

Sport participation in the European Union

Trends and differences

Commissioned by Nike Europe Operations Netherlands BV

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1. Introduction

1.1 Sport and the European Union

Sport is an important part of the European legacy. The origins of sport and the Olympic movement lie in Europe. Large proportions of European citizens participate in sport or are physically active. One of the distinctive characteristics of European sport is the fact that it is largely embedded within a network of sport clubs and federations, which organise competitions at all levels and are linked to one another through systems of promotion and relegation.

Europe is, moreover, as the European Commission puts it, ‘the powerhouse of world sport’.¹ It has been the host of more than half of all of the Olympic Games and World Cup Football Championships. European nations also dominate elite sports. At the end of the Athens Olympics, nine member states of the European Union found themselves in the top 20 of Olympic medal winners. Collectively they won some 286 medals, which is indeed more medals than all those of China, Russia and the United States combined.

In the past, the European Union has not involved itself with this sport movement to any great degree. The world of sport has always been seen as an autonomous field in which the EU should, in principle, not exert its direct influence. Sports organisations have had the authority to manage their own affairs within the confines of national legislation and European treaties. Furthermore, no legal basis for the direct intervention of the EU in the area of sport has ever been established.²

However, the increasing commercialisation and professionalisation of sport throughout the past decades has led to greater EU involvement in its development.³ Since sport has developed as an economic activity, it has been subject to the rules of the European Union Treaty, just like any other economic sector. The Bosman ruling is the most well-known example of this influence. In addition, the sport sector has fallen within the realm of EU general regulations with regard to, for instance, the issues of broadcasting rights, access to sporting events on television and a common anti-doping policy.⁴ When applying such rules, the EU has declared that the specific nature of sport will be taken into account, but sports organisations have no longer been afforded the exceptional status that they have demanded and had been given in this area up until this point.

This development raised considerable concerns. On the one hand, sports organisations feared that the expansion of EU involvement and authority in the field of sport might threaten

¹ European Commission 1998a. Virtually every branch of sport has a European sport federation and European championship. This is a tradition that emerged during the 1950s alongside the first steps that were being taken towards European integration on a political level at that time.

² Tokarski et al. 2004.

³ The first involvement of this nature dates from 1974 in the form of the ruling of the ECJ: C-3674 Walraeve v UCI [1974] ECR I-1405. See European Commission 1998a.

⁴ Tokarski et al. 2004.

their autonomy. On the other, many were concerned that the European model of sport would not survive if sport as an economic activity gained the upper hand. They feared that the influence of commercial enterprises, in particular media organisations, would become so great that the existing open sport competitions in Europe with their systems of promotion and relegation might be replaced by the closed competitions that characterise the American system. This development could damage the relationship between professional and amateur sport in Europe and thereby also the traditional organisational structure of sport in the member states according to the pyramid model.⁵

As a consequence, various national governments and sports organisations have urged the EU to explicitly recognise the importance of sport as a socio-cultural factor in Europe. The EU paid heed to this for the first time in the Declaration on Sport, which was added to the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1997. In this declaration, the Conference emphasised the social significance of sport, particular its role in forging identity and bringing people together. The declaration called on the bodies of the European Union to listen to sports associations when important questions affecting sport were at issue, with special consideration for the particular characteristics of amateur sport.⁶

Although this gave the EU no special mandate to actively and directly promote sport, the Treaty of Amsterdam may be regarded as a change in existing trends.⁷ Previously the EU had focused its attention on sport solely as an economic factor and an instrument of public relations. After the Treaty of Amsterdam, the European Commission adopted a new approach towards sport-related issues at the level of the European Union as well as that of individual member states. In the key publications that followed, the EU acknowledged the importance of sport for European identity and gave its support to the preservation of the social function of sport in the EU “and therefore the current structures of the organisation of sport in Europe”, while at the same time assimilating a changing economic and legal environment.⁸

According to the European Commission, this approach demanded the establishment of a new partnership between the European institutions, member states and sports organisations in order to advance the promotion of sport in Europe. The Commission indicated that the EU Treaty offered no room for large-scale intervention or support programmes, or even the implementation of a Community sports policy. However, it did emphasise its commitment to strengthening and fostering the educational and social functions of sport.⁹

Amongst other things, this commitment gave rise to the European Parliament and European Council’s decision to declare 2004 the European Year of Education through Sport. One of the chief aims thereof was to demonstrate to the citizens of Europe that the Community not only found the economic dimensions of sport of importance, but also its social and educational dimensions. In this way, the EU also wanted to make Europeans aware of the need

⁵ European Commission 1998a; European Commission 1999a.

⁶ European Commission 1997.

⁷ Tokarski et al 2004.

⁸ European Commission. 1999a.

⁹ European Commission 1999a. See also European Council 2000. Cf. Tokarski e.a. 2004.

to improve the physical condition and the social habits of students in Europe. The EU thus conveyed its broader concern about the risks of a sedentary way of life and social isolation stemming from the increasing use of new technologies.¹⁰

The proposed Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe recapitulates this EU involvement in sport and its limitations. Article I-17 gives the European Union the authority to carry out supporting, coordinating or complimentary action in the field of sport. This entitlement is further elucidated in Article III-282. It is here stipulated that the Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of the specific nature of sport, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.¹¹

From the Constitution and the various publications that preceded it, it is clear that the EU recognises the importance of the advancement of sport participation and physical activity among the citizens of Europe. In a declaration on sport made in Nice in 2000, the European Council stated that “sporting activity should be accessible to every man and woman, with due regard for individual aspirations and abilities, throughout the whole gamut of organised or individual competitive or recreational sports”.¹² The belief that social and educational values can be transmitted, social integration and inclusion can be advanced and a sedentary lifestyle may be combated through sport lay at the root of this.¹³

There is a broad base of support for this new approach among the citizens of Europe. A majority of more than sixty percent consider the inclusion of sport in the European constitution useful and believe that the EU should work together more extensively with sports organisations and national governments. Just over half of the population is of the opinion that the EU should intervene more with respect to European issues regarding sport. However, these views vary considerably between member states. Indeed, the support for an interventional role for the EU in the member states decreases in relation to both their GNP per capita and the extent to which a greater proportion of the population regularly participates in sport.¹⁴

1.2 Challenges for the promotion of sport

The perspective on sport that is currently developing within Europe presents great challenges to European institutions, member states, sports organisations and other stakeholders. This is even more the case in the light of the recent expansion of the European Union with ten new member

¹⁰ European Commission 2001.

¹¹ European Council. 2004.

¹² European Council 2000.

¹³ European Commission 2001.

¹⁴ The support for a more interventional role for the EU appears to be significantly related to the GDP on a purchasing power parity basis per capita (Spearman's rho: -.413, $\alpha=.04$) and with the percentage of the populations that never exercises or participates in sport (Spearman's rho: .627, $\alpha=.001$).

states and several other countries now also knocking at Brussels' door hoping to be let in. According to the data available, sport participation throughout the entire European community increased significantly throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The current degree and level of sport participation in Europe may well be viewed from such a global perspective, yet this should not blinker one to the existence of imbalanced structures and problematic developments in sport participation both within and between individual member states.

Firstly, different research studies in a variety of countries suggest that there are patterns of inequality with respect to participation in sport. In spite of its popularisation and democratisation, sport continues to be socially structured.¹⁵ There is a lower degree of participation in sport within a variety of population groups, such as the elderly, women, Secondly, there are signs of sport participation in various countries stagnating or even declining. This applies to the organised and competitive branches of sport in particular. Participation in sport within the context of sports clubs, to which the EU attaches great social importance, is under pressure. A policy that focuses primarily on the practice of sport in the framework of associations seems to be rather one-sided, especially given that the fitness branch is thriving and diversity in sport is increasing. New sports and sporting activities are continually emerging, which are partly practiced in a commercial setting or elsewhere, outside of the international system of sports clubs, sports associations and sport federations (see chapter 2 and 3).

Thirdly, research has indicated that a growing number of people in Europe do not get enough exercise to be able to remain healthy; this is a trend that had previously been identified in the United States and Canada. As far as certain social groups are concerned, one may even speak of a sedentary lifestyle that is characterised by a structural pattern of physical inactivity. Moreover, what is even more alarming is that this pattern is not only to be found among the elderly, but also young people.¹⁶

Fourthly, these structures and developments in sport participation do not occur in all countries to the same degree. The situation in each member state is the product of its own sport tradition, sport policy and sporting identity. On the one hand, this has led to a fascinating cultural diversity, which is distinctive to Europe. On the other, it has created structural differences in sport participation between countries. For example, the present study has determined that the percentage of the population that never participates in sport is significantly related to the degree of affluence in the country concerned (see chapter 2).

The developments in sport described above have not occurred in a vacuum, but are instead interwoven with broader societal developments. Lack of exercise has amongst other things been blamed on the progressive growth in technology and computerisation, as a result of which the average working hours have been reduced and physical exertion during work time have been diminished. Cultural and demographic developments, such as individualisation, informalisation and a sharp rise in the aging population, have been presented as explanations for the decline in competitive and club sport (see chapter 4).

A thorough knowledge of all of these structures and developments in sport and their relationship to broader societal processes is necessary to be able to promote participation in

¹⁵ Scheerder 2003; Marivoet 2001; Wagner 1997. See also the references in chapter 3.

¹⁶ Brettschneider & Naul 2004.

sport and physical exercise in Europe effectively. Yet this is exactly where the rub lies. Despite many research studies on sport, there is still no uniform view with respect to the precise direction of sport participation trends in the European Union, the nature of these trends, the magnitude of the problems identified and the differences between the various member states in this regard. Furthermore, the sport policy of sports organisations and national governments in the various member states is only based to a limited extent on theoretical insights into the key drivers for sport participation and non-participation in the European Union. This means that it is unclear in which way sport can be efficiently and effectively promoted so that increasingly more people enjoy sports and become and remain physically active. The present study hopes to contribute to the deepening of this insight (see chapter 4).

The problems that have been outlined above are a concern to many European institutions, from sports organisations and national governments to the Union in its supporting, coordinating and complementary role. However, as the realisation of this book has shown, this involvement stretches much further. Commercial organisations and public institutions concerned with welfare, health and education also attach great importance to the intensification of sport and thereby also to social inclusion and health in the European Union. The initiative for this study was taken by Nike who, partly on the basis of the results, wishes to establish a platform for the stakeholders who want to be involved in the debate about a coordinated and well-underpinned policy for sport and community development within the European Union.

1.3 Research questions and aims

In order to improve insight into sport participation within the European Union, the following questions set the parameters for the present study.

- To what extent have the member states of the European Union collected data on sports participation and how is sport defined and measured in this regard?
- What is the scale and nature of sport participation in the member states of the European Union and which trends may be identified on both a European level and a country-by-country basis?
- What are the key drivers of sports participation and non-sports participation at a European level and in the individual member states?
- To what extent do the governments and sporting organisations in the countries concerned attune themselves to these key drivers?
- To what extent is further research necessary to obtain a complete picture of the level of sport participation in the European Union and the trends and motivations related to this?

In answering these questions, this book aims to offer insight into the available empirical data on sport participation in the European Union. We describe the nature and extent of the practice of sport in the various member states – or, where this is not possible due to the lack of data, a geographical example of several member states – and investigate whether it is possible to

identify trends on a national and European level on the basis of this data and the extent to which comparison between the member states is possible. Moreover, this data is used to determine the size of the current ‘information gap’ on sports participation levels and trends in Europe. In addition to this, we also discuss the theoretical state of affairs with respect to the key drivers of sport participation and non-participation and the lessons that may be learned for policymaking intended to stimulate sport participation.

1.4 Defining sport

Until the mid-twentieth century, sport in most European countries took place almost exclusively in the context of sport clubs. Many sport clubs were established for this purpose. They usually had access to sport facilities necessary for the practice of one or more types of sport. These clubs made it possible for organised sporting competitions to be held as a part of an international network of sports associations and federations.

Today, organised competitive sport remains an important cornerstone for the practice of sport in Europe. A significant proportion of the European population are members of sport clubs or other sporting organisations that are affiliated to a national sports federation and through this to an international sports federation also. A pyramid structure has arisen within these configurations in which selection is made on the basis of performance and a strictly organised system of promotions and relegations. Although this pyramid structure is vulnerable to erosion and under dispute in various countries, it was still referred to by the European Commission in 1998 as the ‘European Model of Sport’.

Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, however, the practice of sport has changed considerably in character. Apart from pyramid structured sports organisations, people increasingly began to practice sports in a more informal, spontaneous and individualised fashion, like jogging in the streets, badminton in the parks and volleyball on the beach; later followed by fitness and aerobics at home or in the gyms.

This development was part of a wider process of what has been called ‘informalisation’: the spread of more ‘permissive’ ways of behaving, which gathered momentum in the 1960s and early 1970s.¹⁷ In the field of sports, this process of informalisation was pushed and accelerated by an increase in leisure time and income in many western societies, a shift from physically demanding factory work to inactive office work, the realisation of a social welfare policy aimed at improving the quality of life and physical fitness among the population and the commercialisation of the supply of sporting goods and exercise products.¹⁸

The world of sports underwent significant expansion and diversification. More and more people started to participate outside the sports club structures. At the same time, the sporting culture penetrated society at large.¹⁹ By the late seventies, sportswear and fashion was

¹⁷ Wouters 1986.

