

Chapter 7

Hungary: Potentials for Civil Initiatives in Sports



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

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

7.1 Sports Policy and Historical Context

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.2 Structure and Context

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

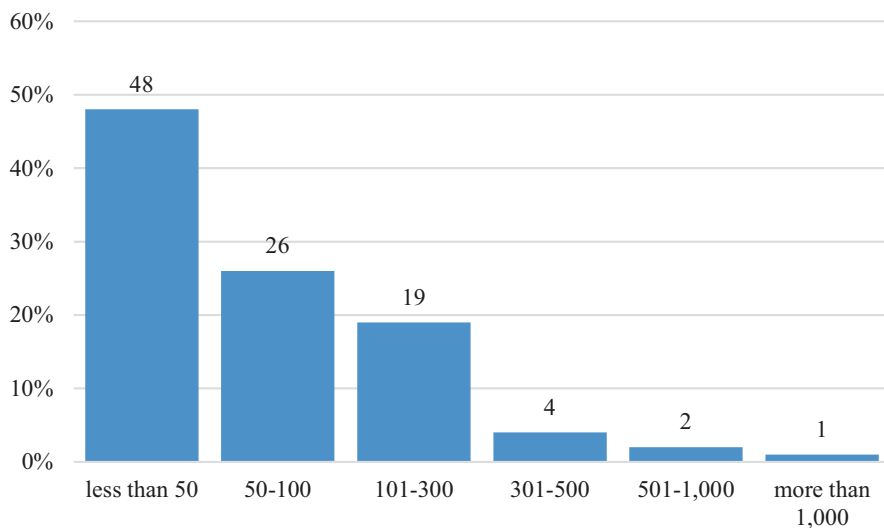


Fig. 7.1 Club size (number of members; club survey, $n = 791$)

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

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

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

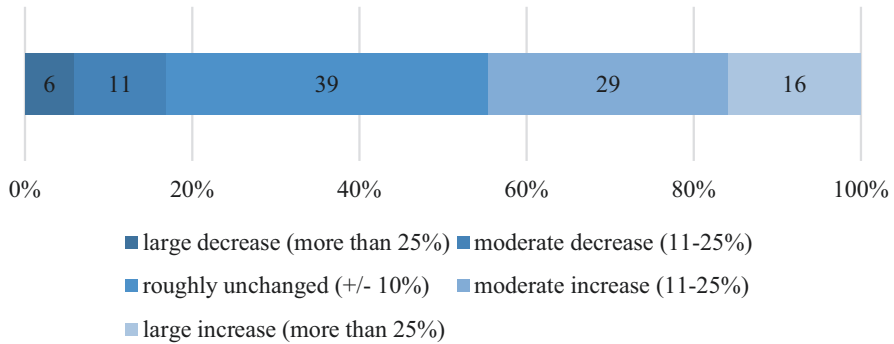


Fig. 7.2 Membership development within the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 807$)

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

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

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

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

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

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

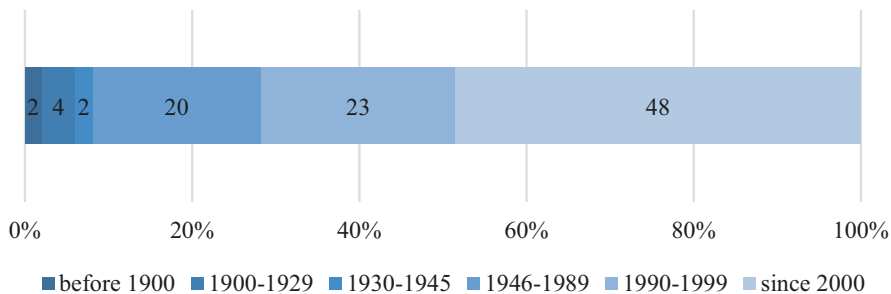


Fig. 7.3 Year of foundation (club survey, $n = 646$)

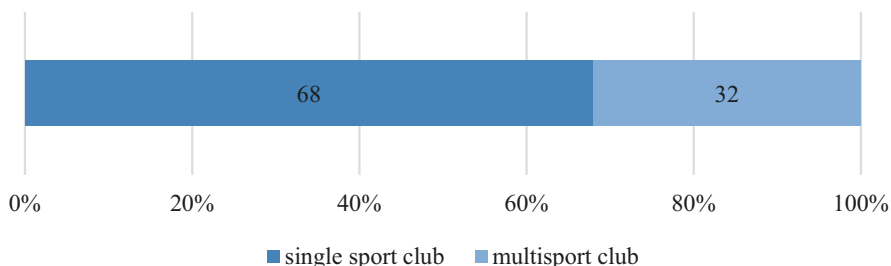


Fig. 7.4 Single or multisport club (club survey, $n = 811$)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

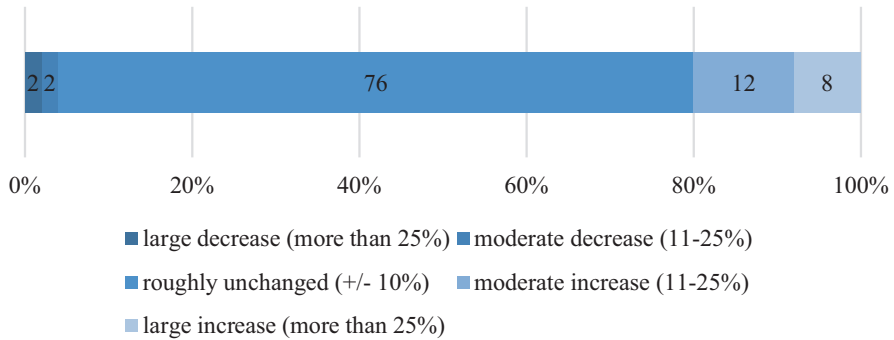


Fig. 7.5 Development in the number of paid staff in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 504$)

