

Chapter 6

Germany: Sports Clubs as Important Players of Civil Society



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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.

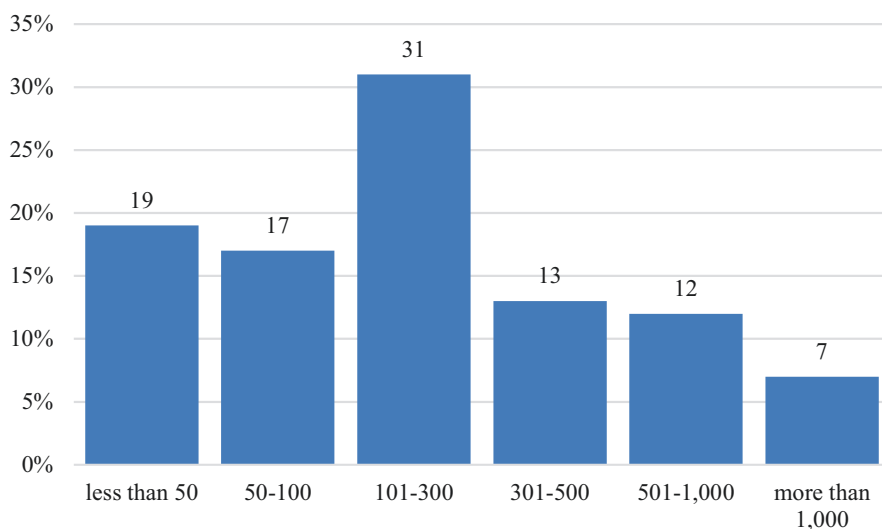


Fig. 6.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 20,513$)

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).

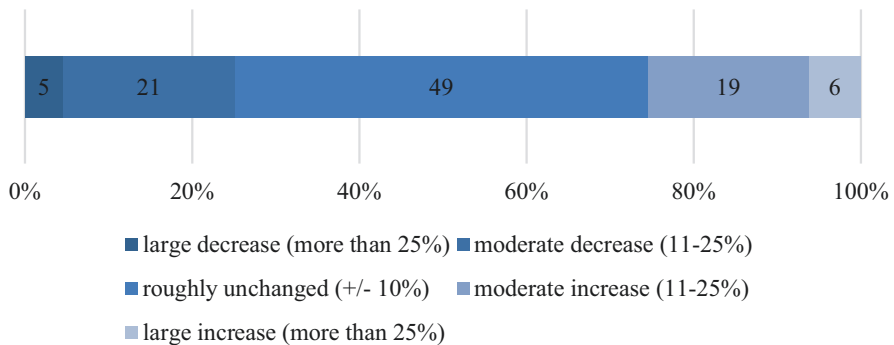


Fig. 6.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, n = 16,665)

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

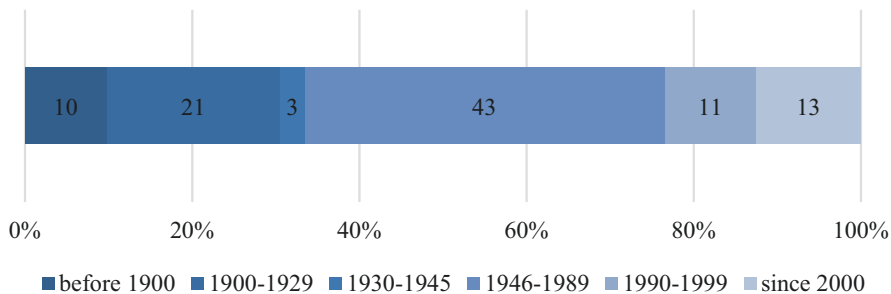


Fig. 6.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 16,735$)