¹⁸ Rader 1991.

¹⁹ Dietrich & Heinemann 1989.

merging and soon sports shoes, shirts, and other things, which could formerly be seen only on the sports fields or in the gyms, were being worn in the streets as normal fashion, even by non-sports participants.

As a consequence of this process of diversification and differentiation, there is a greater variety of sports on offer today than a few decades ago. Fitness, aerobics, step aerobics, power pumping, tae bo, BMX biking, skateboarding, rafting, mountain biking, snowboarding, freestyle skiing, scuba diving, triathlons; while these and various other sports did not even exist or were unknown in Europe in the beginning of the 1970s, they are now part of the extensive package of practiced sports available. Furthermore, it is not just these sports themselves that are new. Their customs, rituals and ways they are practiced also deviate from what was usual in traditional competitive sports.

In this way, sport has become a strongly differentiated and diffuse phenomenon, which is practiced for many different ends, in diverse ways and in divergent contexts and organisational forms. How people experience sport is also related to this. More than ever before, people have the tendency to label their activities as 'sport'. This is furthered by the fact that sport has been 'upgraded' in both a social and cultural sense during the past few decades. One of the consequences of this is that sport in the year 2004 encompasses a broad spectrum with the Olympic games at one extreme, as the ultimate manifestation of organised competitive sport, and at the other, all kinds of physical activity that people (in contrast to fifty years ago) perceive as sporting behaviour.

In view of this historical development, we define sport very broadly; indeed much more broadly than is customary within the American sport science literature. In North America, sport is a term generally used to refer to physical activity that is governed, structured and competitive. In contrast, in Europe the term sport is also applied to exercise and physical recreation (or leisure-time physical activity as opposed to occupational physical activity).²⁰ Consequently, the Council of Europe has defined 'sport' in the European Sports Charter as "all forms of physical activity which, through causal or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels."²¹ Although this definition may also be contested (are Olympic shooting and boxing not really sports, but is gardening actually a sport?), it expresses the broad interpretation of sport that we have also adopted in this study. Here we understand sport as a collective term that embraces a broad scale of activities from physical recreation to exercise and competitive sport.²²

²⁰ Bouchard & Shephard 1994; Biddle & Mutrie 2001; Tammelin 2003.

²¹ See COMPASS 1999.

²² For reasons of comparability, however, hunting and angling have been left out in all statistics on sports participation in this book. Only in few countries, like Italy and Spain, these activities are included in sport participation surveys and sport association membership figures.

1.5 Research methods

This research surveys the existing data on sport participation. No new primary research has been conducted into sport participation in the EU or the individual member states. Indeed, the goal was precisely to bring together the extensive, but highly fragmented research data on sport participation and exercise behaviour that are available in the various member states of the European Union and to explore the extent to which an overview of the trends with and differences between different countries could be created. Two types of existing data were collected: survey data on sport participation and physical activity on a national and EU-wide level, and membership figures of sports organisations from the individual member states. Moreover, wherever possible secondary analyses were conducted on the databases.

Surveys on sport are generally developed and conducted independently of one another, which can lead to differences in questionnaires, research designs, methodology and definition of terms. Such disparities render the comparison of research results problematic. Even within a single year, research conducted in one and the same country can result in significant differences in the recorded figures for sport participation of up to forty percent.²³ Various factors play a role in this: the description and definition of the notions of sport and physical activity, the interview method, the sample size, the period of reference, the use of a prompt card²⁴, the number of sports mentioned and their wording, the nature of questions about the frequency, duration and intensity of the activity, and so forth.²⁵

Nevertheless, this does not necessarily mean that the value of the available data in the various countries should be underestimated. Firstly, increasing use has been made of refined techniques for secondary analysis.²⁶ Secondly, national surveys, however different they may be, are valuable with respect to the information that they provide about the nature, frequency, duration, context and motives for sport participation, in relation to the background characteristics of the respondents. Thirdly, with the necessary caution, *trend directions* in sport participation and physical activity can be compared with each other, even if the underlying data is based on different definitions and methods. Trends can only really be traced when surveys on sport participation and physical activity are periodically repeated in an identical fashion. Unfortunately, there are few member states that possess such longitudinal data.

²³ Hartmann-Tews 1996.

²⁴ COMPASS 1999; Mussino 2002. To increase the objectivity and comparability of the surveys, most countries make use of a prompt card. These cards provide a list of sports from which the respondents identify those sports in which they have participated. The use of prompt cards is considered good practice: if cards are not used and respondents are allowed to self-define the activities they consider to be sports, then this may lead to a level of unquantifiable variation and likely under-reporting. However, these prompt cards cannot be all-inclusive and thus need to include an open category. Moreover, different countries use different prompt cards (with regards to both the number and the wording of the sports listed), again creating problems of validity in making cross-national comparisons. Previous research has indicated that, if a prompt card is not used, the level of sports participation is likely to be underestimated, particularly for those recreational activities that many people may not consider to be sport, for example, cycling.

²⁵ ISI/CONI 1994; COMPASS 1999; Mussino 2002.

²⁶ As Gratton has done in the context of the COMPASS-project; see below. Cf. Rütten et al 2001.

In addition to this, the comparability of research data on sport and physical activity has increased over time due to the development and application of internationally standardised questionnaires, such as those used in the framework of the COMPASS project (directed at the CO-ordinated Monitoring of Participation in SportS) and the HETUS project (Harmonised European Time Use Studies), and like the ‘International Physical Activity Questionnaires’ (IPAQ) developed in the context of international health promotion campaigns.

In the context of the COMPASS project, Chris Gratton (Sheffield Hallam University, UK) was commissioned by CONI, UK Sport and Sport England in 1998 to produce a survey of the national databases that were available for the fifteen countries that made up the European Union at that time. Further to this, Gratton made a comparison of sport participation for six countries on the basis of a secondary analysis of the available research data. Amongst other things, his research resulted in recommendations for the harmonisation of research into sport participation.²⁷

The COMPASS network has adopted a minimalist approach to making comparisons between different countries, offering a framework for the analysis of the structure of participation based on three basic components of sports participation: a quantitative component; a qualitative component; and an institutional (organisational) component. The quantitative component of participation is measured by the frequency of participation over a year. The qualitative component relates to whether any of the occasions was competitive or not. Furthermore, the organisational component deals with the question of whether the sport was practiced as a member of a sports club or otherwise.

In order to measure these dimensions, COMPASS recommends the adoption of five core questions in sports participation surveys:

1. Have you taken part in any of the activities on this card in the last twelve months?
2. If you have, list all the activities in which you have taken part in the last twelve months, and the number of occasions (i.e. days) you have taken part in each activity.
3. Have you taken part in any other sport(s) or physical activities not listed on the card? If so, which ones, and how many occasions have you taken part in each over the last twelve months?
4. For all the activities you mentioned in 2 and 3 above:
 - a. On any of these occasions was the participation part of an organised competition? Yes/No
 - b. On any of these occasions was the participation part of the activities of a sports club or association of which you are a member? Yes/No
5. Have you taken part in any of the activities you have mentioned in 2 and 3 in the last four weeks? If so, which ones, and on how many occasions have you taken part in each over the last four weeks?

This framework requires the use of a prompt card, acknowledging that it is not feasible to suggest that every country uses the same prompt card. However, COMPASS expects that

²⁷ COMPASS 1999.

countries could agree on a core list of sports that all countries would include on their prompt card, and that each country could add a supplementary list of sports to this, comprising sports not in the core list but particularly relevant in their own country. This would recognise the importance of cultural variation.²⁸

With the help of this framework, sport participation can be summarised in a multidimensional scheme and comparisons of the frequency of participation, club membership and participation in competitions can be made. Additionally, on the basis of this, the annual sport frequency according to which people are classified as incidental ($\geq <12$), irregular ($\geq <60$), regular ($\geq 60 < 120$) or intensive (≥ 120) participants in sport can also be determined. Given that research institutes in an increasing number of countries have started to make use of these COMPASS recommendations, this scheme can now be applied to nine European countries. The comparisons, however, involve research data collected from different periods. Moreover, in most countries there is a lack of repeated research studies, which means that trends in sport participation and physical activity can only be identified to a limited extent.²⁹ Increasing these comparisons according to the COMPASS guidelines is also hampered by the fact that pan-European research, such as the Eurobarometers that will shortly be discussed, uses other questionnaires. This often renders both the classification of the population's sporting behaviour into the COMPASS frequency groups, and their correlation with club membership and competition participation, impossible.

The HETUS project has produced *Guidelines on harmonised European time use surveys*. In 2004, the European Commission published its first compendium of European statistics on the way in which Europeans spend their time, based on time use surveys that were conducted in ten different European countries (Belgium, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Norway, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom) according to these guidelines.

The time use research that is based on these guidelines employs questionnaires and diaries through which respondents provide detailed insights into how they spend their time during two days at time intervals of ten minutes. Similar time use surveys were also available for Denmark, Romania, the Netherlands and Portugal, but their survey methods deviated from the European guidelines and did not therefore produce comparable results. It is expected that time use survey data will also be available from Bulgaria, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, and Spain in the near future.³⁰

The internationally standardised physical activity questionnaire IPAQ has been developed in the context of international health concerns and health promotion campaigns, on the initiative of Michael Booth (University of New South Wales, Australia) and supported by the WHO. Using IPAQ, respondents are requested to think about all the vigorous activities that involve hard physical effort that they did during the previous week. These vigorous activities are illustrated as activities that make you breathe much harder than normal and may include heavy lifting, digging, aerobics, or fast cycling, at least 10 minutes at a time. Other

²⁸ COMPASS 1999.

²⁹ <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/sportcompass.htm> (accessed 01/12/2004).

³⁰ European Commission 2004b. European Commission 2004a.

questionnaires of this kind also include questions on the frequency, duration and intensity of physical activities that make one breathe harder than normal.³¹

To obtain existing data on both a national and Europe-wide level, we approached our contacts in all of the EU member states who were involved in the production or analysis of sport participation surveys (see the preface for a list of contributors to this study). We asked them for existing data on sport participation and physical activity, based on national population research conducted during the last ten years, which, wherever possible, were subdivided into frequency, duration, intensity, branches of sport, the organisation of sport and socio-demographic variables. The data provided by our contacts was supplemented with information from secondary literature from the countries in question and data from the publications of various European research groups that are active in this area, such as the HEPA network (European Network for the Promotion of Health-Enhancing Physical Activity), the EUPASS network (European Physical Activity Surveillance System), the RNTU (Research Network on Time Use), the European Heart Network, and the COMPASS network.

This data was also compared with the membership figures of sports organisations. The advantage of this information is that it provides insight into the differences between the various branches of sport. Since this data has often already been collected and published in various European Union member states for several decades, it is possible to use it to identify long term trends in the development of the popularity of individual branches of sport.

However, such data also has significant limitations. Firstly, not all members of sports clubs are active sport participants. Many of them formerly participated in the sport concerned or are members due to the social function of the club. Secondly, these statistics are primarily related to sport participation in a competitive context. They provide no insight whatsoever into the informal or commercially organised sports, such as walking, cycling and fitness. It is precisely these sports that come to the fore as the most frequently practiced sports in surveys. Thirdly, the use of this data is highly dependent on the degree to which participation in sport occurs within the context of sport organised by clubs. As sport participation increasingly takes place in schools/universities and as commercial sport providers have secured a larger market share, these membership figures offer a more limited view of reality.³²

On a Europe-wide level, a ‘pan-EU survey on consumer attitudes to physical activity, body weight and health’ and the various Eurobarometers have also been used. The pan EU-survey on consumer attitudes concerned the way in which European citizens spend their leisure time. The various Eurobarometers offer interesting pan-European survey data on sport behaviour.³³

Since 1973, the Eurobarometers have periodically been conducted, but until the end of the 1990s questions on sport behaviour were only sporadically included. Although sport participation and physical activity were to some extent dealt with, the manner in which the

³¹ For more information on IPAQ see www.ipaq.ki.se.

³² See also Van Bottenburg 2001.

³³ Questions on sport are posed in the following Eurobarometers (EB): EB19 (1983); EB28 and EB28.1 (1987); EB33 and EB34.2 (1990); EB47.2 (1997); EB50.1 (1998); EB52.1 (1999); EB55.1 (2001); EB58.2 and EB2003.1 (2003); EB60.0 (2003); EB62.0 (2004).

questions were posed varied so greatly that comparisons with respect to differences across time are hardly or not possible. In recent years, the collection of data has greatly improved. Due to the European Year of Education through Sport, in 2003 and 2004 new (and more extensive) surveys were held among the citizens of the EU member states with regard to their sport behaviour and the image of sport, which used questions suitable for comparison. Furthermore, in 2002 a Eurobarometer was held concentrating on the physical activity of EU citizens.³⁴

An extensive literature study was also conducted for this research into the key drivers of sport participation and non-participation. This focused on literature from the field of sport psychology with respect to motivation factors as well as studies from sport sociology that explore socialisation factors. In addition, this literature study focused on a review of scientific theories about the determinants of sport behaviour and the dropping out of sport.