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

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

7.3 Sports Participation and Health Promotion

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

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

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

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

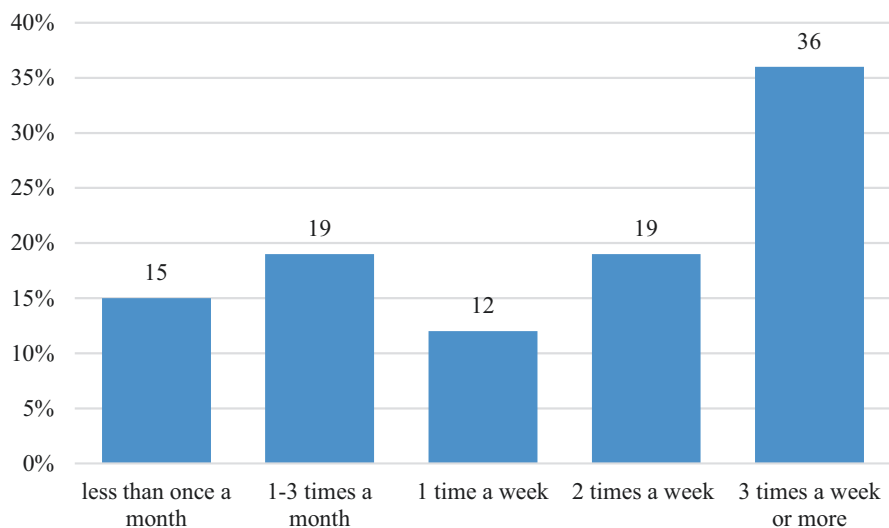


Fig. 7.6 Frequency of sports participation (member survey, $n = 527$)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

7.4 Social Integration

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

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

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

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

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

	Don't agree at all (%)	Don't agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Totally agree (%)
Our club tries to offer sports to as many population groups as possible	3	3	14	23	57
Our club strives to help socially vulnerable groups become better integrated into our club	7	7	23	31	32

Table 7.9 Representation of different population groups in sports clubs (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 696$, people with migration background $n = 683$, elderly $n = 704$, women $n = 791$)

	0%	1–10%	11–25%	26–50%	51–75%	More than 75%
People with disabilities	65	30	1	1	0	3
People with migration background	46	41	8	3	1	1
Elderly (65+ years)	43	39	10	5	2	1
Women	11	12	25	35	11	7

ion in this matter make up one quarter of the clubs in Hungary. With these results Hungary is above the European average (Table 7.9).

In case of people with disabilities, 65% of the clubs do not have members belonging to this group, which is higher in comparison to the European average in this survey. One-third of the clubs indicated that their membership includes 1–10% people with disabilities. Sports policy giving special attention to people with disabilities started by the year 2000, which resulted in integrated opportunities for example in fencing and establishing new clubs specialising services for the disabled (Perényi 2013a; Tóthné and Gombás 2016).

People with ethnic or migration background make up 1–10% of the members in 41% of the clubs and 46% of the clubs do not count any members from this group. It is important to mention that there are 8% of the clubs that reported 11–25% of their members belong to an ethnic minority group (or migration group). The absence of people with migration or ethnical background in Hungarian clubs is higher than the European average (36%), however, lower than that of Poland (71%). The result is reinforced by previous findings as participation in sports of youth with ethnic minority background is below the average; it is 23% in comparison to the total youth population (35%) in 2008 (Perényi 2010).

The proportion of clubs without members above the age of 65 is the third highest in Hungary (43%) after Poland (57%) and Spain (54%). Clubs counting elderly members between 1% and 10% of their total members make up 39%. Only 5% of the clubs have at least half of their members representing people over 65. Results of Hungarian clubs in connection to the elderly members are below the survey average. Other surveys in Hungary reported similar results about the discrepancies of integration of the elderly in sports. Senior citizens' sports participation was measured to be one of the lowest in Hungarian society (Földesi et al. 2008).

Among the special groups, the representation of women in sports clubs is the most satisfactory. But still a clear majority of clubs have a majority of male members, which is line with previous findings in Hungary as sports participants are predominantly men both in the total population (Földesi et al. 2008) and in the youth population (15–28) as well (Perényi 2010). Furthermore, inequality in sports can be noticed along other socio-democratic variables as the higher educated, people living in larger settlements (Kozma et al. 2015) and those owning a higher economic capital or having a student status are most likely to participate (Földesi et al. 2008; Perényi 2010). Male dominance can also be noticed among sports professionals such as coaches (Bodnár 2012).

In comparison to other vulnerable groups, only 11% of clubs reported no female members. One quarter of clubs reported their female members to be up to 25%, and another 35% have female members up to 50%, while a large proportion in comparison to the other target groups have more than half of their members from the female population (18%). The differences across groups can be explained by the fact that more and more women and young girls do sports across all levels and they can be considered less of a vulnerable group than the other groups; female athletes are more successful at the Olympics (Kovács et al. 2017), and an increasing number of women participate in leisure sports events such as running (Perényi 2015).

In terms of the clubs having special initiatives reaching out for different population groups, Hungarian clubs show a noticeable effort. In targeting the groups outlined in Fig. 7.7, Hungarian clubs perform far above the European average. In relation to people with disabilities, 40% of the clubs reported efforts as opposed to the European average (20%). In reference to people of ethnic minorities or with migration backgrounds, this result is 36% compared to the European average of 18%, while in connection to the elderly, 40% of Hungarian clubs act compared to the 25% of European average. People over 65 are offered for example special sporting activities and concessionary membership fees, which are also offered to young people when joining clubs in Hungary (Breuer et al. 2017). A similar noticeable difference can be found in the favour of Hungarian clubs in relation to women as well (61% to a 33% survey average). The initiatives include special sporting activities, such as female teams and divisions. Initiatives for women and young girls are more noticeable. As a result of TAO funding, female teams in ice hockey, football and volleyball increased. In leisure sports both women's sports day and female running events became popular (Table 7.10).

