Chapter 5
England: A Long Tradition, Adapting to Changing Circumstances

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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.

[1] The 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 polices 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

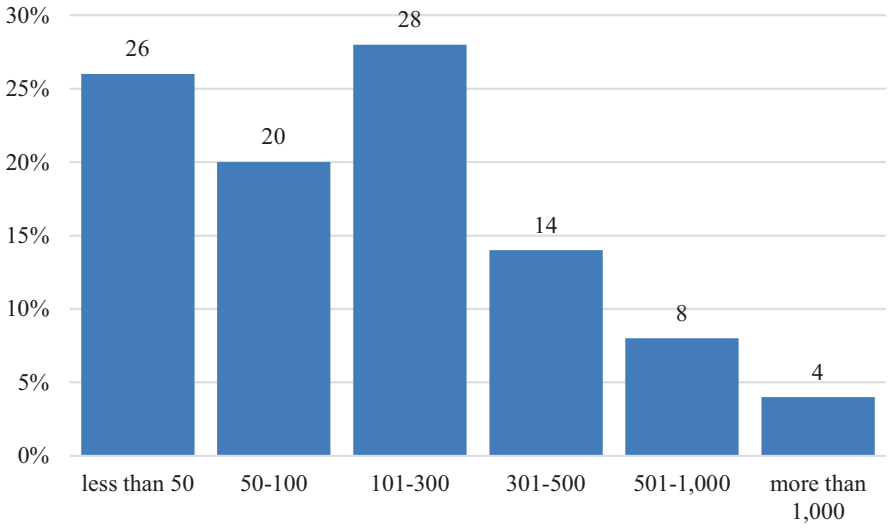

Fig. 5.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 470$)

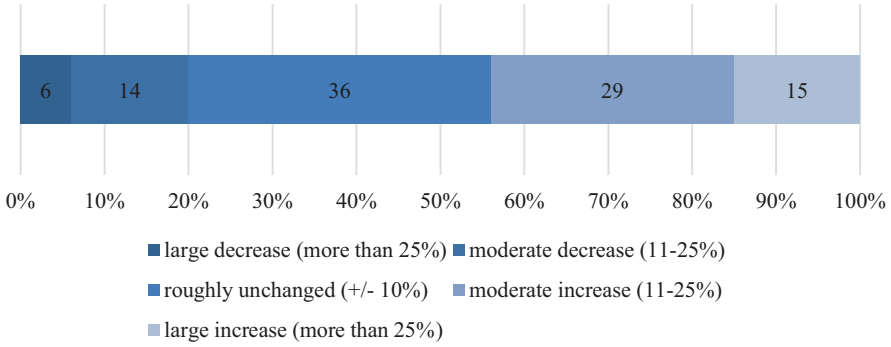

Fig. 5.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 482$)

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

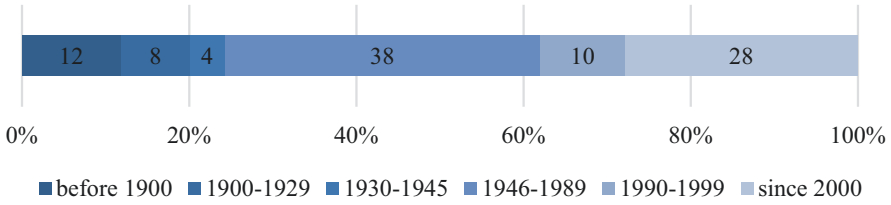

Fig. 5.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 339$)

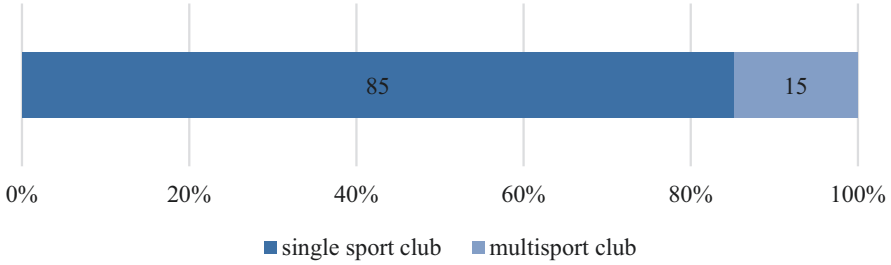

Fig. 5.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 480$)

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.

