Second, the degree to which the clubs are a place where their members regularly carry out physical or sports activity is described. And finally, the degree of participation of the latter in competitions is addressed.

First, 86% of the Spanish clubs offer physical activity programmes that are beneficial for health, which is one of the highest percentages out of the European countries participating in the study. In fact, the Spanish clubs’ score is 25 points above the European average (see Table 11.6).

The percentage increases to 94% when the clubs are asked if they think the type of sports discipline they develop can be considered an activity that enhances health. This percentage is also one of the highest of all the countries included in the study, which showed an average of 85%.

Table 11.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes $n = 415$, sports clubs disciplines suit health-enhancing physical activity $n = 428$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club is committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes | 1 | 2 | 11 | 36 | 50 |
| Our club feels that our sports discipline(s) is/are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity | 0 | 1 | 5 | 28 | 66 |

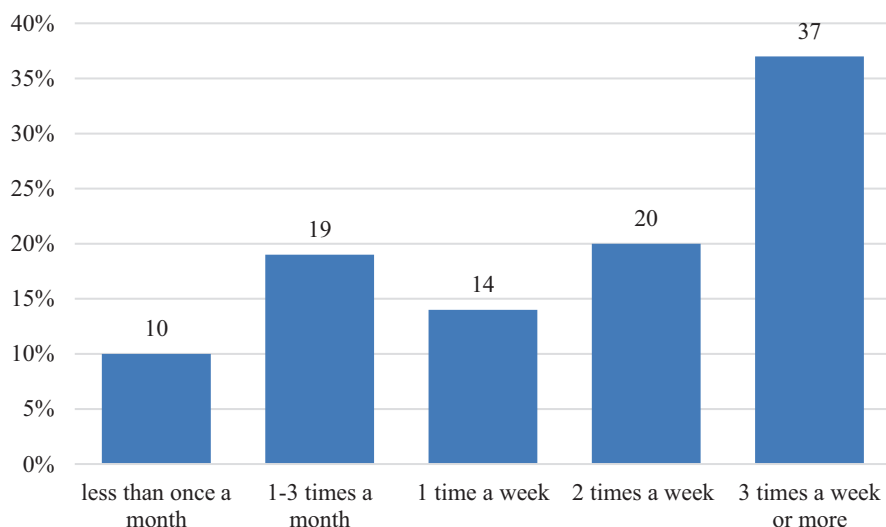


Fig. 11.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 304$)

The sports clubs also contribute to the community’s health promotion to the extent that they represent a space for physical-sports practice. As the information gathered in Fig. 11.6 shows, the Spanish club members perform this kind of activity quite regularly: 71% do so with weekly frequency, whereas the remaining 29% do so three times a month or even less. These data situate the Spanish club members among the most physically active within the countries included in the study.

Although these health-enhancing activities have become a fundamental aspect of sports clubs’ lives, it must be kept in mind that many of them were created to participate in sports competitions. Therefore, it is not surprising that 65% of the members of Spanish clubs do this (Table 11.7), 10% did so last year and 25% have never done this. These proportions are very similar to the European average and situate Spanish clubs in an intermediate position between countries where there is more participa-

Table 11.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 302$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 65 | 10 | 25 |

tion in competitions, such as England or Poland, and countries where there is less, such as Belgium, Denmark and Germany.

In summary, most of the Spanish clubs offer health-enhancing physical activity and think the type of sports disciplines they develop can be considered health-enhancing activities. In both cases, the percentages registered by the Spanish clubs are among the highest of all the European countries studied. In addition, the Spanish clubs' contribution to health promotion through regular physical-sports practice is also valuable: their members are – with 72% doing sports weekly – among the most physically active.

11.3.1 *Social Integration*

This chapter contains a description of the Spanish sports clubs' main characteristics in terms of social integration. Thus, it examines the presence in the clubs of different population groups, such as disabled people or people with an immigrant background, elderly people and women, as well as the attitudes towards these groups and the initiatives clubs undertake to attract them. Then, it examines the social relationships in the clubs and the degree to which they encourage companionship.

11.3.2 *Vulnerable Groups*

In Spanish clubs, the predominant attitudes towards the integration of different population groups are mainly positive. This is revealed in the data shown in Table 11.8, according to which 85% of Spanish clubs offer sport activities to the largest number of population groups possible. Therefore, there is an openness towards the different social groups, fully confirmed by the fact that 72% think their club helps with the integration of socially vulnerable groups. The percentages of these 2 items indicate that Spanish sports clubs are more oriented towards social integration than the rest of the European clubs, given that in both cases they register the highest percentages of the 10 countries studied, nearly 20 points above the average.

One possible explanation for these attitudes can be found in the strong awareness of the needs of the most socially vulnerable groups in Spanish society due to the impact of the Great Recession in the past decade. To this should be added the growing belief about the virtues of sports in promoting positive values and social integration (Llopis-Goig and Garcia-Alcober 2018).

Table 11.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, offer sports to as many population groups $n = 419$, helping socially vulnerable groups $n = 416$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible | 3 | 4 | 8 | 41 | 44 |
| Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club | 5 | 3 | 20 | 38 | 34 |

Table 11.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 430$, people with migration background $n = 416$, elderly $n = 429$, women $n = 528$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 51 | 43 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| People with migration background | 36 | 45 | 14 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 54 | 31 | 8 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Women | 13 | 15 | 20 | 35 | 10 | 7 |

The analysis of the attitudinal dimension is complemented by the structural perspective. In the survey, the sports clubs were asked to estimate the average number of members who belonged to any of the following population groups: people with disabilities, people with an immigrant background, elderly people and women.

Regarding people with disabilities, 49% of the clubs state that they have at least one person with disability belonging to the club. In most cases (43%), people with disabilities do not make up more than 10% of the club's members (see Table 11.9). This percentage coincides with the average registered by the European clubs (50%) and situates Spain among the five countries with the highest presence of people with disabilities.

Spanish clubs, however, show a greater ability to integrate people with an immigrant background, with 64% pointing out that they have people with these characteristics among their members. In this case, in most of the clubs, the percentage of people with an immigrant background does not exceed 10%, but in 14% of the clubs, this percentage ranges between 11% and 25%. Regarding this aspect, the Spanish clubs are situated at the European average (64%).

Spanish clubs are less inclusive in the case of older people. As Table 11.9 also shows, only 46% have a member over 65 years old, far below the European average – 69% – and less than what was registered in all the countries studied, except Poland, with 43%.

Finally, women are present in 87% of Spanish sports clubs, which means that 13% do not have women among their members (Table 11.9). The presence of women in 70% of the clubs ranges between 1% and 50%, whereas in 17%, it exceeds 50%. These numbers reveal a situation of gender inequality that is found in all

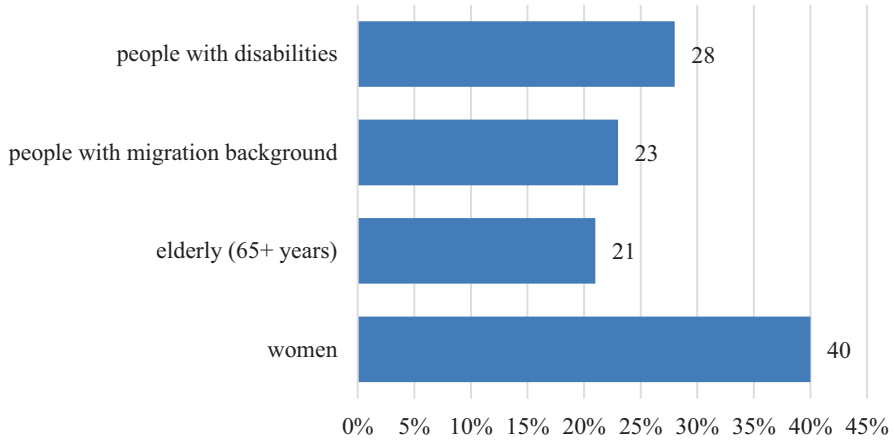


Fig. 11.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 413$, people with migration background $n = 402$, elderly $n = 411$, women $n = 432$)

European countries, although it is higher in Spain. These findings are consistent with other studies that have shown the reduced presence of women in Spanish sport organisations, despite the considerable increase in the sports practice, the achievements in women's sports and the changes in Spanish society (Puig 2007). This is not just a sports problem; it is a general social issue and must be considered from a systemic perspective because it involves the presence of hegemonic gender stereotypes and the issue of work-life balance (Martín et al. 2017).

Information is also available about the development of specific initiatives to include people from the four population groups mentioned. The available results reveal that, in Spain, these programmes are usually directed towards women, as they are mentioned in 40% of the cases, which exceeds the European average of 30% (Fig. 11.7). Next are people with disabilities, mentioned as the target of initiatives in 28% of Spanish clubs, eight points higher than the European average. Of the Spanish clubs, 23% have activities directed towards people with an immigrant background. This percentage is higher than the European average. However, initiatives directed towards elder people are only mentioned in 21% of Spanish clubs, five points below the group of European clubs.

11.3.3 Social Relationships

As pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the examination of the social integration of the sports clubs also addressed the degree to which they provide experiences that favour social interactions among people. Thus, as the data in Table 11.10 show, valuing companionship and conviviality is very important to Spanish clubs:

Table 11.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 428$, competitive sports $n = 423$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 0 | 0 | 1 | 25 | 74 |
| Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition | 8 | 23 | 14 | 33 | 22 |

almost three quarters of the clubs (74%) state that they fully agree here. This value is clearly higher than the European average, which is situated at 50%, with the Spanish clubs giving more importance to companionship and conviviality. In fact, none of the Spanish clubs taking part in the survey disagreed with this item. This is an interesting – but not surprising – finding that shows the importance of social relationships in the daily life of Southern European Latin societies.

The second aspect in this dimension refers to the importance of sporting success and competition. Table 11.10 reveals that 31% of Spanish clubs do put less importance on success in sporting competitions than in most of the countries included in this study.

The club member's survey allows us to complement the information about attitudes with information about behaviours, providing a broader view of the integrative approach of Spanish sports clubs.

The first indicator available shows that 12% of Spanish clubs' members participate in the club's social gatherings at least once a week, 7% once every 2 weeks and 55% do so less than four times per year. This percentage greatly exceeds the European average (37%) and makes Spanish club members the most participative among the European clubs included in the study. Again, this is another clear illustration of the importance of social relations and meetings in a Southern European Latin society.

Second, 50% of Spanish club members stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club at least once every 2 weeks. This percentage is only one point below the European average (Table 11.11).

Regarding the way sports clubs can encourage openness to new social contacts, the survey of the club members revealed that 92% of the people who have been interviewed had made new friendships through their participation in the club and 90% had been able to socialise with people they did not know before (Fig. 11.8).

On both variables, the scores of the Spanish club members were higher than the rest of the European clubs. In the former case, Spanish club members are situated four points above the European average. In the latter case, Spanish club members reported more socialisation behaviours towards people they did not know before, with a higher percentage than the European average (54%).

Another indicator of the socialising role of sports clubs is the number of people in each club the interviewees know by name. As Table 11.12 shows, 80% of club members know more than 10 people from their club by name, with 21% mentioning more than 50 people.

Table 11.11 Frequency of participation in the club’s social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 332$, stay behind after trainings $n = 306$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club’s social gatherings | 9 | 17 | 19 | 22 | 14 | 7 | 12 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 16 | 5 | 6 | 9 | 15 | 15 | 35 |

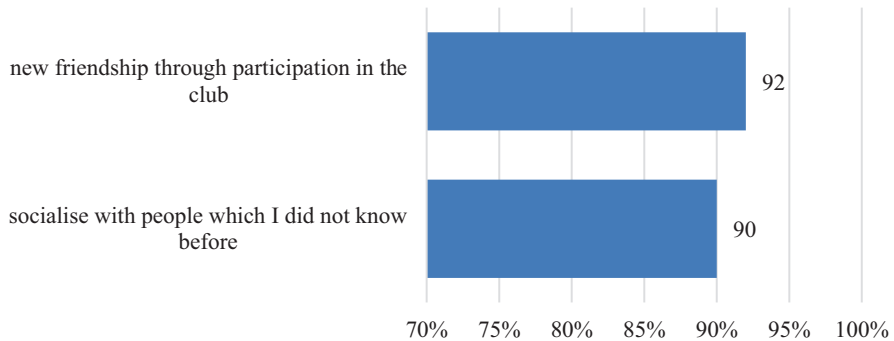


Fig. 11.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 341$, socialise with people $n = 336$)

Table 11.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 358$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 0 | 2 | 4 | 14 | 27 | 32 | 21 |

These numbers place Spanish club members below the average (25% of the club members from the 10 European countries know more than 50 people by name), but obviously the Spanish sports clubs’ reduced size has a strong influence on this result, as mentioned above. In fact, the countries where sports clubs are ahead of Spain are Germany, the Netherlands, England, Norway and Switzerland, all of which, except the last one, have a much bigger average size.

The integration dynamics operating in sports clubs also function at a socio-affective level, where the members establish emotional ties with their clubs and the

Table 11.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 349$, most important social group $n = 346$, respect me for who I am $n = 325$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 3 | 1 | 7 | 19 | 71 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 4 | 5 | 17 | 29 | 45 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 3 | 2 | 14 | 40 | 41 |

other members. In this regard, the majority of European members feel proud of expressing their membership in clubs, stating that they are one of the most important social groups to which they belong. Thus, as the data in Table 11.13 show, 90% of Spanish club members feel proud of belonging, a high percentage shared by Hungarian and English members and higher than the rest of the countries.

Table 11.13 also reveals that 74% of Spanish club members agree with the idea that the club is one of the most important groups to which they belong. The Spanish appear in the first position in this aspect, well above the average, which is 59%. The difference from the European average, however, is significantly smaller when the variable refers to the perception of respect from other people in the club. In this case, 81% of Spanish club members agree, which is one point below the European average.

All in all, this section has examined the presence of different socially vulnerable groups in Spanish clubs and the attitudes towards them, as well as the social relationships in the clubs and the degree to which they encourage companionship. With regard to the latter point, the study has shown that the predominant attitudes towards the integration of people with disabilities, people with an immigrant background, people over 65 years old and women are mainly positive. On the other hand, the analysis from a structural perspective has shown that almost half of the Spanish clubs have at least one person with disability, nearly two thirds have people with an immigrant background, about half have at least one member over 65 years old and around nine out of ten include women. Whereas in the first case, Spanish clubs are situated among the front-runners of the countries; in the second one, they are at the European average; and in the last two cases, far below the European average.

Moreover, companionship and conviviality are very important values for Spanish clubs, whereas they do not put a high value on success in sporting competitions. In this direction, Spanish clubs' members greatly exceed the European average in participation in the club's social gatherings, making new friendships through participation in the club and socialising with people they did not know before. These findings give us a sense of how important social relationships are to the club members.

11.4 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

This section offers some data about the degree to which sport clubs have functional guidelines that can be considered democratic. The clubs’ attitudes about decision-making processes are examined, as well as their members’ participation in assemblies and club meetings and the degree to which they feel free to express their points of view to key persons or other members of the club.

Regarding the functional guidelines, 88% of Spanish clubs agree that they try to involve members when making important decisions, and this percentage is ten points higher than the average in the group of European clubs. Furthermore, 58% of Spanish clubs state that they delegate decision-making from the board to their committees, in this case 11 points above the European average. Both percentages show that Spanish clubs are among the most democratically organised, along with the Dutch, Norwegian and Swiss clubs. It should be kept in mind that the Spanish clubs’ smaller sizes can contribute to this. The close contact between members and the acknowledgement of the importance of each member’s contribution to the club’s functioning and continuity favour the emergence of a greater sense of reciprocity and involvement in collective decisions (Table 11.14).

The democratic culture deduced from the attitudes mentioned above is related to the diverse behavioural patterns of the club members, presented below, where a democratic profile is also detected. Therefore, the information contained in Fig. 11.9 reveals that 64% of Spanish club members participated in the last assembly. This percentage is the highest of the ten countries included in the study, whose average was 42%.

Table 11.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making *n* = 425, delegate decision-making *n* = 417)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 2 | 4 | 7 | 41 | 47 |
| Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees | 8 | 19 | 16 | 39 | 19 |

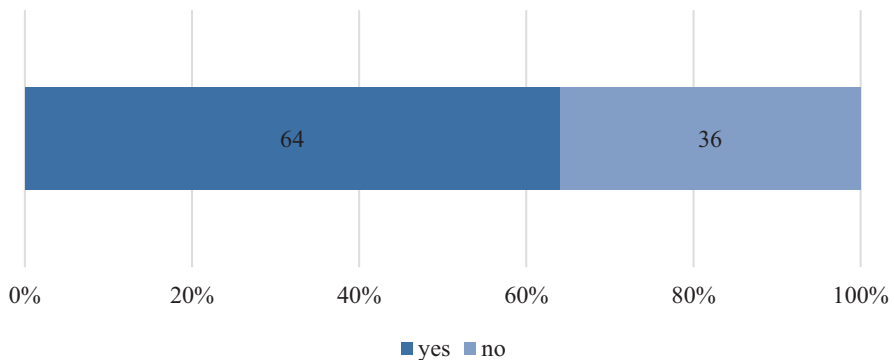


Fig. 11.9 Participation in the last general assembly (member survey, *n* = 379)

Table 11.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 330$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 326$, share my view with other members $n = 327$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 16 | 23 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 16 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 9 | 7 | 7 | 11 | 14 | 52 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 8 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 60 |

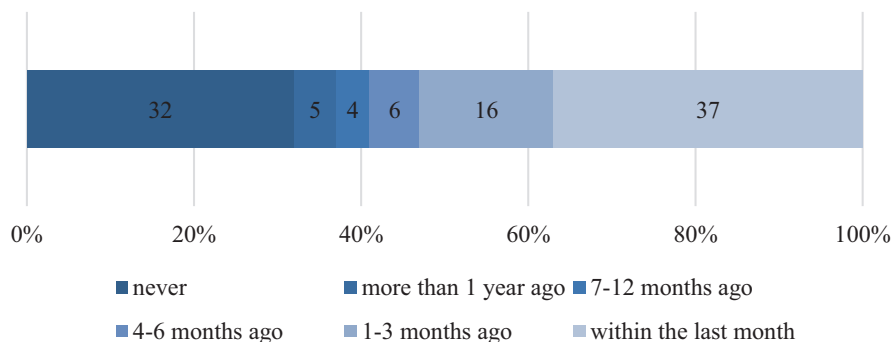


Fig. 11.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 367$)

Table 11.15 provides additional data on participation in the club’s functioning, and it refers to participation in member meetings or other club meetings. The results show that 28% of Spanish club members participate monthly in the club’s meetings, which places them only one point behind Poland but more than ten points above the European average.

Data on the other aspects are presented in Table 11.15 and show the democratic commitment in Spanish sports clubs. On the one hand, 66% of Spanish club members agree that they speak their mind to key persons in the club, which is the highest percentage of all the European countries studied. The same thing occurs when the interviewees are asked if they share their views with other members of the club: 75% of Spanish club members agree with this statement, whereas only 53% do so in European countries, with Spain obtaining the highest score.

All these data show the existence of a strong democratic culture in Spanish sports clubs. Therefore, it is not surprising that 53% of their members declare that in the past 3 months, they have tried to influence the club’s decisions at least once, a much higher percentage than the European average (36%) and higher than the rest of the countries (Fig. 11.10).

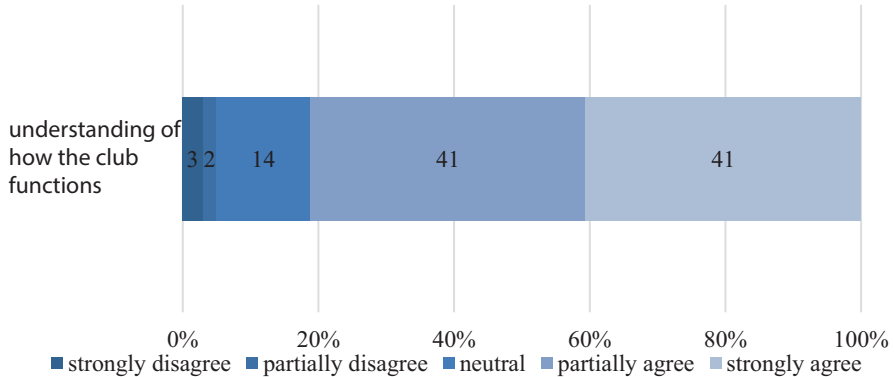


Fig. 11.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 339$)

The last question included in this analysis of the integrative dimension of sports clubs refers to the degree to which their members understand their functioning (Fig. 11.11). This aspect is quite important, given that, despite the democratic functioning of clubs, it is not very useful if the members are not able to understand it. The study shows that 82% of Spanish club members agree partially or strongly with the statement that they understand their club's functioning. This percentage is slightly higher than the European average (79%) and places Spain in an intermediate position compared to other European countries.

To sum up, the Spanish clubs are among the most democratically organised, which is shown by the fact that nearly nine out of ten agree that they try to involve members when making important decisions, and around six out of ten state that they delegate decision-making from the board to their committees. These democratic attitudes are related to behavioural patterns of the club members, such as participation in assemblies, where Spain reaches the highest percentage of the ten countries included in the study. Likewise, in different ways, Spanish club members report the democratic culture and freedom of expression they enjoy in their clubs, reaching the highest percentages of the ten European countries studied.

11.5 Voluntary Work

This last section of results focuses on voluntary work and covers aspects such as the sports clubs' attitude towards this type of work, the type of initiatives sports clubs carry out to recruit and retain volunteers, the number of volunteers they have, the tasks they work on and, finally, the progression in the number of volunteers in the past 5 years.

Spanish sport clubs' attitudes towards voluntary work show widespread agreement that it should continue to play a fundamental role in these clubs. First, more than half of Spanish clubs (59%) agree with the idea that they should be run exclu-

Table 11.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 442$, members as customers $n = 438$, demonstrating passion $n = 443$, all members can be volunteers $n = 445$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 11 | 16 | 15 | 21 | 38 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 52 | 27 | 7 | 8 | 6 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 3 | 10 | 16 | 41 | 31 |
| All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications | 4 | 3 | 3 | 28 | 62 |

Table 11.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 495$, no fixed position(s) $n = 424$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 35 | 31 | 22 | 11 | 2 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 51 | 21 | 16 | 10 | 3 |

sively by volunteers (Table 11.16). This statement varies across countries, given that, whereas most of the Scandinavian and Central European clubs agree with this idea, among the Eastern European clubs, it receives little support. The response of the Spanish clubs is at an intermediate level, two points above the European average.

Table 11.16 also shows that most of the Spanish clubs, on the one hand, do not consider members to be customers who cannot be expected to contribute through voluntary work (79%); on the other hand, they state that their members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done (72%). The scores of the Spanish clubs, in both cases, coincide with the European average and with the idea that all members can be volunteers, regardless of their qualifications, which is ratified by 90% of the Spanish clubs and 88% of the group of European clubs.

Regarding the structural presence of volunteers in clubs, Table 11.17 offers detailed information about the Spanish clubs. The results of the study reveal that 2% of Spanish clubs have more than 20 volunteers in fixed positions, whereas 3% have the same number in non-fixed positions. However, there are greater differences in the percentage of clubs that have between 11 and 50 volunteers in fixed and non-fixed positions: in the former 33% and in the latter 26%. Furthermore, 66% of Spanish clubs have ten or fewer volunteers in fixed positions compared to 72% that have the same number of volunteers in non-fixed positions. The number of volunteers clearly depends on the size of the club.

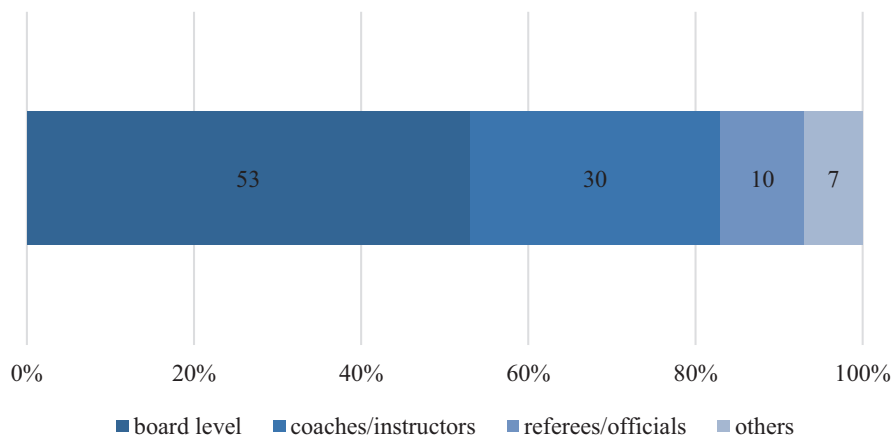


Fig. 11.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 477$)

Table 11.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 422$, coaches/instructors $n = 413$, referees/officials $n = 393$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 42 | 19 | 19 | 16 | 5 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 48 | 17 | 18 | 14 | 4 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 62 | 13 | 14 | 8 | 3 |

More than half of the volunteers in fixed positions in Spanish sports clubs (53%) carry out board level tasks (Fig. 11.12). This proportion exceeds the European average by five points. On the other tasks, the Spanish clubs exhibit a very similar distribution to the rest of the European clubs: 30% of the volunteers carry out coach/instructor tasks, 10% perform referee/official tasks and 7% do other tasks.

Although it is the problem mentioned most by the European clubs (28%), the recruitment and retention of volunteers at the board level is only an important problem for 21% of Spanish clubs, far below issues related to the economic situation or the availability of facilities (Table 11.18). The situation is similar for the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors and referees/officials. In the former case, the percentage of Spanish clubs that point to it as an important problem reaches 18%, compared to the 26% registered among the European countries. In the latter case, 11% of Spanish clubs consider it a problem, less than half of the European average (23%).

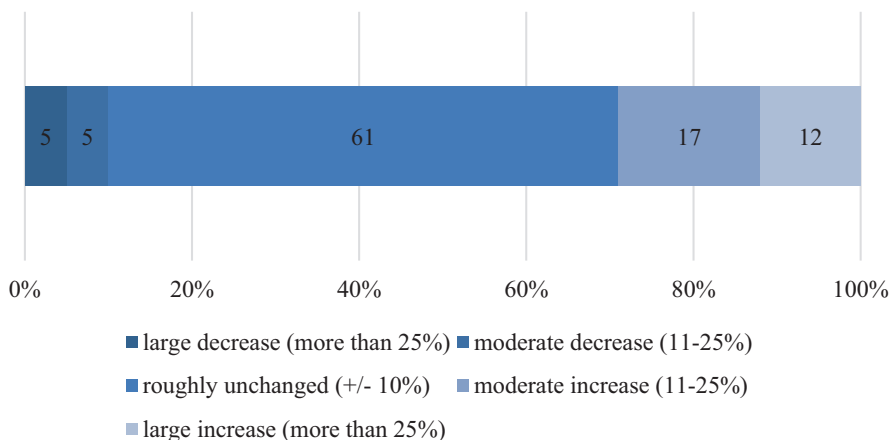


Fig. 11.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 422$)

The evolution of the number of volunteers in sports clubs in the past 5 years has shown few changes. This is pointed out by almost two thirds of the European clubs (65%) and somewhat fewer of the Spanish clubs (61%). Among the latter, 29% have experienced a net growth in their volunteers in the past 5 years (Fig. 11.13), whereas 10% have experienced a decrease.

The variation (difference between growth and decline) registered among the Spanish clubs (19%) is higher than what is registered in the European clubs together (5%), and it does not support the hypothesis that there is a generalised decline in volunteering in Western societies. In fact, the Spanish clubs, along with the Eastern European's, show greater growth in a context where only Germany and Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, the Netherlands show a decline.

In order to face the challenge of recruiting and retaining volunteers, sports clubs adopt different strategies. More than half of the European clubs recruit volunteers mainly through their network of volunteers and members (57%), a similar percentage encourage them verbally (55%) and a little less than half organise meetings for this purpose (45%).

The strategy followed most by Spanish clubs is motivation through speeches and conversations, mentioned by 46% (see Table 11.19). The subsequent strategies involve informing members that they are expected to contribute voluntary work (36%) and arranging parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity (32%). Other strategies that obtain noteworthy percentages are informing parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work (26%), recruiting through the networks of current volunteers and members (25%) and rewarding their volunteers with benefits in kind (22%). To a much lesser extent, strategies are mentioned such as paying for volunteers to get training or earn qualifications (13%), having a volunteer or paid staff member who is specifically responsible for volunteer management (10%) and trying to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members (7%).

Table 11.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 472$, social gatherings $n = 472$, recruit through current network $n = 472$, pay for training $n = 472$, inform members $n = 472$, inform parents $n = 472$, benefits in kind $n = 472$, recruitment outside $n = 472$, management $n = 472$, written strategy $n = 472$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 525$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 46 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 32 |
| The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members | 25 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 13 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 36 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 26 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 22 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 7 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 10 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 4 |
| The club does not do anything in particular | 19 |

Table 11.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 298$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 13 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 7 | 10 | 21 | 8 |

Overall, it can be stated that Spanish clubs turn to several volunteer recruitment and retention strategies in proportions that are always lower than the rest of the European countries, which indicates their lower capacity for initiative. In fact, one out of five Spanish clubs (21%) claims to do nothing to retain and recruit volunteers, a percentage that declines to 13% for the average of the European clubs.