In light of the focus on elite sports performance inherited from the past, Hungarian clubs have an unexpected balance in attitudes about the importance of companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions. The percentage of clubs that agree or totally agree to set high value on companionship and conviviality is 65%. Similar results were found in these categories in the response given to sporting success and competition with 69%. This unanticipated balance on these values shows that in Hungarian clubs the consideration of the importance of these values is high.

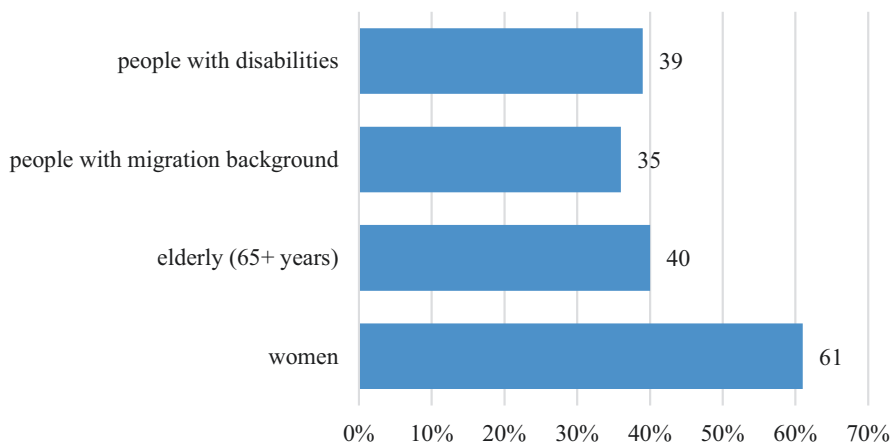


Fig. 7.7 Share of clubs that have special initiatives for different population groups (club survey, people with disabilities $n = 626$, people with migration background $n = 613$, elderly $n = 631$, women $n = 664$)

Table 7.10 Attitudes of sports clubs towards companionship and conviviality as well as sporting success and competitions (club survey, companionship $n = 654$, competitive sports $n = 659$)

	Don't agree at all (%)	Don't agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Totally agree (%)
Our club sets high value on companionship and conviviality	4	8	22	35	30
Our club sets high value on sporting success and competition	5	9	17	34	35

It must be added, however, that considering the value placed on companionship and conviviality by clubs is the lowest among the participating countries in this research.

Member participation in the club's social gatherings in Hungary is close to the survey average. Approximately one-fifth of the members participate in such gatherings at least once a month; however, 50% participate never or once a year in comparison to the European average of 38%.

A more noticeable difference can be detected in relation to staying behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club. Only 31% of Hungarian club members get engaged in such social interaction once every 2 weeks or more in comparison to the European average of 51%. With this result, Hungarian clubs show the lowest proportion in the survey sample.

In relation to the ability of clubs to provide members with social communities in which members can experience social interactions and develop human relations, it was found that 88% of the members in the examined Hungarian clubs stated that they made new friendships through participation in the club. These relations exist mostly within the context of activities in the club and in relation to the sporting

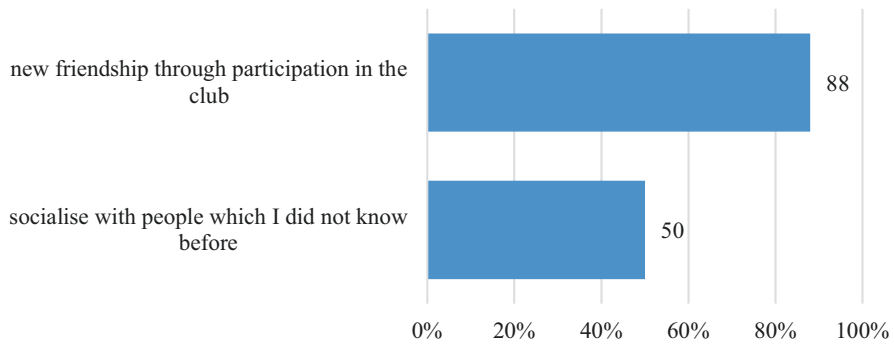


Fig. 7.8 Formation of social relations (member survey, new friendship $n = 547$, socialise with people $n = 519$)

Table 7.11 Frequency of participation in the club’s social life (member survey, social gatherings $n = 507$, stay behind after trainings $n = 475$)

	Never (%)	Once a year or less (%)	Once every half-year (%)	Once every 3 months (%)	Once a month (%)	Once every 2 weeks (%)	At least once a week (%)
Participation in the club’s social gatherings	23	26	23	12	7	3	6
Stay behind after trainings, matches or tournaments to talk to other people from the club	14	10	13	13	18	8	23

activity. Half of the members also reported that they started interactions with people which they did not know before through these activities as is outlined in Fig. 7.8.

The width of social interaction can be described by the proportion of people that members know by name. The results show that people participating in clubs make acquaintance with other members; over 70% of members of Hungarian sports clubs know more than ten other members by name. Interestingly, this result is below the survey average and might have some connection to the fact that Hungarians are less likely to stay behind after practices to socialise with other members (Table 7.11). Another potential explanation could be the high prevalence of small clubs in the Hungarian sample, which could limit the number of people the members know by name (Table 7.12).