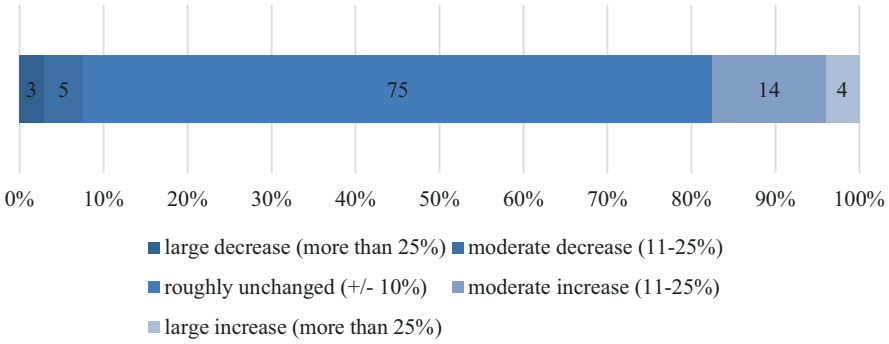

Fig. 5.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 275$)

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

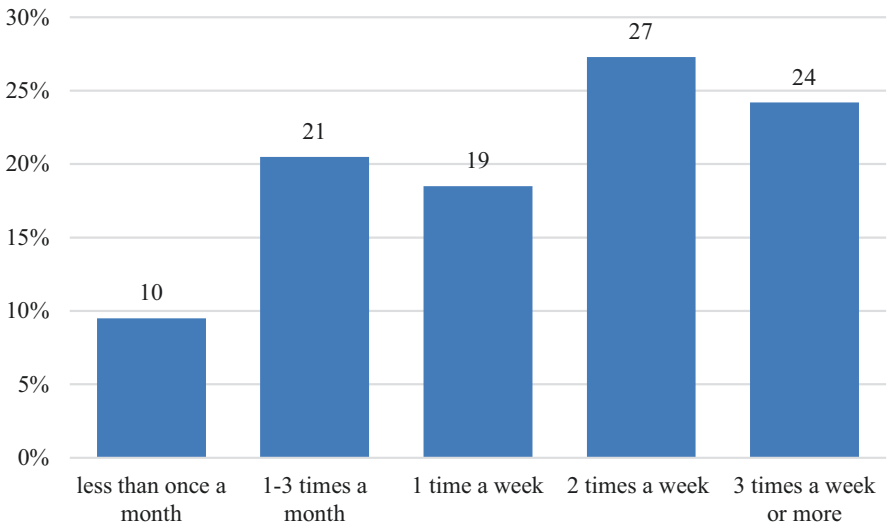

Fig. 5.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 454$)