1.6 Structure of the book

This book is comprised of empirical, theoretical and policy-related chapters. The second and third chapters provide a descriptive empirical overview of levels and trends in sport participation within the European Union and the differences between the member states in this regard. In the second chapter, the overview is based on international comparative research conducted at a pan-European level. The third chapter provides empirical depth to this information with respect to each individual member state on the basis of national research data. In the fourth chapter, we discuss explanations for the differences that have been identified from a theoretical perspective and explore the key drivers of sport participation further. As a corollary to this, the fourth and the concluding chapter deal with the way in which sport participation and physical activity can be most effectively and efficiently promoted. In this regard, the current gaps in research and knowledge about sport development in the European Union are also discussed.

³⁴ The various Eurobarometers on sport behaviour are dealt with extensively in chapter 2.

2. Sport in the European Union: levels, trends and differentiation

2.1 Overall levels and general trends

It is clear that participation in sport in Europe has reached high levels. In a special Eurobarometer on the citizens of the European Union and sport, which was conducted in 2004 on behalf of the European Commission, 60% of the inhabitants of the 25 EU member states stated that they participate in sport or exercise every so often.

The downside is, of course, that 40% of the European population indicated that they never exercise or play sport at all.³⁵ Moreover, the percentage of the European population doing exercise or sport falls sharply if one focuses on a regular or intensive sport participation level. In 2003, 38% of the total population of the fifteen member states participated in sport or exercised at least once a week, which more or less corresponds to ‘regular or intensive sport participation’ according to the COMPASS General Model (≥ 60 times a year; see chapter 1), while 17% of all European Union citizens revealed that they exercise or play sport three or more times a week. In COMPASS terms, they belong to the category of intensive participants in sport (≥ 120 times a year).

There are also significant differences between the member states in this respect. Finland is the most active sporting nation: 76% of the total population regularly or intensively exercises or participates in sport. Hungary finds itself at the bottom of the league with only 22%. This is a difference of 54 percentage points (see figure 2.1.). When one considers the percentage of the population that never exercises or plays sport, there are even bigger differences, namely 62 percentage points, between Portugal (66%) and once again Finland (4%) at both extremes (see figure 2.2.).

³⁵ The question asked “How often do you exercise or play sport.”

Figure 2.1 Percentage of population in 15 EU member states aged 15 and over who do exercise or play sport, by frequency (2004). Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0, 2004.

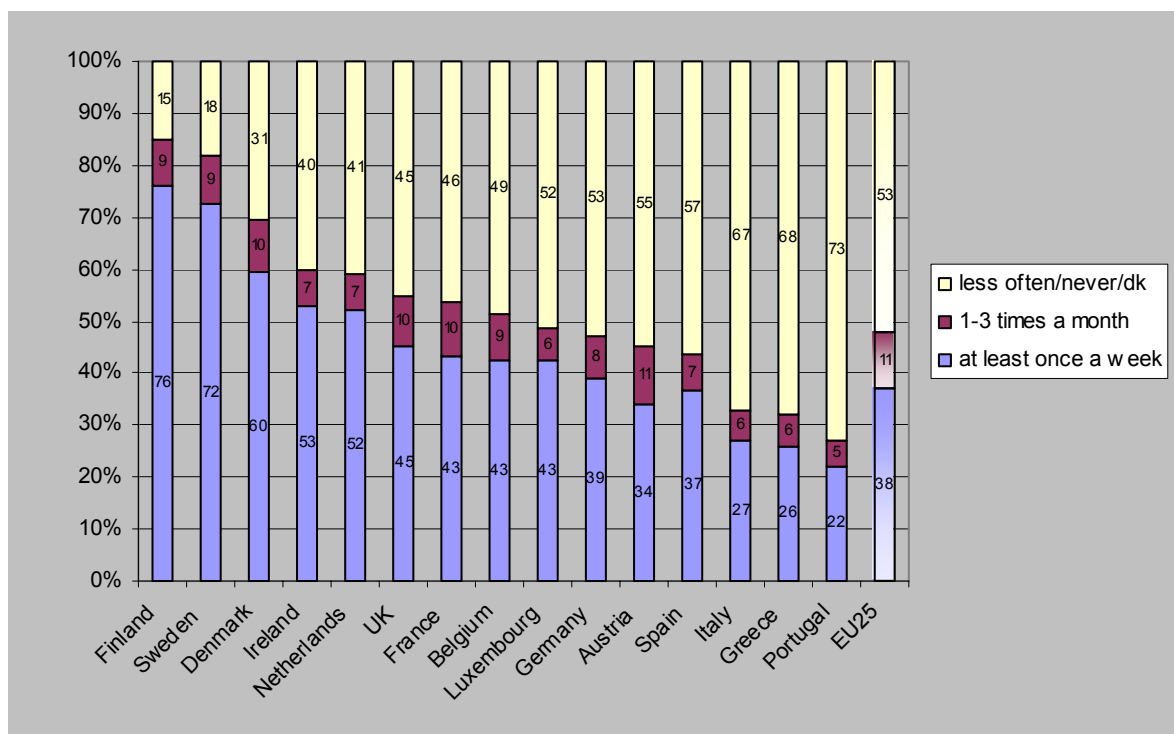
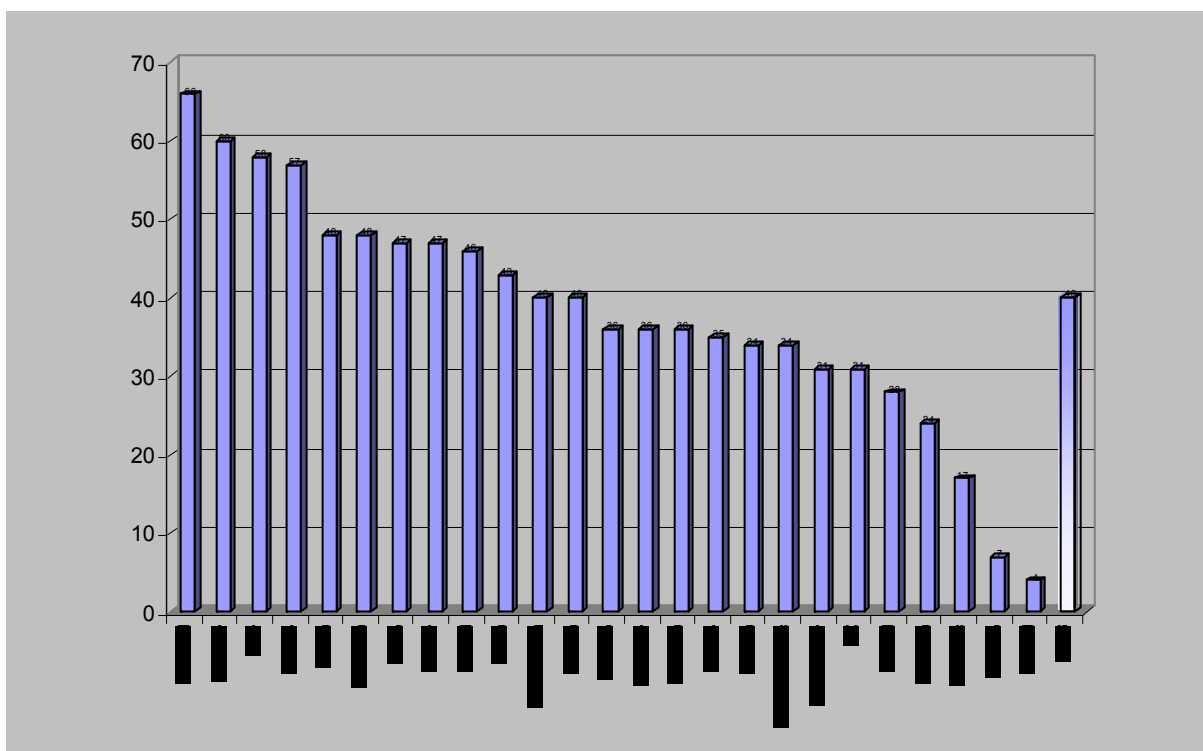


Figure 2.2: Percentage of population in 25 EU member states aged 15 and over whom never do exercise or play sport (2004). Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0, 2004.



A geographical structure in the degree of sport participation can be derived from the above two figures. The levels of sport are highest in the Scandinavian countries and lowest in the southern and eastern countries of the European Union, while the countries in the west find themselves in the middle. A number of countries deviate from this structure: in Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Malta and Cyprus, a higher percentage of the population regularly or intensively exercises or participates in sport than the European average.

Great differences in the level of affluence between the countries lie behind this geographical structure. There appears to be a significant correlation between the percentage of the population that never exercises or participates in sport and the GDP per capita on a purchase power parity basis (Spearman's rho: $-.530$; $\alpha = .006$).

On the basis of the Eurobarometers it cannot be determined whether participation in sport has actually increased or declined over the last decades. There were indeed questions on sport included in (standard) Eurobarometers in 1983, 1987, 1990 and annually since 1997, but these dealt with other subjects (particularly club membership), target groups (primarily young people), or differed so greatly that the results are not appropriate for comparison. In 2003 and 2004 a more or less identical questionnaire was employed. Undoubtedly the availability of data on sport in Europe will improve greatly if these two Eurobarometers mark the beginning of a longitudinal research approach, which should produce data that is suitable for comparison.

The data from 2003 and 2004 show an increase in sport participation within the fifteen original EU member states. During these years, the percentage of people who exercised or played sport at least once a week increased from 35% to 38%. Greece, Belgium, Finland and France bore witness to even greater increases (from 6 to 9 percentage points). Only in Italy and Austria were the percentages for 2004 lower than for 2003. The significant increase in most

countries suggests that methodological differences between these barometers may have distorted the results. This suspicion is reinforced by the analysis of supplementary research data from the individual member states (see chapter 3 for more details). These data point to a more differentiated development between the various member states and to a stagnation, or even decline in sport participation in some countries. The repeat of the Eurobarometers using exactly the same approach and questions should establish whether there is real evidence of a trend, i.e. that the increase in sport participation suggested by the 2003 and 2004 data will continue.

When the data from a number of pan-European research studies about the level of sport participation in the individual member states are compared, it appears that the order of ranking of the member states has remained extremely constant throughout the past seven years (see table 2.1. and 2.2.). In spite of divergent perspectives on and questions about exercise, sport and physical activity as well as several other methodological differences between the various research studies, the ranking orders have displayed a highly significant degree of concordance (Kendall's W: .878; sign. .000).

Table 2.1: Percentage of population in 15 EU member states aged 15 and over who do exercise, sport and physical activity, ranked according to the level of participation according to various standardised pan-EU surveys, 1997-2004.

IEFS*		IEFS**		EB***		EB****		EB*****	
1997	%	1997	%	1999	%	2003	%	2004	%
Sweden	32	Finland	92	Sweden	40	Sweden	17	Finland	15
Finland	33	Sweden	90	Finland	37	Finland	18	Sweden	18
Ireland	35	Austria	87	Denmark	29	Denmark	38	Denmark	31
Austria	38	Ireland	87	Austria	28	Ireland	44	Ireland	40
Netherlands	43	Netherlands	85	Luxembourg	28	UK	49	Netherlands	41
Denmark	46	Luxembourg	78	UK	25	Netherlands	50	UK	45
Luxembourg	47	Denmark	77	Netherlands	24	Austria	51	France	46
UK	48	UK	77	France	23	Luxembourg	52	Belgium	49
Germany	56	Germany	71	W-Germany	23	W-Germany	52	Luxembourg	52
Greece	62	France	65	Ireland	22	France	56	Germany	53
France	63	Spain	63	Italy	21	E-Germany	57	Austria	55
Spain	65	Italy	62	Spain	21	Belgium	58	Spain	57
Italy	66	Belgium	62	Belgium	20	Italy	59	Italy	67
Belgium	67	Greece	62	E-Germany	18	Spain	60	Greece	68
Portugal	83	Portugal	40	Portugal	15	Portugal	70	Portugal	73
				Greece	12	Greece	76		
<i>Total EU 15</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>Total EU 15</i>	<i>31</i>	<i>Total EU 15</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>Total EU 15</i>	<i>54</i>	<i>Total EU 24</i>	<i>53</i>

Sources: * Percentages that do not meet the physical activity recommendations of at least 30 minutes per day. Source: European Commission 1999b. N.B.: Based on data about recreational physical activity only. Research carried out by the Institute of European Food Studies (IEFS).

** Percentage practicing any recreational physical activity in a typical week. Source: Martinez-Gonzalez et.al. (2001). Research carried out by IEFS.

*** Percentage that spend most their free time on sports and physical activities. Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 52.1, 1999 (computer file, Amsterdam, Steinmetz Archive, P1472), Brussels.