Besides looking at the relationship of members to each other in this research, their feelings for their club was also measured (Table 7.13). It seems that Hungarian club members feel very strong about their club; the majority (73%) strongly agrees that they are proud that they belong to their particular club. Together with those who partially agree with the statement, 90% of the members express positive feeling for being proud. This result is the highest in European clubs in this sample (Van der Roest et al. 2017). This result, however, is not complemented with similarly high

Table 7.12 Number of people from the club known by name (member survey, $n = 577$)

	None (%)	1–2 people (%)	3–5 people (%)	6–10 people (%)	11–20 people (%)	21–50 people (%)	More than 50 people (%)
People known by name	0	3	6	18	29	28	17

Table 7.13 Attitudes of members towards social life in the club (member survey, proud to belong $n = 550$, most important social group $n = 545$, respect me for who I am $n = 496$)

	Strongly disagree (%)	Partially disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Partially agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
I am proud to belong to the club	1	1	7	17	73
The club is one of the most important social groups I belong to	9	8	17	35	31
Other people from the club respect me for who I am	1	2	10	28	60

results in relation to the club being the most important social group of members; Hungarian club members were on the survey average in this regard.

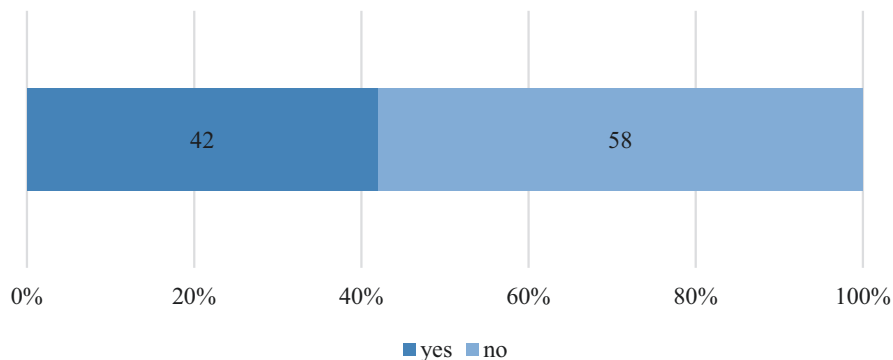
The high prevalence of experienced respect from other members is noticeable in the Hungarian data. Hungarian members gave the highest proportion of feeling respected by other members (60%), when comparing to the European mean of 45%. This may be connected to the local embedding of clubs and homogeneous membership composition.

7.5 Democratic Decision-Making and Involvement

In regard to democratic decision-making processes, it can be stated that the opportunity for people to exercise democracy is reflected by the high number of non-profit civil organisations in sports; out of the over 64 thousand civil organisations covering 18 different societal areas, close to 20% operate in connection to sports (Perényi et al. 2015). The same report, using data provided by the central statistical agency in reference to the year 2014, also found that an approximately equal proportion of the over 12,000 non-profit sports organisations operate with a competition (44,7%) and with a leisure sports (43,8%) focus. Close to 90% of these non-profit sports organisations are still sports clubs, 9% are foundations, and 1% are non-profit companies if considering the organisational forms (Perényi et al. 2015). Therefore, the form of non-profit companies allowed by the Sports Law enacted in 2004 (Évi I 2004) did not result in a large change in the composition of non-profit sports organisations. Clubs as organisational forms are still dominant,

Table 7.14 Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement (club survey, involve members in decision-making $n = 671$, delegate decision-making $n = 646$)

	Don't agree at all (%)	Don't agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Totally agree (%)
Our club aims to involve members when making important decisions	2	6	18	41	33
Our club delegates decision-making from the board to committees	37	20	15	20	8

**Fig. 7.9** Participation at last general assembly (member survey, $n = 599$)

which also provides opportunities for assembling and democratic decision-making for members of society.

Attitudes of sports clubs towards democratic decision-making and involvement was described by clubs' efforts of involving members when making important decisions. In this respect, 74% of the clubs agree or totally agree that they aim to involve members and just a minority (8%) had a negative opinion, as Table 7.14 shows.

We can find an almost opposite opinion when responses for the delegation of decision-making from the board to committees were examined. Only 8% of the clubs totally agreed with the statement and another 20% was also positive about it. It is noticeable that a large proportion of the clubs either did not agree (57%) with such democratic procedures or could not formulate an opinion (15%). It may be the case that coping with the procedures of democratic decision-making is only formal, as when it comes to actual involvement of members in the issues of the clubs, the board demonstrates a rather territorial practice. Important decisions are not delegated to the committees. This phenomenon may be due to the enhanced level of formal and technical requirements toward clubs in administering state funding; special knowledge in handling tasks is needed and the completion of such tasks might not be trusted to committees (Fig. 7.9).

In Hungary, as elsewhere in Europe, clubs have their yearly general assembly where conclusions of the previous year, future plans and positions are discussed and

Table 7.15 Broader democratic participation of members (member survey, participation in member meetings $n = 523$, speak my mind to key persons $n = 508$, share my view with other members $n = 513$)

	Never (%)	Once a year or less (%)	Once every half-year (%)	Once every 3 months (%)	Once a month (%)	Several times a month (%)
Participation in member meetings or other club meetings	31	28	18	8	4	11
I speak my mind to key persons in the club	24	17	16	11	14	18
I share my views with other members in the club	16	14	13	9	16	33

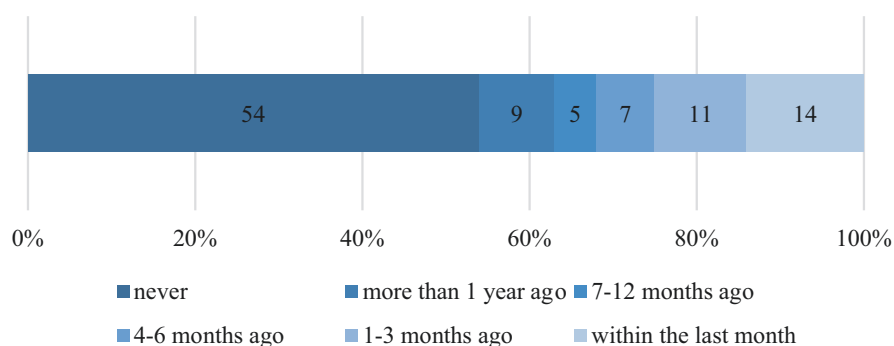


Fig. 7.10 Time since last attempt to influence decision-making in the club (member survey, $n = 584$)

decisions are made. Similar to other European countries, also in Hungary, the attendance of the last general assembly remains below 50% (42%) (Table 7.15).