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-

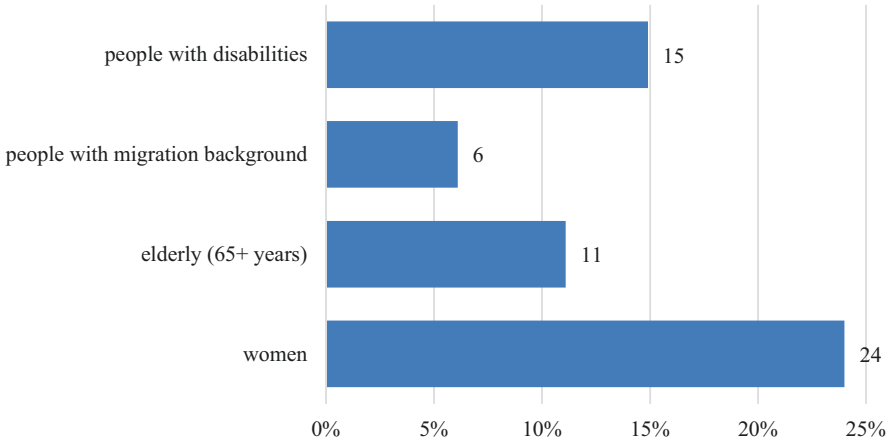

Fig. 5.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 524$, people with migration background $n = 524$, elderly $n = 524$ and women $n = 524$)

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.

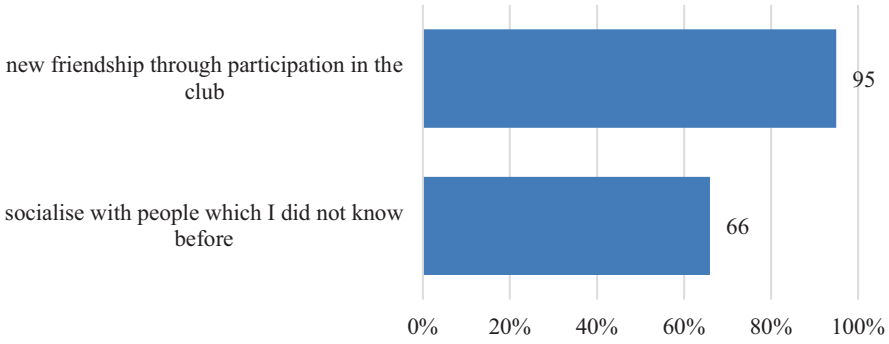

Fig. 5.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 606$ and socialise with people $n = 594$)

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

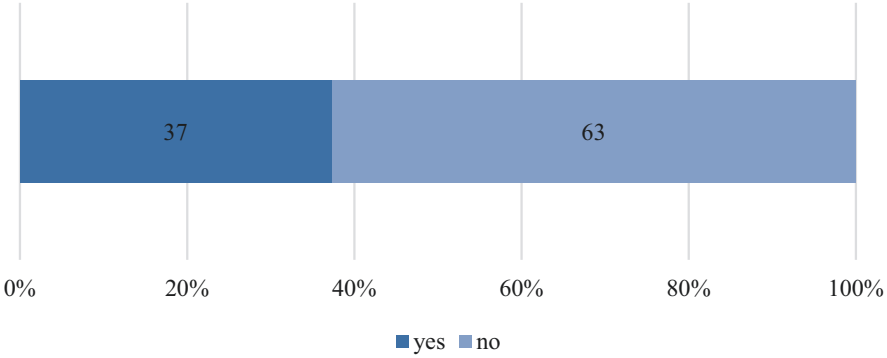

Fig. 5.9 Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 640$)

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

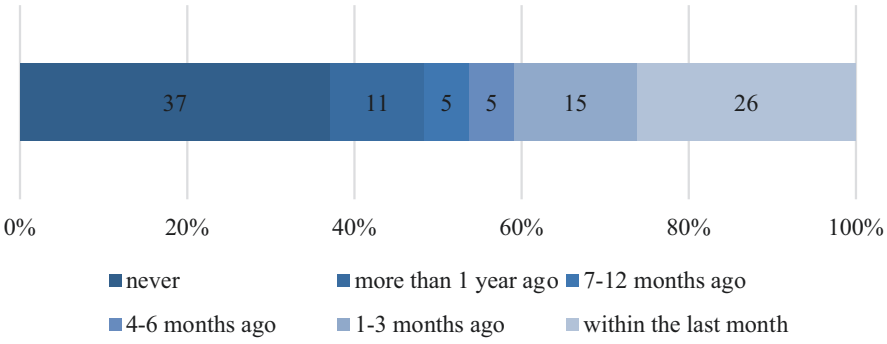

Fig. 5.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 634$)