**** Percentage that exercise or play sport less than once a month or never. Source: European Commission (2003).

***** Percentage that exercise or play sport less than once a month or never. Source: European Commission (2004c).

This concurrence underscores the existence and consistency of a geographical structure, which is related to socio-economic differences. The table demonstrates that this not only applies to the

extent to which sport is practiced in a more restricted sense (sport and exercise), but also in a far broader context (recreational physical activity).³⁶

Table 2.2: Ranking orders of 15 EU member states, ranked according to the level of exercise, sport and physical activity in the various standardised pan-EU surveys, 1997-2004

	1997	1997	1999	2003	2004	Mean
Sweden	1	2	1	1	2	1.4
Finland	2	1	2	2	1	1,6
Denmark	6	7	3	3	3	4.4
Ireland	3	4	10	4	4	5.0
Netherlands	5	5	7	6	5	5.6
Austria	4	3	4	7	11	5.8
UK	8	8	6	5	6	6.6
Luxembourg	7	6	5	8	9	7.0
France	11	10	8	10	7	9.2
Germany	9	9	9	9	10	9.2
Belgium	14	13	13	11	8	11.8
Spain	12	11	12	13	12	12.0
Italy	13	12	11	12	13	12.2
Greece	10	14	15	15	14	13.6
Portugal	15	15	14	14	15	14.6

Sources: see table 2.1.

The time use research, harmonised on a European scale, not only results in comparable differences, but also offers deeper insight into sport participation and physical activity. Using this method it seems that once again the inhabitants of the Scandinavian countries are the most active with regard to sport (see table 2.3.). They devote the most time per day to sport and exercise in its broadest sense and more specifically to active sports (including jogging, ball games, gymnastics and fitness exercise, and so on). These data also corroborate the findings of the Eurobarometer 62.0 from 2004 (see figure 2.2), which suggest that, in the context of Europe, the Slovenian population does comparatively more exercise and sport. Further analysis of the time use research data shows that this is primarily caused by a great deal of time being devoted to walking and hiking. When time spent on sport is considered as a percentage of total free time, Slovenia surpasses even the Scandinavian countries and is only superseded by France. The reason for this lies in the amount of leisure time available, which, in all of the countries studied, is lowest in France and highest in Scandinavia.³⁷

³⁶ See the elucidation of the various research studies used in table 2.1.

³⁷ European Commission 2004a.

Table 2.3: Sports and exercise among women and men aged 20 to 74 in time spent per day and as percentage of total free time (data collection between 1998-2002, varies per country).

Sports and exercise excluding walking dog*							
	Women	Men	Mean#		Women	Men	Mean
	Hours and minutes per day				Percentage of total free time		
Finland	0:28	0:37	0:32	France	9	13	11
Slovenia	0:26	0:36	0:31	Slovenia	10	11	10.5
Norway	0:28	0:33	0:30	Finland	9	10	9.5
France	0:23	0:36	0:29	Sweden	8	10	9
Germany	0:28	0:29	0:28	Germany	9	8	8.5
Sweden	0:25	0:32	0:28	Norway	8	9	8.5
Estonia	0:17	0:28	0:22	Estonia	6	9	7.5
Belgium	0:15	0:22	0:18	Belgium	5	7	6
Hungary	0:13	0:21	0:17	Hungary	5	6	5.5
UK	0:11	0:18	0:14	UK	4	6	5
Sports and exercise including walking dog**							
	Women	Men	Mean#		Women	Men	Mean
	Hours and minutes per day				Proportion of people who spent any time on the activity, % per day		
Finland	0:35	0:42	0:39	Finland	37	38	37.5
Sweden	0:33	0:39	0:36	Sweden	33	32	32.5
Slovenia	0:29	0:40	0:34	Slovenia	31	33	32
Norway	0:31	0:37	0:34	Germany	33	29	31
Germany	0:32	0:32	0:32	Norway	31	30	30.5
France	0:23	0:36	0:29	France	22	28	25
Estonia	0:22	0:33	0:27	Belgium	17	23	20
Belgium	0:18	0:26	0:22	UK	13	17	15
UK	0:17	0:24	0:20	Hungary	11	16	13.5
Hungary	0:15	0:23	0:19	Estonia	-	-	-
Active sports***							
	Women	Men	Mean#		Women	Men	Mean
	Hours and minutes per day				Proportion of people who spent any time on the activity, % per day		
Norway	0:12	0:15	0:13	Finland	19	20	19.5
Finland	0:11	0:15	0:13	Germany	17	15	16
Germany	0:12	0:13	0:12	Norway	14	16	15
Sweden	0:09	0:16	0:12	Sweden	11	16	13.5
Slovenia	0:07	0:12	0:09	Slovenia	10	13	11.5
UK	0:07	0:12	0:09	Estonia	11	10	10.5
France	0:05	0:11	0:08	UK	9	12	10.5
Belgium	0:05	0:10	0:07	Belgium	7	10	8.5
Estonia	0:04	0:06	0:05	France	6	10	8
Hungary	0:02	0:06	0:04	Hungary	3	5	4

* Includes walking, hiking, active sports (see below), productive exercise (covers hunting, fishing, and picking berries, mushrooms and herbs), and sports related activities (include activities that are related to but are not actual exercise, for example, assembling sports equipment or changing clothes at the sports centre).

** In the time use research in France, walking the dog could not be distinguished separately from pet care in domestic work. The figure and is therefore not included here.

*** Active sports include jogging, ball games, gymnastics and fitness exercise, and so on.

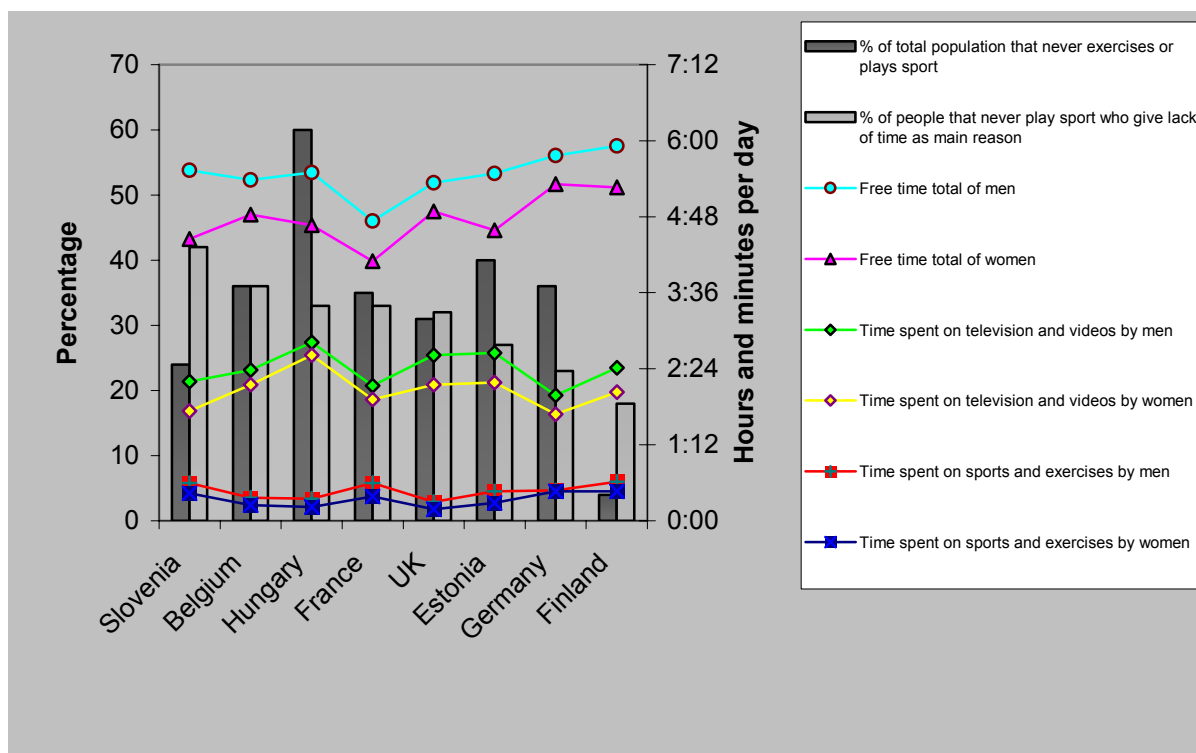
This does not concern a weighted average.

Source: European Commission 2004a, pp. 84-87, 94-95.

Many research studies suggest that a 'lack of time' is the most important reason for the respondents' failure to participate in sport (see chapter 4). The Eurobarometer 213 held in 2004 also corroborated this: 34% of non-participants in sport in the EU member states point to a lack of time as the most important reason for not participating in any sport. Other reasons that respondents could choose from and were less frequently selected were: 'you do not like to play sport' (25%), 'it is too expensive' (4%) and 'there are no suitable sports infrastructures close to where you live (3%).'.

The time use studies demonstrate that the motive 'a lack of time' is based on subjective experience, which may be rooted in more profound motivations that cannot be revealed by means of a Eurobarometer survey or many other research studies into the motives behind sport participation.

Figure 2.3: Sport participation and lack of time as main reason for non-participation in eight EU member states (in % of national populations), 2004; total free time and time spent on exercise and sport, and television and video (in hours and minutes per day), 1998-2002. Sources: European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 (213) 2004; European Commission 2004a.

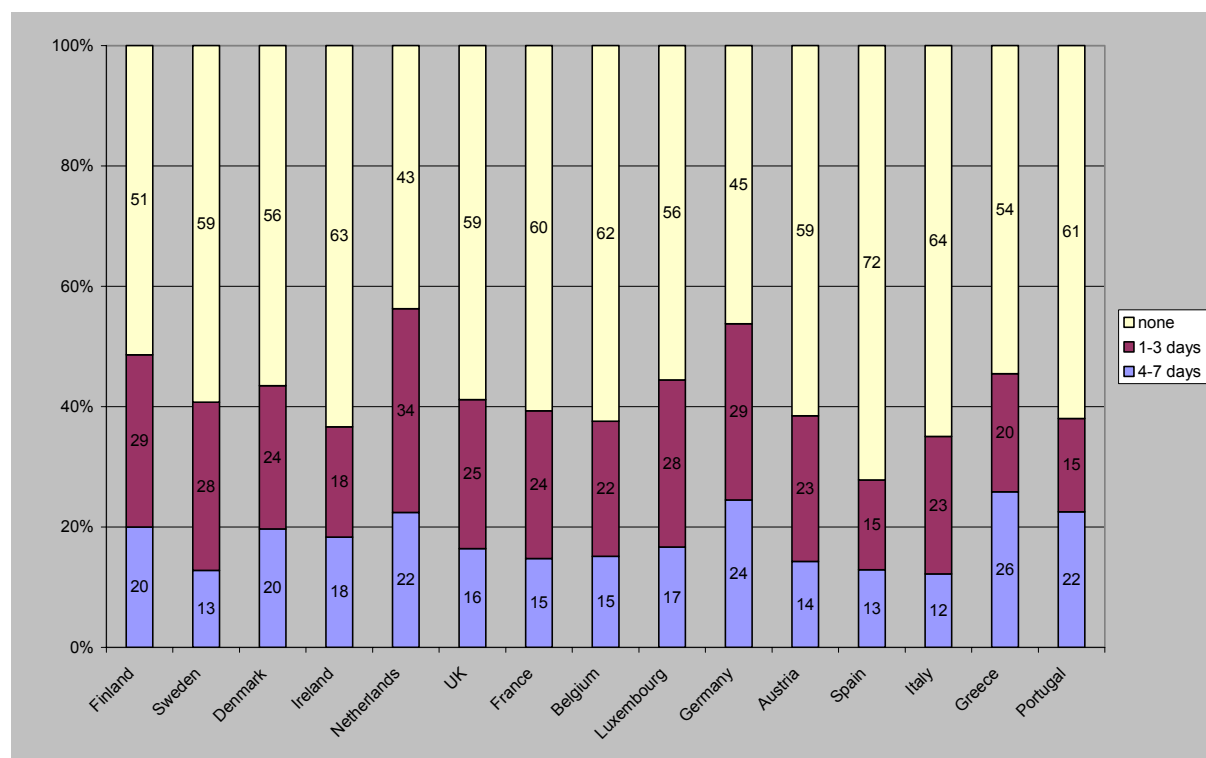


From figure 2.3 it may be concluded that ‘lack of time’ as a motive may perhaps be more appropriately interpreted as ‘a different priority’. Nevertheless, proportionally speaking, both the Finns and the Germans have the most leisure time and give ‘a lack of time’ as a motivation for non-participation in sport less frequently. This does not, however, apply to the other countries. Moreover, it appears that the residents of all countries spend four to twelve times the amount of time watching television and videos than doing exercise or sport. This also applies to the countries where the majority of people state that ‘a lack of time’ is their most important reason for not participating in such physical activity. The Germans spend the least amount of time on watching television and videos, while their level of sport participation is also relatively high. In addition, it is notable that the countries with the highest percentage of non-sports participants among the countries surveyed (Hungary and Estonia) devote the greatest amount of time to watching television and have an average score with regard their total amount of available leisure time.