Members seem to be rather inactive also in other forms of occasions designed for democratic expression. For example, 31% of members never participate in member meetings or other club meetings; 24% of members never tell their opinion to any persons in key positions of the club. It seems that people easier share their opinions with other club members quite actively (33%), and only 16% of members never discussed club issues with others. However, the opinion of club members about the club could also be taken not as a contribution with a view of making the club a better place for members but as a criticism toward the clubs' leadership. It may discourage members from expressing their opinion.

In terms of attempts made to influence decision-making in the club, this survey revealed that over half of the members (54%) never tried to influence any matters in the club. One quarter of respondents stated that their last attempt to influence decisions was within three months (Fig. 7.10). This phenomenon may have its roots back in years when civil initiatives were not only unsupported but have been blocked by the political authorities during the end of the nineteenth century but also during the state-socialist era (Perényi and Bodnár 2015).

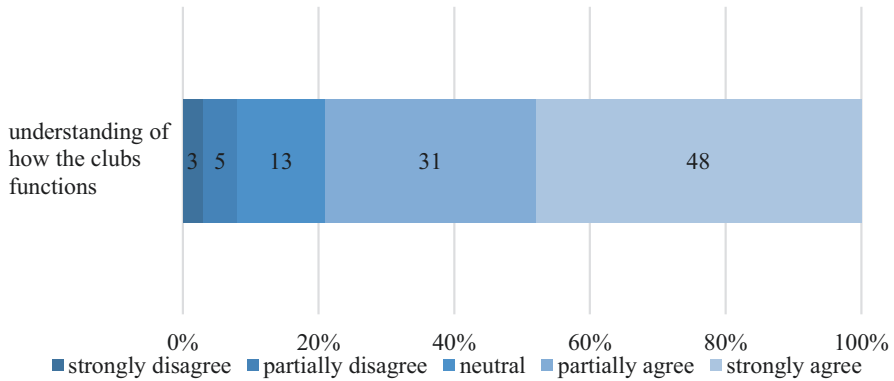


Fig. 7.11 Member’s knowledge of how the club functions (member survey, n = 513)

Regardless of most members’ absence from the general assembly and their reluctance of attempts for decision-making influence, they feel that they understand how the club functions (79%). And only 9% disagree with the examined statement (Fig. 7.11).

7.6 Voluntary Work

Volunteering in Hungary, based on the results of the Special Eurobarometer on Sport and Physical Activity (European Commission 2014), was slightly below the 7% European average with a figure for Hungary of 6%. In case of youth, 17% of the Hungarians volunteer, mostly in sports clubs, in comparison to the EU average of 24%. It was also found that among the volunteers, sports is one of the most frequent choices besides culture or education related activities. National surveys on volunteering reported different results according to targeted age, sample size or time period. Results found with different methodology showed that 40% of the total population got engaged in some sort of volunteering (Czike and Kuti 2005), while some years later results ranged between 13% and 30% (Géczi 2012). Behind volunteering most researchers found goodwill and strive for social contribution as a drive (Czike and Kuti 2005; Géczi 2012).

The attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work are described in Table 7.16. Clubs with agreement and disagreement with exclusive volunteer leadership are almost the same with 39% and 41% consequently, while one-fifth of the clubs does not have a clear opinion on the issue. The majority of the clubs in the Hungarian sample (71%) also think that the club should not consider members as customers that could not be expected to contribute with voluntary work, only 13% are of the opposite opinion, and 17% was not able formulate an opinion on this issue. In this regard, results found nationally are identical with the European average results, showing a strong civil identity within the function of the existing clubs in Hungary.

Table 7.16 Attitudes of sports clubs towards voluntary work (club survey, run by volunteers $n = 689$, members as customers $n = 673$, demonstrating passion $n = 702$, all members can be volunteers $n = 700$)

	Don't agree at all (%)	Don't agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Agree (%)	Totally agree (%)
Our club should be run exclusively by volunteers	24	15	20	17	24
Our club considers members as customers that cannot be expected to contribute with voluntary work	56	15	17	9	4
Our club's members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done	3	2	12	30	53
All members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications	4	2	8	18	68

Table 7.17 Total number of volunteers in clubs (club survey, fixed position(s) $n = 748$, no fixed position(s) $n = 879$)

	0–5	6–10	11–20	21–50	More than 50
Total number of volunteers in fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %)	35	28	24	11	2
Total number of volunteers in no fixed position(s) (share of clubs in %)	53	14	17	12	4

The clubs are of the opinion that their members demonstrate passion, dedication and energy for the work that needs to be done. Eighty-eight per cent of the surveyed clubs agreed with this statement, along with the low proportion of no clear opinion (12%) and 5% in disagreement with this statement. It must be emphasised that Hungarian clubs' satisfaction with their volunteers is among the highest. Also, the clubs in Hungary believe that all members can be volunteers regardless of their qualifications; all together 86% of clubs agree or strongly agree with this statement. This result, once again, is the highest for Hungarian clubs among the participating nations (Breuer et al. 2017). In this respect it seems that clubs may accept and appreciate all help they can get. The competition-oriented clubs need help in relation to their events, while leisure sports oriented clubs need volunteers for their daily operations (Table 7.17).