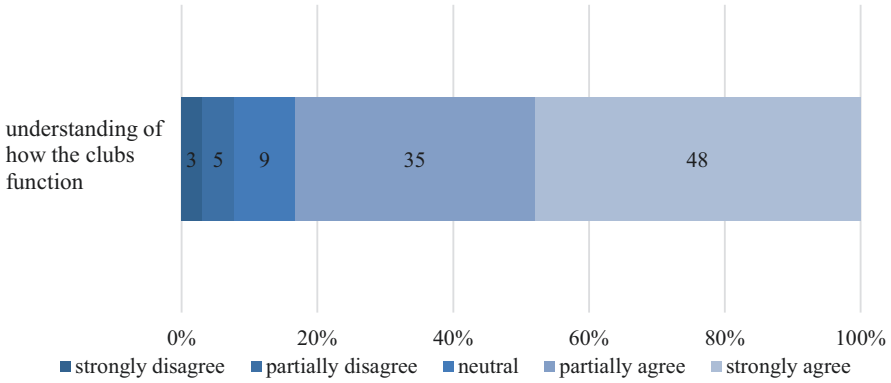

Fig. 5.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 603$)

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

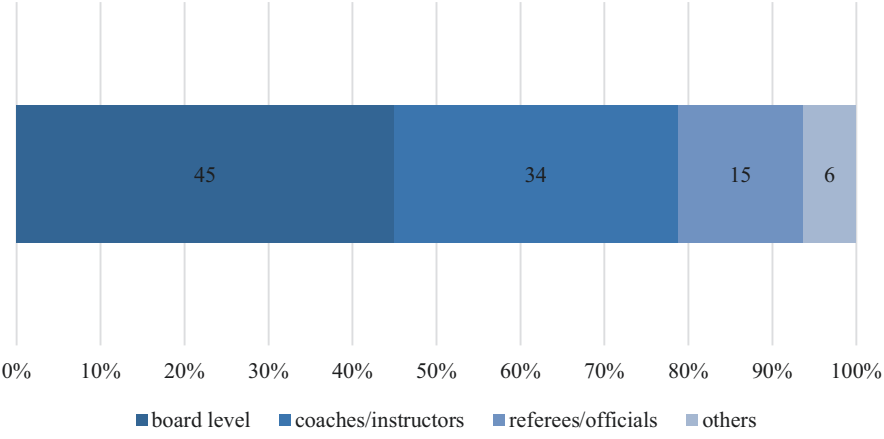

Fig. 5.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 462$)

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

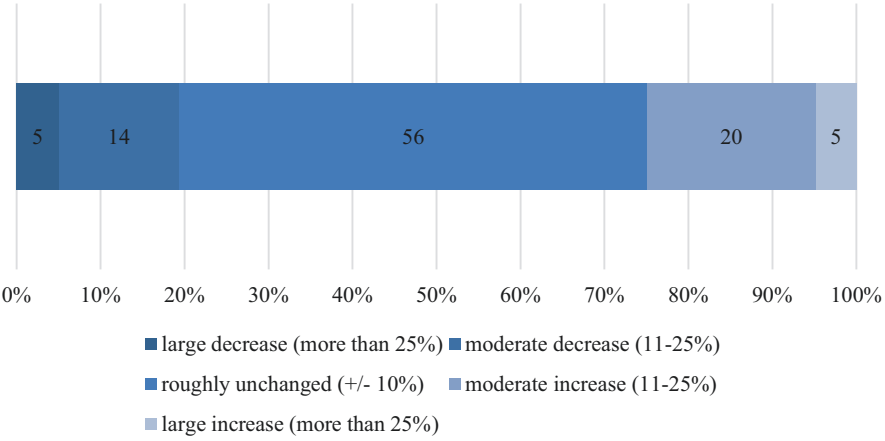

Fig. 5.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 438$)

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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