If the definition of sport and exercise is expanded to include physical activities that also lie beyond the sphere of leisure, such as at work or around the house, then the previously identified geographical patterns seem to disappear. This emerged from a Eurobarometer on physical activity that the European Commission conducted in 2002. It is most striking that this survey of fifteen EU member states revealed Finland to be the country with the *least* physical activity at work, when moving from place to place, and in or around the house (individually and together). Proportionally speaking, the Swedes and Danes also had surprisingly low scores in this regard. However, this research did reveal that the Scandinavians walk more and spend less

time sitting down. On balance, this results in an overview of the total vigorous physical activity in each member state (see figure 2.4.), which significantly deviates from the picture of the differences between member states that was painted earlier with respect to exercise and sport (cf. figure 2.1) and recreational physical activity (cf. table 2.1.). Apparently Scandinavians are involved in sporting activities to a large extent, while (or possibly because) they are comparatively inactive at work, in and around the house or when moving from place to place. The opposite applies to the Portuguese and Greeks who do not belong to the group of Europeans that are the least physically active in this regard, although they do the least amount of exercise, sport and physical activity.

Figure 2.4: Percentage of population who participate in vigorous physical activities like lifting heavy things, digging, aerobics or fast cycling in percentage of total population in 15 EU member states, 2002. Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 183-6, 58.2 2003.



2.2 Sport-specific differences and trends

Data on the differential popularization of the various branches of sport and the nature of exercise (in terms of active practice) are scarce. In the Eurobarometer surveys, European citizens were only asked about their interest in particular sports in 1990. In that year, respondents were given a list of sports and asked whether or not they were interested in each of them. It is unclear how the respondents actually interpreted the question: were they interested in participating in the specific branch of sport, or – and this is more probable – following the sport through the media or otherwise? Given this ambiguity, this data will not be further discussed here.

Alternative sources of information about the differences in popularity between sports seen within an international comparative perspective can be found in the pan-EU survey on consumer attitudes to physical activity, body-weight and health, which was prepared by the Institute of European Food Studies in Dublin and co-financed by the European Commission and in studies on the differential popularisation of sport restricted to sport played competitively or in the context of clubs.³⁸

The pan-EU survey on consumer attitudes posed questions about participation in a variety of physical activities. This resulted in the following ranking of the sporting activities and 'sport clusters' that are found within the European Union (1999, 15 member states).

Table 2.4 Most practiced (pre-coded) sporting activities in EU member states, in percentage of total population aged 15 and over, 1999.

Ranking	Sporting activity	
1	Walking (min. 30 min. consecutively)	31
2	Cycling	17
3-4	Swimming	10
	Keep fit	10
5	Football	6
6	Racquet sports	5
	Athletics	3
7-9	Team sports excl. football	3
	Winter sports	3
10	Hill-walking/climbing	2
	Martial arts	2

Source: European Commission (1999b).

The popularity of these activities varies considerably between the EU member states. Cycling is by far the most practiced physical activity in the Netherlands (53%), whereas only 2% and 3% participate in the sport in Greece and Portugal respectively. As far as walking (consecutively for 30 minutes) is concerned, both Finland (68%) and Sweden (61%) are strides ahead, for in most of the other EU member states this activity is only done by 30% of the population. The same applies to keep fit, which enjoys a higher percentage of participation in Finland and Sweden (20% and 22% respectively), as compared to an average of 15% for all fifteen member states. In addition to this, the popularity of swimming varies considerably: from 20% in Austria and 18% in Luxembourg to 4% in Portugal and Greece.

As one may expect on the basis of geographical differences, hill-walking/climbing and the clustered winter sports are more commonly practiced in Finland, Austria and Sweden. Football (in both organised and unorganised forms) is played most extensively in Ireland

³⁸ European Commission 1999b; Van Bottenburg 1991, 2001; ISI/CONI 1996; Sports Information Bulletin 1997.

(12%),³⁹ Portugal (10%), Spain and Italy (both 8%), while other team sports are especially popular in Greece (probably basketball in particular) and Finland (most likely ice hockey). In 1999, of all EU member states golf attracted the most players in Ireland (7%), Sweden (5%) and the United Kingdom (4%).

There are insufficient data available on a pan-European level to be able to ascertain trends in the popularity of the various branches of sport. This is only possible on the basis of data derived from each individual member state; this data will be dealt with more extensively in the following chapter. The general trend that can be discerned from this data is that many sports increased in popularity during the 1970s and 1980s, most particularly walking, cycling, running, football and tennis. However, the growth of these sports has stagnated throughout the past decade. Moreover, the popularity of other sports, such as tennis and volleyball, has declined, while others like golf, equestrian sports, and diverse fitness sports have really taken off. Aside from these general trends, there have been developments in the popularity of sports that can better be discussed with respect to individual member states than for the EU as a whole (see chapter 3).

Participation in sport in the context of sports clubs presents another picture. However, membership figures for sports organisations are not available for all EU member states. Thus trends can only be identified on a national level. These trends will also be discussed in the following chapter.

On the basis of the existing data, it is possible to make an estimate of the most popular sports that are practiced in a club context within the EU (see table 2.5). This estimate has been reached by the amalgamation of the 'top fifteen' of the sports most practiced in clubs in twelve EU member states. This only provides an indication, since the East European and South European countries are underrepresented in this overview. Moreover, the membership figures refer only to the sports found in the top fifteen and sports classified lower in this scale are not taken into account.

Bearing these limitations in mind, it may be concluded that football is by far the most played (club)sport in the European Union. In nearly all member states for which the membership statistics for the fifteen sport organisations are known, football is at the top of the list. Alongside football, both tennis and swimming can be found in all top fifteen lists of the twelve member states concerned. However, gymnastics is probably practiced by more people than tennis and swimming. Gymnastics does not appear in the top 15 of all twelve member states, but enjoys enormous popularity in Germany (where the *Turnvereine* have a total of around five million members).

³⁹ It is unclear whether this figure relates to the globally played Association football or the native (and very popular) Gaelic football.

Table 2.5: Sports with most members in sport clubs in 12 EU member states ranked according to the frequency with which they appear in the top 15 of sports federations with the most members in each member state.

	Sport	Frequency in top 15 of 12 EU member states*	Total number of members according to top 15 of 12 EU member states*
1	Football	12	15,836,523
2	Tennis	12	4,572,139
3	Swimming	12	1,622,490
4	Athletics	11	1,682,555
5	Golf	10	2,889,189
6	Gymnastics	9	7,011,096
7	Equestrian sports	8	1,725,719
8	Handball	8	1,480,506
9	Volleyball	8	994,973
10	Sailing	8	839,725

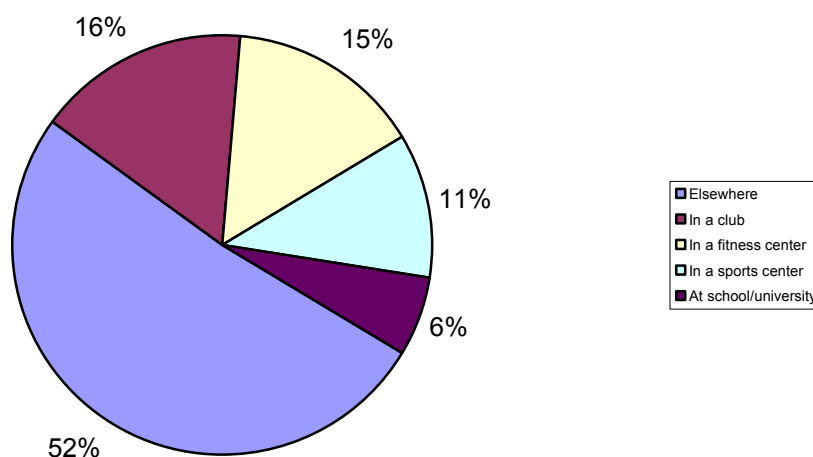
* Austria, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. Source: reworked data of chapter three.

2.3 Organisational context

Throughout the entire European Union, the fitness centre is nearly as popular as the sport club. Of all those who participated in sport and exercise, 16% did so mainly at a sports club, 15% at a fitness centre and 11% at a sports centre. In 2004, schools or universities provided the setting where 6% generally played their sports. The rest, and that is a little over half of all participants in sport, said that they did their exercise or sport ‘elsewhere (spontaneous)’; in other words, outside of any structured organisational framework (see figure 2.5.). The percentage of those who participate in sport in a non-structured way increases significantly for the higher age categories.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 (213), 2004.

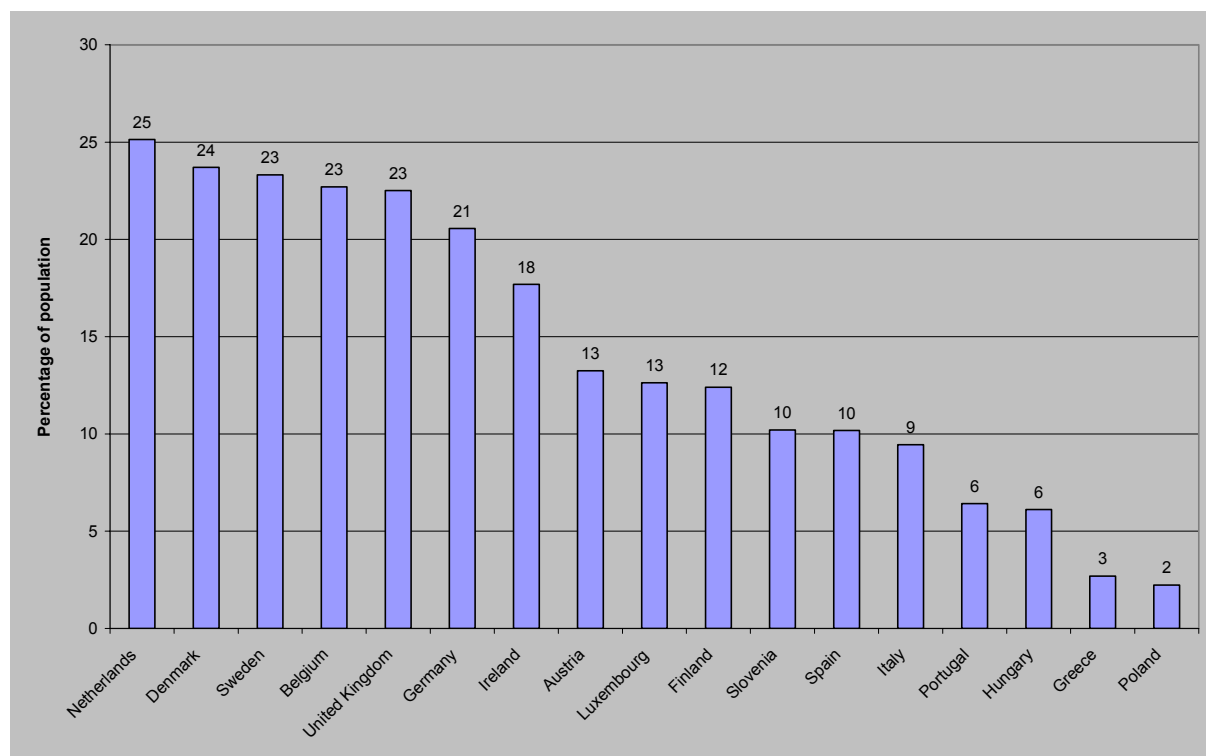
Figure 2.5: Organisational context where sport participants do exercise or play sport most often, in percentage of sport participants, 2004. Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 (213), 2004.



The figures for participation in sport at clubs, fitness centres and sport centres in the European Union were lower in 2004 than in 2003.⁴¹ This decrease is likely to be a result of the expansion of the European Union. In the ten new member states, sport takes place more frequently outside of an organisational framework than in the other EU countries. In Malta, Slovenia and Poland, for example, between 60% and 70% of those who participate in sport do so in an informal, unorganised way. In the southern part of Europe, the use of fitness centres is higher than the European average: 34% in Greece, 28% in Italy and 27% in Portugal. In contrast, sport in the context of sports associations is predominant in the north-western part of Europe (see figure 2.6.). This is certainly the case in the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Belgium, the UK and Germany.

⁴¹ European Commission, Eurobarometer 197 60.0.

Figure 2.6: Percentage of population who participated in a sports or outdoor club in the last 12 months, 2000. Source: European Social Survey, 2002.



Although the market share for sports associations has declined considerably throughout the entire European Union during the past decades, sports associations continue to retain their great social significance within a broader context. There is no other social context in which association membership levels are as high as sport. This is most particularly the case with regard to young people between 15 and 24 years old. In the former fifteen EU member states 28% of this age group were members of sports associations, yet only 8% or less belonged to associations related to another social sphere.⁴² The same applies to the new and candidate member states: 15% of the young people in these countries are members of sports associations and a maximum 8% are affiliated to non-sports associations.⁴³

European Commission estimates of the total number of sport clubs in the fifteen EU member states, dating from over five years ago, range from 545,000 to 700,000.⁴⁴ Camy et al. calculate a total of 694,000 sport clubs in all EU member states (with data missing for Cyprus). Between 60 and 80 million EU citizens are members of one or more of these sports associations.⁴⁵

⁴² Christensen, Eurobarometer 55.1, 2001.

⁴³ European Commission, Eurobarometer Youth 2003.1.

⁴⁴ European Commission 1998b; European Commission 1999b.

⁴⁵ Camy ed. 2004.