The civil initiative and involvement can also be described by the composition of human resources of a club. The total number of volunteers in fixed and not fixed positions was also asked. Specifically, in fixed positions 35% of the clubs have up to 5 volunteers, 28% have between 6 and 10 volunteers and 24% between 11 and 20 volunteers; more than 20 volunteers in fixed positions can be found in approximately 10% of the clubs. In case of volunteers in no fixed position, over half of the clubs have up to 5 volunteers, other volunteer number categories are represented by more or less 15%, but clubs with above 50 volunteers can be found only in 4% of clubs.

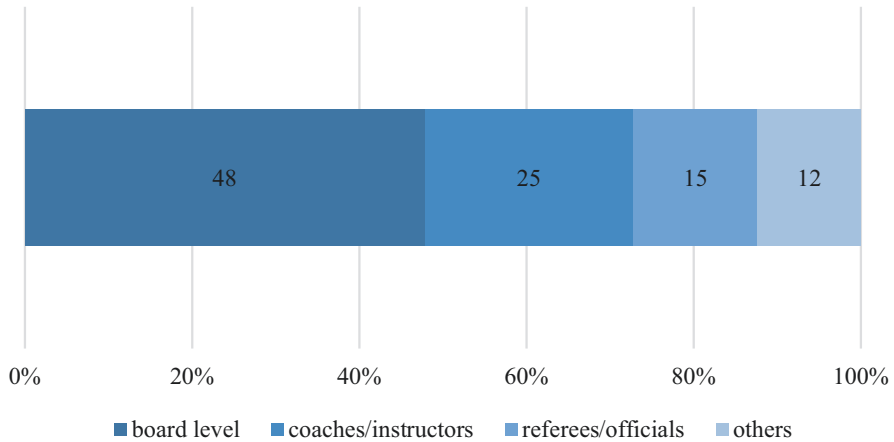


Fig. 7.12 Distribution of volunteers in fixed positions according to their tasks (club survey, $n = 711$)

Both of these results should be evaluated in the light of the fact that the majority of the clubs that participated are small. The results may also reflect a trend or a possible tradition for clubs not to have many volunteers in no fixed positions. This may also have relations to reluctance for delegation of tasks or fear of losing position or power by employed personnel or by volunteers in fixed positions. Such fear from volunteer contribution may be caused by the fact that calls for volunteers often times put emphasis on easier job market entry as a benefit for volunteer contribution (Fig. 7.12).

Volunteers in fixed positions mostly serve on the board level, which refers to 48% of volunteers in fixed positions, while 25% are coaches or instructors, 15% are referees, and the remaining 12% are completing other tasks in connection to preparing practices or competitions, organising travel or accommodation or managing fields or uniforms. The high proportion of board members may also be explained by the high prevalence of small clubs in the sample but also by the fact that positions of referees and even coaches are not perceived as traditional volunteer roles.

Problems associated with the recruitment and retention of volunteers do not lay heavily on the shoulders of the Hungarian clubs with regard to any of the three tasks in Table 7.18. Only about one quarter of the clubs perceived recruitment and retention as a big or a very big problem. There are some, but not substantial differences within the categories. It seems that the recruitment and retention of referees/officials was considered the least problematic as 65% of the clubs feel no or only small problems with that. In comparison, in case of board level volunteers and coaches, around half of the clubs reported no issues with recruitment and retention. A medium or bigger problem was reported by 50% of clubs (Table 7.18). This result may seem contradictory given that the general volunteering rate in Hungary is low. A possible explanation might be that the coach and referee position is not perceived as a real

Table 7.18 Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers (club survey, board level $n = 656$, coaches/instructors $n = 645$, referees/officials $n = 616$)

	No problem (%)	A small problem (%)	A medium problem (%)	A big problem (%)	A very big problem (%)
Problems with the recruitment and retention of volunteers on the board level	25	24	30	15	5
Problems with the recruitment and retention of coaches/instructors	30	21	21	19	9
Problems with the recruitment and retention of referees/officials	44	20	17	13	6

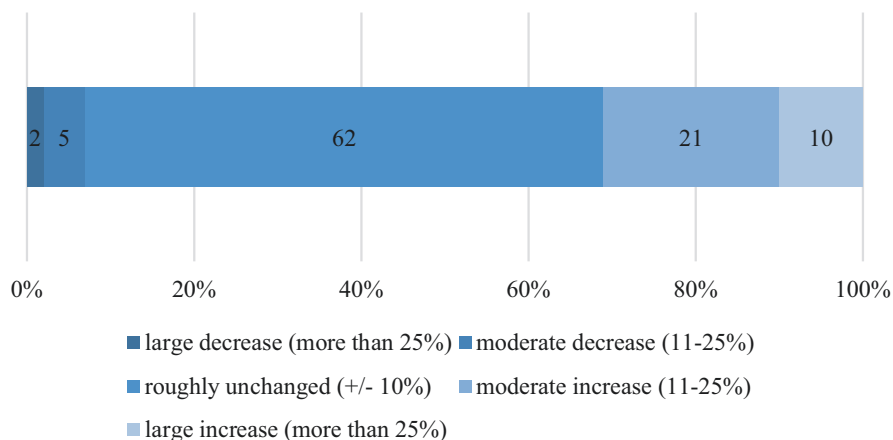


Fig. 7.13 Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years (club survey, $n = 707$)

volunteer role, additional to the fact that in sports, parents provide assistance to clubs without realising it as a volunteer contribution (Fig. 7.13).