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

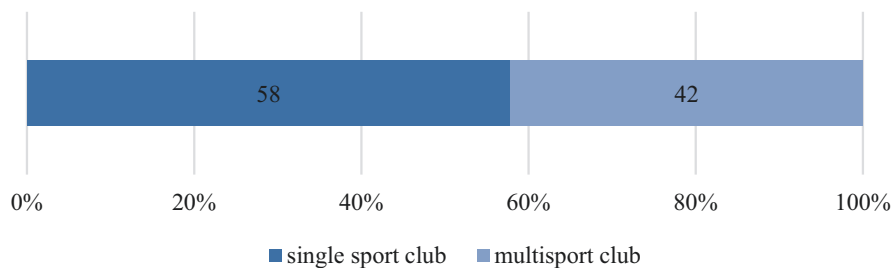


Fig. 6.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 17,464$)

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

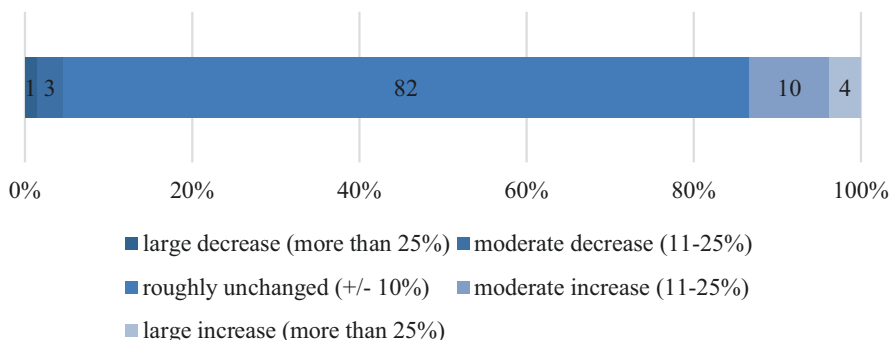


Fig. 6.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 10,030$)

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

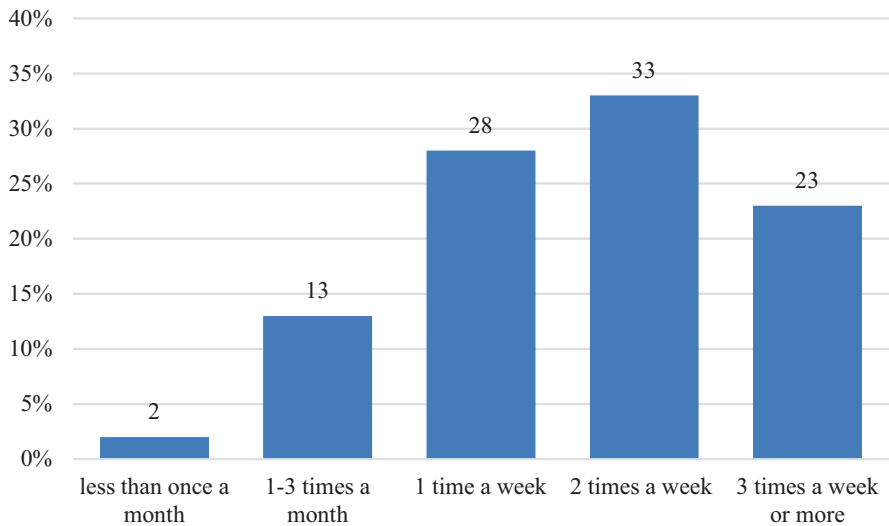


Fig. 6.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 1,900$)

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

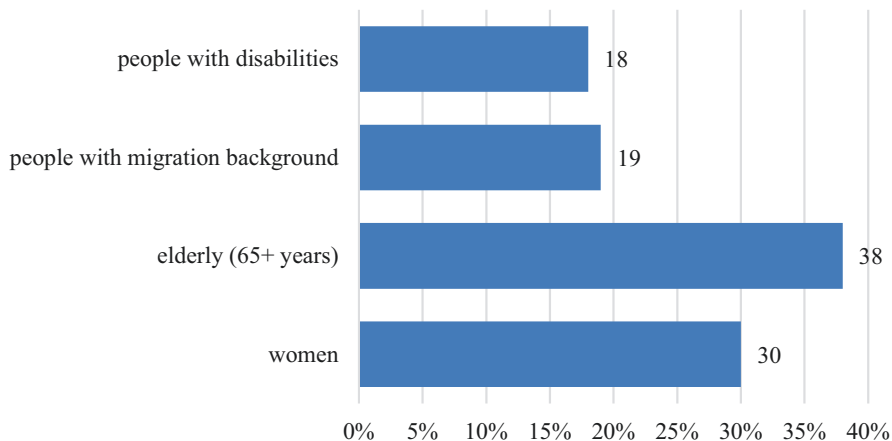


Fig. 6.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 12,766$, people with migration background $n = 12,750$, elderly $n = 13,146$, women $n = 12,290$)