During the past decades, the level of sport club membership has been quantified in at least six standardised surveys within the European Union (1983, 1987, 1998, 2002, 2003 and 2004). Trends identified as a result of these data reveal a rise in participation in club-related sport in the Netherlands, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Denmark and the UK, and a decline thereof in France, Luxembourg, Italy and Greece. The figures fluctuate significantly, most likely as a consequence of methodological differences.

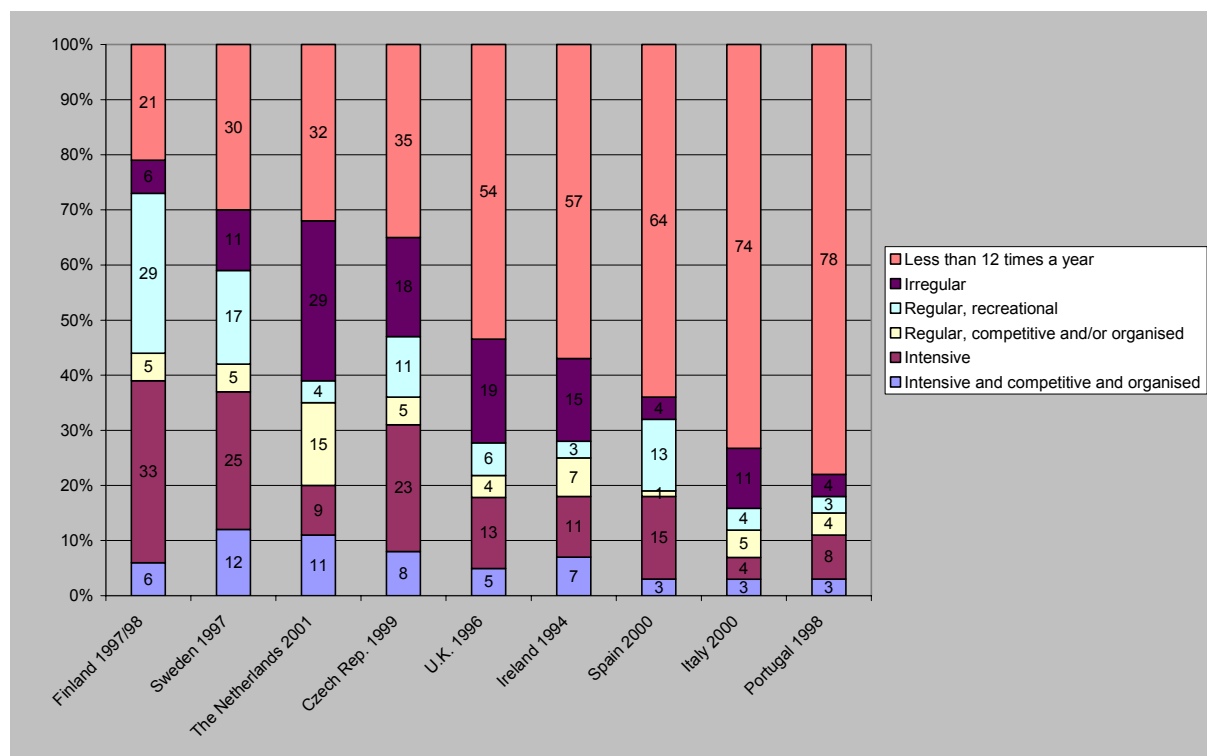
The development of sport club membership among young people between 15 and 24 years old differs considerably from that of the total adult population. In countries where many young people participate in sport (Denmark, Ireland, UK, Belgium and France), the percentage of youths who are sports association members decreases, whereas it increases in the countries where youngsters play less sport (Spain, Portugal and Greece). Italy and the Netherlands are the exceptions to this rule. In both of these countries, the percentage of young people who participate in sport in the context of sports associations has remained stable throughout the past twenty years.⁴⁶

In principle, club-related sport participation increases as sport is more intensively practiced.⁴⁷ Yet this also varies per member state. The use of the COMPASS scheme offers deeper insight into the relationship between frequency of sports participation and its organisational and competitive context. Figure 2.7 not only indicates that a higher percentage of the populations of Finland, Sweden and, to a lesser extent, the Czech Republic, participate in sport than in other European countries where the COMPASS guidelines have been applied, but also that a large proportion of the Finns (and to a slightly lesser extent the Czechs also) do not do so within the context of clubs or competitions. In the Netherlands in particular, but also in Sweden and Ireland, those who participate in sport intensively do so more frequently in the context of clubs and competitions.

⁴⁶ Sources: Commission of the European Community, Eurobarometer 28, 1987; 34.2, 1990; Commission of the European Union, Eurobarometer 47.2, 1997; 50.1, 1998; Christensen, Eurobarometer 55.1, 2001; European Social Survey, 2002; European Commission, Eurobarometer 2003.1, 2003; 62.0, 2004.

⁴⁷ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0, 2004.

Figure 2.7: Rates of sport participants in percentage of total population in 9 EU member states by frequency, competition and organisation, several years. Source: all countries except Spain and the Netherlands: <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass>; for Spain see Garcia Ferrando 2001; Dutch figure is based on own calculations on data of RSO 2001 survey carried out by Centerdata.



2.4 Social differentiation

Sport is socially structured. In all EU member states, and thus throughout the entire European Union also, the degree of participation in sport differs between social population categories such as gender, age, level of education, profession and income. Despite the popularisation and democratisation of sport, it appears that these differences have continued to remain very persistent. They have diminished somewhat, but have not disappeared entirely, with the exception of some differences between men and women. These discrepancies can be summarised as follows (see table 2.6.):

- More men participate in sport than women.
- Participation in sport is proportionally related to age: as age increases, participation in sport decreases.
- There are a higher percentage of sport participants in groups with a higher educational, professional and/or income level.

Table 2.6: Differences in sport participation between various population groups in the European Union, aged 15 and above, 2004.

Gender	Men	41%
	Women	35%
Age groups	15-24	60%
	25-39	41%
	40-54	34%
	55+	28%
<i>Finished studies at:</i>		
Education level	Age 15 or younger	20%
	Between 16-19	32%
	Age 20 or older	50%

Source: European Commission, Eurobarometer 213, 62.0, 2004

Gender

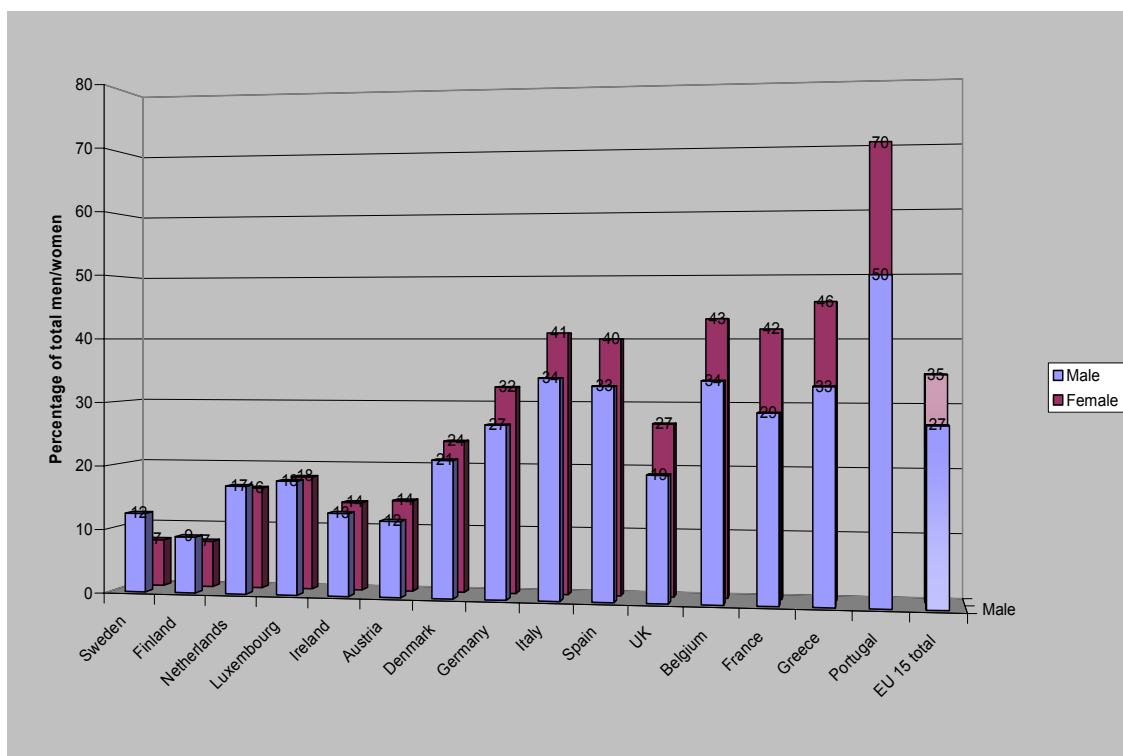
The differences in sport participation measured by the Eurobarometer 213 in 2004 were also found in earlier research studies, independent of broader or stricter definitions of sport. In 2002, the Eurobarometer 183-6 ascertained that a lower percentage of women engage in a lot of physical activity in their leisure time than men (12% as opposed to 18%). Martinez-Gonzalez et al. also reported a difference of nearly five percentage points for 1997 in the numbers of men (76%) and women (71%) with some leisure time activity during an average week.⁴⁸

The differences between men and women vary according to member state (figure 2.8). When one considers the percentage that do not participate in any leisure time activity, as Margetts et al. have done, Portuguese (-21%) and Greek (-13%) women appear to have the greatest deficit with respect to sport participation, while the levels of female participation in Sweden (+5%) and Finland (+2%) are higher than those of men (see figure 2.8).⁴⁹

⁴⁸ European Commission, Eurobarometer 183-6, 2003; Martinez-Gonzalez et al. 2001.

⁴⁹ Margetts et al. 1999. The gender differences in sport participation in the new and candidate member states are greater still (European Commission, Eurobarometer Youth 2003.1 and Eurobarometer 213, 2004).

Figure 2.8: Percentage of population in 15 EU member states aged 15 and over who do not participate in any recreational physical activity, by gender, 1997. Source: Margetts et al. 1999.



The socio-geographic structure resembles the one concerning the degree of sport participation, but does not completely mirror it (cf. figure 2.1.).⁵⁰ Linking it to other patterns of social equality between men and women, which have been identified in the various members states, is the most obvious strategy, but this avenue has not been explored here.

From the COMPASS data, it appears that men in all countries, including Sweden and Finland, are overrepresented in club-related and competitive sport, but that this does not always apply outside of this organisational framework. In Sweden, a higher proportion of women regularly or intensively participate in sport in a non-competitive or club-related context. The same goes for intensive sport participation in Finland and irregular sport participation on the Netherlands.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Indeed, this deviates slightly from the results of the time use survey, which is presented in table 2.3. This reveals that women from all the countries investigated, with the exception of Germany, spend less time on sport.

⁵¹ <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass>.

Age groups

Just as for gender, the differences between age groups can be found both with respect to sport participation and recreational physical activity. In 2002, a Eurobarometer survey found that 31% of young people between 15 and 25 years old engage in a great deal of physical activity during their leisure time, as opposed to 15% of those aged 26-44, 11% of 45-64 year olds, and 6% of those over 65. Martinez-Gonzalez et al. also determined that during a typical week in 1997 the percentage of people engaged in physical activity during their leisure time decreased incrementally as the age categories rose; from 83% of 15-24 year olds to 65% of those over 65.⁵²

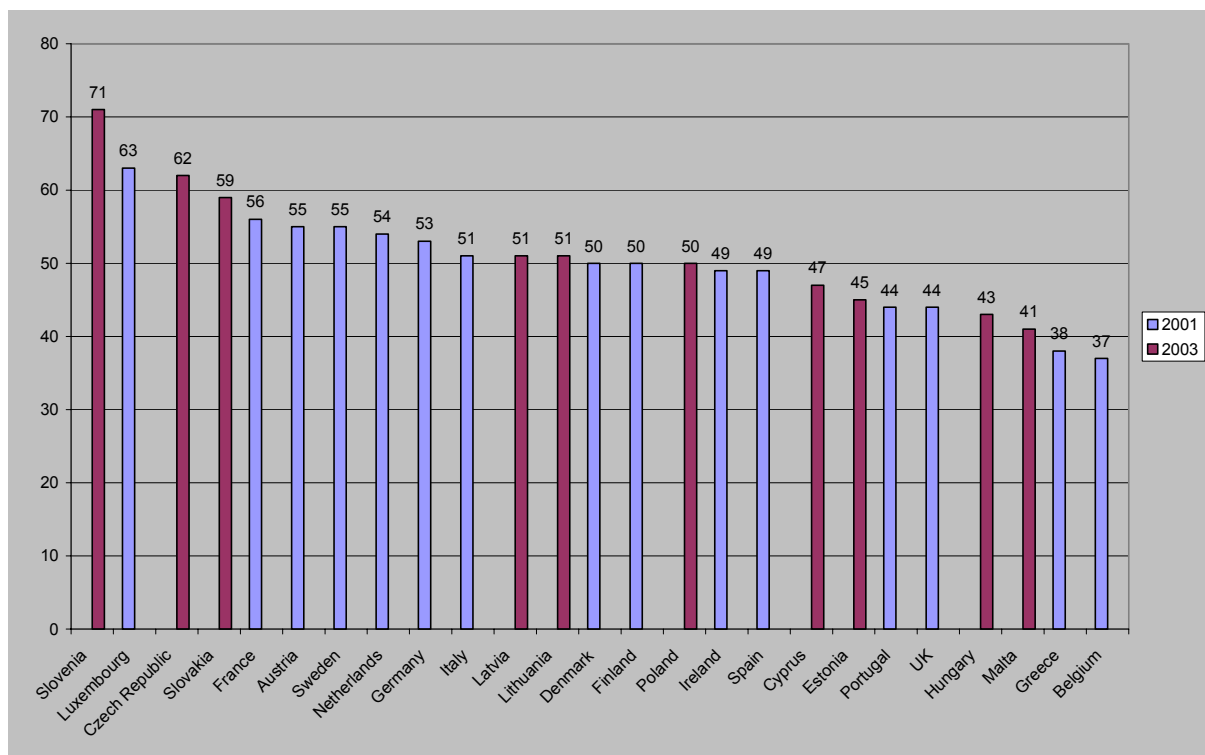
When analysed according to member state, the sport participation of young people between 15 and 24 reveals a spectacularly different pattern to that of the entire population aged 15 and above. Firstly, the difference of 34 percentage points between the two countries with the highest (Slovenia) and the lowest (Belgium) levels of regular⁵³ sport participation among youth is less than the 54 percentage points for the whole population. Secondly, the ranking order deviates significantly. Instead of the Scandinavian countries, three new member states are to be found among the four countries with the highest level of youth sport participation, namely: Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (see figure 2.9).⁵⁴ This points to a high degree of sport participation among young people in (a number of) new European Union member states.