The frequency with which volunteers carry out volunteer work at sports clubs and the number of hours they dedicate monthly are similar to the studied countries. Of the Spanish volunteers, 21% and 8% dedicate from 2 to 4 days and more than 4 days per week, respectively (Table 11.20). Among their European counterparts, these percentages are practically identical: 20% and 6%, respectively. By contrast, regarding the volunteers who dedicate less time, the proportions detected in the Spanish clubs are also very similar to the European average. Thus, whereas 41% of Spanish volunteers perform volunteer tasks less than once a month, in the group of Europeans, the percentage decreases to 38%.

Table 11.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions in an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 172$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 27 | 18 | 20 | 24 | 11 |

Table 11.21 extends and further describes the previous data with information about the hours spent on voluntary work by Spanish volunteers in fixed positions. The data reveal that more than one fourth of the Spanish clubs' volunteers (27%) spend 5 hours or less on voluntary work, whereas 11% declare that they spend more than 50 hours. Between these two extreme profiles, almost one third of volunteers (62%) dedicate from 6 to 50 hours a month to voluntary work.

In conclusion, Spanish clubs' attitudes towards voluntary work show widespread agreement that it should continue to play a fundamental role in these clubs. More than half of the clubs state that they should be run exclusively by volunteers, and nearly three quarters of them report that their members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done. The presence of volunteers in Spanish clubs, however, is determined by their smaller size. Thus, only 35% of the clubs have more than ten volunteers in fixed positions, whereas 29% have the same number in non-fixed positions.

The recruitment and retention of volunteers at the board level are the problem most mentioned by the Spanish clubs, although it is only important for around two out of every ten. The fact that the Spanish clubs turn to the different recruitment and retention strategies in proportions that are always lower than the rest of the European countries is a clear indicator of their lower capacity for initiative.

11.6 Conclusion

Spanish sports clubs are characterised by being young, most of them were set up in the twenty-first century; by having a small size, most of them have less than 50 members; by experiencing high growth in terms of members in recent years; by a lower presence of women, 7 out of 10 members are men; and by not usually having their own sports facilities, all of which are traits they share with Eastern European countries.

On the one hand, Spanish sports clubs make a great effort to extend their sports offer to all the population groups and, especially, to socially vulnerable groups, in order to facilitate their integration. Two thirds of the Spanish sports clubs have at least one person with an immigrant background among their members, half of them have at least one person with a disability and half of them have at least one member over the age of 65 years, one of the lowest percentages in Europe. The clubs' integration initiatives are directed to a greater extent towards women and people with disabilities. On the other hand, they highly value the conviviality in their organisa-

tion and functioning, and they prioritise comradeship over other goals such as success in sports competitions. Almost all of them try to involve their members in the various activities of the clubs.

The Spanish clubs count on a high percentage of volunteers – four out of ten members – which probably explains why they carry out fewer volunteer recruitment and retention strategies. Half of the Spaniards who do volunteer work at their sports clubs do it regularly. Most of them state that the club and its members acknowledge and support their work, they inform them properly and take their concerns into consideration and they give them high autonomy in performing their tasks, which are interesting and stimulating for them. The Spanish clubs democratically structure decision-making about their organisation and functioning, and they enable and encourage their members' and volunteers' participation in it.

One of the key explanations for these results is related to the smaller size and the younger age of the Spanish clubs: three out of four were founded during the twenty-first century, whereas, for example, 78% of Danish, 87% of German and 93% of Dutch clubs were created before that time. Furthermore, it should be taken into account that the average number of members in Spanish clubs is 169, whereas in the aforementioned countries, the average number is 320, 365 and 410, respectively. This allows us to imagine that the day-to-day functioning of Spanish clubs is less subject to stable organisational structures and formalised procedures and it depends to a greater extent on the members' informal involvement. Additionally, the relationships among the members are more direct, reinforcing their bonds of reciprocity and commitment to mutual obligations, which facilitates the creation of a more marked community ethos. It is also important to consider that, unlike most Central and Northern European countries, the progress of Spanish sports clubs experienced a four-decade rupture during Francoism, when they lost their private nature, autonomy and democratic culture. Once democracy was restored, in the second part of the 1970s, policies promoting municipal sport were carried out, and a large number of associations and sports clubs emerged, marked by a democratising impulse and a culture of participation that still prevails in Spanish sports. These clubs have become one of the most characteristic expressions of self-organisation in Spanish civil society. Therefore, it is not surprising that for three out of four Spanish respondents in the survey, their sports club is one of the most important social groups to which they belong, and this proportion is significantly higher than in other countries.

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Chapter 12

Switzerland: Autonomous Sports Clubs as Contributors to Public Welfare



Siegfried Nagel, Pascal Stegmann, Rahel Bürgi, and Markus Lamprecht

Abstract About 20% of the Swiss population practise sports in a club, and the nearly 19,000 sports clubs are a core element of the Swiss sports landscape and can contribute to public welfare. Sports clubs are accredited with various socio-political functions, although there are no far-reaching sports policy programmes – except Youth and Sport. The results of this chapter demonstrate that sports clubs can promote public health, social integration and democratic decision-making, particularly through voluntary work by the members.

Sports club members usually practise sports regularly. Thus, sports clubs can contribute to individual as well as to public health, even though sports clubs frequently have no specific focus on health promotion. There is considerable evidence that sports clubs are able to contribute to social integration, since they usually promote goals such as openness and conviviality and most members identify with their club and have social networks and friendships. The principle of bottom-up democratic decision-making ensures that the sports programmes fit the interests of the members. Therefore, sports clubs can promote democratic involvement and active citizenship. Particularly volunteering in sports clubs gives people the opportunity to engage for society and therefore can contribute to social cohesion and trust in Swiss society.

12.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

The sports system in Switzerland consists of the public sector with sports policy institutions at the national, regional and local level, the voluntary sector and a market sector that has grown over the past decades (Kempf and Lichtsteiner 2015). Despite the move towards commercialisation and professionalisation, nearly 19,000

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voluntary sports clubs still remain a core element of the Swiss sports landscape. Swiss Olympic – the umbrella organisation of the non-profit sports sector in Switzerland – represents the interests of 86 national sports federations and their sports clubs. There are currently about 2.8 million out of 8.5 million people in Switzerland who belong to one or more sports clubs and 2 million members who actively practise sports with their club (Lamprecht et al. 2017). According to the *Sport Switzerland 2014* survey (Lamprecht et al. 2014), about three quarters of the Swiss population aged between 15 and 74 years (74%) participate in sports, and about one third of these people also hold a club membership (about 20% of the total population). Thus, sports clubs play a crucial role in the regular sports activity of the Swiss population, particularly for children and youth, although the commercial sports sector has grown considerably over the last decades.

The Federal Act on the promotion of sports and exercise (Sport Promotion Act, SpoPA; Bundesgesetz über die Förderung von Sport und Bewegung (Sportförderungsgesetz, SpoFöG) 2011), established in 2012, provides a legal framework to support private initiatives in sports, especially those of sports clubs and federations (for a detailed overview of the historical development and current legal framework of sports policy in Switzerland, see Chappelet 2010). This legal framework formulates the following main goals of sports promotion: promotion of health and physical performance of the population, integrated education and social cohesion. The main reason the Swiss Confederation, its cantons and its municipalities publicly promote and subsidise sports (clubs) are the (assumed) positive effects of sports activities (such as social integration of specific target groups, accumulation of cultural and social capital, health promotion, etc.). The Federal Act on the elimination of discrimination against people with disabilities (Disability Discrimination Act, DDA; Bundesgesetz über die Beseitigung von Benachteiligungen von Menschen mit Behinderungen (Behindertengleichstellungsgesetz, BehiG) 2002) and the Federal Act on Foreign Nationals and Integration (Foreign Nationals and Integration Act, FNIA; Bundesgesetz über die Ausländerinnen und Ausländer und über die Integration (Ausländer- und Integrationsgesetz, AIG) 2005) oblige the federation, cantons and communities to set conditions that facilitate participation, integration and equal opportunities in social life (and particularly access to sports activities) for disabled people and immigrants. However, there are no national programmes that assist the participation in a sports club among people with a migration background or people with a disability. Nevertheless, sports clubs are somehow expected to promote social integration and thus help to achieve social benefits. For example, sports clubs are the most important supporters of youth sports in Switzerland.

Although there is a Federal Act on the promotion of sports and exercise, the national government has no direct legal obligation to sports clubs and vice versa. This is the result of the traditional principles of subsidiarity and autonomy. Within this idea, tasks, actions and solutions to problems in society are undertaken, as far as possible, independently and autonomously by private initiatives (such as sports clubs). This means that sports clubs can plan their programmes without direct public intervention and only get support and funding if necessary. In this context, there

is an important programme (Youth and Sport programme; J+S) at the national level that supports sports clubs. The Federal Office of Sport (FOSPO) distributes over CHF 100 million per year to clubs engaged in the promotion of youth sports. This programme is predominantly realised through volunteers in sports clubs. Approximately 700,000 children and young adults have taken part in one or more courses in 75 different kinds of sports offered by J+S. This corresponds to about two thirds of the Swiss population aged between 10 and 20 years. Funding promotes courses, events and camps for children and adolescents in sports clubs. Funding also pays for the development of coaches responsible for sports groups. There are currently over 120,000 licensed J+S coaches in Switzerland. However, only clubs that offer sports activities where young people (aged between 5 and 20 years) can participate in their sports activities get funding (Kempf and Lichtsteiner 2015).

Furthermore, the Adults sport programme Switzerland (ESA) aims to promote sports activities among people aged 20 years and older. ESA aims to establish good conditions for physical activity in adulthood through the work of ESA coaches. ESA coaches can participate in specific courses, such as “Preventive action: integration” and “Sports and handicap”. If a club offers activities for adults within the ESA programme, it receives free training of its coaches who deliver this programme, but no other subsidy for the participants.

About half of all 26 Swiss cantons have a law regarding the promotion of sports and physical activity. Cantons are responsible for the regional development, construction and maintenance of sports-related infrastructure and implementation of Youth and Sport programmes. However, there are big differences in how the cantons use profits from lotteries for sports promotion and the support of special programmes in sports clubs. There are also large differences between municipalities when it comes to the support and funding of sports clubs. However, in most municipalities, sports clubs can use public sports facilities for free or by paying a fairly moderate fee.

Sports clubs played a decisive role in the historical development of sports in Switzerland because the establishment and operation of clubs were always simple and were seldom opposed by the authorities (for more details, see Stamm et al. 2015). The establishment of sports clubs in the nineteenth century was a decisive milestone for the introduction of modern sports. In Switzerland, clubs have always been considered a partial substitute for public initiatives (Stamm et al. 2015). The first gymnastic clubs (inspired by the German *Turnen*) had various social goals and considered themselves to be promoters of their members’ health and education. When gymnastics, sports and these first clubs emerged, there was no central institution to play a role in sports development. Thus, from a historical perspective, sports clubs can be viewed as a private alternative to public sports promotion and as fulfilling important functions in Swiss civil society (Stamm et al. 2015). Sports clubs and federations developed significantly in the early twentieth century and remain the main promoters of mass sports and elite sports in Switzerland. In general, the public society sector is relatively small in Switzerland compared to other countries (see Helmig et al. 2017), whereas voluntary organisations, such as sports clubs, play a significant role.

Swiss law has few prerequisites for establishing a club: clubs must be voluntary organisations with democratic structures where members share a common goal, and the club must not be oriented towards making an economic profit (for a general overview on characteristics of voluntary associations, see Horch 2018).

The principle and social value of solidarity and creating benefit to the public (*Gemeinnützigkeit*) have played an important role in the development of Swiss society since the beginning of the 1900s (e.g. Farago 2007). Thus, the social role of sports clubs has deep historical roots, and clubs are still “supposed to fulfil several welfare functions in the context of health promotion, the socialisation of children and adolescents and social integration” (Stamm et al. 2015, p. 408). Sports clubs also give their members the opportunity to participate in democratic decision-making especially when they engage as volunteers.

In summary: despite the lack of far-reaching sports policy programmes – except Youth and Sport – sports clubs are accredited with various social and political functions in the Swiss sports system. In the following discussion, we intend to elucidate the extent to which sports clubs can promote health promotion, social integration and democratic decision-making and involvement, particularly through voluntary work by the club members, and thus contribute to public welfare in Swiss society.

12.2 Structure and Context

Sports clubs in Switzerland are somewhat small organisations compared to other countries in central Europe, with a median of 58 members per club. More than two thirds of clubs have only 100 members or fewer (Fig. 12.1). Twenty-four per cent of the clubs have between 101 and 300 members, and only one out of 100 clubs has 1000 members or more. Thirty-six per cent of the members of Swiss sports clubs are women, and the majority of clubs have a large proportion of children and adolescents (Lamprecht et al. 2017). A reason for the high relevance of youth sport in the clubs is probably the influence of the national program Youth and Sport (see Sect. 12.1).

With regard to membership development, approximately half of the clubs indicate that the number of members has stayed more or less stable within the last 5 years (Fig. 12.2). Around one out of four clubs reported either a decrease or an increase in the number of members. Only 4% of the clubs reported a large decrease over the last 5 years. These figures for membership development are in line with the overall membership data from Swiss Olympic that shows a stable number of approximately 2.8 million memberships in Swiss sports clubs since the year 2000 (Lamprecht et al. 2017).

The results for member development indicate that few sports clubs in Switzerland have difficulties with retention of members (Table 12.1). In contrast, slightly more clubs have problems with recruitment of new members, with 21% reporting a big and 13% a very big problem. However, there are clear differences between the clubs that effect member recruitment and retainment. Some structural characteristics of

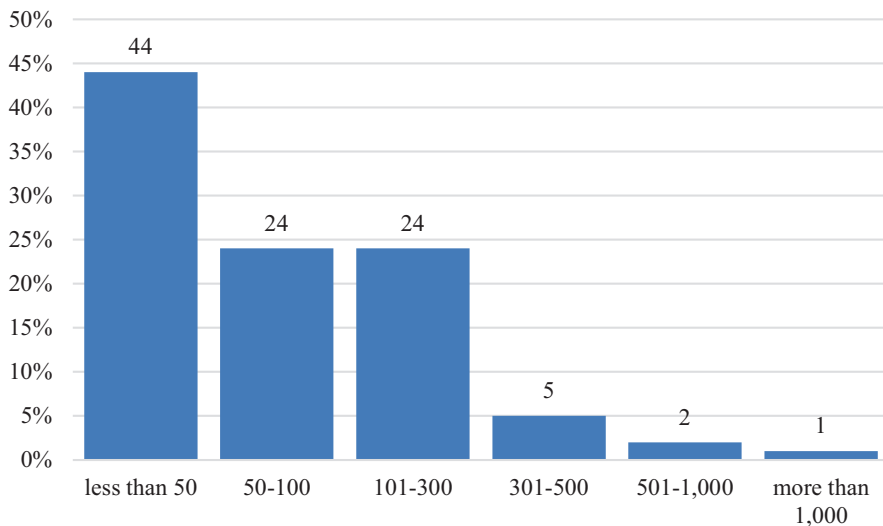


Fig. 12.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, *n* = 4849)

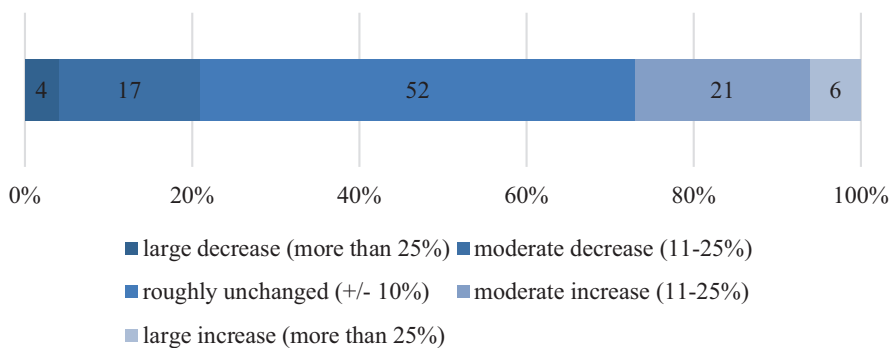


Fig. 12.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, *n* = 5040)

Table 12.1 Problems with recruitment/retention of members (club survey, recruitment *n* = 4652, retention *n* = 4609)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with recruitment of members | 17 | 22 | 27 | 21 | 13 |
| Problems with retention of members | 23 | 38 | 26 | 10 | 3 |

the club are most likely relevant to member development. Schlesinger and Nagel (2015) were able to show that member commitment is higher in those sports clubs that support sociability, which in turn correlates positively with the identification and perceived solidarity of club members. Furthermore, club memberships are more stable in rural areas.

Sports clubs in Switzerland have a long tradition. From the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards, gymnastics clubs – with their roots in the German *Turnen* – were established. Before 1900, the first shooting, football, rowing, tennis clubs, etc. had already emerged – inspired by ideas of sports in England (Lamprecht et al. 2012; Stamm et al. 2015). As expected, around one out of seven sports clubs were founded before 1900 and about 30% between 1900 and 1945 (Fig. 12.3). Many sports clubs in Switzerland emerged in the decades after World War II, whereas only 11% were established from the year 2000.

The clear majority of Swiss sports clubs (79%) offer only one sport for their members (Fig. 12.4). Consequently, these single sport clubs do not diversify their programmes in response to new trends in sports or health-enhancing physical activities. In contrast, sports clubs in Germany are more often organised as multi-sport clubs, even though they have the same historical roots as Swiss sports clubs (Wicker et al. 2014).

The fact that most sports clubs in Switzerland have not greatly increased in size and number of sports over the last decades is assumedly influenced by the following aspects: the political communities in Switzerland are relatively small. Policies of

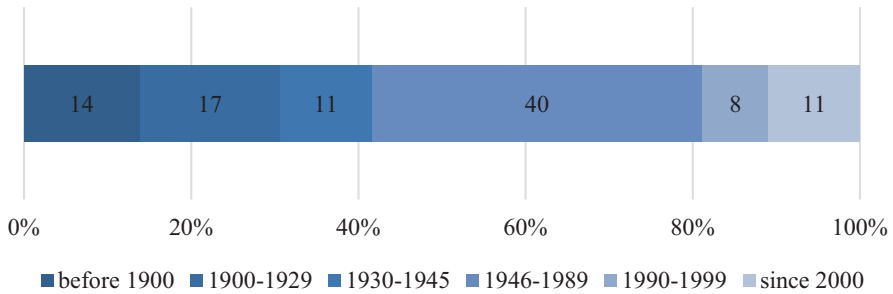


Fig. 12.3 Year of foundation (club survey, n = 5087)

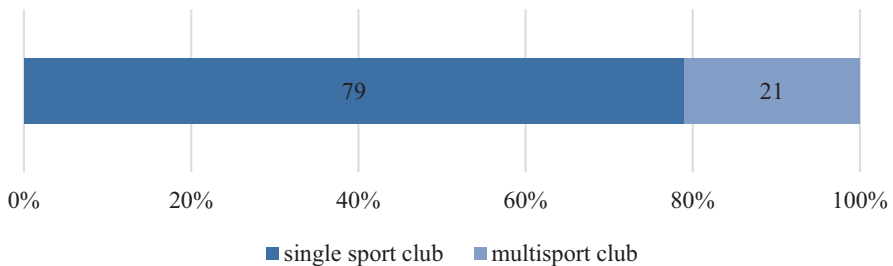


Fig. 12.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, n = 5224)

Table 12.2 Most common sports offered by sports clubs (top ten; club survey, $n = 5224$)

| Rank | Sport | % |
|------|---------------------|----|
| 1 | Shooting sports | 18 |
| 2 | <i>Turnen</i> | 16 |
| 3 | Football | 15 |
| 4 | Fitness/aerobic | 11 |
| 5 | Floorball | 10 |
| 6 | Volleyball | 10 |
| 7 | Gymnastics | 9 |
| 8 | Track & field | 9 |
| 9 | Artistic gymnastics | 7 |
| 10 | Ski/snowboard | 7 |

Note: *Turnen* is a polysportive offer in which a combination of different forms of gymnastics, aerobics, apparatus gymnastics and often games is practised. In gymnastics, different forms of exercises are performed

the umbrella organisation Swiss Olympic and most of the federations across the various sports have no clear strategy for mass sports and growth.

Looking more carefully at the large number of small single sport clubs, it is not surprising that the (top ten) list of sports offered by Swiss sports clubs (Table 12.2) is made up of primarily traditional sports (e.g. shooting, *Turnen* & gymnastics, track and field) as well as team sports (e.g. football, floorball, volleyball). Fitness sports activities are also quite popular in Swiss sports clubs. (Alpine) Skiing is an important part of the Swiss (winter) sports culture and plays a significant role in top-level sports in Switzerland.

The majority of the clubs require sporting facilities so that their members can practice sports. However, only one third of the Swiss sports clubs have their own sports facility, whereas two thirds use public sports facilities (Table 12.3) – usually owned by the municipality. About half of the clubs that use public sports facilities have to pay a (mostly quite moderate) fee, whereas the other half can use the public facilities free of charge. Public funding through sports facilities is quite important to sports clubs. In total, around 14% of revenue stems from public funding.

It is clear that the majority of sports clubs have access to adequate sports facilities (Table 12.4). Nearly half of the clubs report no problems with the availability of (own or public) facilities. However, around 20% of the clubs have big or even very big problems in accessing adequate facilities for the sports activities of their members.

There are few sports clubs in Switzerland that have big problems with their financial situation (Table 12.4). The clear majority indicate no or only small problems, whereas in most other European countries, sports clubs indicate a more problematic financial situation. The stable financial situation of most Swiss sports clubs is presumably based on continuous public sports funding (e.g. programme Youth

Table 12.3 Ownership of facilities, payment of usage fees and the share of revenues that stem from public funding (club survey, own facilities $n = 4385$, public facilities $n = 4385$, usage fee for public facilities $n = 4385$, share of revenues $n = 3453$)

| Share of clubs that use own facilities (%) | Share of clubs that use public facilities (%) | Share of clubs that pay usage fee for using public facilities (% of clubs that use public facilities) | Share of total revenues in clubs that stem from direct public funding (%) |
|--|---|---|---|
| 33 | 67 | 54 | 14 |

Table 12.4 Problems with the availability of facilities and the financial situation (club survey, availability of facilities $n = 4559$, financial situation $n = 4620$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|---|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the availability of facilities | 44 | 22 | 14 | 11 | 9 |
| Problems with the financial situation of the club | 47 | 27 | 18 | 5 | 3 |

Table 12.5 Paid staff and paid manager/s in clubs (club survey, paid staff $n = 4537$, paid manager/s $n = 684$)

| Share of clubs with paid staff (%) | Share of clubs with paid manager/s (%) |
|------------------------------------|--|
| 15 | 3 |

and Sport, availability of sports facilities) and the prosperous economic situation in the country that enables the clubs to generate enough revenue and achieve a positive annual balance.

Around one out of seven sports clubs in Switzerland have paid staff, and only 3% of clubs have a (full or part-time) paid manager (Table 12.5). Therefore, there is only slight professionalisation in Swiss club sports. An explanation for this could be the high rate of small single sport clubs and the traditional policy of clubs where mainly volunteers are responsible for decision-making.

Consequently, around two thirds of the clubs report that their number of paid staff has mostly remained stable over the last 5 years (Fig. 12.5). However, nearly 30% of the clubs indicate a moderate (17%) or large (11%) increase in paid staff. This increased development of paid work in sports clubs is not in line with the aggregated figures of the last two sports club surveys (2010 and 2016) that show a slight reduction of the number of paid positions (Lamprecht et al. 2017). Even more surprising is the increasing numbers of Voluntary positions in Swiss sports clubs.

In summary: Swiss sports clubs are attractive sports providers for many people and have mostly stable membership figures and financial resources as well as sufficient sports facilities. The usually small, single sport clubs with a long tradition and a strong culture of conviviality and solidarity are presumably able to promote

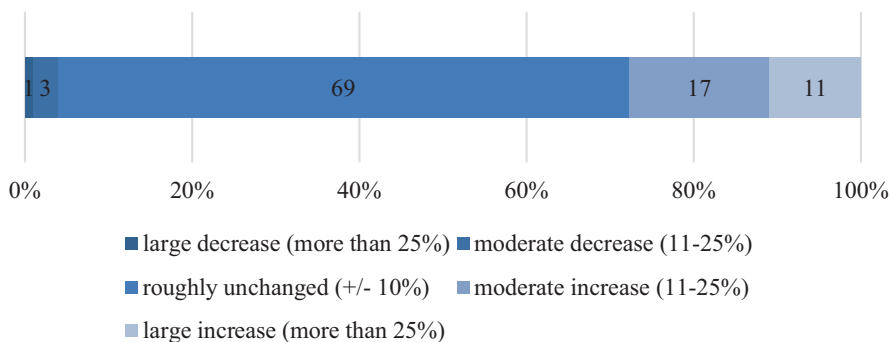


Fig. 12.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 667$)

social cohesion and democratic participation in society. Yet the question arises whether sports clubs can contribute to health promotion. Over the following sections, we will take a closer look at these particular functions of sports clubs.

12.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

Health promotion as a function of social welfare played an important role in the historical development of the first clubs in the nineteenth century geared towards the German Turnen. In contrast, the members of clubs that emerged in the context of the English sports movement were not primarily interested in health-enhancing physical activities.

The current data shows that more than one third of all sports clubs in Switzerland do not get involved with health sports, while 24% agree and 18% totally agree with this statement (Table 12.6). The rate of Swiss sports clubs that do not have integrated health promotion in their philosophy is fairly high compared to most other European countries. Several factors may be relevant to the relatively low significance of health sports programmes in Swiss club sports. The clubs focus mainly on one sport and set more value on competitive sports. This aligns with the fact that neither Swiss Olympic and their various sports federations nor the Federal Office of Sport have clear policy to promote and support health-enhancing physical activities in the context of sports clubs.

Regularity of sports activities is an essential condition for positive effects on physical and psycho-social health (Marti and Hättlich 1999). In this context, it is remarkable that a majority of the members who practise sports in the club do this at least once a week (Fig. 12.6). One third participate in club sports two times a week and nearly one fourth three times a week or more. In contrast, one out of six members does not play sports regularly. Thus, membership of a sports club is frequently connected to regular sports activity.

Table 12.6 The attitude of clubs towards health-enhancing physical activity (club survey, $n = 4664$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club gets involved with health sports | 15 | 21 | 22 | 24 | 18 |

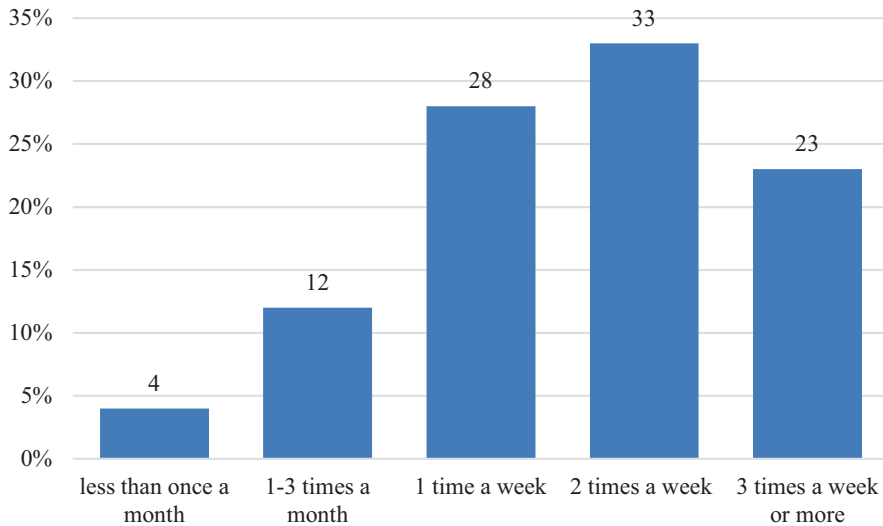


Fig. 12.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 755$)

Table 12.7 Participation in competitive sports (member survey, $n = 743$)

| | Yes (%) | No, but I used to (%) | No, never (%) |
|---|---------|-----------------------|---------------|
| Participation in competitive sports in the club | 68 | 22 | 11 |

Additionally, membership of a sports club is often characterised by stable involvement. Three out of four club members in the survey indicate that they have been connected to the club for 5 years or longer (van der Roest et al. 2017).

Sports participation in a club is often combined with competitive sports (Table 12.7). Nearly nine out of ten club members currently participate in competitions for their clubs or used to do this previously. Although engagement in competitive sports has no clear focus on health effects, it has to be emphasised that certain goals of a sports competition can consequently lead to regular sport practice.

In summary: as sports club members usually practice sports regularly with the club, we can cautiously assume that sports clubs – despite the often lack of focus on health promotion – can contribute to individual and consequently to public health. However, as sports have various requirements (e.g. gymnastics, running, football, shooting), the effects may be quite different, and active engagement in a sports club may not automatically improve a member’s health.

12.4 Social Integration

The first and essential condition for sports clubs to contribute to social integration is for people of different population groups to become members and thus build their social networks. In this context, it is notable that only around half of Swiss sports clubs attempt to offer sports to as many population groups as possible (Table 12.8). In comparison with most other European countries, many clubs in Switzerland (47% don't agree at all, don't agree or are undecided) do not pursue – according to opinion of the board – a philosophy of openness to different population groups and a clear concept of Sport for All.

Nevertheless, the social groups women and elderly, that were often underrepresented in club sports some decades ago, are well represented in Swiss sports clubs today (Table 12.9). However, there are still clubs without any women or people over 65 years. The majority of clubs have members with a migration background who are particularly integrated in team sports such as football or basketball, as well in martial arts (see Adler Zwahlen et al. 2017). In contrast, nearly three out of four clubs have no members with disabilities. This is the highest rate compared to all other European countries in the comparative sample (Breuer et al. 2017).