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

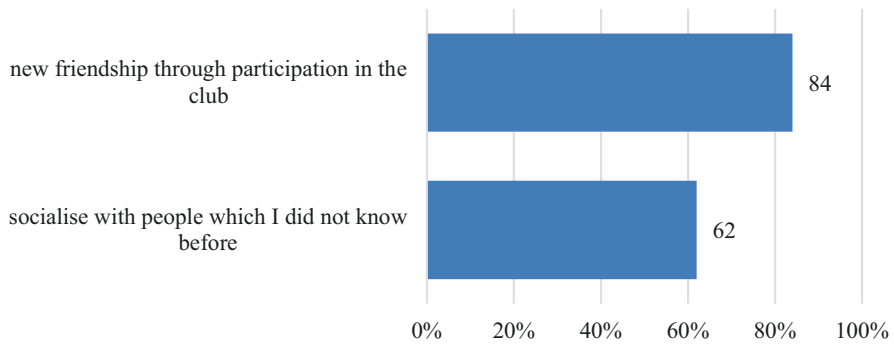


Fig. 6.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 1,882$, socialise with people $n = 1,858$)

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).

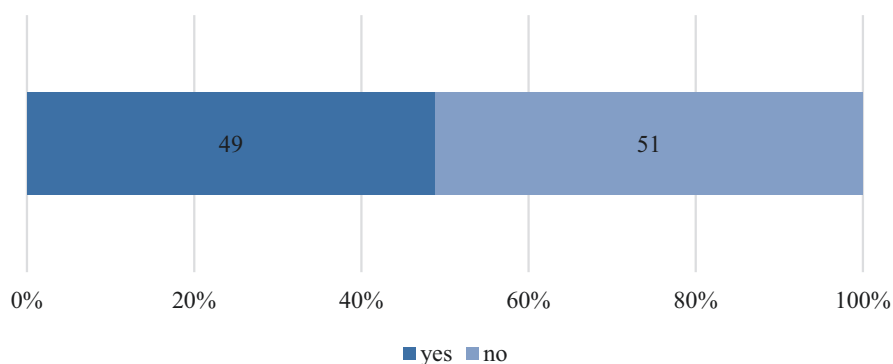
Overall, the results of both the club survey and the member survey in Germany underline the great social importance of sports clubs, and it becomes once more clear that sports clubs are a social phenomenon (Rittner and Breuer 2004). Club goals include, apart from offering sports programmes to their members, 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

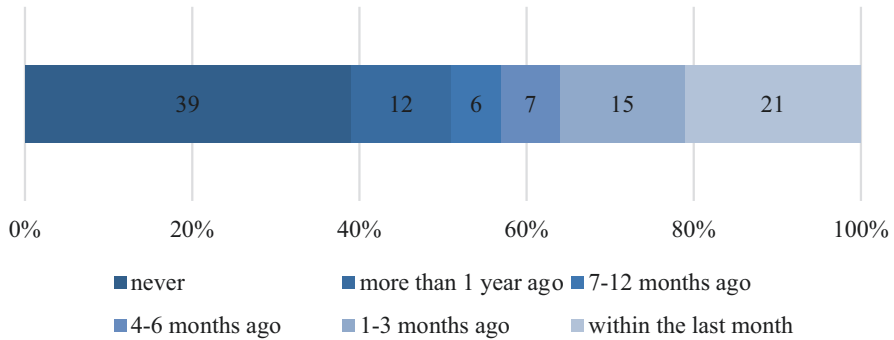


Fig. 6.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 2,084$)