Development in the number of volunteers in the last 5 years was also examined in this study. The concerns for volunteer involvement raised in Europe (Elmose-Østerlund et al. 2017) cannot be clearly tracked in Hungary. Only 7% of clubs reported a large or moderate decrease in volunteer numbers, which is below the survey average of 15%. It can be emphasised that the highest percentage of clubs experiencing an increase in the number of volunteers was measured in Hungary over the past 5 years in comparison to other countries in the survey: Thirty-one per cent of the clubs reported a moderate or large increase in their volunteer numbers to the survey average of 15% (Breuer et al. 2017). The increase may be explained by postmodern changes in society but also the increased attention that sports gets in the media in relation to its strategic sector nature – increased funding, new facilities and

Table 7.19 Measures taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers (club survey, encourage verbally $n = 747$, social gatherings $n = 747$, recruit through current network $n = 747$, pay for training $n = 747$, inform members $n = 747$, inform parents $n = 747$, benefits in kind $n = 747$, recruitment outside $n = 747$, management $n = 747$, written strategy $n = 747$, club does not do anything in particular $n = 853$)

	Yes (%)
The club encourages and motivates its volunteers verbally	38
The club arranges parties and social gatherings for the volunteers to strengthen group identity	31
The club mainly recruits through the networks of current volunteers and members	57
The club pays for volunteers to take training or gain qualification	13
The club informs members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work	25
The club informs parents of children who are members that they are expected to contribute with voluntary work	21
The club rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind	21
The club tries to recruit volunteers from outside existing club members	8
The club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management	21
The club has a written strategy for volunteer recruitment	4
The club does not do anything in particular	19

international events. Also, the Fina World Championships in 2017 created a hype around volunteering in sports (Perényi 2018) (Table 7.19).

The actions taken by sports clubs to recruit and retain volunteers showed that more clubs in Hungary make efforts in volunteer recruitment than in volunteer retention. The proportion of clubs recruiting within their existing networks are the same as the survey average, while clubs that encourage and motivate volunteers verbally are below, 38% in comparison to the average of 55%.

On the efforts on recruitment, 21% of the Hungarian clubs reported that the club has a volunteer or paid staff member with specific responsibility for volunteer management, and an even lower proportion has a written strategy outlining recruitment procedures. The clubs in Hungary use the capacities of their members and the parents of their members more often as they are both expected to contribute to the implementation of their clubs' activities (57%). Recruitment from outside networks is rare (8%) and it is below the survey average (14%).

The rewarding side, as mentioned, is weak. The verbal encouragement is present in 38% of the clubs and 21% rewards its volunteers with benefits in kind. Payment for volunteers to take training or gain qualification is used as a reward in 13% of the clubs, which, similarly to Spain and Poland, is far below the average (33%). This result on one hand can be a result of lack of resources such as funding for trainers or location for the training or the lack of time and interest expressed by volunteers. The organisation of social gatherings again is below the survey average of 45%. Only 31% of Hungarian clubs organises parties or social gatherings for their volunteers. It seems clubs are more understood as places for practice than socialising. The proportion of clubs, however, not getting engaged in anything in particular with

Table 7.20 Frequency of voluntary work of volunteers (member survey, $n = 389$)

	Once a year or less (%)	Once every 6 months (%)	Once every quarter (%)	Once a month (%)	Every other week (%)	Once a week (%)	2–4 days a week (%)	5 days a week or more (%)
Frequency of voluntary work of members	14	19	18	18	7	10	10	5

Table 7.21 Hours spent on voluntary work by volunteers in fixed positions on an average month in the season (member survey, $n = 179$)

	0–5	6–10	11–20	21–50	More than 50
Hours spent on voluntary work of members per month (share of volunteers in %)	29	23	22	16	11

regard to volunteer recruitment (19%) are only slightly above the survey average of 13% (Table 7.20).

The distribution of the frequency of voluntary work reported by volunteers in Hungarian clubs is more or less balanced over the predefined categories. It is to emphasise, however, that more than half of the volunteers gets engaged with supporting the clubs at least once in every 3 months, 18% once a month, 7% bi-weekly and only one quarter helps at least once a week. Regular volunteers contribute 2–4 days a week (10%) or 5 days a week or more (5%) (Table 7.21).

In an average month of a season, 29% of the volunteers in fixed positions contribute up to 5 hours a month of voluntary club work, which is the most frequently contributed time in the predefined categories. Twenty-three per cent of the volunteers reported to use 6–10 hours and 22% of clubs' volunteers help 11–20 hours in an average month. There are also a large proportion of volunteers that contribute more hours per month: Twenty-seven per cent of the volunteers can count 21 or above hours of volunteer contribution. The rather balanced dispersion across volunteer hours may reflect the diversity in the social position of volunteers or the needs of clubs distributed throughout different club sizes.

7.7 Conclusion

As part of the non-profit sector, sports clubs in Hungary are important platforms for civil initiatives and democratic decision-making. They are also sites for the exchange of sporting services, and they provide physical and sporting activities in local communities within both leisure and competitive sports. Sports clubs are also social melting pots for women, people with disabilities, the elderly or people with ethnic or migration backgrounds. Hungarian sports clubs also contribute to

public welfare in the areas of health, social integration, democracy and voluntary work.

Clubs offer a range of physical activities starting from health-enhancing physical activity through grass roots sports up to competition and elite sports. Clubs are dedicated to offer these activities and they not only feel that their sports disciplines are suitable as health-enhancing physical activity, but they are committed to provide local communities with their services in relation to sports. The value of their contribution to public health is unquestionable as the raising public health issues are present in society and as low participation rates are also severe in the country. On the other hand, clubs do not consider low sports participation as a problem of their own. Initiatives targeting underrepresented groups or offering maintained membership for athletes retiring from their sport are not in the view of club's policy. Opportunities in connection to services offered on lower levels of sports, including leisure sports or in roles different from training and competing such as volunteering or spectating can only rarely be found in practices.