The Swiss sports system is characterised by structures that have specific federations for handicapped sports. Thus, sports for people with disabilities are often organised in particular sports clubs. Furthermore, the integration of children and adolescents with a disability in regular schools is a relatively recent educational policy. Switzerland only ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations 2006) in 2014.

The figures on the representation of different population groups in sports clubs (Table 12.9) align with findings on the share of clubs that explicitly try to enable sports for a certain target group (Fig. 12.7). Sixty-four per cent of the clubs pursue

Table 12.8 Attitudes of sports clubs towards the integration of different population groups (club survey, $n = 4793$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club tries to make a sports offer to as many population groups as possible | 6 | 16 | 25 | 34 | 19 |

Table 12.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 4734$, people with migration background $n = 4826$, elderly $n = 4246$, women $n = 4819$)

| | 0% | 1–10% | 11–25% | 26–50% | 51–75% | More than 75% |
|----------------------------------|----|-------|--------|--------|--------|---------------|
| People with disabilities | 73 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| People with migration background | 27 | 43 | 18 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| Elderly (65+ years) | 26 | 19 | 23 | 21 | 8 | 3 |
| Women | 17 | 17 | 23 | 24 | 8 | 11 |

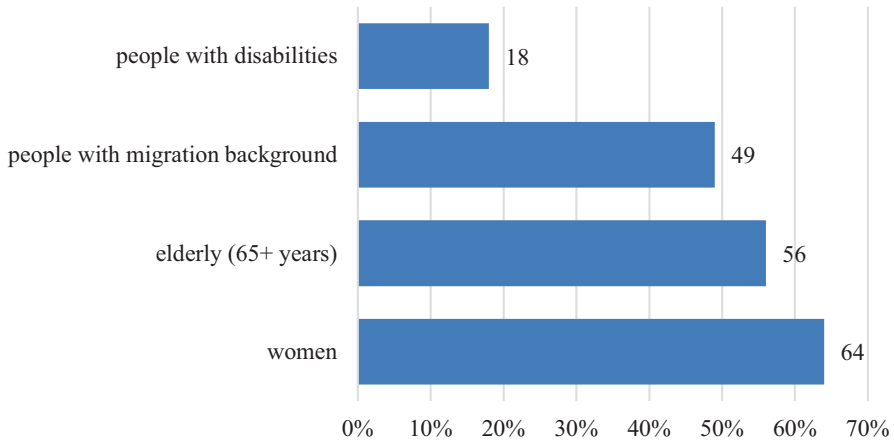


Fig. 12.7 Share of clubs that wants to enable sports for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 4674$, people with migration background $n = 4671$, elderly $n = 4695$, women $n = 4685$)

the idea to offer sports for women (and girls), and 56% have groups that are open to elderly people (65+ years). About half of all Swiss sports clubs have the goal to enable sports for people with migration background, and some of them have specific initiatives. Here, the results of a current study in Switzerland show that members with migration background are relatively well socially integrated in Swiss sports clubs but less successfully than club members without migration background (Adler Zwahlen et al. 2018). Only 18% of the clubs have the clear objective to enhance sports for people with a disability. However, those clubs that have members with a handicap and/or specific initiatives (e.g. targeted sports activities, special teams) manage to integrate these people fairly well (Klenk et al. 2017).

Thus, sports clubs in Switzerland can, in a particular way, fulfil the ascribed ability to promote social integration of people with disabilities and migration background. However, integration is not reached automatically, and it is dependent on specific factors and conditions.

Turning to some general attitudes of sports clubs, the results reveal that the majority set a high value on companionship and conviviality (Table 12.10: 57% totally agree and 31% agree with this statement). Such club philosophy is fundamental to members' ability to create and foster social networks and friendships with other members. Obviously, more than half of the clubs also have a clear focus on competitive sports and are proud of the success of their teams and athletes. In this context, the question arises whether competitive sports are able to establish appropriate support processes for the social integration of the members.

To gain a broader picture of the function of clubs to promote social integration, the data from the member survey in selected Swiss sports clubs gives interesting results. More than half of all members regularly (at least every 2 weeks) stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments (Table 12.11). Thus, regular training in

Table 12.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 4832$, competitive sports $n = 4749$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality | 0 | 2 | 10 | 31 | 57 |
| Our club is proud of his success in competitive sports | 12 | 14 | 24 | 31 | 19 |

Table 12.11 Frequency of participation in the club's social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 719$, stay behind after trainings $n = 702$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Once every 2 weeks (%) | At least once a week (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Participation in the club's social gatherings | 9 | 27 | 30 | 18 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club | 9 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 15 | 17 | 38 |

particular, as well as sports competitions, provides opportunities to meet and talk with other members, especially those from the same team/group. In contrast, the members participate far less frequently in social gatherings (e.g. parties) to connect with other members. Only a minority of the members do not participate in the club's social life.

Based on these findings, it is not surprising that nearly 90% of all club members indicate they have gained new friendships through participation in the club (Fig. 12.8). Thus, club sports is an excellent setting to meet other people and to make friends. Three out of four members agreed with the statement that they socialise with people who they did not know before joining the sports club.

Furthermore, the member survey data demonstrates that sports clubs enable their members to create and foster social networks. One third of all members state that they know more than 50 people in the club by name (Table 12.12). Another 38% indicate they are personally acquainted with 21–50 people in the club. Only a minority of the club members know less than six members by name.

Finally, some selected attitudes of the members towards the social life in the club indicate that sports clubs can enable cohesion and solidarity between the members. A broad majority of the members agree strongly (55%) or partially (30%) with the statement "I am proud to belong to the club" (Table 12.13). For more than half of the members, the club is one of the most important social groups they belong to, while nearly all members – independent of their social background – feel respected and accepted within their sports club.

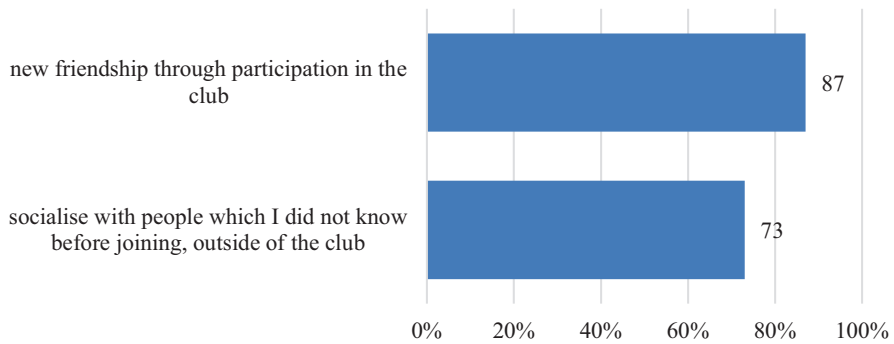


Fig. 12.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 714$, socialise with people $n = 700$)

Table 12.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 761$)

| | None (%) | 1–2 people (%) | 3–5 people (%) | 6–10 people (%) | 11–20 people (%) | 21–50 people (%) | More than 50 people (%) |
|----------------------|----------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| People known by name | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 19 | 38 | 32 |

Table 12.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 692$, most important social group $n = 722$, respect me for who I am $n = 699$)

| | Strongly disagree (%) | Partially disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Partially agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) |
|---|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| I am proud to belong to the club | 1 | 3 | 12 | 30 | 55 |
| The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to | 9 | 15 | 19 | 29 | 29 |
| Other people from the club respect me for who I am | 1 | 1 | 7 | 37 | 54 |

More generally, a club culture of identification, familiarity and cohesion is an important foundation for the club to fulfil social functions and contribute to solidarity in the club and presumably to society as well (Nagel et al. 2004).

In summary: sports clubs in Switzerland have a predominant philosophy of openness and conviviality and the majority of the members indicate that they identify with the club and have social networks and friendships in the club. Thus, there is considerable evidence that sports clubs can contribute to social integration. However, some population groups are underrepresented in sports clubs (e.g. people with migration background, elderly; see Lamprecht et al. 2017), and there may be some practices in clubs that hinder the participation of these groups.

12.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

Swiss society and the political system have several central elements of grassroots democracy. In this context, clubs as voluntary associations with democratic decision-making structures historically developed in the nineteenth century are expected to be an essential part of the system. The question then arises as to the extent sports clubs contribute to democratic participation and socialisation in Switzerland.

The clear majority of boards of the clubs have the philosophy to involve members in making important decisions (Table 12.14). Four out of five clubs (totally) agree with this statement, and only 4% do not pursue the idea of democratic decision-making.

Do the members achieve this idea of democratic involvement and how is this integrated into discussions of strategies and long-term planning? Sports clubs are established from the bottom-up where the general assembly affords each member one vote, elects the president and the board members and makes important decisions. The results of the member survey show that more than half of the members participated at the last general assembly (Fig. 12.9). This proportion of 57% is clearly higher than in most other European countries in the study.

Furthermore, findings on democratic involvement demonstrate that four out of five members participate more or less regularly in club meetings at least once a year (Table 12.15). About half of the members probably attend the annual general assembly only, whereas a minority take part in meetings each month. Aside from this, the

Table 12.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, *n* = 4745)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions | 1 | 3 | 15 | 41 | 40 |

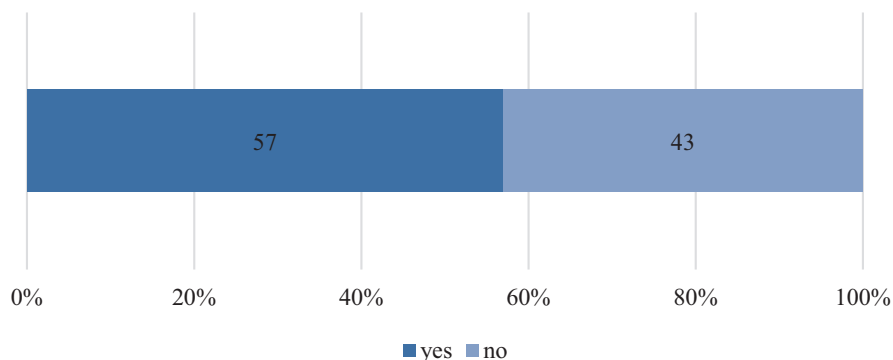


Fig. 12.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, *n* = 805)

Table 12.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 738$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 588$, share my view with other members $n = 604$)

| | Never (%) | Once a year or less (%) | Once every half-year (%) | Once every 3 months (%) | Once a month (%) | Several times a month (%) |
|---|-----------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| Participation in member meetings or other club meetings | 16 | 51 | 12 | 13 | 5 | 3 |
| I speak my mind to key persons in the club | 23 | 24 | 16 | 18 | 10 | 10 |
| I share my views with other members in the club | 12 | 18 | 16 | 17 | 16 | 21 |

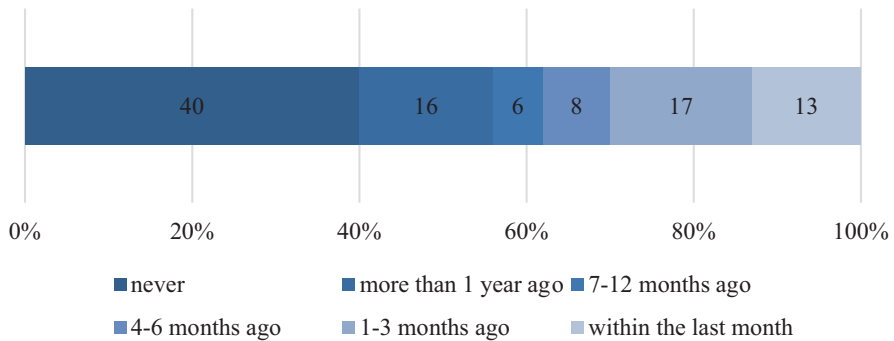


Fig. 12.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 775$)

results reveal that there are differences in active participation of the members in club policy and strategy. At least once a month, 20% speak their mind to key persons in the club, while nearly one out of four never does this. For the statement “I share my views with other members in the club”, we find that around half do this at least once every 3 months and the other half only once every half-year or even less.

According to these results, more than half of the members never attempted to become involved in decision-making in the club or did this more than 1 year ago (Fig. 12.10). In contrast, nearly one third of the members recently attempted to influence decisions in the club. Overall the findings show that one section of the membership participates actively and regularly in decision-making, whereas the rest is not interested in club policy.

Although not all members actively participate in decision-making processes, the clear majority have enough knowledge to understand how the club functions (Fig. 12.11). Only 6% of the members disagree (strongly or partially) to the statement regarding the functioning of the club.

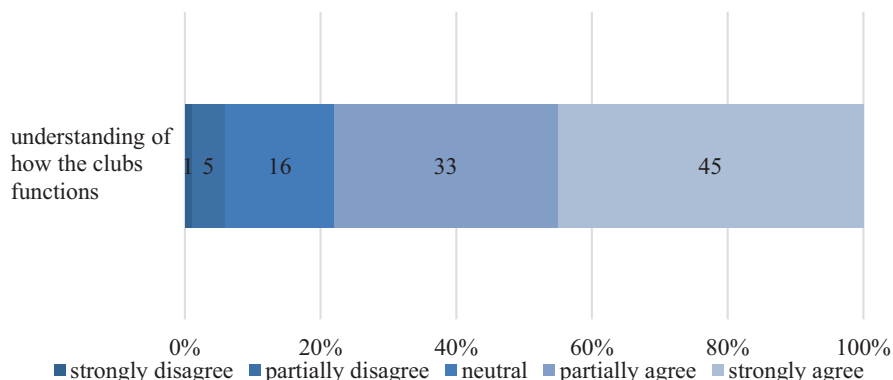


Fig. 12.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 725$)

In summary: the results of the member survey particularly demonstrate that most members know the principles of democratic decision-making in a (sports) club and within each club, there is usually a sufficient number of members who have an active role in club policy. Thus, they construct together the sports club programme to offer members various possibilities to play sports. Here, the principle of bottom-up democratic decision-making ensures that the sports programme of the club fit the interests and expectations of the majority of the members. Hence, sports clubs can contribute to active democratic involvement of the members in decision-making, which is the basis for attractive sports offers.

12.6 Voluntary Work

Decision-making by elected volunteers who represent the interests of the members and voluntary work in general is still the most relevant resource for most sports clubs in Switzerland (Nagel et al. 2018), although some (larger) clubs also have paid staff. Aside from this, most sports competitions and events arranged by sports clubs benefit from the engagement of volunteers.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, volunteering has played an important role in Swiss society and particularly in Swiss sports clubs (Nagel et al. 2018). Current figures from the Swiss Statistical Office (Bundesamt für Statistik [BFS] 2018) show that 20% of all adults in Switzerland engage as volunteers in formal positions within organisations. The highest amount of this voluntary work is done with sports clubs. The Swiss Statistical Office further estimates that 6% of all people aged 15 years and older are engaged as a volunteer in a sports club in Switzerland. The survey Sport Switzerland 2014 and the 2016 national survey of sports clubs report similar figures. Overall, around 335,000 volunteers deliver an average of 11 hours of unpaid work per month for their clubs (Lamprecht et al. 2014, 2017).

Table 12.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 4800$, members as customers $n = 4333$, demonstrating passion $n = 4336$)

| | Don't agree at all (%) | Don't agree (%) | Undecided (%) | Agree (%) | Totally agree (%) |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|---------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers | 2 | 4 | 11 | 28 | 56 |
| Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work | 52 | 27 | 13 | 6 | 2 |
| Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done | 0 | 3 | 18 | 44 | 35 |

In view of these figures, it is not surprising that there is generally very high agreement among sports club representatives that volunteering plays an important role (see Table 12.16). The clear majority of sports clubs ascribe to the philosophy that their clubs should be run exclusively by volunteers. 28% of all clubs agree and 56% totally agree with this statement, whereas only 6% disagree. The idea of volunteer leadership is more popular compared to most other European countries in the survey. The reason for this may be the general importance of bottom-up decision-making in the Swiss political system and the strong historical roots of volunteering in Swiss sports.

Further results in Table 12.16 show that in four out of five clubs, the members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy when volunteering for their club, while about four out of five clubs disagree with the statement that the club considers members as customers who cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work. Hence, the modern idea of service and customer orientation only plays a minor role in most sports clubs in Switzerland.

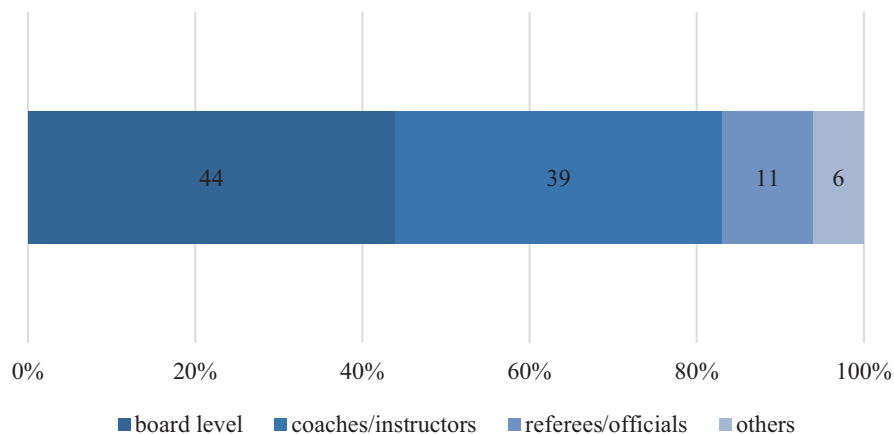
Corresponding to the results on the attitudes and philosophy of the clubs, Swiss sports clubs usually have at least six or more volunteers in different positions. Only 14% of the clubs have five volunteers or fewer, and one third have between six and ten volunteers in fixed positions (Table 12.17). In 28% of the clubs, between 11 and 20 members do regularly voluntary work. About one fourth of the (mostly larger) clubs have more than 20 volunteers in fixed positions (people who get less than CHF 2000 are defined as volunteers in the sports clubs survey, as this is considered symbolic compensation for their time spent as volunteers).

The majority of volunteers hold a fixed position at the board level (44%) or in the sports sector (Fig. 12.12). Thirty-nine per cent work as coaches or instructors of teams and sports groups, and 11% are referees or officials for competitions. These results are broadly in line with the findings of Schlesinger et al. (2014). In addition, these may indicate that a considerable number of members help with the organisation of sports competitions and events.

While volunteers are quite important for the successful development of sports clubs, the clubs frequently indicate they have problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers for the board, for coaching and for refereeing (Table 12.18). These three types of fixed positions are very big problems for around one sixth of

Table 12.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 4527$, no fixed position(s) $n = 4312$)

| Range (number of volunteers) | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|--|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 14 | 34 | 28 | 19 | 5 |
| Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %) | 20 | 17 | 22 | 26 | 15 |

**Fig. 12.12** Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 4527$)**Table 12.18** Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 4604$, coaches/instructors $n = 4565$, referees/officials $n = 4274$)

| | No problem (%) | A small problem (%) | A medium problem (%) | A big problem (%) | A very big problem (%) |
|--|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level | 14 | 22 | 27 | 22 | 15 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors | 12 | 21 | 28 | 25 | 14 |
| Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials | 25 | 17 | 21 | 20 | 17 |

the clubs, and more than half of the clubs declare this to be at least a medium problem. However, there are also clubs that have no problems to recruit and retain enough motivated and competent volunteers.

Along with Germany, the number of clubs with big problems at the board level is the highest in Switzerland (Breuer et al. 2017). It is interesting that, at the same time, the culture for volunteer club management is quite strong in these two countries.

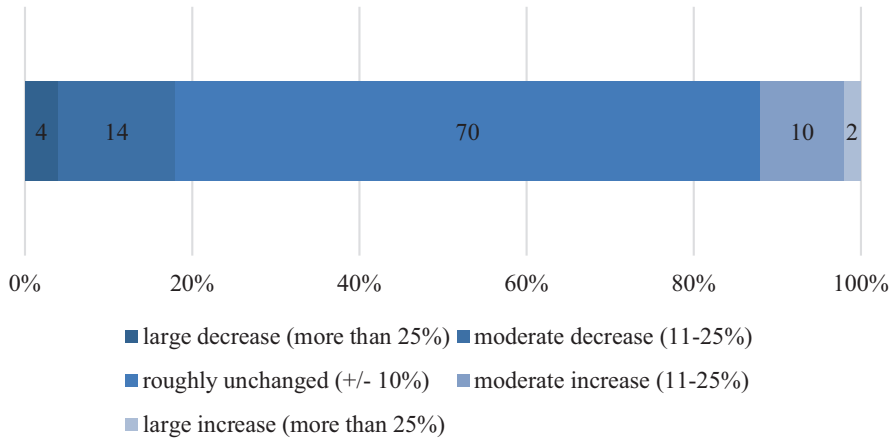


Fig. 12.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 4500$)

Although numerous sports clubs indicate problems with recruiting and retaining enough volunteers, more than two thirds broadly show unchanged numbers of volunteers over the last 5 years (Fig. 12.13). The reason for this may be that the requirements of the clubs have increased and therefore more volunteers are needed. Another explanation could be that in general volunteers are a scarce resource in sports clubs and thus problems tend to arise in this area.

Only 12% of clubs specify an increase in the number of volunteers. This result is surprising, as the current Swiss sports club survey shows that the number of voluntary positions in all sports clubs in Switzerland increased from 285,000 in 2010 to 335,000 in 2016 (Lamprecht et al. 2017; Nagel et al. 2018). One reason for this result is that job sharing appears to be a viable solution for the recruitment of enough volunteers to meet the increasing work in sports clubs. It is interesting that the number of volunteers has increased, although there is no specific policy or programme in Switzerland to promote volunteering in general or more specifically in sports (Nagel et al. 2018).

Why do some clubs have big problems with volunteering and others manage to recruit enough volunteers and retain them for a longer period? An explanation for this phenomenon could be the different measures sports clubs undertake to recruit and retain volunteers. The results in Table 12.19 show that the majority of the clubs try to recruit enough volunteers by informing the members they are expected to contribute with voluntary work (70%), by arranging social gatherings for volunteers (69%) and by encouraging and motivating volunteers (43%). Thus, the main strategy is to get enough members to volunteer, whereas external approaches, for example, by informing and recruiting parents of children (28%) or recruiting volunteers from outside existing club members (10%) are less frequent. About one quarter of clubs reward volunteers through benefits in-kind or by paying for training and qualification. Finally, the results reveal that only a minority of clubs have formalised the issue of volunteering through a written recruitment strategy or a person who is

Table 12.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 4299$, social gatherings $n = 4355$, pay for training $n = 4289$, inform members $n = 4364$, inform parents $n = 4215$, benefits in kind $n = 4276$, recruitment outside $n = 4348$, volunteer management $n = 4336$, written strategy $n = 4340$)

| | Yes (%) |
|---|---------|
| The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally | 43 |
| The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity | 69 |
| The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification | 25 |
| The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 70 |
| The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work | 28 |
| The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind | 24 |
| The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members | 10 |
| The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management | 13 |
| The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment | 18 |

responsible for volunteer management. Here, Schlesinger et al. (2015) show that sports clubs dealing with problems of volunteering in a systematic and strategic way are more successful (see also Egli et al. 2016).

Additionally, it is worth noting that the specific conditions of volunteering in a club are quite relevant to volunteer satisfaction and as a consequence for long-term volunteering. Current studies in Swiss sports clubs show that the following factors are particularly relevant to the satisfaction and commitment of volunteers in sports clubs: appreciation and recognition, interesting tasks, support by the club and material incentives (Schlesinger et al. 2013, 2014).

The findings of the member survey demonstrate that there are large differences in the frequency and workload of volunteers. Table 12.20 shows that one third of all volunteers engage in their club at least once a week or even more often. Probably most of these people have a fixed position (e.g. as board member or coach), whereas those who do voluntary work once every quarter or even less do not hold fixed positions. These volunteers usually help sporadically in the organisation of competitions or other events for the club.

There are also big differences in the time volunteers dedicate to their work (Table 12.21). Nearly one third of all volunteers spend only 5 hours or less on voluntary work and slightly more than one fourth work on an average between 6 and 10 hours a month during the season. One sixth of all volunteers spend between 21 and 50 hours on volunteering and 5% engage more than 50 hours per month.

In summary, volunteering is still one of the most important resources for sports clubs in Switzerland, enabling clubs to offer interesting programmes to their members. The majority of clubs pursue the philosophy that strategic decisions have to be made by elected volunteers. Most of the clubs manage the challenge of recruiting and retaining enough volunteers by implementing specific measures to increase the number of volunteers and to enhance the commitment of volunteers.

Table 12.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 617$)

| | Once a year or less (%) | Once every 6 months (%) | Once every quarter (%) | Once a month (%) | Every other week (%) | Once a week (%) | 2–4 days a week (%) | 5 days a week or more (%) |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers | 11 | 20 | 16 | 12 | 8 | 14 | 16 | 2 |

Table 12.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 314$)

| | 0–5 | 6–10 | 11–20 | 21–50 | More than 50 |
|---|-----|------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %) | 31 | 28 | 20 | 16 | 5 |

Furthermore, volunteering is not only relevant to sports clubs and members but also to civil society, as integration in a club can lead to integration in the broader community and play an important role in social trust. Volunteering in sports clubs gives people the opportunity to engage in society and public welfare (Nagel et al. 2018).

12.7 Conclusion

From the beginning of the nineteenth century (sports), clubs in Switzerland have been considered as institutions that can, in part, substitute for public initiatives (Stamm et al. 2015). In fact, with a lack of central public authorities, clubs – not only in sports but also in areas such as science, education and politics – often replace official functions. To a certain extent, sports clubs and other clubs are private and officially encouraged alternatives to public interventions, and they have become an important feature of Swiss civil society (Nagel et al. 2018). As a consequence, the public civil society sector in Switzerland is small compared to other countries (e.g. the Northern countries; see Helmig et al. 2017), whereas voluntary organisations such as sports clubs play an important role.

In this context, the results of the club and member survey demonstrate that sports clubs can promote health, social integration, and democratic decision-making, particularly through voluntary work by the members, and thus contribute to public welfare of Swiss society.

Health Promotion On the whole, sports club members regularly practise sports with their club. Thus, sports clubs can contribute to individual and, as a consequence, to public health, even though sports clubs frequently have no specific focus on

health promotion. However, depending on the sports (e.g. gymnastics, running, football), the effects for health promotion may be quite different.

Social Integration Sports clubs in Switzerland usually promote goals such as openness and conviviality, and most members identify with their club and have social networks and friendships in the club. There is considerable overall evidence that sports clubs are able to contribute to social integration. In particular, sports clubs in Switzerland are able to fulfil to a certain extent the ascribed ability to promote social integration of people with disabilities and migration background. However, integration is not automatically attained and is dependent on specific factors and conditions. Furthermore, these population groups are underrepresented across sports clubs (see Lamprecht et al. 2017).

Democratic Decision-Making The results of the member survey particularly demonstrate that most of the members of Swiss sports clubs understand the principles of democratic decision-making in a sports club. In addition, there are usually enough members in each club to play an active role in club policy. Thus, together they construct the sports clubs programmes that offer the members various possibilities to play sports. Here, the principle of bottom-up democratic decision-making, important in the Swiss political system, ensures that the sports programmes of the club fit the interests and expectations of the majority of the members. Hence, sports clubs can contribute to active democratic involvement of the members in decision-making that forms the basis of attractive sports offers.

Volunteering Volunteering is still the backbone of sports clubs in Switzerland, and most have the philosophy that strategic decisions need to be made by elected volunteers. This bottom-up principle ensures that the members have the opportunity to gain experience in democratic decision-making in their club.

Volunteering is not only relevant to sports clubs and members but also to civil society, as integration in a club can lead to integration in the broader community, playing an important role in social trust. Volunteering in sports clubs gives people the opportunity to engage in society and public welfare. Thus, volunteering is an important promoter of social cohesion in Swiss society (Freitag 2014).

Overall, sports clubs and the more than 300,000 volunteers who engage in the club and in the welfare of the general public (e.g. by promoting youth sport) contribute to a vibrant civil society in Switzerland.

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Chapter 13

Exploring Pan-European Similarities and Differences in Club-Organised Sports: A Cross-National and Cross-Temporal Comparison



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Abstract When it comes to scientific research in sports, most European countries conduct country-specific investigation programmes for which mostly non-harmonised standards are applied. As a consequence, reliable, pan-European data of organisational and participatory aspects of (club-organised) sports, both cross-nationally and cross-temporally, are lacking. The present chapter tries to overcome this gap by using available data of three waves of the harmonised Eurobarometer survey. More precisely, we aim to investigate (1) active participation in (club-organised) sports; (2) health-related club-organised participation; (3) social integration in clubs; and (4) volunteering in club-organised sports. On all these aspects, regional differences within Europe as well as differences between social groups are examined. Results demonstrate that club-organised sports participation declined in all regions among almost all social strata. In general, underrepresented groups (women, elderly and lower educated), who live in Northern Europe, seem to enjoy better opportunities to participate in club-organised sports. In addition, clubs seem to be a good environment to promote social integration. The results presented in this chapter indicate that harmonised instruments such as the Eurobarometer are indispensable for cross-national and cross-temporal comparisons. In addition, these surveys facilitate the preparation and implementation of evidence-based sports policy programmes at the European level.