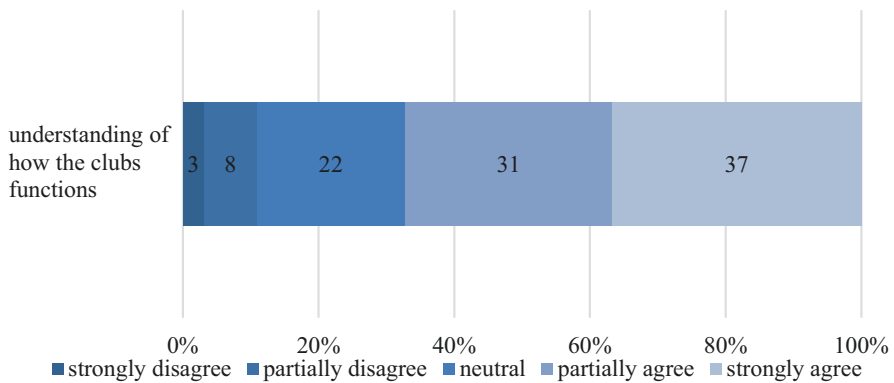


Fig. 6.11 Member's knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, $n = 1,926$)

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).

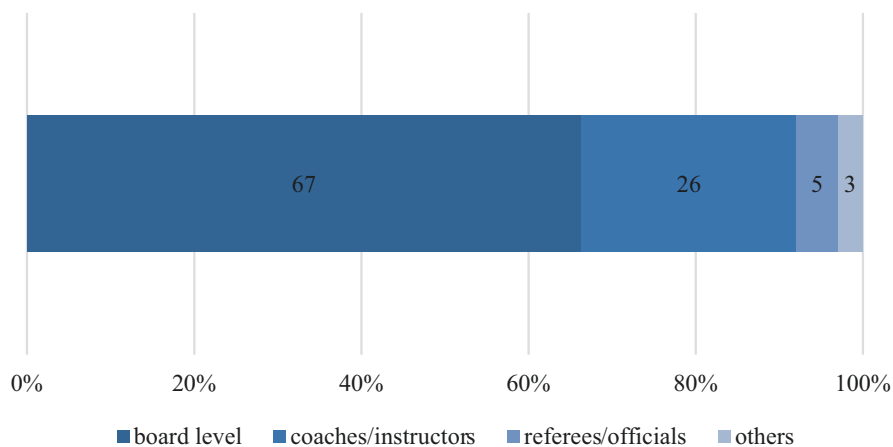
Looking at the distribution of the number of volunteers, about one-third of the clubs in Germany states to have between 11 and 20 volunteers in the club in fixed positions, while roughly a quarter each reports to have between 6 and 10 volunteers

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

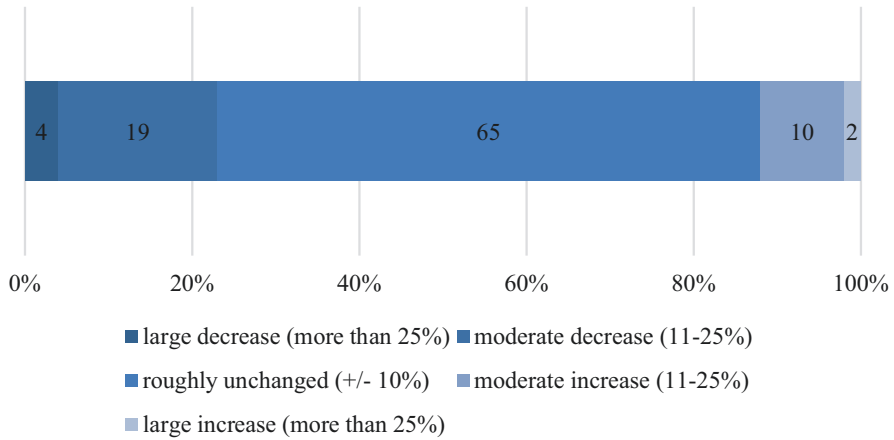


Fig. 6.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 14,481$)

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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