⁵² European Commission, Eurobarometer 183-6, 2003; Martinez-Gonzalez 2001.

⁵³ Unspecified in the questionnaire.

⁵⁴ European Commission, Eurobarometer 2003.1, 2003; Eurobarometer 55.1, 2001.

Figure 2.9: Percentage of youth in 25 EU member states, aged 15-24, who plays sport regularly during leisure time, 2001. Source: Christensen, Commission, Eurobarometer 55.1, 2001.

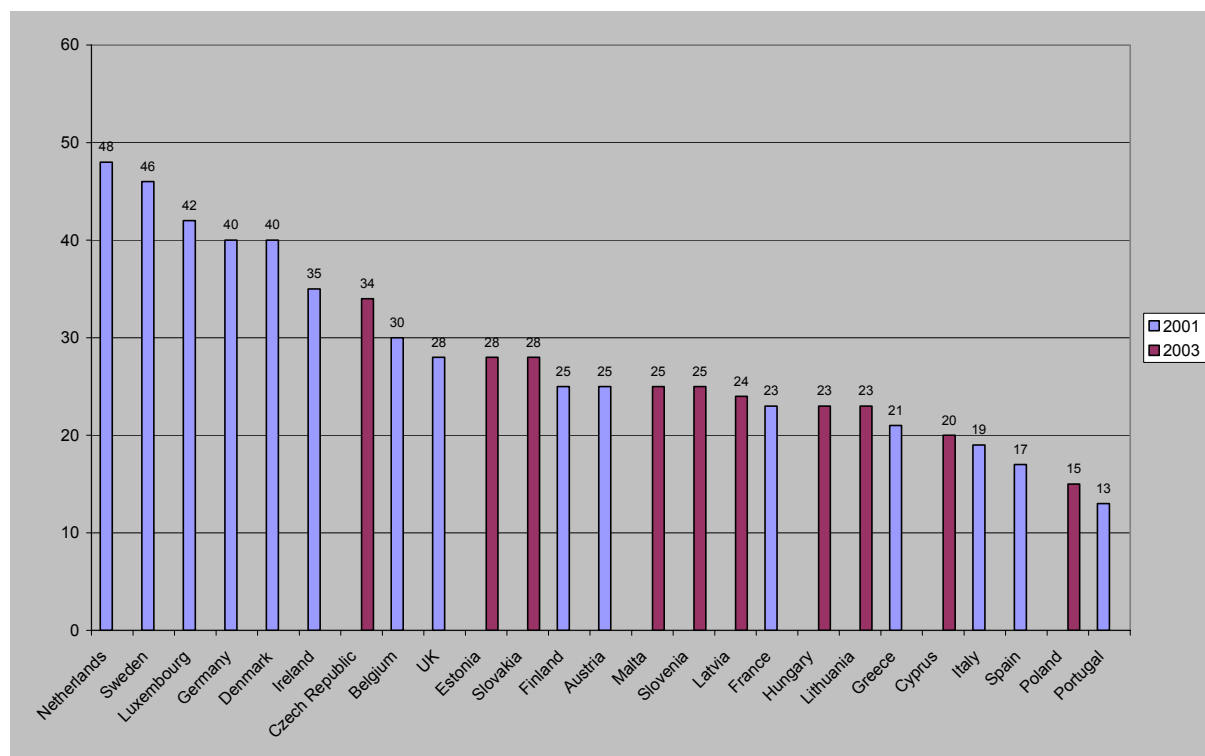


It is notable that youth sport participation in the fifteen existing member states reveals another pattern than the one established for the population as a whole (cf. figure 2.1.). It seems that the socio-geographic structure for the extent of sport participation for the entire adult population – with the highest levels found in Northern Europe, followed by Western and Central Europe and then Southern Europe – is partially determined by the higher degree of sport participation among the elderly in Western and, also particularly, Northern Europe. At any rate this pattern is not visible among the young.

A comparison between the regular sport participation of young people in the fifteen original member states can also be made for the years 1997 and 2001. For these member states as a whole, the level of participation remained constant at 50%. This is certainly the consequence of growth in a number of big countries, namely Germany, France and Italy, in conjunction with an increase in Luxembourg and Austria. In nine other countries, participation in sport declined, while in just one country (the Netherlands) there were no discernable changes.

In the context of club-related sport, there are fewer differences between sport participation among young people and the population as a whole. In the ranking of countries with the highest percentage of club members, the first seven are the same, albeit in a slightly different order. In 2001, the Netherlands had the highest percentage of young people who were members of sports associations (48%), followed by Sweden (46%), Luxembourg (42%) and Germany and Denmark (40%). The lowest proportion of club members among the youth can primarily be found in the southern European countries, with 19% in Italy, 17% in Spain and 13% in Portugal, although Poland with 15% provides the exception to this rule.

Figure 2.10: Percentage of youth in 25 EU member states, aged 15-24, who are member of a sport club or who participate in activities of sport clubs, 2001 and 2003. Sources: Christensen, Eurobarometers 55.1, 2001; European Commission, Eurobarometer 2003.1, 2003.55.



Education and income

The fact that sport participation is related to the degree of affluence was addressed earlier in this chapter. This correlation can also be found within individual countries. The percentage of those who exercise or play sport is related to social class. In almost every country, there is a higher degree of participation in sport among groups with a higher educational, professional and income level.

This correlation was not only found in the Eurobarometer 213, which was conducted in 2004, but also, for example, the aforementioned pan-EU survey on consumer attitudes to physical activity, body-weight and health. From the publications of Martinez-Gonzalez et al. and Zunft et al., it appears that 81% of those with the highest level of educational enjoy leisure time activity during a typical week, whereas only 76% of the middle and 64% of the lowest

⁵⁵ The questions posed differed. In Eurobarometer 55.1 the youth of the 15 old member states were asked which organisations they were member of or whose activities they participated in. In Eurobarometer 2003.1 the youth of the 15 new member states were asked in which organisations they actively participated.

educational level do so. This disparity is greatest in Portugal and Greece. In the Netherlands and Sweden there is no difference between the highest and middle levels. Finland is the only country in which those of all three educational levels display a more or less equal level of sport participation.⁵⁶

This pattern can likewise be seen among young people of 15 to 24 years of age in the new and candidate member states. Regular participation in sport is higher according to the level to which household income increases and education is completed at a higher age. Further details of the relationship between sport participation and social class for these and other member states will be provided in the next chapter, which discusses the patterns and trends in sport participation for each member state.

2.5 Conclusions

A majority of the EU population participates in sport every so often, and around one in six persons participates in sport intensively. The most popular sports are walking, cycling and swimming. In the context of club-related and competitive sports, football, tennis, swimming, athletics, golf and gymnastics are the most popular sports at a European level. Sport predominantly takes place in a non-organised context and, besides this, mainly in the context of associations and fitness centres.

Throughout the past decade, the ranking order of member states according to the degree of sport participation has remained quite stable. Moreover, this also seems to be fairly independent of the issue of whether the research was focussed on sport and exercise only, or also about recreational physical activities. A geographical structure is discernable in this ranking order, with the most (and most intensive) sporting activity taking place in the Scandinavian countries, followed by the Western and Central European countries and then those in the southern part of Europe. The new member states present a shifting picture. In Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, there is a proportionally higher level of sport participation than in the other new member states.

To a certain extent, this classification is also applicable to the organisational framework of sport. In the north-western part of Europe club-related sport is dominant and in the southern reaches fitness centres prevail, whereas sport participation in the new member states occurs more than averagely in a non-organisational context.

In many respects, Finland and Sweden stand out as the countries with the largest and most wide-ranging sports movements. It is striking that the mass participation in exercise, sport and recreational physical activity in these countries goes hand in hand with a relatively low level of physical activity at work, in and around the house and when moving from place to place.

In many respects, sport seems to be socially structured. As the GNP increases per capita, a greater proportion of the population generally takes part in sport. Moreover, within

⁵⁶ Martinez-Gonzalez 2001; Zunft et al. 1999.

various EU member states, sport is played by more men than women, by more young people than old people and by more people from higher than lower social classes. Wherever the GNP per capita is higher, the differences between the social groups that have been distinguished are more minimal and in some instances even absent altogether.

Given the lack of longitudinal research, sport participation trends on a European level cannot or may hardly be determined. This applies to the proportion of the population that participates in sport, the amount of time people devote to sport, the organisational context in which sporting activity takes place or the popularity of the individual branches of sport. To obtain such information one must instead examine the data collected in the individual member states. This will be done in the next chapter.

3. Sport participation in each EU member state

A greater insight into sport participation in the 25 member states can be gained through the analysis of national research data. These data do not derive from harmonised or standardised, and thus also not comparable, research studies. Nevertheless, they do provide valuable additional information on each country with respect to the nature and extent of sport participation, the varying popularity of particular sports, the organisational frameworks in which sport is played, the differences between demographic and social groups and the trends that have emerged with respect to them.

The incidence of such data varies for each member state. In a number of countries there is so much data available that we must here confine ourselves to presenting only a limited summary of the main points of interest. In contrast, for other countries there are so little data available that the overview presented in this chapter is unavoidably restricted to a few snippets of information.

Our discussion of the sport participation (trends) in the various member states is structured as follows. Firstly, the description of each member state is built up along established lines. Following a general profile of the levels and frequency of sport participation from a European perspective, the differences between population groups, trends in sport participation, the organisational framework in which sport takes place and the differential popularity of sports practiced are examined in turn.

Secondly, we deal with the various member states according to a classification that is based on the previous chapter, which determined that levels of sport participation appear to increase the further north the member states are situated. Furthermore, it also demonstrated that sport in the western parts of the European Union is to a large extent organised in the context of sports clubs, while in the south of Europe it, proportionally speaking, takes place more frequently in fitness centres and in the new European member states mainly in a non-organised context. Finally, it appeared that there was far less data with regard to the ten new member states than for the fifteen existing ones.

On the basis of this, sport participation in the individual member states will be discussed in four different sections. Part 4 concerns the new EU member states, whereas parts 1 to 3 deal with the remaining states.

Part One: Scandinavian member states (Finland, Sweden and Denmark).

Part Two: Western European member states (Ireland, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Germany and Austria).

Part Three: Southern European member states (Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece).

Part Four: New European member states, from south to north (Cyprus, Malta, Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia).

To a large extent, the data have been provided by our contacts in the various member states. Some of them not only provided us with an overview of the available data, but also carried out secondary analyses of these data. At the beginning of every section, we acknowledge all those who have supplied us with this information.

Part One: Scandinavian member states

3.1 Finland

With special thanks to Dr. Pasi Koski of the University of Turku and Terhi Heinilä of the Finnish Sports Federation for the analysis and supply of sport participation data.

Introduction

Apart from the pan-European data, which was discussed in the previous chapter, data on sport participation trends in Finland can be found in a variety of national sources. The most important of which are derived from the surveys that Suomen Gallup conducted in 1991, 1994, 1997 and 2001/2002, commissioned by the Ministry of Education. These surveys were based on representative samples of the age groups 3-65 years old. They largely comply with the COMPASS guidelines (with the exception of the age range), which makes comparison with other COMPASS pilot countries partly possible.