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13.1 Introduction

In the so-called European model of sports, the European dimension of sports is emphasised (European Commission 1999). In accordance to this model, sports clubs fulfil a central role, in particular at grassroots level. Their social, cultural, economic as well as political functions are highly valued. As has been stressed in previous chapters of this book, sports clubs are characterised by free and voluntary engagement, and they intend to offer the opportunity to actively partake in competitive and recreational forms of sports activities, regardless of one's age, sex or social background. As such, sports clubs are considered as a key instrument for sports policy-making. All over Europe, national, regional and local governments recognise the unique venue sports clubs represent and the societal benefits they provide. Despite this privileged and promising position that sports clubs hold, empirical data as regard sports clubs are lacking, both cross-nationally and cross-temporally. More precisely, longitudinal data that allow for comparisons between countries on the one hand and through different time intervals on the other are inaccurate or even not available at the European level. As a consequence, it is difficult to compare, among others, the popularity, the organisation and the management of club-organised sports practices between different European countries. Most countries often make use of their own national research methods and standards in order to collect data of sports clubs. In this chapter, we aim to partly overcome this gap by making use of existing data. Indeed, repeated measurements based on a pan-European standardised questionnaire are needed if one wants to make comparisons between countries and across different periods of time (Scheerder et al. 2011). Provided that such rigorously established data are available, not only at the (sub)national level but also at the European level, policy-makers would be better informed to prepare and implement evidence-based sports policy programmes (Breedveld et al. 2013; Hoekman et al. 2015; Scheerder et al. 2011; Van Bottenburg et al. 2005). Moreover, this would also allow for substantiating and justifying public policy decisions and actions.

One of the goals of the "Social Inclusion and Volunteering in Sports Clubs in Europe" (SIVSCE) project was to meet the lack of data with regard to sports clubs. More precisely, the SIVSCE project sought to collect, analyse and discuss comparable data across ten European countries. Based on this knowledge, suggestions for policy action can be proposed to policy-makers in order to promote social integration and volunteering in European sports clubs (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2016, see also Chap. 1 in this book). As such, the SIVSCE project can be labelled as an example of a harmonised data survey. Contrary to sports participation surveys based on national, country-specific data, the harmonised data approach implies the cross-national collection of sports participation data by means of a homogenised questionnaire (Scheerder et al. 2011). Because a similar research methodology is used, the harmonised data approach is more likely to meet criteria in terms of both the validity and comparability of the collected data. However, along with the fact that

harmonisation can be very time-consuming and financially expensive, other weaknesses appear. First, it can still prove difficult to interpret findings, since the specific cultural context might result in having dissimilar connotations of similar concepts in different countries. Second, when only a rather small number of countries partake in a survey and/or are able to meet the homogenised standards, the power of harmonised data may be somewhat undermined. Therefore, with only ten countries being involved in the SIVSCE project, complementary data are very much welcomed.

13.2 Material and Method

The Eurobarometer, among others,¹ is an example of a harmonised cross-European survey that allows to measure (club-organised) sports participation and other sports-related issues for all EU member states and through multiple time intervals. Therefore, this chapter will grasp this opportunity and will make use of data that enable cross-national/cross-regional and cross-temporal comparisons. In this way, it is our intention to complement the SIVSCE findings already presented in this book. The previous chapters took us through ten European countries. For these countries a wealth of insights has been provided based on the SIVSCE data. Seemingly, similar as well as dissimilar developments can be identified concerning the ten countries involved in the SIVSCE project. In this penultimate chapter, we will elaborate on this by further investigating similarities, differences and trends with a broader focus on sports participation and by including all EU member states. For our analysis, we will rely on available, fully harmonised data that has been collected within the framework of the Eurobarometer surveys. Thanks to the harmonisation, the Eurobarometer is strong on comparability, and it covers all EU member states. However, due to the somewhat lower number of cases (respondents) per country (in each country at least 1000 interviews were taken, with the exception of Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta with each around 500 interviews), the Eurobarometer is less suitable for in-depth analyses at the (sub)national level. For this, again, we refer to the other chapters in this book. In the Eurobarometer surveys used in this chapter, there is no data available on children, since these surveys are conducted among respondents 15 years of age and older.

¹Examples of other harmonised cross-European or international surveys in which sports-related questions are included are the *European Health Interview Survey* (EHIS, see Eurostat 2019b, c), *European Social Survey* (ESS, see ESS 2020), *European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions* (EU-SILC, see Eurostat 2019d, g), *European Values Study* (EVS, see GESIS – Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences [GESIS] 2019a), *Harmonised European Time Use Surveys* (HETUS, see Eurostat 2019e, j), *Household Budget Survey* (hbs, see Eurostat 2019a, f), *International Social Survey Programme* (ISSP, see GESIS 2019b, c), *International Trade in Sporting Goods* (sprt_trd, see Eurostat 2019h), etc. In the present chapter, however, we prefer to make use of the Eurobarometer surveys since this instrument provides comparable data for at least three time intervals in a row.

Another added value of the Eurobarometer, along with its comparability between different countries/clusters of countries, concerns its possibility to compare data between several time intervals. More precisely, comparable Eurobarometer data are available for 2009, 2013 and 2017² (European Commission 2010, 2014, 2018). This enables us to make comparisons for a time-span of almost 10 years. Although most Eurobarometer surveys do not (exclusively) focus on sports, the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Special Eurobarometers include specific sports-related questions that are of particular relevance to the central issues presented in this book. The special attention to sports and physical activity in these Special Eurobarometers underlines the increasing interest from policy-makers at the European level in (club-organised) sports. As such, the Eurobarometer data can be considered as worthwhile on itself and as complementary to both the previous chapters and the following, conclusive chapter.

For the results presented, analyses are executed at the European level in general but also in relation to the respondents' social background (age, sex and education) and in accordance with the regional location of the EU member states. As concerns the latter, a geographical classification of all EU countries is applied in order to investigate whether differences occur between different geographical parts of the European Union. For this, the authors used a classification with six geographical clusters or regions as they also will be called. In order to set up the classification of countries, the authors used the geographical location of the countries, rather than relying on any existing typology or by taking political and cultural similarities into account. The classification is presented in Table 13.1. Although our classification is rather pragmatic, it corresponds to a certain extent to Esping-Andersen's (1990) classic typology of welfare states and its further development by other authors, namely, (1) universalist welfare states (Northern Europe), (2) liberal welfare states (Western Europe), (3) corporate welfare states (Central Europe), (4) Mediterranean welfare states (Southern Europe) and (5) post-communist welfare states (Eastern Europe).

Our secondary analysis of the Eurobarometer data resulted in a plethora of outcomes, and not all of them are included in the present chapter but can be consulted in a separate publication. For this we refer to the report of Helsén and Scheerder (2020) in which analyses at the national (country) level are included as well. When calculations are reported, references to the original and/or secondary sources are

²Although questions about sports and sports participation in particular have been sporadically included in some Eurobarometer surveys ever since 1983, a valid comparison between different time intervals is only possible for the 2009–2017 period. Due to the use of different definitions (cf. a dissimilar operationalisation of sports participation and club membership) or the inclusion of different age groups (cf. young people only versus people aged fifteen and over), the available data from pre-2009 Eurobarometer surveys are not suitable for accurate comparisons over time (see, among others, European Commission 2000, 2003, 2006; European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Industrial Relations, and Social Affairs, Directorate V/F.3 1999; Eurostat 2004). One exception, however, needs to be made here since the 2004 survey asks the same question as in 2009, 2013 and 2017 with regard to active participation in sports (European Commission 2004).

Table 13.1 Classification of EU member states according to their geographical location

| Northern Europe | North Eastern Europe | South Eastern Europe | Southern Europe | Central Europe | Western Europe |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|--|---------------------------|
| Denmark Finland Sweden | Estonia Latvia Lithuania Poland | Bulgaria Croatia Hungary Romania Slovakia Slovenia | Cyprus Greece Italy Malta Portugal Spain | Austria Belgium Czech Republic France Germany Luxembourg The Netherlands | Ireland United Kingdom |

included at the bottom of the respective table or figure. For all analyses, the authors make use of weight coefficients that are provided in the original databases. Although comparisons between social groups and geographical regions are presented, significances are only calculated for comparisons and developments at the overarching, European level in order to detect trends within the European Union as a whole. Statistical tests for significance, however, are not performed for the analyses in relation to social background and geographical classification, since this would result in a torrent of extra statistics which would hamper the readability of the chapter. As differences between numbers can be due to chance, significant differences are calculated by making use of chi-squared (χ^2) tests and 95% confidence intervals. These tests check whether observed numbers systematically deviate from expected numbers. When a significant difference is found, this implies that we are 95% sure that this difference is not due to chance and thus can be considered as a real difference.

For the structure of the present chapter, we rely on the conceptual framework that is applied throughout the book (see Chap. 2). Therefore, we will present and discuss the results according to the different functions of sports clubs that have been dealt with in the previous chapters (apart from the function of democratic engagement as no data are available on this in the Eurobarometer surveys): (1) active participation in (club-organised) sports, (2) health-related club participation, (3) club-organised sports participation and social integration, and (4) volunteering in club-organised sports. The following two main questions are put forward in this chapter: to what extent are there differences and similarities between the different geographical regions and between the different social layers, with regard to health promotion, social integration and volunteering in the context of sports clubs? To what extent has the contribution of sports clubs to these sociopolitical functions changed over the last decade?

Except for Sect. 13.3, all of the following sections use the same order of presenting the analyses, namely, overall, European results, results related to geographical regions and results according to social background features (sex, age and education). In Sect. 13.6, which deals with the volunteering in club-organised sports, supplementary analyses are included because other relevant variables on this topic are available in the Eurobarometer dataset.

Table 13.2 Overall sports participation and sports participation in different organisational settings among EU27/EU28 (EU27 member states = all EU28 member states except for Croatia being the most recent country that joined the European Union) citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of total population)

| Sports participation | 2009 (EU27) | 2013 (EU28) | 2017 (EU28) | χ^2 |
|--|-------------------|----------------------|-------------------|------------|
| In general | 60.8 ^a | 57.9 ^b | 53.9 ^c | 274.602*** |
| In a sports club | 12.3 ^a | 12.2 ^{a, b} | 11.6 ^b | 7.984* |
| In a sociocultural association | 4.2 ^a | 3.1 ^b | 3.2 ^c | 57.667*** |
| In a club (sports club and/or sociocultural association) | 15.8 ^a | 14.8 ^b | 14.3 ^b | 25.753*** |
| In a fitness centre | 9.0 ^a | 10.6 ^b | 10.6 ^b | 51.322*** |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsens and Scheerder 2020)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

13.3 Participation in (Club-Organised) Sports

According to the 2017 Eurobarometer survey on sports, 54% of people aged 15 and over are actively engaged in sports (Table 13.2). A quarter of these sports participants (25%) practise their sports in a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, which corresponds to 14% of the population in general (Fig. 13.1 and Table 13.2). These percentages imply that in all EU28 member states, 235 million people aged 15 and over are sports active, of which almost 63 million are an active member of a sports club or a sociocultural association where one can actively partake in sports.³ As can be seen from Table 13.2, both the general sports participation rates and the club-organised sports participation rates have undergone a significant decline between 2009 and 2017. This indicates that sports participation (in a club) became somewhat less popular during the last decade in the EU27/EU28. From Table 13.2, it can be inferred that the level of general sports participation has diminished to a higher extent (−7%) than is the case with the level of club-organised sports participation (−1.5%). When presented as percentages of the sports active population, active club membership proves to be constant as no significant differences can be detected (Fig. 13.1). It is important to notice that in this chapter, club-organised sports participation is defined by looking at the active membership of a sports club and/or of a sociocultural association that provides sports activities.⁴ Consequently,

³The absolute numbers presented here are the result of a weighted calculation by the authors based on available, country-specific demographic data for 2017 concerning inhabitants aged 15 years and older in each of the EU28 member states (Eurostat 2019i). In addition, participation rates are taken into account for each of the EU28 countries (European Commission 2018).

⁴Based on the Eurobarometer surveys, club-organised sports participation can be defined in two ways. On the one hand, club-organised sports participation is defined as the membership of a sports club (besides other contexts where one can practise sports, such as a sociocultural association or a fitness centre). On the other hand, the location or setting where one practises his or her sport is

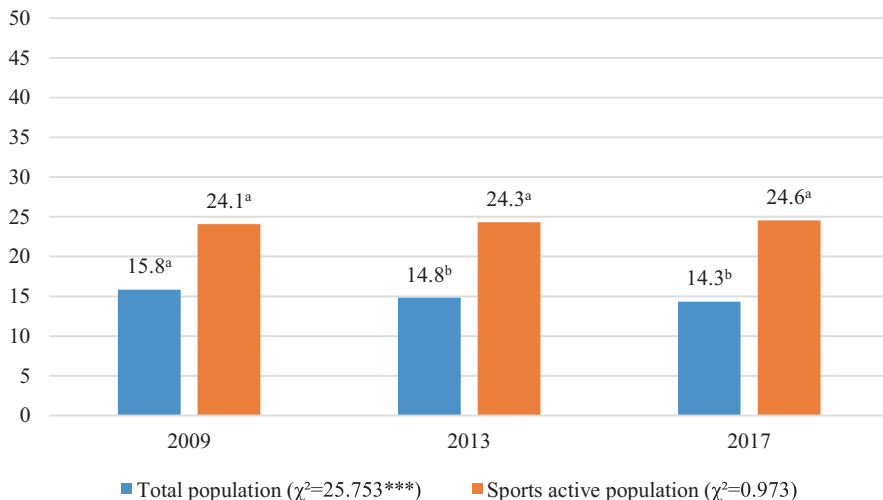


Fig. 13.1 Club-organised sports participation among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of total population and of sports active population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2010, 2014, 2018; see also Helsen and Scheerder 2020))

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

the percentages included in this chapter can slightly differ from those presented in the original Eurobarometer reports.

The decrease in sports participation could potentially be related to the different enlargements the European Union has undergone, in particular since 2003 when ten new member states from Eastern Europe joined the European Union. Indeed, as has been shown by Hartmann-Tews (2006), an obvious difference in general sports participation occurs when – based on 2004 data – calculations are made for the EU15 (64%) versus the EU25 (59%). Also in the Eurobarometer measurements of 2009, 2013 and 2017, similar differences can be discerned between the EU25, the EU27 and the EU28 (see Tables 13.2 and 13.3). For example, in 2017, the sports (club) participation level in the EU28 and EU27 is 54% (14%), whereas this percentage equals 55% (15%) in the EU25. However, even if only the EU25 or EU27 member states are taken into consideration, a slight but significant decrease in the proportion of participants in sports (clubs) takes place as well (Table 13.3). As a consequence, it can be stated that in the European Union, the stake of sports club membership has declined – or at least to a certain extent has somewhat stabilised but surely not

taken into consideration to define club-organised sports participation (besides a sports club, also other locations/settings like a school, a park, a sports centre, etc.). In this chapter club-organised sports participation is determined by considering active membership of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association that includes sports in its activities.

Table 13.3 Overall sports participation and sports participation in different organisational settings among EU25 (EU25 member states = all EU28 member states except for Bulgaria, Croatia and Romania, being the most recent countries that joined the European Union) and EU27 citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of total population)

| Sports participation | EU25 | | | EU27 | | |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| | 2009 | 2013 | 2017 | 2009 | 2013 | 2017 |
| In general ($\chi^2_{EU25} = 225.744^{***}$; $\chi^2_{EU27} = 257.639^{***}$) | 61.6 ^a | 59.2 ^b | 55.1 ^c | 60.8 ^a | 57.8 ^b | 54.0 ^c |
| In a sports club ($\chi^2_{EU25} = 8.273^*$; $\chi^2_{EU27} = 6.569^*$) | 13.0 ^a | 13.0 ^a | 12.2 ^b | 12.3 ^a | 12.2 ^{a,b} | 11.6 ^b |
| In a sociocultural association ($\chi^2_{EU25} = 58.274^{***}$; $\chi^2_{EU27} = 55.737^{***}$) | 4.4 ^a | 3.3 ^b | 3.3 ^b | 4.2 ^a | 3.1 ^b | 3.2 ^b |
| In a club (sports club and/or sociocultural association) ($\chi^2_{EU25} = 27.393^{***}$; $\chi^2_{EU27} = 23.017^{***}$) | 16.6 ^a | 15.6 ^b | 15.0 ^b | 15.8 ^a | 14.8 ^b | 14.4 ^b |
| In a fitness centre ($\chi^2_{EU25} = 46.461^{***}$; $\chi^2_{EU27} = 52.033^{***}$) | 9.4 ^a | 11.0 ^b | 11.1 ^b | 9.0 ^a | 10.6 ^b | 10.7 ^b |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2010, 2014, 2018)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

augmented – during the past decade. On the other hand, participation in fitness seems to have slightly gained in popularity since more Europeans than ever before frequent a fitness centre for physical exercising (Tables 13.2 and 13.3, see also Scheerder et al. 2018, 2019).

Not only in general but also in relation to social background characteristics, the trends described in this section apply. Thus, among men as well as women, among young people as well as older people and among lowly educated as well as highly educated people, both participation in sports and active club membership have decreased a bit during the last decade (Table 13.4). Only among people aged 15–24 years and people who are still studying, sports participation in a club has not diminished between 2009 and 2017. Nevertheless, differences between social layers persist, meaning that men, younger people and people with a high educational level are still overrepresented compared to their respective counterparts. Moreover, the differences between social groups have even augmented. For instance, the club participation gap between men and women, between young and older people and between people with a low and high education has increased between 2009 and 2017. Future pan-European studies are needed in order to detect whether these trends will continue during the next decade.

From a geographical point of view, it is clear that differences in sports participation as well as in club membership occur between different European regions and (clusters of) countries (see also Hartmann-Tews 2006; Helsén and Scheerder 2020; Van Bottenburg et al. 2005; Van Tuyckom and Scheerder 2010). This is shown in Fig. 13.2 in which six European regions are discerned. For details about the

Table 13.4 Overall sports participation and sports participation in a (sports) club among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to background characteristics, 2009–2017 (percentages of total population)

| | | 2009 (EU27) | | | 2013 (EU28) | | | 2017 (EU28) | | |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------|-------------|-------------|------|
| Background | | Sports | Sports club | Club | Sports | Sports club | Club | Sports | Sports club | Club |
| Sex | Men | 65.4 | 16.4 | 19.9 | 63.0 | 16.3 | 18.9 | 60.2 | 15.6 | 18.6 |
| | Women | 56.5 | 8.4 | 12.1 | 53.2 | 8.3 | 11.0 | 48.0 | 7.8 | 10.3 |
| Age | 15–24 years | 83.1 | 21.7 | 24.6 | 81.2 | 21.1 | 25.4 | 76.4 | 20.5 | 25.1 |
| | 25–39 years | 70.6 | 13.4 | 16.4 | 67.4 | 12.2 | 14.5 | 64.8 | 12.8 | 15.3 |
| | 40–54 years | 62.3 | 12.1 | 15.2 | 58.6 | 12.4 | 13.9 | 55.6 | 11.8 | 13.7 |
| | 55 years and over | 43.0 | 7.7 | 12.1 | 41.4 | 8.4 | 11.4 | 38.8 | 7.7 | 10.6 |
| Education | Lowly educated | 35.7 | 6.3 | 9.8 | 32.0 | 5.1 | 7.4 | 27.4 | 4.7 | 6.5 |
| | Middle-educated | 60.5 | 10.9 | 14.5 | 54.6 | 10.3 | 12.0 | 48.2 | 8.4 | 10.5 |
| | Highly educated | 76.1 | 16.4 | 20.1 | 72.9 | 16.3 | 19.6 | 68.7 | 16.7 | 19.9 |
| | Still studying | 88.1 | 25.0 | 27.8 | 86.9 | 25.0 | 30.7 | 83.9 | 23.1 | 29.5 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsen and Scheerder 2020)
Legend:

Sports club = sports participation in sports club; club = sports participation in sports club and/or sociocultural association

Lowly educated = studied until the age of 15; middle-educated = studied until the age of 16–19; highly educated = studied until the age of 20 or over

geographical classification of EU member states, we refer to Table 13.1. High scores for both sports participation and club membership are noted for Northern Europe (84%/24%), Western Europe (63%/13%) and Central Europe (60%/22%), whereas North-eastern Europe (46%/8%), Southern Europe (44%/8%) and Southeastern Europe (42%/5%) clearly show lower participation rates.

Social stratification patterns regarding active club membership appear in all European regions (Figs. 13.3, 13.4, and 13.5). More precisely, differences in club-organised sports participation occur in each of the six European regions according to sex, age and educational status. The difference in club participation between men and women is remarkably larger in North-eastern Europe, Northern Europe, Western Europe and Central Europe than is the case in the two southern regions of Europe (Fig. 13.3).

According to age group, the results presented in Fig. 13.4 indicate that people aged 15–24 years show the highest club member participation rates in all of the six European regions. Compared to their counterparts in other European regions, active club membership seems to be the most popular among youngsters in Central Europe

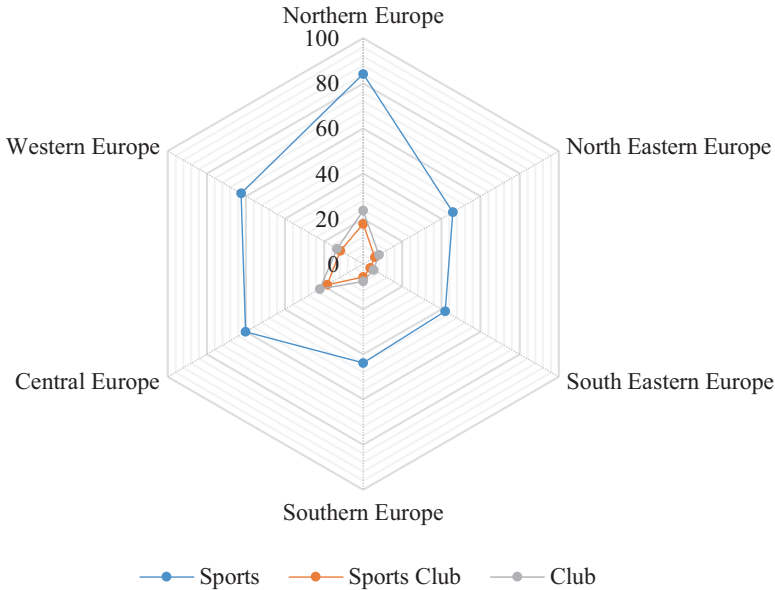


Fig. 13.2 Participation in (club-organised) sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region, anno 2017 (percentages of total population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsens and Scheerder 2020))

Legend:

Sports club = sports participation in sports club; club = sports participation in sports club and/or sociocultural association

(34%). Seen relatively to the other regions, people aged 55 years and over from Northern Europe present the highest rate for club-organised sports participation (22%).

From Fig. 13.5 it can be seen that the highest club membership scores are noted among highly educated people and people who are still studying. Club membership is particularly high among students from Central Europe (41%). Among the lowest educated, those from Northern Europe show the highest club membership rate (19%). In general, underrepresented groups, namely, women, elderly and people with a low education, who live in Northern Europe, seem to enjoy better opportunities to participate in club-organised sports as can be seen by the asymmetrical shape of the radar charts towards Northern Europe in Figs. 13.3, 13.4 and 13.5.

13.4 Health-Related Club Participation

As indicated in Chap. 2, sports clubs are more and more considered as potential and proper settings for the promotion of health-enhancing behaviour. Participatory data from the Eurobarometer surveys seem to support this line of argumentation. As

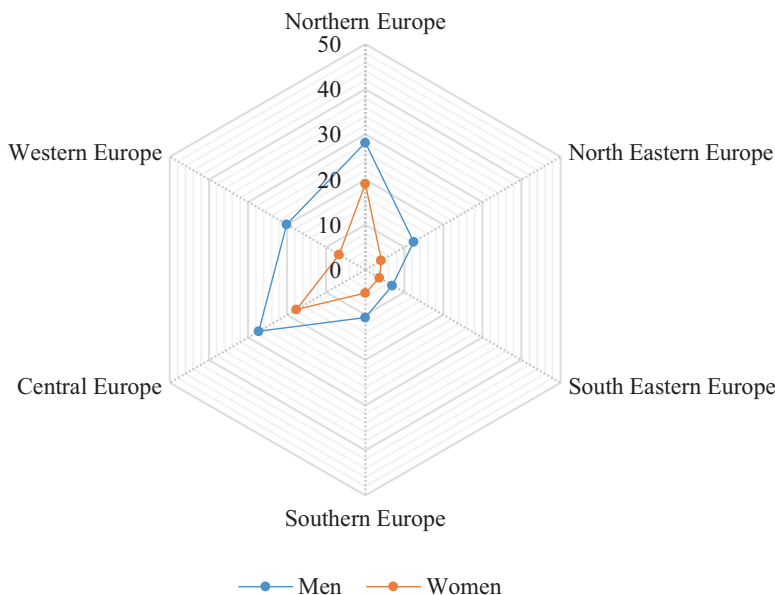


Fig. 13.3 Participation in club-organised sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region and sex, anno 2017 (percentages of total population). (Source: Authors’ own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsens and Scheerder 2020))

presented in Table 13.5, the two clearly most important motives to participate in sports concern the improvement of health (59%) and the improvement of fitness (55%). Moreover, among club-organised sports participants, these motives are even of more importance compared to sports participants in general (Table 13.5 versus Table 13.6). More precisely, in 2017, just over 60% of active club members practise sports for reasons of fitness or health improvement (Table 13.6). Among the sports active population as well as the club-organised sports population, the improvement of fitness as a motive to participate in sports has undergone a significant increase. On the other hand, social motives for participation in sports, in particular making new acquaintances, integrating better into society or meeting people from other cultures seem to be less popular, both in general and with regard to club participation (Tables 13.6 and 13.7). However, as regard the social motives, it should be noted that higher scores are registered among sports club members compared to sports active people in general. In Sect. 13.5, the relation between club-organised sports participation and social integration will be discussed in more detail.

Health as well as fitness motives seems to be very popular reasons to participate in sports in all six European regions since these two motives make up the top two in every region (Fig. 13.6). Compared to their respective counterparts, women, elderly and highly educated people who were sports active in a club in 2017 tend to show higher scores for health improvement as an important reason to participate in sports (Table 13.7). Thus, regarding the health- and fitness-related motives, social

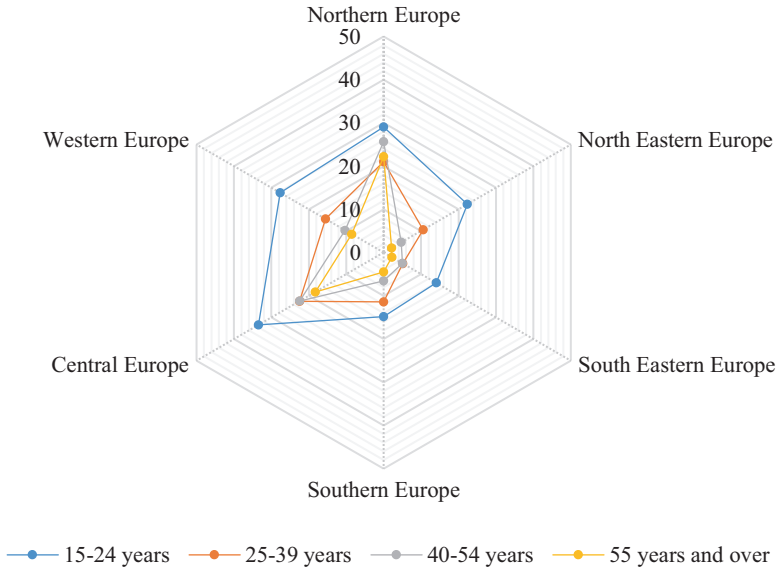


Fig. 13.4 Participation in club-organised sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region and age group, anno 2017 (percentages of total population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsens and Scheerder 2020))

stratification patterns can be detected in terms of sex, age and education, whereas only minor differences between the different European regions show up when it comes to the most popular sports participation motives (Fig. 13.6).

13.5 Club-Organised Sports Participation and Social Integration

The fact that social motives are valued more highly among sports club members than among sports participants in general (see Tables 13.5 and 13.6) could be interpreted as an indication that sports clubs can be considered as a venue where people look for opportunities in terms of social interaction and social integration and/or become more socialised to these values and motives to a higher extent than in non-organised sports.

Although a long time before the 2015 European migration crisis, the European Commission (2004) in its Special Eurobarometer of 2004 on the social dimension of sports evaluated the opinion of EU citizens with regard to values that sports promote the most⁵ in general and with regard to sports as a

⁵The precise wording of the respective question in the 2004 Eurobarometer was “In your opinion, which of the following values does sport promote the most?” (European Commission 2004).