It can be stated that sports clubs' role is also important in Hungary as they are open to including members from any segment of society, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, religion or occupation – but the measures of sports participation show social inequalities. Exclusion is not noticeable in policy or attitude of clubs at all. However, inclusive calls could be more visible in communication or programmes. Beside the importance given to ability and performance, as the majority of the clubs are seen as a place for elite and competitive athletes to develop, clubs could do more to match the contemporary trends towards more individualistic and non-competitive sports. The reason being that after the age of 18, club membership declines in clubs that focus on competition sports. As leisure sports organisations have limited ability and capacity to offer sporting services for citizens in older age categories, for example, and many people participate in sports or do physical activities more outside of organisational (club) affiliation, there could be a potential for gaining new members. Even though the values and social benefits associated with sports proved to be grounded in the life and activities of clubs and realised through club membership in general in Hungary, becoming a member of a sports club is under-utilised, and not an option for the majority of people in communities. Discrepancies may also be noticed as club loyalty is not fully capitalised by the vast majority of clubs that do not strive to retain members through the life course, for example. Young athletes tend to drop out of sports and their club membership shortly after a decline in their sports performance and/or their increased age or as a result of an injury. Clubs are limited in offering continued participating opportunities in lower divisions or leisure sports with or without competition elements. Young athletes terminating their competitive sporting career drop out of the view of their childhood club; and their contribution to roles in club management or volunteering become limited.

Clubs function as civil organisations with democratic decision-making procedures. Even though most clubs in Hungary aim to involve members in decision-making procedures, the majority of members does not participate in the general assembly of clubs. It is also not characteristic for members to participate in member meetings or other club meetings or speak their mind to key persons in the club

and share their views with other members in the club. Members hardly make attempts to influence decision-making in the club, but they feel that they have enough knowledge about how the club functions. This may be connected to the fact that the majority of clubs does not delegate decision-making from the board to committees. The withdrawal of members from self-expression may have its roots in historical events when activities of civil organisations were blocked or prohibited. This reflex is combined today by the complexity of financial procedures and importance given to politics of relations; both may make members feel incompetent to formulate opinions.

This phenomenon may also have an effect on how much and in what role members volunteer for sports clubs. Most volunteers are in fixed positions and are serving with tasks on the board level, but fewer serve in committees or help in daily operations. Many clubs with volunteer programmes expect their members and the parents of their athletes to contribute to the activities of the club and find the members to be enthusiastic and dedicated in their contributions. Most clubs are also open to receive any kind of help and from anyone willing to offer support, regardless of job qualifications. In terms of rewards and benefits, the recruitment of volunteers gets more attention than the retention of volunteers. Unlike clubs in other European countries, clubs in Hungary more rarely use the benefit of training and qualification for their volunteers, and less frequently organise social gatherings to strengthen club identity.

The social functions of sports clubs are influenced by the changes in sports realised as part of the centrally driven efforts to develop sports since 2010. Regardless of these efforts, some challenges may also be mentioned mainly around the scope and the distribution of funding. For example, the central funds dominantly reach the big clubs, and the successful clubs in team sports and traditionally also successful individual sports. Clubs without these characteristics hope that funding comes from the municipality level. The allocation of funds to clubs from municipalities is, firstly, not automatic; secondly, it does not include all clubs; and thirdly, it also supports elite success. Clubs with athletes representing sports with potential at national and international competition levels may have greater chances of receiving funding and funding at higher levels. Most clubs do not receive this support. Those clubs supported may receive a portion of their yearly budget, of which a part would be spent on the use of sporting facilities. The use of funding is closely monitored. In cases where the club is able to access additional income through providing public services, the funding in the following year may be lowered by the municipality.

Also, the attitude of municipality leaders towards sports is a critical factor in the funding and development of sports on the local level, even today. In cities where the city leadership prefers and supports sports, both sports facilities and sports programmes become part of the city strategy and were used in city marketing; thus their funding is more generous to develop sports and provide health-enhancing physical activities for their communities. With few exceptions, sporting facilities in general are not owned by sports clubs. The ownership of these facilities is attached to municipalities or the state. Their operation is managed by municipality-owned companies or by schools. Accordingly, sports clubs are obliged to pay rent when using

school or municipality sports halls or fields. The sports facility problem was well addressed by the TAO programme, new facilities are built, and old ones renovated all around the country.

The patterns of the results in this survey place Hungary in the same group with another former state-socialist and a Mediterranean country, Poland and Spain. It must be noted, however, that among the members of country clusters, large deviations may occur. For example, the reported proportion of clubs using public facilities may be higher in these countries in comparison to other countries included in the survey, but deviations of even 20–30% may occur among nations of former state-socialist countries. In some cases, the patterns of results in Hungary are more similar to countries in the sample such as Norway, Denmark or the Netherlands. This phenomenon requires deeper analysis, and further research about the historical context and specific system characteristics of clubs' social roles and functions in these former state-socialist countries, and their communities.

Sports clubs in Hungary may further contribute to health promotion, social cohesion and democratic participation with special initiatives and programmes. Their role in promoting public welfare in Hungary and, through that, in Europe could be more developed. Sports clubs in Hungary hide an unrealised potential for further integrating not only vulnerable groups but also societal segments presently inactive in sports and physical activities. Clubs could more effectively communicate their openness to receive members' opinion in their democratic decision-making and could be more conscious in delegation of decisions to committees and invite members to participate in the procedures and actions or simply express an opinion before making final decisions. They also could reach out more for local community and by providing services could gain new members. Call upon vulnerable groups and make efforts to comfort them in their needs or involve them in the clubs daily activities as participants or volunteers.

Sports in Hungary is facing a double challenge: new initiatives and developments fighting the instincts inherited from the past in the operation of sports clubs for a more inclusive and community-based sports and trends of individualisation and postmodernity of citizens wanting to be fitter and more active, but not necessarily within the boundaries of sports clubs.

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