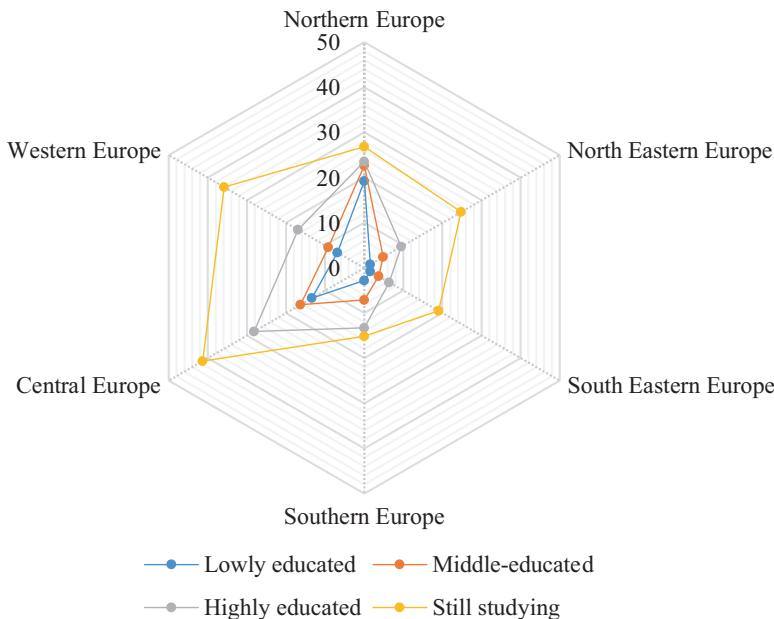


Fig. 13.5 Participation in club-organised sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region and educational level, anno 2017 (percentages of total population). (Source: Authors’ own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsens and Scheerder 2020))
 Legend:
 Lowly educated = studied until the age of 15; middle-educated = studied until the age of 16–19; highly educated = studied until the age of 20 or over

vector for the integration of immigrants⁶ in particular. The results indicate that among club active sports participants, values such as tolerance, solidarity and mutual understanding are ranked lower than sports-related values as team spirit, discipline and fair play (Table 13.8). However, the sports clubs members rate nearly all values higher than the population that is not organised in sports clubs. Moreover, this trend can be observed all over Europe to a certain extent (Fig. 13.7).

Some geographical and social differences, however, seem to appear. For instance, tolerance as a value is less popular in Western Europe compared to other parts of Europe, while mutual understanding ranks higher in Northern and Southeastern Europe (Fig. 13.7). Among women, elderly and lowly educated people, both tolerance and mutual understanding are highly classified compared

Multiple answers were possible to this question.

⁶The precise wording of the respective statement in the 2004 Eurobarometer was “Sport promotes the integration of immigrant populations by developing a dialogue between different cultures”. (European Commission 2004). Possible answers to this statement were “agree”, “disagree” and “don’t know”.

Table 13.5 Motives to participate in sports among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of sports active population)

| Motive | 2009 (EU27) | 2013 (EU28) | 2017 (EU28) | χ^2 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| To improve health | 63.8 ^a | 67.6 ^b | 59.2 ^c | 238.923*** |
| To improve fitness | 47.3 ^a | 45.9 ^b | 54.6 ^c | 270.819*** |
| To relax | 42.3 ^a | 39.6 ^b | 41.0 ^a | 24.481*** |
| To have fun | 37.9 ^a | 34.8 ^b | 35.2 ^b | 41.215*** |
| To improve physical performance | 28.7 ^a | 28.5 ^a | 32.6 ^b | 81.192*** |
| To control weight | 29.4 ^a | 27.9 ^b | 26.9 ^b | 25.306*** |
| To improve physical appearance | 28.6 ^a | 27.3 ^b | 24.4 ^c | 74.574*** |
| To be with friends | 26.5 ^a | 22.8 ^b | 22.7 ^b | 84.755*** |
| To counteract the effects of aging | 16.0 ^a | 16.6 ^a | 15.7 ^a | 5.086 |
| To improve self-esteem | 12.3 ^a | 12.3 ^a | 14.4 ^b | 42.736*** |
| To develop new skills | 7.8 ^a | 7.7 ^a | 8.2 ^a | 2.874 |
| To make new acquaintances | 6.8 ^a | 6.0 ^b | 6.9 ^a | 14.517** |
| For the spirit of competition | 7.8 ^a | 6.9 ^b | 6.8 ^b | 16.106*** |
| To better integrate into society | 3.9 ^{a,b} | 3.4 ^b | 4.3 ^a | 15.894*** |
| To meet people from other cultures | 2.9 ^a | 2.9 ^a | 2.8 ^a | 0.199 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2010, 2014, 2018; see also Helsen and Scheerder 2020)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

to their respective counterparts (Table 13.9). However, at the same time, we learn that seven out of ten consider sports as a potential instrument to facilitate the social integration of people with a migration background (Table 13.10). This number even increases to up to eight out of ten among club active sports participants. Nevertheless, on this issue a significant difference can be detected between Southeastern Europe and the rest of the EU28, as countries from this region seem to be less in favour with the statement on social integration (Fig. 13.8). On the other hand, the results presented in Table 13.11 show no considerable differences in terms of sex and age. As regards the educational level, however, it can be noted that among club participants, lowly educated people to a lesser extent agree with the statement on social integration.

Future research will have to prove whether or not these outcomes have continued after the migration crisis of 2015. To our knowledge, no recent pan-European data have been collected on this issue so far. Nevertheless, as has already been discussed, more recent findings based on Eurobarometer surveys show that social motives like making new acquaintances, integrating better into society and meeting people from other cultures are more popular among club active sports participants (see Table 13.6). Moreover, this popularity did not significantly diminish between 2009 and 2017.

Table 13.6 Motives to participate in sports among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of club-organised sports population)

| Motive | 2009 (EU27) | 2013 (EU28) | 2017 (EU28) | χ^2 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-----------|
| To improve fitness | 54.8 ^a | 52.7 ^a | 61.2 ^b | 63.606*** |
| To improve health | 65.1 ^a | 68.6 ^b | 60.9 ^c | 52.115*** |
| To have fun | 56.2 ^a | 56.8 ^a | 52.1 ^b | 20.585*** |
| To relax | 47.2 ^a | 46.5 ^a | 48.9 ^a | 5.149 |
| To improve physical performance | 36.6 ^a | 36.8 ^a | 40.4 ^b | 15.472*** |
| To be with friends | 43.1 ^a | 41.0 ^a | 37.5 ^b | 27.169*** |
| To control weight | 32.3 ^a | 29.9 ^b | 27.3 ^c | 24.387*** |
| To improve physical appearance | 31.0 ^a | 29.4 ^a | 26.3 ^b | 22.916*** |
| To counteract the effects of aging | 18.6 ^a | 19.6 ^a | 18.1 ^a | 2.820 |
| To improve self-esteem | 16.2 ^{a,b} | 15.4 ^b | 17.6 ^a | 7.643* |
| For the spirit of competition | 17.9 ^a | 17.3 ^a | 15.9 ^a | 5.969 |
| To develop new skills | 12.8 ^a | 14.9 ^b | 14.4 ^{a,b} | 8.304* |
| To make new acquaintances | 13.1 ^a | 12.3 ^a | 12.8 ^a | 1.073 |
| To better integrate into society | 7.5 ^a | 5.9 ^b | 7.3 ^a | 10.229** |
| To meet people from other cultures | 5.3 ^a | 5.6 ^a | 4.7 ^a | 3.637 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2010, 2014, 2018; see also Helsen and Scheerder 2020)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

13.6 Volunteering in Club-Organised Sports

Along with the declining trend in European society as regards active participation in (club-organised) sports (see Tables 13.2, 13.3 and 13.4, and Fig. 13.1), the number of people doing voluntary work that supports sporting activities seemingly diminishes (Fig. 13.9). In 2017, 6% of the EU28 citizens aged 15 and older performed voluntary work in sports. In 2009 and 2013, just over 7% claimed to do so. The decline is likely to be associated with the decrease in the proportion of people who are active in a club (see Fig. 13.1 and Table 13.2). In 2017, one sports club member out of four is engaged in volunteering in his or her club (Fig. 13.9). Doing voluntary work in the field of sports apparently is popular in Northern Europe where almost one out of five claimed to be engaged in sports volunteering (Fig. 13.10). On the other hand, the number of sports volunteers is much lower in countries in Southern and Eastern Europe. Also, social differences occur regarding sports volunteerism. More precisely, sports volunteers are less likely to be female, 55 years and over and/or lowly educated (Table 13.12). Table 13.12 also shows that a decline in sports volunteering takes place in all social groups.

From the Eurobarometer data used in this chapter, it is not clear whether “being engaged in voluntary work that supports sporting activities” solely concerns voluntary work performed in the context of a sports club or in sport-

Table 13.7 Motives to participate in sports among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to background characteristics, 2009–2017 (percentages of club-organised sports population)

| Back-ground | 2009 (EU27) | | | | | | 2013 (EU28) | | | | | | 2017 (EU28) | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--------|-------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------|--------|-------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------|--------|-------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|--|
| | Fitness | Health | Relax | Physical performance | Control weight | Physical appearance | Counter-act aging | Fitness | Health | Relax | Physical performance | Control weight | Physical appearance | Counter-act aging | Fitness | Health | Relax | Physical performance | Control weight | Physical appearance | Counter-act aging | |
| Gender | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Men | 54.1 | 61.7 | 45.8 | 36.3 | 29.3 | 28.3 | 15.2 | 53.3 | 66.4 | 46.0 | 38.7 | 27.6 | 28.5 | 18.3 | 60.5 | 58.0 | 48.1 | 40.5 | 26.3 | 25.1 | 16.5 | |
| Women | 55.7 | 70.4 | 49.4 | 37.0 | 37.1 | 35.3 | 23.9 | 51.7 | 72.3 | 47.2 | 33.7 | 33.5 | 30.9 | 21.6 | 62.4 | 65.8 | 50.4 | 40.2 | 29.0 | 28.4 | 20.9 | |
| Age | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 15–24 years | 53.7 | 57.3 | 38.1 | 45.9 | 26.8 | 40.9 | 7.3 | 61.1 | 65.5 | 43.0 | 48.3 | 27.7 | 44.3 | 7.2 | 65.9 | 52.8 | 40.8 | 50.4 | 21.8 | 34.6 | 3.4 | |
| 25–39 years | 55.7 | 62.8 | 52.8 | 36.4 | 34.1 | 36.3 | 12.0 | 52.4 | 66.9 | 49.4 | 37.6 | 31.0 | 31.9 | 14.7 | 59.7 | 58.9 | 48.2 | 42.1 | 30.4 | 36.9 | 10.7 | |
| 40–54 years | 57.4 | 67.3 | 51.6 | 36.1 | 37.7 | 29.6 | 20.3 | 47.4 | 68.4 | 52.3 | 33.5 | 32.0 | 25.2 | 20.9 | 59.1 | 66.6 | 61.9 | 38.8 | 33.1 | 19.3 | 17.6 | |
| 55 years and over | 52.2 | 72.4 | 45.7 | 28.8 | 30.5 | 18.2 | 33.8 | 50.0 | 73.3 | 41.6 | 28.3 | 28.9 | 17.4 | 34.2 | 60.5 | 64.4 | 45.2 | 32.0 | 24.2 | 16.2 | 37.3 | |
| Education | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Lowly educated | 44.0 | 73.2 | 42.8 | 32.8 | 31.4 | 23.9 | 27.9 | 41.2 | 70.8 | 35.1 | 28.8 | 21.1 | 19.5 | 26.4 | 52.3 | 56.8 | 33.8 | 25.1 | 29.6 | 20.2 | 32.4 | |
| Middle-educated | 53.3 | 61.9 | 47.3 | 33.6 | 31.3 | 30.1 | 16.8 | 50.6 | 65.3 | 44.9 | 34.3 | 30.9 | 28.2 | 21.2 | 57.8 | 55.9 | 46.7 | 36.3 | 24.6 | 21.8 | 17.3 | |
| Highly educated | 60.3 | 66.5 | 52.4 | 35.4 | 37.9 | 30.0 | 22.1 | 53.3 | 72.4 | 51.6 | 35.4 | 32.9 | 25.1 | 22.9 | 63.3 | 66.9 | 54.9 | 40.2 | 30.3 | 26.1 | 22.1 | |
| Still studying | 59.3 | 63.1 | 40.6 | 49.7 | 25.3 | 40.2 | 7.3 | 60.9 | 66.4 | 45.7 | 48.5 | 25.6 | 45.8 | 6.9 | 65.9 | 58.5 | 45.6 | 53.7 | 24.4 | 37.2 | 5.2 | |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2010, 2014, 2018)

Legend:

Lowly educated = studied until the age of 15; middle-educated = studied until the age of 16–19; highly educated = studied until the age of 20 or over

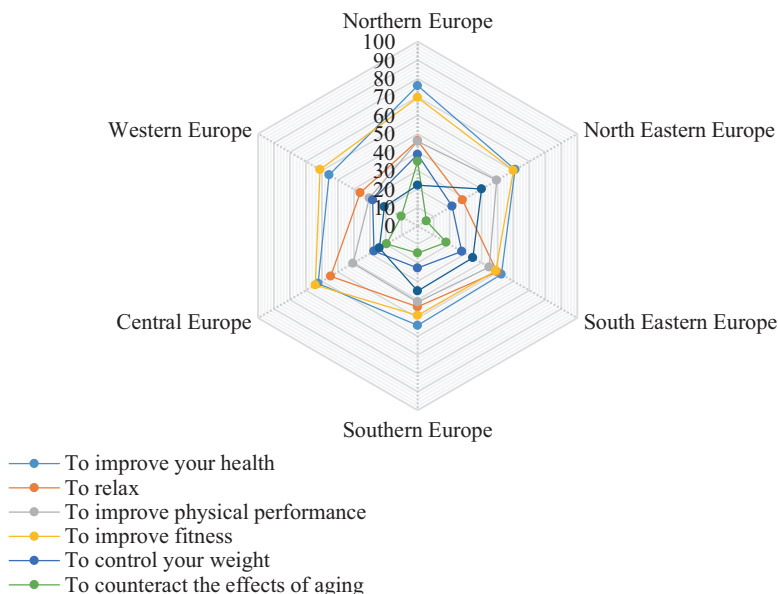


Fig. 13.6 Motives to participate in sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region, anno 2017 (percentages of club-organised sports population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2018; see also Helsen and Scheerder 2020))

ing activities outside of sports club as well. Nevertheless, it can be assumed that most of the voluntary work in the field of sports is related to sports clubs. This assumption seems to be confirmed when looking at which kinds of tasks sports volunteers perform. From Table 13.13 it can be deduced that the majority, if not all types of volunteer activities, can be labelled as typical club activities, including being a board member, coach or official or doing administrative work or day-to-day club activities (e.g. bar, food or merchandising). As a consequence, the analyses presented in this section are unmistakably of relevance to sports clubs.

Almost half of the sports volunteers are involved in extra-sportive tasks (Fig. 13.11). Such tasks include help to run events, provision of transport, maintenance of facilities and maintenance of equipment. Therefore, these tasks can be identified as activities that support the functioning of sports clubs apart from governing activities (board tasks) and training/pedagogical activities (sportive tasks). Just over a third of the sports volunteers take up sportive tasks (coach/trainer or referee/other official), and one out of five sports volunteers is engaged in board-related activities. Between 2013 and 2017, hardly any remarkable changes concerning these numbers can be detected. Changes do occur, however, when it comes to the time spent on voluntary work in sports (Fig. 13.12). Between 2009

Table 13.8 Values that sports promote the most among EU25 citizens aged 15 and over, anno 2004

| Values | Sports active | | Club-organised | | χ^2 |
|------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|---|------------|
| | Total population | Sports active population | No-sports active population | Club-organised sports population ^o | |
| Team spirit | 52.0 | 56.4 ^a | 45.8 ^b | 64.6 ^a | 75.980*** |
| Friendship | 38.4 | 42.8 ^a | 32.2 ^b | 54.2 ^a | 152.743*** |
| Discipline | 45.7 | 48.2 ^a | 42.3 ^b | 50.1 ^a | 3.902* |
| Fair play | 31.5 | 36.5 ^a | 24.3 ^b | 44.3 ^a | 73.567*** |
| Respect for others | 32.1 | 36.3 ^a | 26.0 ^b | 43.5 ^a | 64.888*** |
| Sticking to the rules | 31.4 | 34.0 ^a | 27.6 ^b | 42.9 ^a | 100.828*** |
| Self-control | 32.6 | 37.8 ^a | 25.2 ^b | 40.4 ^a | 7.293** |
| Effort | 35.7 | 40.7 ^a | 28.4 ^b | 39.0 ^b | 3.479 |
| Tolerance | 22.5 | 25.9 ^a | 17.6 ^b | 33.3 ^a | 79.343*** |
| Solidarity | 18.1 | 20.0 ^a | 15.4 ^b | 23.4 ^a | 20.708*** |
| Mutual understanding | 15.1 | 17.3 ^a | 11.8 ^b | 22.1 ^a | 45.394*** |
| Equality among men and women | 15.3 | 16.7 ^a | 13.3 ^b | 17.2 ^a | 0.557 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2004)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

^oNote: In the 2004 Eurobarometer, club active sports participation is differently operationalised. Compared to the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Eurobarometer surveys (where club participation is defined by being a member of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, with multiple answers possible), the 2004 Eurobarometer survey defines sports participation in a club as the practice of doing sports in a sports club. If this category was filled out, another answer was not possible anymore (other answer categories: fitness centre, sports centre, school/university, elsewhere)

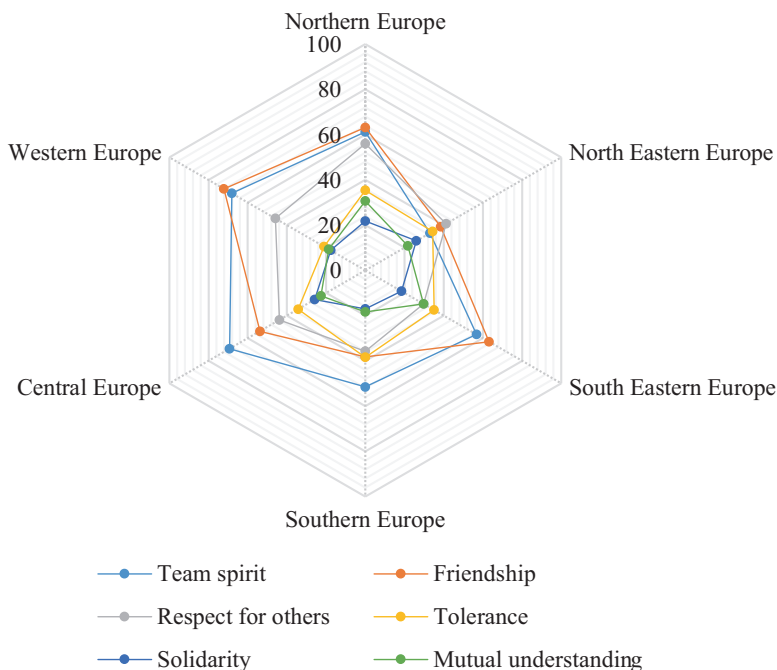


Fig. 13.7 Values that sports promote the most among EU25 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region, anno 2004 (percentages of club-organised sports population*). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2004))

*Note: In the 2004 Eurobarometer, club active sports participation is differently operationalised. Compared to the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Eurobarometer surveys (where club participation is defined by being a member of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, with multiple answers possible), the 2004 Eurobarometer survey defines sports participation in a club as the practice of doing sports in a sports club. If this category was filled out, another answer was not possible anymore (other answer categories: fitness centre, sports centre, school/university, elsewhere)

and 2017, the number of those spending at least 1 hour per month on voluntary work has increased from 56% to 70%, whereas in the same period, a decline of more than 10% points took place among those who only occasionally engage in sports volunteering. This is remarkable since previous research has indicated that the nature of volunteering, in general, is changing and that occasional volunteering is gaining popularity (Hustinx and Lammertyn 2003).

13.7 Summary

The aim of this chapter was to make cross-national/cross-regional and cross-temporal comparisons regarding the issues that have been discussed throughout this book, in particular the potential contribution of sports clubs to

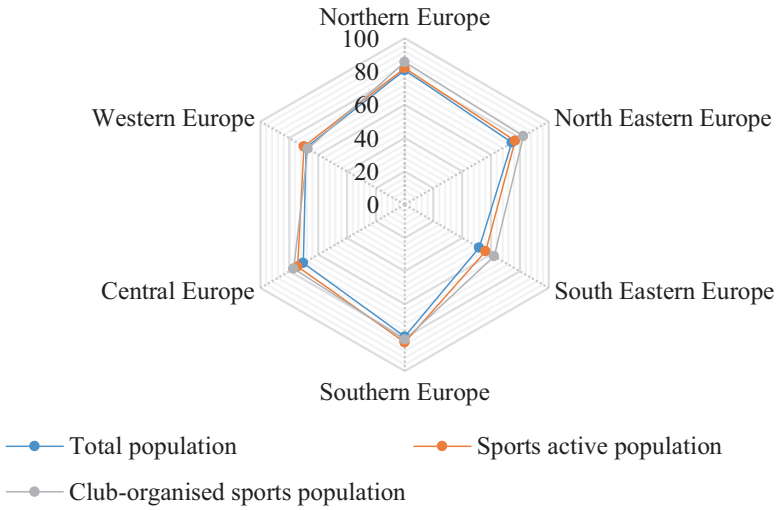


Fig. 13.8 Agreement with the statement that sports promote the integration of immigrant populations among EU25 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region, anno 2004 (percentages of club-organised sports population*). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2004))

*Note: In the 2004 Eurobarometer, club active sports participation is differently operationalised. Compared to the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Eurobarometer surveys (where club participation is defined by being a member of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, with multiple answers possible), the 2004 Eurobarometer survey defines sports participation in a club as the practice of doing sports in a sports club. If this category was filled out, another answer was not possible anymore (other answer categories: fitness centre, sports centre, school/university, elsewhere)

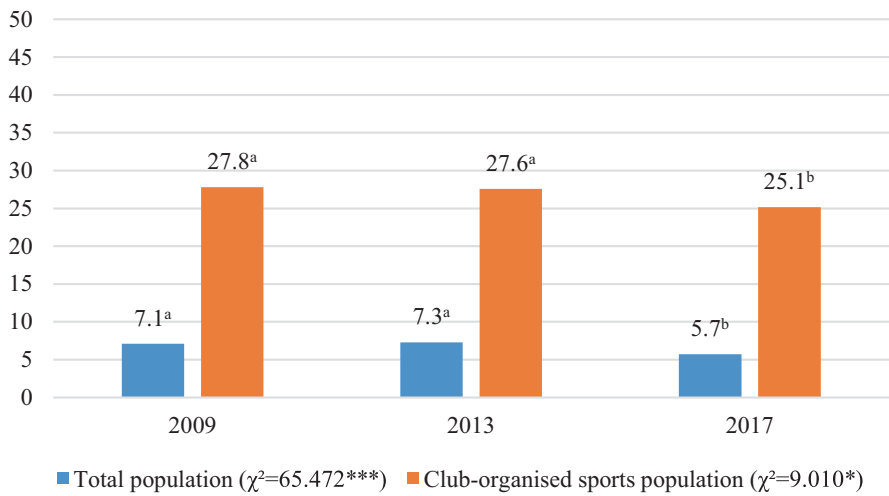


Fig. 13.9 Engagement in voluntary work that supports sporting activities among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of total population and of club-organised sports population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsén and Scheerder 2020))

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c} Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

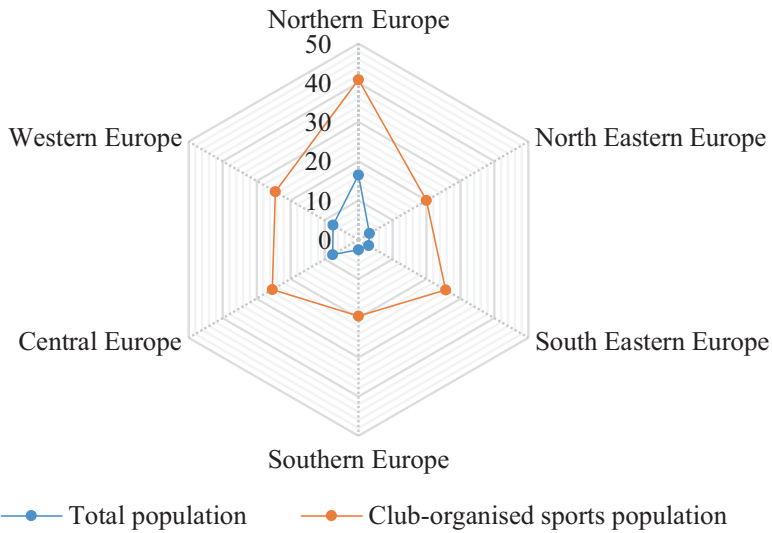


Fig. 13.10 Engagement in voluntary work that supports sporting activities among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to geographical region, anno 2017 (percentages of total population and of club-organised sports population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2018))

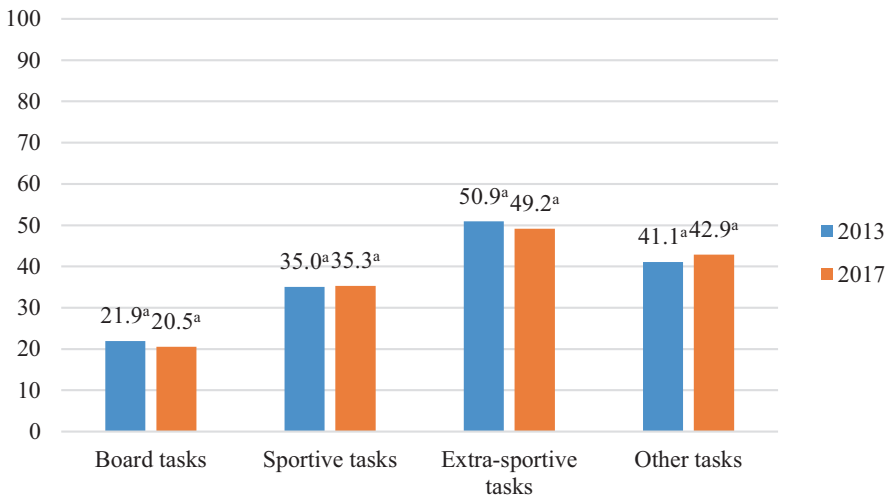


Fig. 13.11 Tasks of volunteers in sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2013–2017 (percentages of volunteering population). (Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2014, 2018))

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another board tasks include being a board member ($\chi^2 = 1.049$); sportive tasks include being a coach/trainer or referee/other official ($\chi^2 = 0.037$); extra-sportive tasks include help to run events, provision of transport, maintenance of facilities and maintenance of equipment ($\chi^2 = 1.062$); other tasks include day-to-day club activities, administrative tasks and other tasks ($\chi^2 = 1.208$)

Table 13.9 Values that sports promote the most among EU25 citizens aged 15 and over according to background characteristics, anno 2004 (percentages of club-organised sports population*)

| Background | | Team spirit | Friendship | Respect for others | Tolerance | Solidarity | Mutual understanding |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|------------|--------------------|-----------|------------|----------------------|
| Sex | Men | 65.2 | 55.9 | 43.6 | 31.1 | 24.9 | 20.0 |
| | Women | 63.7 | 51.6 | 43.4 | 36.7 | 21.2 | 25.4 |
| Age | 15–24 years | 77.2 | 61.1 | 47.0 | 32.4 | 27.7 | 23.7 |
| | 25–39 years | 63.7 | 52.6 | 44.8 | 33.1 | 23.2 | 17.1 |
| | 40–54 years | 59.4 | 47.3 | 37.8 | 29.0 | 23.2 | 22.9 |
| | 55 years and over | 60.0 | 57.3 | 44.1 | 38.6 | 20.1 | 26.4 |
| Education | Lowly educated | 64.5 | 59.5 | 49.8 | 36.1 | 22.4 | 25.2 |
| | Middle-educated | 63.4 | 56.4 | 37.7 | 31.4 | 20.9 | 21.9 |
| | Highly educated | 62.6 | 49.3 | 45.5 | 34.6 | 24.0 | 21.2 |
| | Still studying | 73.1 | 53.5 | 50.3 | 32.3 | 29.7 | 22.3 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2004)

*Note: In the 2004 Eurobarometer, club active sports participation is differently operationalised. Compared to the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Eurobarometer surveys (where club participation is defined by being a member of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, with multiple answers possible), the 2004 Eurobarometer survey defines sports participation in a club as the practice of doing sports in a sports club. If this category was filled out, another answer was not possible anymore (other answer categories: fitness centre, sports centre, school/university, elsewhere)

Table 13.10 Agreement with the statement that sports promote the integration of immigrant populations among EU25 citizens aged 15 and over, anno 2004 (percentages of total, sports active and club-organised sports population°)

| Statement | Total | Sports ($\chi^2 = 269.132^{***}$) | | Club ($\chi^2 = 3.360$) | |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--|---|
| | % of total population | % of sports active population | % of no-sports active population | % of club-organised sports population° | % of no-club-organised sports population° |
| Sports promote the integration of immigrant populations by developing a dialogue between different cultures | 72.7 | 75.5 ^a | 68.8 ^b | 76.6 ^a | 75.5 ^a |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2004)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

°Note: In the 2004 Eurobarometer, club active sports participation is differently operationalised. Compared to the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Eurobarometer surveys (where club participation is defined by being a member of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, with multiple answers possible), the 2004 Eurobarometer survey defines sports participation in a club as the practice of doing sports in a sports club. If this category was filled out, another answer was not possible anymore (other answer categories: fitness centre, sports centre, school/university, elsewhere)

Table 13.11 Agreement with the statement that sports promote the integration of immigrant populations among EU25 citizens aged 15 and over according to background characteristics, anno 2004 (percentages of club-organised sports population*)

| Background | | Sports active population | Club-organised sports population* |
|------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Sex | Men | 76.2 | 76.8 |
| | Women | 74.6 | 76.2 |
| Age | 15–24 years | 70.7 | 77.2 |
| | 25–39 years | 75.9 | 76.5 |
| | 40–54 years | 76.2 | 76.6 |
| | 55 years and over | 78.5 | 75.9 |
| Education | Lowly educated | 75.5 | 70.1 |
| | Middle-educated | 74.8 | 78.0 |
| | Highly educated | 77.8 | 75.3 |
| | Still studying | 71.7 | 81.0 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2004)

Legend:

Lowly educated = studied until the age of 15; middle-educated = studied until the age of 16–19; highly educated = studied until the age of 20 or over

*Note: in the 2004 Eurobarometer, club active sports participation is differently operationalised. Compared to the 2009, 2013 and 2017 Eurobarometer surveys (where club participation is defined by being a member of a sports club and/or a sociocultural association, with multiple answers possible), the 2004 Eurobarometer survey defines sports participation in a club as the practice of doing sports in a sports club. If this category was filled out another answer was not possible anymore (other answer categories: fitness centre, sports centre, school/university, elsewhere)

Table 13.12 Engagement in voluntary work that supports sporting activities among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over according to background characteristics, 2009–2017 (percentages of total population)

| Background | | 2009 (EU27) | 2013 (EU28) | 2017 (EU28) |
|------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Sex | Men | 9.3 | 9.3 | 7.9 |
| | Women | 5.0 | 5.4 | 3.7 |
| Age | 15–24 years | 8.8 | 9.8 | 7.5 |
| | 25–39 years | 6.8 | 7.3 | 5.9 |
| | 40–54 years | 9.2 | 8.8 | 6.7 |
| | 55 years and over | 5.0 | 5.2 | 4.4 |
| Education | Lowly educated | 4.4 | 3.7 | 2.5 |
| | Middle-educated | 6.4 | 6.3 | 4.7 |
| | Highly educated | 10.2 | 9.9 | 8.3 |
| | Still studying | 9.7 | 12.1 | 8.3 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsén and Scheerder 2020)

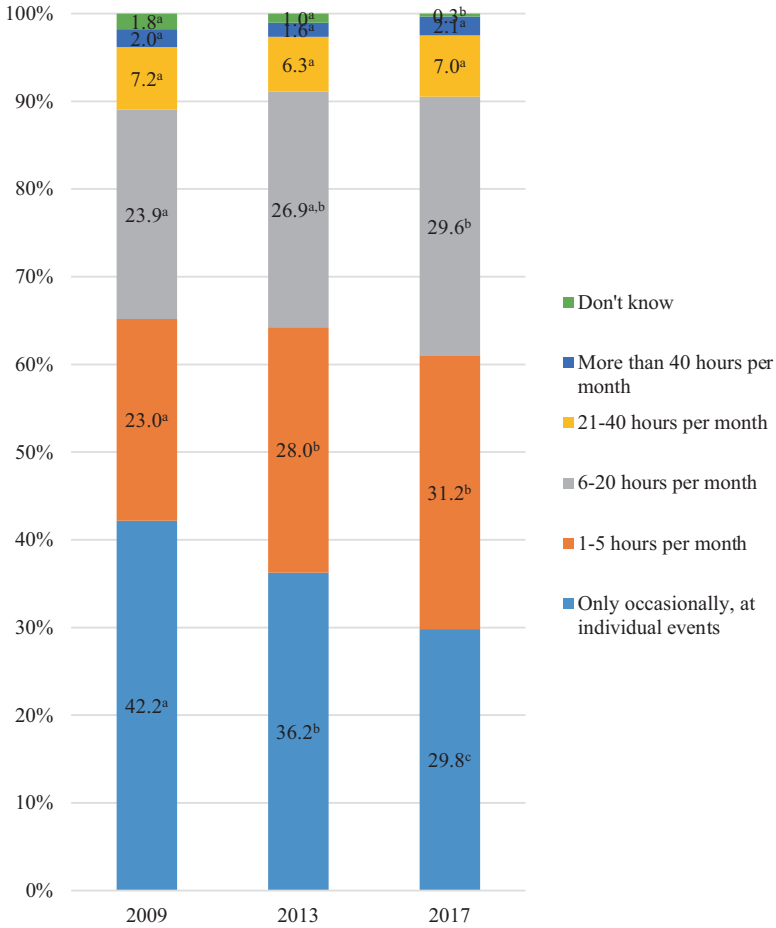


Fig. 13.12 Time spent on voluntary work that supports sporting activities among EU27/EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2009–2017 (percentages of volunteering population; $\chi^2 = 89.919^{***}$). (Source: Authors’ own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (see Helsens and Scheerder 2020))

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c} Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

Table 13.13 Tasks of volunteers in sports among EU28 citizens aged 15 and over, 2013–2017 (percentages of volunteering population)

| Task | 2013 (EU28) | 2017 (EU28) | χ^2 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------|
| Help to run events | 35.0 ^a | 32.5 ^a | 2.402 |
| Coach/trainer | 28.9 ^a | 27.4 ^a | 1.021 |
| Board member | 21.9 ^a | 20.5 ^a | 1.049 |
| Day-to-day club activity | 19.6 ^a | 19.8 ^a | 0.017 |
| Administrative tasks | 16.3 ^a | 18.2 ^a | 2.241 |
| Referee/other official | 9.0 ^a | 11.5 ^b | 6.651* |
| Provide transport | 15.4 ^a | 10.1 ^b | 22.018*** |
| Maintain equipment | 7.8 ^a | 9.6 ^a | 3.465 |
| Maintain facilities | 9.8 ^a | 8.8 ^a | 1.122 |
| Other tasks | 10.3 ^a | 8.9 ^a | 2.012 |

Source: Authors' own calculations based on Eurobarometer data (European Commission 2014, 2018; see also Helsen and Scheerder 2020)

Legend:

*** = $p < 0.001$; ** = $p < 0.01$; * = $p < 0.05$

^{a, b, c}Numbers with a different superscript differ significantly from one another

sociopolitical functions. For this, we relied on available data from three Eurobarometer surveys. The advantage as well as the added value is that analyses for different time intervals in all EU member states are included based on accurate data from a standardised and consistent questionnaire. The analyses made in this chapter are no mere reproductions of the existing results already reported by the European Commission but concern secondary calculations based on the available data. As such, original findings are presented here. The results provide new and up-to-date insights regarding the topics that are central to the present book, namely, (1) active participation in (club-organised) sports, (2) health-related club participation, (3) club-organised sports participation and social integration, and (4) volunteering in club-organised sports. It was not possible to include material on the function of democratic engagement in a sports club, since no data from this regard are available in the Eurobarometer surveys.

The results show that 54% of the adult population in the EU participates in sports and that 14% are active in club-organised sports. However, sports participation has significantly declined during the past decade. More precisely, a significant decrease can be registered both between 2009 and 2013 (from 61% to 58%) and between 2013 and 2017 (from 58% to 54%). In the same period, club-organised sports became less popular as well. Club participation has slightly dwindled from 16% of the adult population in 2009 to 14% in 2017. Simultaneously, participation in fitness activities has gained popularity with almost 11% of the adult EU citizens having a fitness centre membership in 2017. In 2009, the corresponding figure was 9%.

Six out of ten people, who are active in club-organised sports, participate for health and/or fitness reasons. Club-organised sports can thus be considered as a proper setting for the promotion of health-enhancing motives. However, the question arises if all these sports club members are able to transform their intentions into regular health-enhancing behaviour. Although social motives for participation in sports, such as making new acquaintances, integrating better into society and meeting people from other cultures, are much less popular compared to health and fitness motives, people who are sports active in a club value these social motives significantly higher than sports participants more broadly. Regarding the values that sports promote, club-organised sports participants are more inclined to ascribe social values like respect for others, tolerance and solidarity to sport. However, these social values are considered of significantly less importance when compared to values such as team spirit, friendship and discipline. Finally, the results show that almost eight out of ten club-organised sports participants agree with the statement that sports promote the integration of immigrant populations.

Regarding voluntary work that supports sporting activities, the results show that 6% of the adult population in EU countries is actively engaged. This represents a significant decrease from the 7% in 2009 and 2013. It can be assumed that most of these volunteers are active in club-organised sports as the voluntary tasks reported largely resemble typical tasks in a sports club (e.g. board work, coach/trainer, event organisation). In the same period as the proportion of sports volunteers has decreased, an increase in the time allocated to sports volunteering by sports volunteers has taken place. Thus, fewer are sports volunteers, but those who are devote more time.

When it comes to analyses between geographical regions in the EU, the results reveal a number of interesting similarities and differences. The participation in (club-organised) sports is significantly higher in Northern, Western and Central European countries. Health and fitness motives are the most popular motives in all European regions, while social motives are consistently less important in all regions. When comparing the regions according to the values that sports promote, tolerance is highly valued in Northern European countries and less so in Western European countries. Mutual understanding is valued more highly in Northern and Southeastern European countries. Regarding the statement that sports promote the integration of immigrant populations, only the Southeastern European countries tend to agree to a lesser extent to this statement. Finally, volunteering in sports is more popular in Northern Europe with almost one out of five participating in voluntary work. Countries in Southern and Eastern Europe have a significant lower share of volunteers.

Turning to social stratification patterns, it is clear that the decline of (club-organised) sports participation is visible among all social layers and social groups, except for people who are still studying and people aged 15–24 years. Males, younger people and higher educated people are still overrepresented in (club-

organised) sports. Underrepresented groups (e.g. women, elderly and less educated) from Northern European countries, however, enjoy the highest opportunities to partake in (club-organised) sports. Females, elderly and highly educated individuals tend to show higher scores for health improvement as a motive to actively participate in (club-organised) sports. Regarding the statement that sports promote the integration of immigrant populations, no differences can be found among the different social groups. However, other values that sports promote the most, such as tolerance and mutual understanding, are highly valued by females, elderly and lowly educated people. On the other hand, females, elderly and lowly educated people are less likely to be involved in sports volunteering. This pattern has not changed during the past decade.

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Chapter 14

The Contribution of Sports Clubs to Public Welfare in European Societies. A Cross-National Comparative Perspective



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Abstract This chapter presents the results from a cross-national comparative analysis of European sports clubs' contribution to public welfare and offers potential explanations for the similarities and differences identified. The analysis reveals how sports clubs make a significant contribution to public welfare with regard to the four functions examined: health promotion, social integration, democracy and voluntary work. However, the contribution of sports clubs to these functions can mainly be understood as side effects to the activities offered by clubs. Sports clubs' contribution to public welfare is in many respects relatively similar, but the analysis also identifies significant differences between countries. Potential explanations for the similarities and differences identified are examined at different levels of analysis. At the macro level (societal level), explanations pertaining to the historical origin and political opportunity structure for sports clubs are discussed. At the meso level (sports club level), potential explanations regarding the constitutive elements and typical features, the organisational capacity as well as the structural characteristics of sports clubs are discussed. At the micro level (member level), potential explanations pertaining to the social background as well as motivation and engagement of members are discussed. The chapter ends with five awareness points to enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

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14.1 Introduction

The purpose of this final chapter is to present the results from the cross-national comparative analysis on sports clubs' contribution to public welfare in European societies. The country-specific descriptions elaborated in the ten country chapters in this book provide the main source of data for this analysis, but they are supplemented by references to the cross-national and cross-temporal comparison in Chap. 13 and selected results from statistical analyses based on the project data developed for scientific reports and articles.

We attempt to answer the main question posed in the introductory chapter, namely, to what extent do sports clubs contribute to health promotion, social cohesion, democratic involvement and volunteerism and therefore promote public welfare in European societies? More specifically, this cross-national analysis aims to answer three research questions with a focus on the European context:

1. What characterises sports clubs' contribution to public welfare with regard to health promotion, social integration, democratic involvement and volunteerism?
2. What are the potential explanations for the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare?
3. Which points of awareness can be derived from the analysis regarding strategies to enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare?

The chapter is structured according to these three research questions. First, sports clubs' contribution to public welfare is described based on the cross-national comparison. This section is structured chronologically according to the four societal functions dealt with in this book: (1) sports participation and health promotion, (2) social integration, (3) democratic decision-making and involvement and (4) voluntary work. Second, potential explanations for the similarities and differences identified with regard to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare are presented. This section is structured according to the multilevel model (see Chap. 2), which differentiates explanations according to three levels of analysis: (1) the macro level (society and countries), (2) the meso level (sports clubs) and (3) the micro level (members and volunteers). Third, points of awareness regarding how sports clubs' contribution to public welfare can be enhanced are suggested.

14.2 Sports Clubs' Contribution to Public Welfare

Even though in most European countries sports clubs are first and foremost an arena for the participation of children and young people, it is estimated that 14% of the adult population (15 years and older) in the EU are sports-active members in a sports club or a sociocultural association (see Chap. 13, Sect. 13.3). However, there are large differences between countries regarding the share of adults that are active

in a sports club and/or a sociocultural association. Among the ten countries included in this study, the Netherlands (29%), Denmark (29%) and Germany (27%) have the highest participation rates in sports clubs or sociocultural associations, while Hungary (7%), Poland (8%) and Spain (9%) have the lowest participation rates (Helsen and Scheerder 2020).

An estimated 54% of the adult citizens in the EU are sports active. Thus, a clear majority of the sports-active adults in the EU are active outside of sports clubs. Most of the sports-active adults are active outside of any organised setting, but fitness centres are also popular, illustrated by the 11% of the adult population in the EU that frequent these centres (see Chap. 13, Sect. 13.3). Furthermore, recent development trends from 2009 to 2017 have shown a decline in sports participation, a modest decline in sports-active membership in a sports club or sociocultural associations and a significant increase in sports participation in fitness centres (see Chap. 13, Sect. 13.3). Taken together, these figures underscore sports clubs' potential for contributing to public welfare, but they also indicate that this potential is different from country to country. Furthermore, the figures indicate that other arenas for sports participation also have a significant potential to contribute to public welfare.

14.2.1 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

A large number of the sports clubs agree that they are committed to providing health-enhancing physical activity. In all countries, more than seven out of ten clubs feel that the sports they offer are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity, which is in line with the claims above regarding the health benefits of participation in sports and physical activity. However, when clubs are confronted with the more demanding statement that they are explicitly committed to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes, there is much more variation in the clubs' answers and between countries. This could be interpreted to mean that health promotion is not the main aim for most sports clubs; rather it is likely an additional outcome of the activities provided, which has synergy with the overall policy goals regarding health promotion. As a result, sports clubs could potentially play a stronger role in health promotion by using a more structured approach (e.g. by offering more physical activities with high health benefits, by guiding members with regard to physical activity inside and outside the club, by giving advice on nutrition or by promoting healthy habits regarding smoking and alcohol consumption). However, some of these suggestions could be in conflict with existing practices in clubs, such as alcohol consumption in connection with the sports activities.

The potential of sports clubs to contribute to health promotion is substantiated by the finding that the vast majority of sports club members are regularly active (once a week or more) in the sports activities provided by the clubs. It should be noted, however, that the contribution to health promotion is likely to vary depending on the sports activity (e.g. football vs. shooting sports). Despite these differences, health

benefits seem evident as a by-product of regular sports activities of the members in most clubs. In that context, it is worth noting that the most frequently active members can be found in the countries with the lowest share of adults active in sports clubs, namely, Hungary, Poland and Spain.

The results also show that the vast majority of sports club members are active in competitive sports in the clubs. This points to the still strong position of competitive sports in clubs and, in turn, to the strengths and weaknesses of traditional sports clubs. It is clearly a strength that the clubs organise activities that are attractive to the members, and those who take part in competitions practise sports more regularly. However, with a competitive focus in most clubs, it is likely that the selection of activities provided by the clubs is too narrow to appeal to all segments of society. This general point is supported when looking at the motives for practising sports among EU citizens. The main motives of EU citizens for practising sports is to improve health and fitness, while improving physical performance is a far less important motive (see Chap. 13, Sect. 13.4).

Against this background, one could assume that in particular, those wanting to practise sports mainly for health benefits will be less inclined to join sports clubs because of the high relevance of competitive elements. However, it is worth mentioning that two countries, Belgium (Flanders) and Denmark, stand out from the other countries by having significantly more members, around two out of five, that have never been active in competitive sports. Thus, competition need not be a constitutive element of sports club activities. Furthermore, it need not be a problem if some sports clubs are more narrowly focused on competitive sports, as long as there are enough clubs with a broader non-competitive focus to cater to those wanting to practise sports for health benefits.

In summary, since sports club members usually practise sports regularly in their club, it seems reasonable to conclude that sports clubs promote individual health and, consequently, contribute to public health as also concluded in other studies (e.g. Geidne et al. 2013; Kokko et al. 2016; Meganck et al. 2017). At the same time, sports clubs' contribution to public health must be mainly regarded as a side effect because of the lack of specific focus on health promotion by most sports clubs. Furthermore, the sports offered by sports clubs have different physical requirements (e.g. football, running, gymnastics, shooting), which means that the health-related effects of participation can be quite different depending on the sports practised.

14.2.2 Social Integration

Social integration can be examined both with a specific focus on underrepresented population groups, including socially vulnerable groups, and on the broader integration of club members into the activities and social communities in the clubs. Both perspectives are discussed below.

14.2.2.1 Integration of Underrepresented Population Groups

A general trend seems to be that the vast majority of sports clubs in Europe are positive towards the integration of as many population groups as possible but more sceptical when they are asked whether they specifically work to integrate socially vulnerable groups. We also find some variation between countries here, illustrated by the difference between Belgium (Flanders), Denmark and the Netherlands, in which less than one in ten clubs strongly agree that they work to integrate socially vulnerable groups, and Spain and Hungary, in which around one third of the clubs strongly agree. A likely interpretation of this finding is that, in the vast majority of European sports clubs, people who want to join the clubs are invited to do so, but fewer clubs use segmentation and devote special attention to one or more socially vulnerable groups.

The general results regarding the integration of underrepresented groups is further substantiated and nuanced when attention is devoted to the following four groups: people with disabilities, people with a migration background, the elderly and women. The proportion of members from these four groups, as well as the percentage of clubs with targeted initiatives for integrating people from each of these groups, vary significantly between the group in question and between countries. As an example, the percentage of clubs with no people with a migration background in their membership varies between one in five in Germany, the Netherlands and Norway and three in four in Poland. Similarly, in Denmark, England and the Netherlands, less than one in ten clubs have targeted initiatives for people with a migration background, while such initiatives are present in more than one in three clubs in Hungary and Switzerland.

Even though the variations between countries in social integration can, in the case of people with a migration background, be partly interpreted as a result of their representation in each country, this cannot fully explain the variation. The same holds true for the three other underrepresented groups, people with disabilities, the elderly and women, for whom the representation in the population is more evenly distributed across country borders than is the case for people with a migration background. This indicates that there are differences between countries in the extent to which clubs try to integrate people from underrepresented population groups and the extent to which they succeed. The results also show that, across countries, few clubs can be described as clubs specifically for one of the examined population groups (i.e. by having more than 75% members from one group), but we do not know the distribution in teams or activities within the clubs. The club level percentages could conceal homogeneous teams or sub-groups.

14.2.2.2 Integration of Members into Sports Clubs

Social integration of members is crucial to nearly all European sports clubs. This is reflected by the fact that the proportion of clubs that agree that they place a high value on companionship and conviviality range between two thirds in Hungary and

more than nine out of ten clubs in Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, the Netherlands, Norway and Spain. The high relevance of social integration is further established when compared to the relevance of another traditional focus point of sports clubs: sporting success and competitions. Although many clubs agree to set high value on sporting success and competitions, the proportion of clubs that agree with this is significantly lower in nearly all countries when compared to the share of clubs that agree to set high value on companionship and conviviality. Poland and Hungary are the only two countries in which a higher proportion of clubs totally agree to set high value on sporting success and competitions compared to companionship and conviviality.

The socially integrative intentions of the clubs are largely reflected in the practices and attitudes of the club members. In all countries, a clear majority of the members are socially engaged with other members although to varying degrees and significantly more through informal socialising than through formal events arranged by the clubs. The sociality is reflected in the fact that the percentage of members that stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other members at least once a month amount to half of all members or more in all countries and as much as four out of five in Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands. Across all countries, it is between one or two in ten members that never engage socially with other members. Judging by their social interaction, it seems reasonable to conclude that the vast majority of club members are socially well integrated in their clubs.

At least four out of five members in all countries form new friendships in the club, indicating that sports clubs are an arena not only for social interaction and maintenance of friendships but also for expanding existing social networks. However, the variation is higher between countries on whether the friendships formed in the clubs remain club friendships or spill over into other social arenas. In Denmark and Hungary, around half of the members socialise with new acquaintances outside the club, while in Spain this is the case for nine out of ten members. The members' evaluation of the relevance of the social networks formed in the clubs also varies quite significantly. In Denmark and the Netherlands, around two out of five members agree that they see the club as one of the most important social groups they belong to, while the same holds true for three out of four members in Poland and Spain. These figures indicate that many members strongly value the social networks in their clubs, even evaluated against a range of alternative social groups that could be regarded as central to the members (e.g. their family, friends, schoolmates and colleagues). Furthermore, the figures show how Polish club members are relatively social even though the focus on sporting success and competitions is relatively strong in most Polish club boards. Thus, there does not seem to be a conflict between a competitive club focus and the social integration of members.

In summary, sports clubs in Europe mainly have a philosophy of openness and conviviality, and the majority of the members identify with the club and have formed friendships in the club. Thus, there is considerable evidence that sports clubs can be regarded as important arenas for social integration of the members, as also concluded in a number of previous studies (e.g. Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019b; Høy and Nicholson 2008; Ibsen et al. 2016; Seippel 2019a; Spaaij et al. 2014). However,

some population groups are still underrepresented in sports clubs (in particular, people with a migration background or disability), and there seem to be barriers that hinder the participation of these groups, which has also been identified in previous studies (e.g. Darcy et al. 2017; Elling and Claringbould 2005; Seiberth and Thiel 2010; Strandby et al. 2017).

14.2.3 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

Democratic decision-making structures form a constitutive element of sports clubs (e.g. Horch 2018). In line with this, at least two thirds of the clubs in all countries agree that they try to involve members when making important decisions. The clubs are more divided when it comes to delegating decision-making to committees from the club board. Around three out of ten clubs agree that they do this in Belgium (Flanders), Hungary and Poland, while around two out of three clubs agree in Denmark, England and Norway. Thus, in some countries more than in others, the club boards demonstrate a more decentralised practice when it comes to decision-making. This raises the question of whether delegating decision-making is a goal that many clubs sympathise with but do not always act in accordance with.

Regarding the participation of members in the democratic procedures in clubs, the data seems to reveal a polarisation with a minority of very active members and a large number of not very active members. This is illustrated by the fact that in all countries, a third or more of the members claim that they have never attempted to influence the decision-making in their club. Conversely, at least one third of the members in all countries state that they have tried to influence decision-making within the last half-year. The highest proportion of members that are not democratically active can be found in Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands, where around half of the members are not active, while in Spain, Norway and Poland, at least half of the members have tried to influence decision-making within the last half-year.

When differentiating between democratic participation in informal democratic arenas (i.e. a democratic dialogue with board members or other members) and formal democratic decision-making forums (i.e. the general assembly and member meetings), informal forms of participation are more popular among club members. As an example, almost two out of three members claim to have spoken their mind to key persons in the clubs within the last half-year. Within the same time period, around two out of five members have attended a member and/or club meeting. In both democratic forums, members from Spain and Poland are most active, while Danish, German and Swiss members are the least active.

The relatively high proportion of members that are not active in democratic decision-making in their clubs cannot be ascribed to a lack of knowledge about the club democracy. In all countries, more than two out of three members agree that they understand how the club functions. Thus, other reasons, such as a lack of time, a lack of interest or a high level of satisfaction with the way the clubs are managed,

are more likely explanations for the relatively high proportion of members not engaged in democratic decision-making. The many inactive members indicate that there is potential for further involvement and democratic learning. For the vast majority, a lack of knowledge about the club democracy is not a barrier.

In summary, although many members are not actively engaged in democratic decision-making in their clubs, there is still a considerable number of members who engage in the democratic processes and help run the sports clubs' activities. This ensures at least some correspondence between the decisions made and actions taken by sports clubs on the one hand and the expectations of the members on the other. Hence, sports clubs do function as democratic organisations with actual involvement of members. As such, they are arenas in which people can gain first-hand experience with democracy, as also concluded in previous studies (e.g. Ibsen et al. 2019).

14.2.4 Voluntary Work

The vast majority of sports clubs provide activities for their members by mainly or exclusively drawing on the work of volunteers. Voluntary work is even viewed by most clubs as having value in itself. This can be seen in the fact that most clubs in all countries reject the notion that clubs should regard members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute voluntary work. Furthermore, in all countries, except Hungary and Poland, a clear majority of the clubs agree that their clubs should be run exclusively by volunteers. Across countries, the vast majority of clubs are also prepared to provide volunteers with an opportunity to do voluntary work in the clubs regardless of their qualifications. Thus, volunteering seems to be a possibility for more or less anyone who wishes to engage. The centrality of voluntary work is also underscored by the fact that volunteers far outnumber paid staff in all countries and by the fact that in all countries, at least four out of five clubs operate without relying on a paid manager.

Regarding the development in the number of volunteers, the results show that in all countries, around three out of four clubs have experienced roughly unchanged numbers of volunteers within the last 5 years. Among the quarter of the clubs that have experienced significant change, the general trend is that more clubs have experienced growth rather than decline in the number of volunteers. In this context, Hungary and Spain stand out as the countries with the most clubs with growing volunteer numbers. About one third of the clubs in these countries report an increase in the number of volunteers. Conversely, England, Germany and Switzerland stand out as the countries in which more clubs have experienced a decline rather than an increase. Around one in five clubs report declining volunteer numbers in these countries. On average, at least one in four clubs regard the recruitment of volunteers for board positions and as coaches or instructors to be a big or a very big problem. Clubs in Germany and Switzerland report the largest problems with volunteer recruitment. Thus, the development

in volunteer numbers seems to correspond to the rating of problems with volunteer recruitment by the clubs.

Volunteers in fixed positions (e.g. board members, coaches and instructors) outnumber volunteers in no fixed position, also called occasional volunteers (e.g. event volunteers). Across countries, the volunteers in fixed positions are distributed in a manner where most work with administration and management, followed by sports and training, sports and competition and other tasks. There are some differences between countries, but the order of tasks is more or less the same.

Most sports clubs are rather traditional in how they approach the recruitment and retention of volunteers. Recruitment among networks of current volunteers, verbal encouragement and social gatherings for volunteers are the most commonly utilised tools. Few clubs have written strategies for volunteer recruitment and retention, and few clubs look beyond the current membership for potential volunteers. The described strategies used by clubs to recruit and retain volunteers could potentially limit the opportunities for broad segments of members and citizens in a local community to become volunteers in sports clubs.

In summary, most sports clubs support the notion that sports clubs should be run by volunteers and thus provide members with an opportunity for active citizenship, which can be regarded as a contribution to public welfare, as also concluded in other studies (e.g. Hallmann and Fairley 2018; Nagel et al. 2018; Nichols 2017). Furthermore, clubs usually succeed in the challenge of recruiting and retaining enough volunteers. However, the data also indicates that there could be an underutilised potential for broader recruitment and commitment of volunteers that could enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

14.2.5 Summary and Discussion: Status of Sports Clubs' Contribution to Public Welfare

This cross-national comparative analysis paints an ambiguous picture of sports clubs' contribution to public welfare with regard to health promotion, social integration, democratic involvement and voluntary work. On the one hand, there is strong evidence that sports clubs make a significant contribution. They offer sports activities with health benefits for regularly active members, they provide arenas in which various kinds of people practice sports together and where social communities are formed, they function as participatory democracies, they are run predominantly on a volunteer basis, and members are invited to volunteer regardless of their qualifications.

On the other hand, there seems to be a potential for sports clubs to contribute more to public welfare. The clubs are mainly in agreement with general statements that reflect political goals with regard to health promotion, Sport for All, the formation of social communities and active citizenship. However, when the clubs are confronted with more demanding statements regarding the four functions discussed

in this chapter, the clubs' commitment is less clear (e.g. the commitment to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes or targeted initiatives for one or more underrepresented population groups).

From the responses of sports clubs and members, it seems reasonable to conclude that some societal functions align with what can be considered the core business for most sports clubs, while other functions are better described as side effects of their activities. Clearly, the role of providing sports activities in which all people who are interested can participate is the structuring principle of almost all sports clubs. Besides this, social integration, when operationalised as companionship and conviviality, is also a central goal for most sports clubs. The relevance of companionship and conviviality is supported by the fact that most members participate in social interaction and form social networks with other club members. Thus, providing sports activities that enable members to form social communities seems to be crucial for most sports clubs.

However, our data also seems to support the notion that even though social integration of members is crucial for most clubs and they align with the political goal of Sport for All, this does not mean that the majority of clubs also actively work to promote equal participation of underrepresented population groups. Most clubs agree that they are open to all population groups, but selected groups, such as people with disabilities and people with a migration background, are still underrepresented. This indicates that targeted initiatives are required in order to achieve equal representation, and though some clubs provide these initiatives, such efforts are not the core business of most clubs. The same can be said for health promotion, which most clubs seem to view as a positive side effect of the activities provided rather than as a guiding principle for the activities offered and initiatives taken.

The democratic decision-making structure is a constitutive element of sports clubs, and the strong reliance on voluntary work is typical for most sports clubs. In that sense, this is also the core business for clubs. However, our data indicates that the clubs are also pragmatic regarding these two functions. Most clubs depend on volunteers and agree that the club should be run by volunteers, but, at the same time, clubs with sufficient resources frequently hire paid staff, which has resulted in a trend towards professionalisation, although mainly in large clubs and within specific sports. Furthermore, most clubs rely on existing networks among current volunteers to recruit new volunteers, indicating that not all members have the same opportunities to be recruited. Regarding democratic decision-making, most clubs function as member democracies in that the members have the last say. However, our data indicates that most clubs might try to involve members, but they are more reluctant to delegate decision-making, and they only manage to involve a minority of their membership in democratic procedures. As such, it does not seem to be the core business of clubs to promote active citizenship by actively working not only to involve but also to engage all members.

Though sports clubs' contribution to public welfare is in many respects relatively similar, there are also some significant and interesting differences between countries that are relevant to consider. The sports clubs and members in Hungary, Poland and Spain have the lowest percentage of active adult members but the highest sports participation rates by sports club members. They are more focused on the integration of socially vulnerable groups, they have the highest percentages of members that view the sports club as one of the most important social groups they belong to, and they have a more positive development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years. Polish and Spanish members are the most engaged in member democracy, whether formal or informal. Clubs in Poland, Hungary and the Netherlands share a stronger devotion to sporting success relative to companionship and conviviality, although it should be noted that both functions are regarded as important in all three countries. In these countries, the club boards are also less inclined to delegate tasks, and there is less devotion to the statement that sports clubs should be run exclusively on a volunteer basis. Clubs in England, Hungary, Norway and Spain share the common trait that they have the highest commitment to offering health-enhancing physical activity programmes. Finally, Belgian (Flemish) and Danish members are the least active in competitive sport, and they place a relatively low value on the importance of the club community as a social group in comparison with other social groups to which they belong. In these countries, the clubs are less focused on the integration of socially vulnerable groups and have few targeted initiatives for underrepresented population groups.

Even though there are significant differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare between the ten countries included in this study, the high number of similarities across country borders can seem somewhat surprising given that each country has its own history, policy system, financial situation, etc. This indicates that European sports clubs function in a relatively similar manner across country borders.

14.3 Potential Explanations for Similarities and Differences in the Contribution to Public Welfare

In the following four subsections, potential explanations for the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare are presented. In the first three subchapters, the potential explanations are structured according to the multi-level framework for analysing functions of sports clubs introduced in the analytical framework of the book (see Chap. 2). The fourth subsection offers cross-level interpretations of similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

14.3.1 Macro-Level Explanations

The macro level is concerned with potential explanations at the societal level. Specifically, potential explanations according to (1) the historical context of sports clubs and (2) the political opportunity structure for sports clubs are discussed in this section.

14.3.1.1 Historical Context of Sports Clubs

The social origins theory argues that differences in the actions of sports clubs can be explained historically. This theory also argues that organisational patterns formed years ago seem to endure even when the social conditions that led to the formation of these patterns have changed (Anheier and Salamon 2006; Pierson and Skocpol 2002; Salamon and Anheier 1998; Stinchcombe 1965). This is also known as path dependence. In context to the topic of this book, the theory informs us that the actions of sports clubs in the context of their contribution to public welfare cannot be understood separately from the historical context in which they have evolved. The cross-national analysis partly confirms this theory, and we present some examples below to elaborate on this: (1) the gymnastics and sports movement, (2) the formation of sports systems in different political systems and (3) the democratic tradition and strength.

The Gymnastics and Sports Movement

A potential explanation for the similarities between countries in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare is the common roots shared in the gymnastics movement from Germany and Sweden as well as the sports movement from England (Heinemann 1999; Nagel et al. 2015). The constitutive characteristics of democratic decision-making and voluntary work in clubs as well as the idea of contributing to public welfare have played an important role in the historic development of the gymnastics movement. These basic elements are still relevant in most sports clubs in various European countries. The influence from the sports movement led to the adaption of common standards and rules for the different sports, which made it possible to compete within and between countries. This could help to explain why the competitive element plays a central role in the activities of sports clubs across countries, illustrated by the majority of club members in all countries participating in competitive sports.

The central role of competitive sports has persisted in European sports clubs despite historical developments since the late 1960s in which the Sport for All movement generated a counter-culture against traditional sports. Due to processes of diversification and de-sportisation, recreational sports became more important and popular, which profoundly changed the club-organised sports landscape in most

European countries. The emphasis on Sport for All policies and programmes vary somewhat between countries, but this does not seem to explain country differences in the percentage of members that are active in competitive sports. In Belgium (Flanders) and Denmark, the percentage of non-competitive members is relatively high. In Denmark, this is likely to be connected to the strong influence from the Swedish gymnastics movement from the mid-1800s characterised by a strong focus on non-competitive team gymnastics, physical fitness and character building. In Belgium (Flanders), the explanation for the relatively high proportion of non-competitive members seems less obvious. Consecutive sports federations' decrees have emphasised sports for and by all in Belgium (Flanders), but this is also the case in other European countries.

The Formation of Sports Systems in Different Political Systems

In all countries, the period after World War II was crucial to the formation of the existing sports systems. This applies to the central characteristics of the systems as well as the relations between the political level and sports clubs. However, in three countries, Hungary, Poland and Spain, the sports systems are influenced both by the period following World War II in which authoritarian regimes existed in all three countries and by the years following the shift to democracy in which the influence from sports systems in other European countries has been significant. The period of authoritarian rule in Hungary, Poland and Spain meant that sports clubs were subject to comprehensive government intervention and were used to promote the ideas of the regime. The fact that sporting success and competitions are particularly important for sports clubs in Hungary and Poland is likely to be associated with the involvement of the communist regime with a strong focus on athletic performance and elite sports (Nichols et al. 2017).

During the period of the authoritarian regimes, the civil sector did not grow as much in Hungary, Poland and Spain as was the case in democratic nations elsewhere in Europe. This is reflected by the fact that in Hungary, Poland and Spain, comparatively few sports clubs were formed in the period after World War II until 1990. In fact, the majority of sports clubs in Hungary, Poland and Spain have been founded since the turn of the millennium, indicating that the voluntary sports sector has been growing rapidly in recent years. This is also reflected in the finding that the proportion of clubs that have experienced a substantial increase in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years are the highest in Hungarian, Polish and Spanish clubs. This likely indicates a catching up of the civil sector in these countries following authoritarian rule in which scepticism existed towards the civil sector.

With regard to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, the described differences in the formation of sports systems are likely to help explain why Hungary, Poland and Spain show the lowest proportion of active club memberships and sports volunteers among the ten countries included in this study (European Commission 2018). However, the results of this study also show that club members in these countries are the most active and engaged when measuring their participation in the

sports activities and democratic decision-making in the clubs. Furthermore, sports club members in Hungary, Poland and Spain place a relatively high value on the social communities formed in the club context compared to members from the other European countries. These results seem difficult to explain directly from the described differences in the formation of the national sports systems. However, one possible interpretation could be that because the authoritarian regimes limited the options for people in Hungary, Poland and Spain to engage actively in civil society until the more recent shift to democracy, the citizens are less inclined to take this option for granted and thus show a greater dedication. Furthermore, the role of sports clubs in providing opportunities for active citizenship seems more central in Hungary, Poland and Spain when considering the significantly smaller civil sectors and thereby the more limited alternative options to engage in voluntary work.

Democratic Tradition and Strength

Several studies have shown a correlation between political culture, active citizenship and the role of associations in society (Almond and Verba 1963; Putnam 1993; Wuthnow 1991). Inspired by this, one could hypothesise that the tradition for and strength of a country's democracy influence the extent and manner of member participation in the club democracy. The stronger a democracy is, the larger the proportion of members who participate in the club democracy could be expected. A ranking of European countries was based on an assessment of different dimensions of democracy in each country: freedom of association, freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, equal opportunities for political influence and control of political power (Bühlmann et al. 2012). This ranking shows that Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands have the highest democratic quality among the countries included in this study, while England (the UK), Hungary, Poland and Spain have the lowest.

When comparing this ranking to the engagement of members in the club democracy, this study cannot confirm the general expectation that a correlation should exist. For instance, Denmark is at the top of the rankings for democratic strength and quality but last or second to last regarding the participation of members in the club democracy. Conversely, Spain ranks at the top regarding the participation of members in the democracy in sports clubs but only seventh in the assessment of democratic strength and quality. Similarly, there is no match between the democratic strength and quality on the one hand and the other measures for member participation in the formal and informal democracy of sports clubs on the other hand (Ibsen et al. 2019).

When interpreting these results, it is worth bearing in mind that the countries that are ranked highly regarding democratic strength and quality, such as Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the Netherlands, have comparatively high rates of club membership when compared to the countries that are ranked lower, such as England (the UK), Hungary, Poland and Spain. Thus, though the average member seems to be less engaged in club democracy in Belgium, Denmark, Norway and the

Netherlands, a higher proportion of the population in these countries exercise active citizenship in sports clubs when compared to countries such as England, Hungary, Poland and Spain, simply because the voluntary sector in the former countries is significantly larger.

14.3.1.2 Political Opportunity Structure for Sports Clubs

The political opportunity structure theory argues that the limitations and possibilities provided for sports clubs by the political system and the public sector establish the space in which sports clubs can act and thereby heavily influence the possible actions of sports clubs (Kriesi 1995; McAdam et al. 1996; Micheletti 1994; Seippel et al. 2018). With regard to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, this means that the framework conditions play a central role in explaining the actions of sports clubs. Below, we elaborate on selected examples from the cross-national analysis that reaffirm and add nuance to this theory: (1) political aims and goals, (2) public subsidies, (3) sports infrastructure and (4) welfare state typology.

Political Aims and Goals

Sport for All is the guiding principle in government policies in all ten countries. The political aims and goals regarding sports are mainly connected to the four functions described in this book: health promotion, social integration, democratic decision-making and active citizenship. However, the emphasis on which functions of sports clubs are highlighted in any one country vary. For instance, there is some difference between countries regarding which underrepresented groups are given the most attention from the political level. Most political aims and goals are formulated in a very broad and general manner without specific goals or targets that the sports sector is obligated to work towards. As a result, sports clubs have relatively high freedom in choosing if and how they want to work towards the aims and goals set by politicians.

The relatively high autonomy of sports clubs is likely to be an important part of the explanation for why the findings in this study regarding sports clubs' contribution to public welfare are ambiguous. The sports clubs are not given clear expectations from politicians, and they are not obligated to work to fulfil political aims and goals. Some clubs might not even be aware of the political aims and goals regarding sports. In spite of this, the findings in this study show how sports clubs do contribute to public welfare in the sense that there is some coherence between the political aims and goals on the one hand and the attitudes and actions of sports clubs on the other. At least three potential explanations for this finding seem relevant. First, the political aims and goals are rather traditional, mainstream and not controversial. Second, it seems obvious that sports clubs should be able to help with health issues and social integration as well as promoting democratic decision-making and active citizenship without special effort and cost. In essence, sports clubs do help to fulfil

political aims and goals, because the desired functions are promoted by the clubs, if not due to explicit aims and goals, then as side effects of the activities provided. Finally, it is possible that the partial alignment between political aims and goals on the one hand and the actions of sports clubs on the other hand reflects that the political aims and goals mirror the ideology and practice of sports clubs. Thus, politicians adapt their expectations to match the qualities that have traditionally been ascribed to sports clubs.

Even though there seems to be some coherence between political aims and goals on the one hand and the actions of sports clubs on the other, there are also concrete examples of the opposite. For instance, Denmark is the only country where funding for sports clubs from local governments is attached to the expectation that the clubs actively work to promote active citizenship and democracy. In spite of this, the Danish club members are the least engaged in club democracy. Another example can be identified in England, where limiting immigration is a strongly debated political issue, and as a result, there are no government policies or programmes to increase the integration of people with a migration background in sports clubs. In spite of this, people with a migration background are relatively well represented in English clubs compared to sports clubs in the other nine countries. These examples illustrate the more general point that the specific political aims and goals for sports clubs in any one country are hardly automatically reflected in the actions of sports clubs.

Public Subsidies

A topic that is closely connected to political aims and goals is the public subsidies provided for sports clubs. Aligned with the very generally formulated political aims and goals for sports clubs, it seems that in most of the ten countries, there are few specific demands attached to the majority of public subsidies distributed to sports clubs. Public subsidies for sports clubs are mainly distributed by local governments (i.e. municipalities), and the main part of the funding is provided as access to facilities that enable sports clubs to offer sports activities to their members, although some variations exist both between countries and within countries depending on the priorities of the municipalities.

It is worth noting that differences exist between countries depending on the generosity of the funding schemes provided for sports clubs and the specificity of the demands attached to the funding. Regarding the generosity of the funding schemes, reliable information was only available in some countries. The available information indicates that public funding schemes are relatively generous in Belgium (Flanders), Denmark, Germany, Norway and Switzerland and less so in England, while in the Netherlands, public subsidies for sports clubs have declined over the past decade. In Hungary and Poland, elite sports performance has historically taken prevalence, resulting in less generous funding schemes for recreational sports clubs. With regard to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, the relatively less generous funding schemes for sports clubs in England, Hungary and Poland correspond

to a relatively low level of sports club participation in the population. In Norway, it is just the opposite: generous public financial support, but low sports club participation among adults. However, it should be noted that public support is usually primarily provided for activities that target children and young people.

With regard to the differences between countries in the specificity of the demands attached to public funding, the degree to which funding for sports clubs is distributed to clubs by using targeted subsidies varies in particular. Targeted subsidies are usually awarded through the use of public programmes or projects with specific aims and goals that clubs can apply for funds from. For example, this could be subsidies specifically targeted at increasing the participation of one or more underrepresented population groups in sports clubs. Clearly, this reflects an attempt from the public sector to more directly steer the activities provided by sports clubs with the goal of increasing their contribution to public welfare. With the data collected in this project, it is not possible to conclude that the sports clubs in countries in which these projects or programmes are heavily used (e.g. Belgium (Flanders), England, Germany, Hungary and Spain) contribute more to public welfare. There are examples of countries in which the targets of specific projects and programmes correlate with a higher contribution of sports clubs to public welfare in that specific area, but there are also examples in which the same correlation is not present in our data.

Sports Infrastructure

Across the ten countries, publicly owned sports facilities and public support for private facility rental and investments are the main form of public support for sports clubs. Thus, the sports infrastructure provided for sports clubs seems to be an aspect of the political opportunity structure that is highly relevant when trying to interpret the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. Across the ten countries, a minority of sports clubs view the sports infrastructure, when operationalised as the availability of facilities, as a significant problem. However, in Hungary, Poland and Spain, the proportion of clubs that experience problems with access to facilities is significantly higher. Around one in five clubs in these countries report that their existence is threatened due to lack of facilities. This coincides with lower public spending in comparison with the other countries and neglect of the maintenance and building of the sports infrastructure during the authoritarian regimes. In England, nearly one in ten clubs feel that their existence is threatened due to a lack of facilities, which is likely to be due to government budget cuts, especially since 2010 (Nichols and James 2017).

In spite of the lack of sports infrastructure, Hungary, Poland and Spain have experienced a substantial growth in the voluntary sports sector since the dissolution of the authoritarian regimes. This is illustrated by the fact that these countries have the highest proportions of sports clubs formed since the turn of the millennium and the clubs with the most positive development in the number of members and

volunteers within the last 5 years. This positive development coincides with the adoption of comprehensive national development policies and investments to improve the infrastructure that is particularly visible in Hungary and Poland. Even though we cannot evaluate the effect of these initiatives, the results do indicate that a lack of sufficient infrastructure is associated with lower sports club participation and more severe, in some cases existential, problems for sports clubs. Thus, it seems that a sufficient infrastructure is a prerequisite for sports clubs to contribute to public welfare. However, our data indicates that such infrastructures are present in most countries, so this does not mean that infrastructure investments will have the same effect across countries.

Apart from the more general relevance of sufficient sports infrastructure for sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, it is worth briefly mentioning some potential limitations of sports clubs due to insufficient infrastructure. One is that even though the infrastructure might often be sufficient for clubs, it might not be suitable for activities that could enhance the contribution of clubs to public welfare. An illustration of this could be that some facilities are not suitable for people with disabilities due to lack of equipment. Next, some clubs experience a lack of facilities for social engagement among members. This challenges the opportunities of clubs to build social communities between members. Finally, it seems relevant to also mention that many clubs share public facilities with other clubs and user groups, while the clubs that own their facilities have the opportunity to organise their activities more freely, which increases the opportunities for these clubs to innovate. It should be noted that the results of this study do not allow for conclusions regarding the potential scope of these challenges, but they are all specifically mentioned as challenges in some countries, indicating that they could play a role in the potential of sports clubs to contribute to public welfare.

Welfare State Typology

This study was inspired by the theory of welfare state typology that stratifies countries according to two main dimensions: (1) the intensity of redistribution and (2) the level of universality of solidarity (Esping-Andersen 1990; Fenger 2007; Leibfried 1992; Pierson 2004). Even though the typologies were developed in the context of social policy, comparative studies of sports policies show that the national sports policies also differ according to the grouping of countries suggested by the welfare state typology (Bergsgard et al. 2007). As a result, it seems interesting to pursue if and how the similarities and differences between sports clubs in the ten countries included in this study match the welfare state typology. Five welfare state types are represented by the countries included: the liberal (England), the conservative/corporatist (Belgium (Flanders), Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland), the universalist (Denmark and Norway), the Latin-rim/Mediterranean (Spain) and the post-communist (Hungary and Poland).

The analysis of sports club policies in the countries involved in this study indicates some level of coherence between the welfare state typology and the sports club policies. The relatively low public support and political steering of voluntarily organised sports in England are linked to characteristics of the liberal welfare state. The universalistic features of sports policy in Denmark and Norway coincide with the characteristics of the universalist welfare state. The subsidiarity principle as a guiding principle for public funding for sports clubs is found in countries that can best be characterised as conservative/corporatist welfare states (Belgium (Flanders), Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland). The sports systems in the two post-communist countries, Hungary and Poland, still have features of a relatively state-controlled sports policy. The state-interventionist sports policy in Spain, where sports clubs play a weak role in some regions while much of the development is left in the hands of the municipalities, also has common features with the Latin-rim welfare state policy.

However, there is also some ambiguity regarding the connection between the welfare state typology and the national sports club policies. For example, the strongly decentralised sports policies in Denmark and Norway resemble the principle of subsidiarity, but without a specific reference to that term. Furthermore, in Denmark and Norway, corporatist elements are present in the national sports policies, which, from a welfare state typology perspective, would be expected to be found mainly in the corporatist welfare states.

When examining the relation between the welfare state typology and sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, this study cannot demonstrate any close connection. For example, one would immediately expect that a universalist sports system would promote social integration in sports clubs, but the results show that a relatively low proportion of the sports clubs in Denmark work to integrate socially vulnerable groups, while the proportion is relatively high in Spain. There can be at least two possible explanations for this. First, the missing link could be explained by the fact that the coherence between the welfare state typology and the national sports policies is ambiguous. Second, it could be because the correlation between the level and nature of public support for sports clubs in any one country and the practices and attitudes of the clubs in that country is generally not very strong.

14.3.2 Meso-Level Explanations

The meso level is concerned with potential explanations for the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare that are connected to the characteristics and functioning of sports clubs. Specifically, potential explanations pertaining to (1) the constitutive elements and typical features of sports clubs, (2) the organisational capacity of sports clubs as well as (3) the structural characteristics of sports clubs are discussed in this section.

14.3.2.1 Constitutive Elements and Typical Features of Sports Clubs

Even though the population of European sports clubs is highly diverse across as well as within countries, most sports clubs share seven constitutive elements and typical features (see Chap. 2). Since these elements and features are characteristic of most European sports clubs, they are more likely to help explain similarities rather than differences between European sports clubs. Nevertheless, they seem important in order to understand sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. Four elements and features seem particularly relevant and will thus be discussed in this section: (1) orientation towards the interest of members, (2) democratic decision-making structure, (3) voluntary work and (4) autonomy.

Orientation Towards the Interests of Members

Sports clubs are organisations that allow people to participate in sports activities in which they share a common interest. As a result – and due to the voluntary nature of club membership – sports clubs are most often characterised by the effort to realise the common interest of members. On the one hand, this focus on member interests enables the clubs to remain attractive to their current membership. On the other hand, it can have limiting effects on the scope of sports clubs. This is partly backed by the data collected in this study. For example, the vast majority of sports clubs sets high value on companionship and conviviality, indicating that social integration among members is viewed as important by most club boards. At the same time, significantly fewer clubs work to integrate people from socially vulnerable groups or offer targeted initiatives to integrate people that belong to these groups. This can serve as an illustration that the focus with regard to social integration is limited to the current membership in many sports clubs. However, it should be mentioned that many clubs in all the examined countries combine a strong focus on the current membership with the pursuit of broader aims and goals.

Democratic Decision-Making Structure

Sports clubs are democratic organisations in which the members have the final say. Formally, the members can vote at the annual general assembly and thereby decide who will be on the club board. A consequence of this structure is that the aims, goals and actions of sports clubs have to be somewhat in sync with the interest of a majority of the members. If not, the current leadership of the club can be replaced at the next general assembly. As a result, it is advantageous for club boards to seek alignment with member interests when making important decisions if they want to remain in control. This illustrates how members have at least two important instruments of power: exit (to leave the club) and voice (to use their democratic rights; Hirschman 1970). However, our study shows how attendance at the general assembly amounts to about half of the members or more in only three countries (Germany,

Spain and Switzerland). In Denmark, where the participation is the lowest, only a little more than one in five members participate in the general assembly. The fact that many members do not engage in the club democracy could be interpreted as a lack of interest or as an indication that many members are satisfied with the club and see no reason to engage. Regardless, the formal right of members to decide on club matters is likely to play a role when explaining the actions of sports clubs.

Voluntary Work

The results from this study confirm that the vast majority of sports clubs are run predominantly or even exclusively by volunteers in all ten countries. Because volunteers devote their free time to club work, there seems to be greater restrictions on what can be expected of them compared to paid employees in terms of tasks, working hours and formal education. In clubs with one or more volunteers, who are motivated to work for health promotion or social integration, there is likely to be a more explicit focus on the contribution to public welfare. However, the motivation of volunteers is often rooted in an interest in a particular sport, in the desire to do something meaningful for other club members or in an effort to enable children to practice sports in the club. Thus, for most volunteers, the contribution to public welfare can be best described as a side effect and as something that they are not explicitly working to enhance. This fits well with the finding in this study that most club boards feel that their club contributes to public welfare but that fewer clubs have specific and targeted initiatives to enhance this contribution. Furthermore, the reliance on volunteers also makes it difficult for a club board to implement initiatives that volunteers might lack both the interest and competencies to implement at the operational level (Nichols and James 2017).

Autonomy

Sports clubs function as voluntary organisations, and, as such, they pursue their aims and goals independently of others. The main income for most sports clubs is membership fees, which underscores their autonomy. However, most sports clubs are also reliant on external resources, including public subsidies. Privileged access to sports facilities provided by local governments plays a particularly important role for sports clubs. Thus, on the one hand, sports clubs are autonomous, but on the other hand, they rely on public funding. This study documents how public subsidies are distributed both with and without very specific demands attached, and that the use of targeted subsidies varies between countries.

The use of targeted subsidies can be viewed as an instrument for politicians to implement initiatives that seek to enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare while still respecting their autonomy in that the sports clubs are still free to decide whether they want to apply for the funds provided. However, it is worth noting that in this study, no clear and general link could be identified between the scope

of the use of targeted public subsidies for sports clubs and sports clubs' contribution to the socio-political functions examined in this book. This does not mean that the use of targeted subsidies cannot enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, but it shows that there is no certainty that it will. One possible interpretation of this lack of a general consistency between the use of targeted subsidies and the contribution of clubs to public welfare could be that in most countries, the targeted subsidies are not essential for sports clubs. They are mainly reliant on subsidised facility provision, and in most countries, there are few demands attached to this form of indirect public funding. In sum, the autonomy of sports clubs makes it difficult to use clubs as policy implementers in order to increase their contribution to public welfare. However, the widespread use of public funding without specific demands attached could potentially also help explain why many sports clubs view the contribution to public welfare as a side business rather than a core task.

14.3.2.2 Organisational Capacity of Sports Clubs

The organisational capacity of sports clubs plays an important role for their ability to deliver a number of outputs. As a result, organisational capacity is a key concept when seeking to understand similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. Organisational capacity is a multidimensional concept, and the most frequently used model in the study of organisational capacity in voluntary organisations, including sports clubs, sets out five dimensions of capacity (Hall et al. 2003): human resource capacity, financial capacity, planning and development capacity, infrastructure and process capacity and relationship and network capacity. The dimensions of organisational capacity have been developed based on empirical studies of voluntary organisations. However, Hall et al. (2003) place human resource capacity centrally in relation to the other forms of capacity, thereby underscoring the centrality of volunteers and paid employees to the functioning of voluntary organisations, including sports clubs. Data on relationship and network capacity was not collected in this study, and infrastructural aspects of capacity at the macro level were discussed in Sect. 14.3.1.2. Therefore, the focus in this section is on the role of three capacity dimensions: (1) human resource capacity, (2) financial capacity and (3) planning and development capacity.

Human Resource Capacity

This study documents how both volunteers and paid staff are relevant to the functioning of European sports clubs. However, volunteers far outnumber paid staff, and the clear majority of sports clubs are run predominantly or even exclusively by volunteers in all ten countries. Paid staff are most frequently hired by sports clubs for positions as coaches and instructors, while a minority of the paid staff work in leadership positions. In seven out of ten countries, less than one in ten clubs has a paid manager, and even in the three countries with the highest representation of paid

managers (England, Hungary and Norway), less than one in five clubs has a paid manager. Thus, sports clubs mainly rely on volunteers for their contribution to public welfare.

The biggest differences between countries in human resource capacity exist with regard to the use of paid staff and the agreement that sports clubs should be run exclusively by volunteers. Poland in particular, but also Hungary, stand out as the country with the most paid staff relative to members and the lowest agreement that clubs should be run exclusively by volunteers. Most likely, this reflects a stronger tradition in Poland and Hungary for hiring paid staff to work as coaches and instructors than can be identified in the eight other European countries included in this study (Nichols et al. 2017).

Though there are differences in human resource capacity between countries, it is striking how relatively similarly sports clubs seem to function across countries in this respect. As a result, differences in human resource capacity seem less relevant when seeking to explain differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare across countries. However, this is not the same as arguing that human resource capacity is irrelevant for sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. In contrast, specific data analysis that examined the correlation between the number of volunteers and paid staff in sports clubs on the one hand and sports clubs' contribution to specific aspects of public welfare on the other hand mainly identified positive associations. For example, one analysis found that clubs with more volunteers and paid staff, in particularly clubs with a paid manager, were more inclined to have targeted initiatives to enhance the integration of underrepresented population groups (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017; Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019a).

When examining the development in human resource capacity in clubs, this study shows that in most countries, more clubs have experienced an increase rather than a decrease in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years. Only three countries (Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland) have more clubs that have experienced a decrease rather than an increase in the number of volunteers. Conversely, four countries (England, Hungary, Poland and Spain) stand out as the countries with the highest proportion of clubs that have experienced an increase in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years. Though there is no simple explanation for this finding, it is striking that the countries with the most positive development in the number of volunteers include three countries with developing voluntary sectors (Hungary, Poland and Spain), while the countries with the most negative development all have established civil sectors with long-standing traditions of voluntary work. Another important aspect of human resource capacity is paid staff, and when asked for the development in the number of paid staff, all countries besides one (Spain) have more clubs that have experienced an increase rather than a decrease in the number of paid staff in the last years. Despite some differences between countries, these results seem to indicate that sports clubs are doing relatively well with regard to the recruitment and retention of a stable base of human resources.

The growing use of paid staff in sports clubs identified in this study could be interpreted as a trend towards increased professionalisation, though from a low starting point in the sense that most clubs have only few or no paid staff at all.

Nevertheless, the growing use of paid staff could be viewed as a response to increasing political and societal pressures for sports clubs to help solve societal tasks (e.g. health promotion and social integration) and could potentially influence the contribution of European sports clubs to public welfare. On the one hand, professionals, particularly in leadership positions, could introduce more professional working procedures (e.g. goal setting and long-term planning), which could lead to a stronger focus of clubs on concrete action with regard to contribution to public welfare. Furthermore, hiring more professional coaches and instructors might help solve problems related to the lack of qualified coaches and instructors that enable sports clubs to offer targeted sports offerings relating to, for instance, health promotion or social integration.

On the other hand, increased professionalisation of sports clubs could potentially limit the contribution to public welfare, because it is likely to reduce the necessity and value of volunteering and democratic decision-making, which are important expressions of active citizenship. Furthermore, an increased reliance on paid employees could restrict the opportunities of clubs to offer affordable sports activities to their members, because substantial economic funds are needed to pay the wages of paid employees. More studies are needed to understand the role of professionalisation for sports clubs, including their contribution to public welfare.

Financial Capacity

Sports clubs depend on sufficient financial resources to fulfil their role as contributors to public welfare in European societies. However, most sports clubs operate with small economies in which the membership fees make up the most significant source of income. Furthermore, the results from this study show that in seven out of ten countries, one in five clubs or fewer experience big or very big problems with their financial situation. This indicates that financial capacity is not viewed by most clubs as a limiting factor for their daily operation. The clubs in three countries (Hungary, Poland and Spain) stand out from this general picture. In Hungary and Poland, more than half of the clubs experience big or very big problems with their financial situation, while in Spain this is true for more than one third of the clubs. This finding corresponds with the less generous funding schemes for sports clubs that exist in these countries (see Sect. 14.3.1.2). Thus, financial resources seem to be more of a limiting factor for sports clubs in Hungary, Poland and Spain than in the other countries.

With the data collected in this study, we were not able to identify a consistent association between the higher severity of financial problems in Hungarian, Polish and Spanish clubs on the one hand and the contribution to public welfare on the other hand. The density of sports clubs and members is relatively low in these countries when compared to the other European countries included in the project, but the clubs that do exist cannot generally be argued to contribute less to public welfare. However, it is likely that the clubs in Hungary, Poland and Spain are struggling more to contribute to public welfare. As an example, many Polish sports clubs do not have sufficient resources to pay for their volunteers to take courses and gain

qualifications to improve their work in the club. This could also be the case in Hungary and Spain, where relatively few clubs offer opportunities for qualifications to their volunteers.

Overall, our data seems to indicate that financial capacity is not viewed as a big problem for the vast majority of sports clubs. However, the examples from Hungary, Poland and Spain illustrate how a lack of financial resources can potentially limit the possibilities for action of sports clubs and thereby their opportunities to contribute to public welfare. Furthermore, when the majority of clubs indicate that financial capacity is not a big problem, they are likely to think of this in the context of the day-to-day operation of the clubs and in the context of the current scope of activities. Consequently, the results might conceal a demand for more financial capacity if clubs were to increase their contribution to public welfare, e.g. to start up activities for targeted groups, invest in specialised equipment, etc.

Planning and Development Capacity

Sports clubs are often described as loose organisations with a weak formal hierarchy and a low degree of formalisation (Orton and Weick 1990; Seippel 2019b). A likely consequence could be that sports clubs only rely on strategic planning to accomplish different club goals to a limited extent. Therefore, it can seem quite surprising that in more or less all countries, more than half of the sports clubs agree that they engage in long-term planning and claim to monitor the implementation of these plans. However, one possible explanation for this finding could be that most sports clubs engage in some form of long-term planning in order to provide sustainable sports activities to their members, and thus they reply at least somewhat positively when asked about their use of long-term planning. Thus, long-term planning, as it is operationalised in this study, is likely to capture a broad aspect of more or less formal planning practices.

The relatively small differences between countries in the use of long-term planning in sports clubs found in this study show that long-term planning is frequently used by clubs regardless of the country context. As a result, it seems unlikely that differences between countries in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare could be explained by differences in the use of long-term planning by clubs in any one country. However, specific data analysis that examined the correlation between the use of long-term planning in clubs and the contribution to public welfare revealed a mainly positive correlation. For instance, the use of long-term planning was found to be positively associated with the inclination of clubs to seek to enhance the integration of underrepresented population groups (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017; Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019a). This result indicates that some form of formalisation of plans – here long-term planning – could be a managerial tool that can help clubs enhance their contribution to public welfare. However, naturally this depends on whether initiatives regarding health promotion, social integration, democratic decision-making or voluntary work are included in the club goals to be realised through the use of long-term planning.

14.3.2.3 Structural Characteristics of Sports Clubs

Though sports clubs share a number of constitutive elements and typical features (see Sect. 14.3.2.1), the population of sports clubs is highly diverse when measured by a number of structural characteristics. This holds true when examining clubs from both a national and cross-national perspective. Structural characteristics include a broad range of parameters that characterise a sports club. A selection of structural characteristics that have frequently been used to differentiate sports clubs are discussed in this section: (1) club size, (2) single-sport or multisport clubs, (3) sports activities and (4) urbanisation.

Club Size

Sports clubs in all ten countries differ in size from small clubs with 100 members or fewer to very large clubs with more than 1000 members. Such differences are likely to play a role in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. In Hungary, Poland, Spain and Switzerland, small clubs with 100 members or fewer account for around three out of four clubs, whereas in the Netherlands they account for one in four clubs and one in three clubs in Germany and Norway. Germany, the Netherlands and Norway are also the countries with the highest proportion of large clubs with more than 1000 members, ranging from 7% in Germany to 9% in the Netherlands.

When examining the differences between countries in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare according to club size, some trends become visible. In Hungary, Poland, Spain and Switzerland, the participation in the general assembly is relatively high, while it is relatively low in the Netherlands and Norway, although not in Germany, as would be expected based on club size. A similar pattern is visible regarding club meetings, although the attendance at club meetings is lower than expected in Switzerland. Similar trends can be observed regarding voluntary work. The density of volunteers (proportion of volunteers relative to members) in fixed positions is highest in Hungary and Spain, and the density of volunteers in no fixed position is highest in Switzerland. Poland stands out by having a relatively low density of volunteers in both fixed and not fixed positions. This is most likely due to the relatively high number of paid employees that can be found in Polish clubs. These results show that club size, when aggregated to the country level, seems to correlate negatively with the democratic and voluntary engagement of members.

Specific data analysis that examined the direct correlation between club size and the contribution to public welfare confirms this country-level pattern. For example, club size correlates negatively with both formal and informal democratic engagement (Ibsen et al. 2019) as well as the social integration of members in clubs (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019b). However, data analysis also show that club size is positively correlated with the contribution to public welfare in other areas, such as the willingness of clubs to aim for and provide targeted initiatives for underrepresented population groups (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017; Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019a).

A likely interpretation of the mixed results regarding club size and the contribution to public welfare is that small and large clubs have different potentials and limitations. When small clubs engage relatively more members in club democracy and volunteering than large clubs, it is likely because the demand for volunteers is higher (e.g. the density of volunteers in leadership positions is typically higher), the distance from members to club volunteers and board members is smaller, and, related to this, the possibility of free-riding is likely to be lower. Furthermore, small clubs often cater to more homogeneous groups of members, which could help explain the higher social integration of members in small clubs. On the other hand, the positive correlations between club size on the one hand and aims and efforts to integrate underrepresented population groups on the other can be interpreted as an indication that larger clubs, due to their sheer size, have a higher potential to work strategically to achieve demanding goals such as the integration of underrepresented population groups. Large clubs are also likely to be more willing to take on this task, because they are more inclined to view themselves as clubs that carry a responsibility to cater to different population groups in a local community. In conclusion, the role of club size in the contribution of clubs to public welfare largely depends on the type of societal function examined.

Single-Sport or Multisport Clubs

The clear majority of European sports clubs are single-sport clubs that offer one sports activity to their membership. In seven of the ten countries, around three out of four clubs or more are single-sport clubs, and in the remaining three countries (Germany, Hungary and Norway), single-sport clubs make up around three out of five clubs or more. Thus, a minority of the European sports clubs are multisport clubs that offer more than one sports activity to their members. This could be viewed as a potential limitation to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, since a broader range of activities are more likely to help a sports club appeal to a broader segment of society. Specific data analysis regarding the propensity of clubs to have targeted initiatives for underrepresented population groups provides some support for this claim in the sense that multisport clubs are more inclined to have targeted initiatives than single-sport clubs (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019a). Conversely, whether sports clubs are single-sport or multisport does not seem to influence the democratic or social engagement of members (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019b; Ibsen et al. 2019).

Sports Activities

Even though the clear majority of sports clubs are single-sport clubs, the population of sports clubs organise a wide range of sports activities from large, traditional sports such as football, tennis and gymnastics to more niche-oriented activities such as extreme sports, fighting and combat sports, motorsports and sailing sports. This variety enables

sports clubs to appeal to broad segments of society, which is likely to increase the potential of sports clubs to contribute to public welfare. The high number of sports club members, children in particular, in most European countries underscores this potential. At the same time, competitive sports have a dominant position in sports clubs in most of the ten countries, which could potentially limit the segment of society that sports clubs appeal to. In eight of the ten countries, more than half of the members are active in competitive sports, and in six of these countries, two thirds or more are active in competitive sports. The proportion of members that have never been active in competitive sports make up one fourth or less of the membership in eight countries, and in five of these countries, they make up around one in ten members.

Non-competitive club sports are more popular in Belgium (Flanders) and Denmark, where around one in three members are active in competitive sports, while two out of five members have never been active in competitive sports. The relatively strong position of non-competitive club sports in Belgium (Flanders) is likely to reflect the influence from the Sport for All movement as a counter-culture to traditional sports, while in Denmark the influence from the Swedish gymnastics movement seems a more relevant explanation (see Sect. 14.3.1.1). In Germany, gymnastics also has a relatively strong position in sports clubs, which is likely to help explain why three in ten German sports clubs offer health sports to their members. In the Netherlands, the number of so-called open clubs that have a broader range of sports offers than the traditional ones in order to appeal to a broader segment of society (e.g. by offering fitness and health activities) has been growing in recent decades. However, the proportion of members in Dutch sports clubs that have never been active in competitive club sports still only amounts to one in ten.

Overall, the sports activity pattern of most sports clubs remains relatively traditional. Football is the most offered activity followed by gymnastics, volleyball, track and field, shooting sports, swimming, cycling and tennis. Fitness activities barely make it into the top ten list of activities in sports clubs, while it is, particularly among adults, one of the most frequently practised activities in European countries, particularly among adults. The limited focus of European sports clubs on non-competitive and health-oriented activities could potentially limit contribution of sports clubs to public welfare. Some segments of society are likely to find it difficult to find a suitable sports offer in a sports club, which is likely to help explain the rapid growth of commercial fitness centres in many European countries.

It is worth noting that the types of sports activities offered by sports clubs to their members might also play a different role in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. Some sports activities are more physically demanding, which is likely to lead to a higher contribution to health promotion. Furthermore, some activities are organised as team sports that demand intense interaction between the participants. Other studies have documented how this can lead to higher levels of democratic and social engagement among members (Østerlund 2014; Østerlund and Seippel 2013). Thus, an increased focus on more individual and flexible sports activities (i.e. fitness activities) in sports clubs would likely increase the participation in clubs and thereby the contribution to health promotion, but it could come at the expense of less social and democratic engagement of members.

Urbanisation

Sports clubs are present in rural as well as urban areas in all ten countries. Switzerland has a relatively high number of clubs in rural areas, while in England, Hungary, Poland and Spain, a relatively high number of clubs are located in urban areas. Clubs that are located in urban areas have a larger and more diverse catchment area, but they usually have to share facilities with other clubs, which could limit their opportunities to provide sports offers, especially at peak hours. This could potentially limit their opportunities to contribute to public welfare. In rural areas, the catchment area can be too small for sports clubs to offer a broad range of activities, but often the clubs can more freely utilise the facilities, creating fewer problems at peak hours than can be found in urban areas. However, some rural areas might lack the sports infrastructure to cater to sports clubs. Thus, urbanisation is likely to play different roles for sports clubs depending on the situation in different local communities.

With regard to some societal functions, the composition of the catchment area of the clubs is likely to be more important than the degree of urbanisation. For clubs to work for the integration of underrepresented population groups, they need to be located in a catchment area with enough people from these groups. An example is people with a migration background who may be located in demarcated residential areas. For a club to implement targeted initiatives for this group, it needs to be located near such a residential area. Specific data analysis on the role of urbanisation for the propensity of clubs to have targeted initiatives reveals how clubs in more densely populated areas are more likely to have such initiatives (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017; Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019a). This is likely because these areas have larger and more diverse catchment areas in which enough people with a migration background are present to allow for sufficient recruitment. Thus, urbanisation might not directly influence sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, but the characteristics of the catchment area and the local infrastructure quite often depend on the size of the local community, which makes urbanisation relevant when examining sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

14.3.3 Micro-Level Explanations

The micro level is concerned with potential explanations for the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare that are connected to member characteristics. Specifically, potential explanations pertaining to (1) the social background of members as well as (2) member motivation and engagement are discussed in this section.

14.3.3.1 Social Background of Members

The finding in this study that participation in sports clubs varies based on a number of different social background characteristics, such as gender, age, migration status and disability, shows how integration into sports clubs is to some extent selective. The degree of underrepresentation varies between social groups as well as between countries (see Sect. 14.2.2.1), indicating that the explanations for the underrepresentation of the different groups within the different countries are multifaceted. Thus, understanding the role that social background plays in the decision to join a sports club and become socially integrated is a complex undertaking. However, increasing the participation of underrepresented population groups could increase sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

In connection with the above, specific data analysis on the role of social background for democratic participation and social integration in sports clubs shows that among the existing membership in sports clubs, the differences according to social background are relatively limited. Though men, the elderly and the well-educated are more inclined to be active in the club democracy, the differences according to social background are far from deterministic, and migration status was not found to specifically play a role in democratic participation (Ibsen et al. 2019). Similar trends exist regarding the social integration of members in the sense that the correlations between different social background characteristics of members on the one hand and their integration into and commitment to the sports clubs and other members on the other hand are mainly weak and inconsistent (Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2019b).

Against this background, it seems that the social background of members influences the possibilities for and willingness of people to join sports clubs, but that social background is less important when seeking to explain differences in the engagement and commitment of members in sports clubs (e.g. democratically and socially). This underscores the potential of sports clubs to enhance their contribution to public welfare by offering activities and launching initiatives that appeal to people with different social backgrounds. However, as shown in Sect. 14.2.2.1, the willingness of clubs to cater to different societal groups vary significantly between clubs both within and between countries.

14.3.3.2 Member Motivation and Engagement

Most members initially join a sports club because they want to be active in a particular sport or form of exercise. In time, they might get engaged in other sides of club life (democratically, socially or as volunteers), but not all members choose to do so. This serves as an illustration of the general point that membership of a sports club is first and foremost centred around a sports activity in which the members share a common interest. However, the motivation of members to join a sports club and

participate in a particular activity is likely to vary significantly. As an example, some members are motivated by competitive elements, others seek social interaction, and some are motivated by health benefits. Such personal motivations are likely to influence the actions of members and thereby play a role in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

To exemplify how motivations and actions of members can correspond, this study shows that the importance that members in sports clubs ascribe to the socialisation with other members largely follows the pattern of social participation and commitment of members in the ten countries. Polish and Spanish club members are particularly motivated by socialising with other members, and the members in these countries also rank highest in social participation and commitment. Conversely, members in Denmark, England, the Netherlands and Norway ascribe less importance to socialisation with other members, and, particularly in Denmark and the Netherlands, social participation and commitment is relatively low. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the percentage of the population active in sports clubs is relatively low in Poland and Spain and relatively high in Denmark and the Netherlands. This could indicate that there is a trade-off between a high proportion of the population being active in sports clubs on the one hand and the social participation and commitment of members on the other hand. A possible interpretation of this trade-off could be that by recruiting a broader segment of the population, sports clubs in Denmark and the Netherlands recruit more members that are less motivated to socialise with other members and more motivated by other aspects of sports club participation, such as health.

When examining motivation, it should be noted that this need not be a stable construct. Rather, the motivation of members for being part of a sports club is likely to be subject to change over time. Though this study did not examine such developments, specific data analysis on the correlation between, on the one hand, duration of membership and, on the other, democratic and social participation and commitment revealed significant and positive correlations (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019b; Ibsen et al. 2019). Thus, it seems that with time, the commitment and engagement of members with the club and other members from the club increase.

Another correlation identified in this study is between the different forms of participation: participation in the sports activity, democratic participation, social participation and participation in voluntary work (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019b; Ibsen et al. 2019). This result serves as an indication that participation fosters participation in the sense that if a member is active in one area, this person is more likely to be active in other areas of club life. At the country level, the members in Hungary, Poland and Spain are generally more active in member democracy and social life in clubs. Since these forms of participation are positively correlated with the engagement of members in voluntary work, this result could help explain why the clubs in Hungary, Poland and Spain report the fewest problems related to the recruitment of volunteers.

14.3.4 Cross-Level Explanations of Sports Clubs' Contribution to Public Welfare

From the discussion of the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, it becomes apparent that factors at all three levels of analysis – macro, meso and micro – seem to be relevant to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. It is difficult to argue that factors at any one level are generally more important than factors at other levels. The statistical analyses conducted in the context of this project have generally shown that when seeking to explain differences at the meso level – the attitudes and actions of clubs (e.g. with regard to public welfare) – most of the variation can be explained by meso-level factors, followed by factors at the macro level (e.g. Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2017; Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2019a). Similarly, when seeking to explain differences at the micro level – the attitudes and actions of members – most of the variation can be explained by micro-level factors, followed by factors at the meso level and macro level (e.g. Elmoose-Østerlund et al. 2019b; Ibsen et al. 2019).

Following this statistical logic, one would expect that macro-level variations – between countries – can only explain differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare to a limited extent. On the one hand, this coincides well with the finding that sports clubs in general function quite similarly across country borders. They share the same constitutive elements and typical features, they are predominantly run by volunteers, and they are rooted in the same popular movements. On the other hand, this is contradicted by the significant differences identified between countries in the sports infrastructure, political systems, organisational capacity, structural characteristics as well as member motivation and engagement.

A potential explanation for this apparent contradiction could be that factors at higher levels of analysis set a framework for the possible actions at lower levels of analysis and that cross-level interactions exist. More concretely, macro-level factors, such as the historical context of sports clubs and the political opportunity structure, set a framework for the possible actions of sports clubs and members, which in turn influences sports clubs' contribution to public welfare in each country. For instance, the lack of a sufficient sports infrastructure at the national level, which is particularly visible in Hungary, Poland and Spain, influences the perception of the available infrastructure by sports clubs. This is reflected by the finding that significantly more sports clubs in Hungary, Poland and Spain view the supply of sports facilities as problematic. The same holds true with regard to the relatively low levels of public funding in these three countries and the experienced higher financial problems in the sports clubs. These examples clearly illustrate how factors at any one level of analysis quite often influence factors at different levels of analysis. Thus, it becomes difficult to evaluate the specific role that factors at any one analytical level play in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare compared to factors at other levels. From the analysis in this chapter, it seems probable that factors at different levels of analysis are relevant to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare although to varying degrees depending on the function examined.

In the same way that macro-level factors set a framework for the actions of sports clubs and members, meso-level factors, such as the organisational capacity and structural characteristics of sports clubs, set a framework for the possible actions of members. A basic illustration of this is that members are limited in their options to engage in sports clubs by the sports activities provided by the clubs and the opportunities for social, democratic and voluntary engagement. Thus, when a relatively high number of members are active in non-competitive sports activities in Belgium (Flanders) and Denmark, this at least partly reflects that the sports clubs in these countries are more inclined to offer such activities. Another example of how characteristics at the meso level can affect the behaviour of members is that in countries with a high proportion of small sports clubs, such as Hungary, Poland, Spain and Switzerland, a relatively high proportion of the members attend the general assembly. Thus, the size of a sports clubs is likely to play a role in the actions of members.

Even though higher-level factors affect the actions on lower levels of analysis, the statistical analyses conducted indicate that factors at the same level of analysis exert the greatest influence on actions at these levels. This means that factors at the meso level (e.g. the organisational capacity and structural characteristics of the club) can explain differences in the contribution of each sports club to public welfare to a greater extent than factors at the macro level (e.g. historical context and political opportunity structure). An example of this relates to the propensity of clubs to offer targeted initiatives for underrepresented population groups. Though this is a political objective in more or less all countries, the focus on underrepresented population groups is different from country to country. However, no strong and consistent link between the political aims and goals in any one country and the actions of clubs could be identified. In contrast, statistical analysis reveals a strong correlation between the degree to which club boards work to integrate socially vulnerable groups in clubs and the propensity of clubs to offer targeted initiatives and have many members from selected population groups (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017; Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2019a).

At the micro level, the societal context and the conditions provided by sports clubs for the members set a framework in which the members can act, but the decision to act in a way that contributes to public welfare (e.g. by engaging in democratic decision-making and voluntary work) lies with the individual and is most strongly affected by the social background, motivation and affiliation of each member. As an example, statistical analysis revealed that the degree to which club boards strive to involve members in decision-making was weakly correlated with the decision of members to engage in the club democracy. Conversely, this decision was more strongly correlated with the social background of the members (e.g. gender, age and educational level) and, in particular, the affiliation of the members (e.g. duration of membership, social participation and participation in voluntary work) (Ibsen et al. 2019).

The multilevel framework applied in this book is based on the actor-theoretical approach, which states that social structures affect the actions of social actors (e.g. individuals), but that social structures also result from the interaction of actors (see Chap. 2). This reminds us that lower-level factors can also affect factors at higher

levels of analysis. For instance, the goals and actions of sports clubs are affected by the interests and actions of members through the member democracy. Furthermore, nearly all clubs are run by volunteer board members, who are mainly responsible for the club goals. Similarly, sports clubs can aggregate their interests, which is often done through national or regional umbrella organisations for voluntary organised sports and thereby seek to influence political aims and goals regarding sports. Such reciprocal relations between different levels of analysis are important to keep in mind when seeking to understand similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare.

In sum, our study indicates that factors at any one level of analysis are more strongly affected by other factors at the same level. However, factors at higher levels of analysis seem to be important in the sense that they set the framework in which different actions are preferred or even possible for social actors at lower levels of analysis (e.g. members or sports clubs). Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind that social actors influence the formation of social structures. These findings underline the importance of studying sports clubs from a multilevel perspective including the macro level, meso level and micro level. The examples provided in this section serve as illustrations of this general point.

14.4 Points of Awareness to Enhance Sports Clubs' Contribution to Public Welfare

By drawing on the potential explanations for the similarities and differences in sports clubs' contribution to public welfare provided in this chapter, it is the purpose of this section to set forth points of awareness that can inspire academic, political and practical discussions about how to enhance this contribution. The awareness points should not be viewed as a complete list but rather as selected points that were deemed relevant based on the empirical data collected in this study and the analyses conducted. The reason that this section offers points of awareness rather than recommendations is that some recommendations for enhancing sports clubs' contribution to public welfare could potentially contribute positively to one function while limiting the contribution to another function. Such potential trade-offs will be discussed.

14.4.1 The Balance Between Political Steering and Autonomy of Sports Clubs

On the one hand, sports clubs are autonomous organisations that can be considered parts of civil society. On the other hand, sports clubs are dependent on public funding and are met with more or less explicit political expectations to contribute to

public welfare. As a result, politicians balance a desire to use sports clubs as policy implementers with respect to their position as autonomous organisations. In most countries, this has resulted in very broad, general and uncontroversial political aims and goals for sports clubs. The broad and general nature of the aims and goals enable most sports clubs to argue that they already make a significant contribution to public welfare, which is supported by the findings in this study.

However, our study also indicates that there might be a potential for sports clubs to enhance their contribution to public welfare, provided that they work strategically with one or more of the social functions discussed in this book. Therefore, a central question for policy-makers is which tools they can apply to motivate sports clubs while respecting their autonomy. Our study demonstrates that the most frequently used political instrument to motivate clubs to take such action is the use of economic incentives (i.e. targeted subsidies).

It is worth noting that in this study, no clear and general link could be identified between the use of targeted public subsidies for sports clubs and sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. This does not mean that targeted subsidies cannot enhance sports clubs' contribution, but it shows that there is no certainty that it will. One possible interpretation of the lack of a general consistency between the use of targeted subsidies and the contribution of clubs to public welfare could be that in most countries, the targeted subsidies are not essential for sports clubs. They are mainly reliant on subsidised facility provision, and, in most countries, there are few demands attached to this form of indirect public funding.

In sum, policy-makers face a tightrope between respecting the autonomy of sports clubs and their current contribution to public welfare while seeking to enhance this contribution for the benefit of society. The use of targeted subsidies has so far been the preferred political instrument, but the experiences are diverse. While a stronger and more direct political steering could potentially motivate clubs to work strategically to enhance their contribution to public welfare, there is no guarantee that it would. It might even involve a trade-off in the sense that an increased focus on one social function might lead to a decreased focus on and contribution to another social function (e.g. health vs. social integration), or it might make some sports clubs less attractive for the members, who are in the clubs mainly to practise their favourite sport.

14.4.2 The Supply of a Sufficient Sports Infrastructure

Sports clubs are dependent on a sufficient sports infrastructure to be able to offer opportunities for members to practise sports, socialise and engage in the club democracy and voluntary work. As such, the sports infrastructure is a prerequisite for sports clubs to be able to contribute to public welfare. The results from this study demonstrate how a sufficient sports infrastructure seems to be present in most European countries, where the vast majority of clubs face no or only modest problems with the availability of suitable sports facilities. However, in countries with

infrastructures for sports that are relatively less developed (e.g. Hungary, Poland and Spain), many sports clubs characterise the absence of suitable sports facilities as severely problematic or even existentially challenging. Furthermore, the overall sports club participation rates are also relatively low in these countries.

While the results from this study indicate that the supply of a sufficient sports infrastructure provides the framework that enables sports clubs to contribute to public welfare, it should not be interpreted to mean that building more facilities will automatically increase this contribution. In Hungary and Poland, national programmes have been initiated to significantly improve the sports infrastructure, which coincides with relatively rapidly growing membership rates in sports clubs in these countries, indicating the relevance of such large-scale political initiatives in countries with less developed sports infrastructures. However, it seems unlikely to expect the same positive effects in countries with well-developed sports infrastructures. In these countries, the needs of most sports clubs seem to be covered, but the need for facilities that serve specific purposes or groups might not be. This includes facilities that allow for social interaction between members, facilities that are accessible to people with disabilities or facilities that are suitable for non-competitive and health-enhancing physical activities.

In sum, the supply of a sufficient sports infrastructure plays a key role for sports clubs, and the lack of a sufficient infrastructure is likely to limit sports clubs' contribution to public welfare. There is no simple definition of what constitutes a sufficient infrastructure for sports clubs, since different activities for different member groups pose different demands. However, to increase sports clubs' contribution to selected societal functions (e.g. social integration), including in countries with well-developed sports infrastructures, investments in facilities that serve specific purposes or groups might be required.

14.4.3 A Diversification of Sports Offerings in Sports Clubs

Even though the majority of European sports clubs are single-sport clubs with one sports activity, the population of sports clubs in any one country represent a high degree of diversification of sports offers. This variety of sports offerings enables sports clubs to appeal to broad segments of society, which is likely to increase the potential of sports clubs to contribute to public welfare. At the same time, the results from this study clearly show that the sports activity pattern of most sports clubs remains relatively traditional. Furthermore, sports clubs are first and foremost an arena for the practice of competitive sports. As a result, the segments of society that are not motivated by the competitive elements of the sports practice are less likely to find a suitable offer in a sports club. This is a likely explanation for the rapid growth of commercial fitness centres in many European countries.

Most sports clubs exist first and foremost to promote particular sports, but the motives and goals of clubs are diverse. Some clubs view themselves as sports providers for a local community, and others target specific population groups. Due to

these different goals and missions of clubs, it seems most relevant to aim for diversification of sports offerings not in any one club but within the population of sports clubs in any country and local community. For instance, each club cannot be expected to work for the integration of all underrepresented population groups. This might not even make sense depending on the population distribution in the catchment area of the club.

In sum, the challenge with regard to diversification of sports offerings is not that most clubs focus on one or a limited selection of sports activities but rather that the population of sports clubs still represents a selection of activities that do not appeal to all segments of society. In particular, the high proportion of people active in sports who are primarily motivated by health benefits and are not interested in competitive sports offerings are likely to have a hard time finding suitable sports offerings in a club. It should be noted that an increased focus on individual and flexible sports activities (i.e. fitness activities) in sports clubs could involve a trade-off with other functions of sports clubs discussed in this book, such as the democratic, social and voluntary engagement of the members, because the characteristics of a sports activity have been shown to play a role in the engagement of members in sports clubs.

14.4.4 Potentials and Trade-Offs of Professionalisation in Sports Clubs

Strategies and initiatives that seek to enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare often seem to involve some form of professionalisation. Those working with health promotion and social integration might need more knowledge, and those who organise the club activities might need more authority and resources to be able to respond to political aims and goals. The most obvious way to achieve this is by focusing more on formal knowledge and education and to hire paid staff that are devoted to such tasks. Though such professionalisation developments are visible in some sports clubs, the majority of sports clubs are still run mainly or exclusively on a voluntary basis, and though some clubs state that they work with long-term planning, most sports clubs function in an informal manner and operate on a day-to-day basis.

In this study, positive links were identified between professionalisation, when operationalised as paid staff and long-term planning, and certain aspects of the contribution to public welfare, such as the propensity of clubs to work for social integration and the implementation of targeted initiatives for underrepresented population groups. Conversely, no negative links between the examined aspects of professionalisation and sports clubs' contribution to public welfare were identified. However, negative associations were identified between club size and aspects relevant to sports clubs' contribution to public welfare, such as the social, democratic and voluntary engagement of members. In short, large sports clubs seem to have a higher proportion of free-riders.

In sum, professionalised and often larger clubs seem to have a greater potential to work strategically to increase their contribution to public welfare. However, this might involve a trade-off with the engagement and commitment of members in other sides of club life, such as volunteer engagement as well as member democracy and social communities, which can be viewed as contributing to public welfare. Thus, professionalisation of sports clubs seems to involve both potentials and trade-offs regarding their contribution to public welfare.

14.4.5 The Role of Different National Contexts

Though sports clubs seem to function relatively similarly across country borders in Europe, this does not necessarily mean that strategies and initiatives to increase sports clubs' contribution to public welfare will have similar effects in all countries. There are at least three potential explanations for this. First, the countries have different cultures and traditions regarding redistribution and solidarity (cf. the welfare state typology). Second, different cultures and traditions exist between countries regarding the implementation of sports policies (e.g. the degree of state intervention). Third, the framework conditions for sports clubs (e.g. sports infrastructure) vary significantly between countries.

As a result of this heterogeneity, one cannot assume that successful initiatives that enhance sports clubs' contribution to public welfare in one country will be successful in another country. As an example, a national programme targeted at the social integration of migrants (as has been implemented in Germany) is not likely to be directly transferable to other nations, particularly those that have few migrants in the population and/or in which it is a political ambition to limit migration. Another example is the national programmes to build the sports infrastructure that is implemented in Hungary and Poland. They are particularly relevant in nations with an insufficient sports infrastructure and a tradition of state-interventionist sports policy.

In sum, strategies and initiatives to increase sports clubs' contribution to public welfare cannot be expected to be directly transferable between countries. Thus, it is important to always consider the national context (Nichols et al. 2017).

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