Levels of sport participation

The Suomen Gallup data confirms the view that the Finns are the most sportingly active people of the European Union. In 2004, Eurobarometer 213 (62.0) indicated that some 85% of Finns participated in sport and physical exercises more than once a month; while a mere 7% never partook in any exercise or sport at all. The Suomen Gallup survey of 2001/2002 reveals that the Finns also participate in sport quite intensively: 63% participate in sport and physical exercises more than 120 times a year. In addition to this, their participation in sport and physical exercises continues into old age. According to the harmonised time use surveys from 1999/2000, women spent 35 minutes and men 42 minutes on average a day on sport and exercise. In all these respects, Finland scores the highest of all European Union member states for which comparable data is available.

Trends in sport participation

Between 1997 and 2001, the size of the sporting and physically active population has remained at more or less the same (high) level (see table 3.1.).

Table 3.1 Sport and physical activity among the Finnish population (19-65 years old) according to frequency (in %)

	1997	2001
at least 5 times a week	35	34
4 times a week	11	12
3 times a week	22	22
2 times a week	17	16
1 times a week	8	8
2-3 times a month	2	2
Seldom	2	2
Never	3	4
Hard to say	1	1

Source: Suomen Gallup data reworked by Pasi Koski (University of Turku).

Social differentiation

As far as can be ascertained, the high level of sport and physical activity in Finland is more evenly distributed among the various demographic groups than in most other member states. The total amount of exercise, sport and physical activity for men and women is more or less identical. A larger proportion of women participate in sport (more than 120 times a year) with a higher frequency than men.⁵⁷

Table 3.2 Sport and physical activity among the Finnish population (19-65 years old) according to gender, intensity and competitive or organisational contexts (in %)

	2000/2001*		
	All	Female	Male
Competitive, organised, intensive	4	1	6
Intensive	42	49	36
Regular competitive and/or organised	7	4	9
Regular recreational	31	33	29
Irregular	2	8	11
Less than 12 times a year	4	3	7

⁵⁷ Suomen Gallup data reworked by Pasi Koski (University of Turku).

* Walking accepted as sport; intensive is at least 4 times a week

Source: Suomen Gallup data reworked by Pasi Koski (University of Turku)

Just as elsewhere in Europe, Finnish men (35%) are more frequently members of sports clubs than their female counterparts (24%). Furthermore, there is an even greater gender difference with respect to participation in competitive sports; three quarters of participants are men.⁵⁸

As far as sport participation according to age is concerned, Finland deviates from the dominant European pattern. While participation in sport declines in almost every country as people get older, this is not or hardly the case in Finland (see table 3.3.). With respect to age, sport in a competitive context does decrease with increasing age, but this is less conspicuous in Finland than in other EU countries.⁵⁹

Table 3.3 Sport and physical activity among the Finnish population (19-65 years old) according to age and intensity (in %)

	Age groups (1997/8)								
	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64
Intensive (>120/year)	46	40	35	34	34	34	38	41	46
Regular (12-120/year)	41	38	43	44	44	44	35	35	26
Occasional/non-participant (<12/year)	13	22	22	22	22	22	27	24	28

Source: Suomen Gallup data reworked by Pasi Koski (University of Turku)

This egalitarian structure of sport participation according to gender and age is not just a recent occurrence. In 1989, Paavo Seppänen already observed how sport was a broadly accepted phenomenon throughout all layers of society and groups in Finland.⁶⁰

Organisational context

Three-quarters of the Finnish population partake in sport every now and then on their own initiative, 45% in independent groups and 15% with the context of sport clubs. The latter applies more to men than women (18% versus 14%). In contrast, women engage in sport more frequently within an extracurricular school context, a commercial context (private businesses) and on their own initiative or in independent groups.

While the commercial sport providers have gained a greater market share in the rest of Europe, in Finland participation in sport within a commercial context in fact decreased between 1991 and 2001. During the same period, sport participation in independent groups grew strongly and, within the context of clubs, it remained pretty much stable (see table 3.4.).

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Seppänen in Kamphorst en Roberts 1989.

Table 3.4 Sport participation and physical activity among the Finnish population (15-65 years old in 1991, 19-65 years old in 1994-2001), according to organisational context (in %).

	1991	1994	1997	2001
Sports clubs or sport organisation	15	15	15	16
Open college	5	3	3	3
Municipality	7	4	4	2
Workplace	6	5	7	6
School	3	1	1	1
Private business	10	7	7	4
On one's own initiative	77	76	82	75
Independent group	35	31	34	45

Source: Suomen Gallup data reworked by Pasi Koski (University of Turku)

In 2004, a total of 75 sports associations and two fitness sports organisations were members of the Finnish Sport Federation. More than 7,800 sports clubs, of which most operate on a non-profit basis, fell under the umbrella of these sports associations and had a total of approximately 1.5 million members. According to a study of Koski, one third of these members did not participate in the physical activities of the club. In 2004, the total number of members remained more or less the same as in 1997.⁶¹

The most popular sports

In 2001, walking, cycling, cross-country skiing, swimming and jogging were the sports that were most widely participated in within a non-organised context. Football and cycling were the most favourite sports for children and young people aged between 3 and 18 years old, followed by swimming, cross-country skiing and floorball (see table 3.5).

At the beginning of the 1990s, there was a significant increase in the popularity of walking. However, since the mid-1990s this growth has stagnated. To a lesser extent, the same applies to cross-country skiing. On the other hand, participation in floorball, golf, dance, gymnastics and cycling has greatly increased during the second half of the 1990s, with Nordic walking and roller-skating making an appearance as the latest sport trends during the final years before the turn of the century. Volleyball, badminton, tennis, and alpine skiing are among the sports that have lost the highest numbers of participants. In terms of absolute numbers, football and cycling have shown the greatest increase among young people and, proportionally speaking, cycling, skating and cross-country skiing and jogging have gained the greatest popularity.

⁶¹ Koski 2000 and data from the Finnish Sports Federation (SLU), provided by Terhi Heinilä.

Table 3.5: The most popular branches of sport, non-organised and organised, and estimated numbers of participants, members and clubs among children/young people and adults in Finland.

		2000/2001*			1994**					
		Aged 3-18	Adults		Participants	Members	Clubs			
1	Football	261,000	1	Walking	1,990,000	1	Football	154,000	-	-
2	Cycling	261,000	2	Cycling	922,000	2	Women gymnastics	111,000	126,184	470
3	Swimming	202,000	3	Cross country ski	732,000	3	Ice hockey	91,000	60,000	450
4	Cross country ski	195,000	4	Swimming	520,000	4	Volleyball	74,000	98,000	989
5	Floorball/ bandy	160,000	5	Weight exercise	360,000	5	Athletics	72,000	-	-
6	Walking	132,000	6	Jogging	360,000	6	Cross country ski	45,500	208,568	1,159
7	Skating	125,000	7	Nordic walking	300,000	7	Pesäpallo#	38,000	67,000	370
8	Ice-hockey	116,000	8	Gymnastics	250,000	8	Orienteering	37,000	65,672	492
9	Jogging	113,500	9	Aerobic	182,000	9	Floorball	33,000	10,500	428
10	Track and field	75,000	10	Floorball	170,000	10	Basketball	32,000	80,000	330

Finnish baseball.

Sources: *Suomen Gallup data reworked by Pasi Koski; ** Suomen Gallup data in Koski & Heikkala 1999.

In 1994, an overview of the membership numbers per sports association revealed that, of all the organised sports, football enjoyed the greatest popularity, followed by women gymnastics, ice hockey, volleyball, and athletics. In terms of membership and clubs, however, cross country skiing dominates the Finnish sports scene before women gymnastics and volleyball (with football and athletics left out because data are lacking).

3.2 Sweden

With special thanks to Göran Nordström of Statistics Sweden and Ola Stadler of the Swedish Sports Confederation for the supply and analysis of data on sport participation.

Introduction

One of the most important sources of information on exercise and sport participation in Sweden is the Swedish National Living Conditions Survey (ULF), which Statistics Sweden has conducted several times since 1975: 1980-81, 1988-89, 1990-91, 1996-97, 1999, 2002-2003. In addition to this, the Swedish Sports Confederation possesses data on the annual membership figures on a national level per sports organisation dating from 1998. Furthermore, in 1997 for the first time a sports specific survey, rather than a multipurpose survey with a part on sports, was carried out by Statistics Sweden on behalf of the Swedish Sports Confederation (w3.uniroma1.it/compass).

Levels of sport participation

According to the 2004 Eurobarometer 213 (62.0), the levels of sport participation in Sweden are pretty much on a par with Finland: 81% of the Swedish population participate in sport more than once a month; 7% do not do so at all.⁶² The Statistics Sweden Survey from 1997 (in: w3.uniroma1.it/compass) shows that slightly fewer Swedes than Finns partake in sports and physical activity more than 120 times a year, but in Sweden this takes place more frequently within an organisational context. In both countries, the percentage of women who take part in sport and physical activity hardly differs from the percentage of men, though more men than women participate with a club or competitive context. One significant difference to Finland is that Swedish participation in sport and physical activity declines more sharply with an increase in age. However, in comparison to other EU member states, there is a higher degree of participation in sport and physical activity among older people in Sweden (see table 3.6. & 3.7.).

⁶² EB 213 (62.0) 2004.

Table 3.6 Sport and physical activity among the Swedish population (16-70 years old), according to gender, intensity and competitive or organisational context (in %).

1997			
	All	Male	Female
Competitive, organised, intensive	12	17	8
Intensive	25	19	29
Regular, competitive and/or organised	5	7	3
Regular, recreational	17	15	19
Irregular	11	12	11
Occasional	-	-	-
Non-participant	30	30	30

Source: Statistics Sweden (in: <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass>)

Table 3.7 Sport and physical activity among the Swedish population (16-70 years old) according to age and intensity (in %).

1997											
	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 +
Intensive (>120/year)	62	59	39	38	33	32	26	26	24	19	28
Regular (12-120/year)	23	21	35	28	23	22	26	24	19	20	16
Occasional/non-participant (<12/year)	15	20	26	34	44	46	48	50	57	61	56

Source: Statistics Sweden (in: <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass>)

Trends in sport participation

Between 1980 and 2000, exercise during leisure time in Sweden has significantly increased. The percentage of the population that engaged in no exercise during leisure time whatsoever dropped from 14% in 1980/81 to 11% in 1999. The percentage that takes part in exercise during leisure time at least once a week grew from 46% in 1980/81 to 62% in 1999.

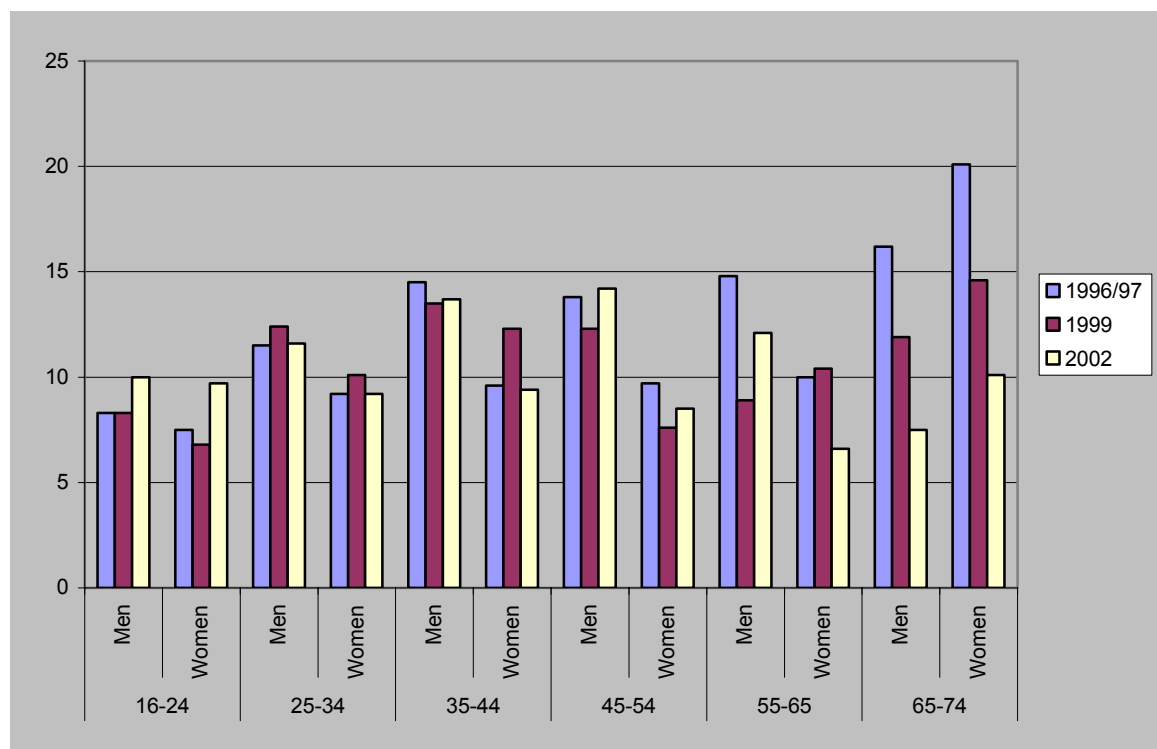
Table 3.8 Exercise during leisure time among the Swedish population between 16-74 years old according to intensity (in %).

	1980-81	1988-89	1990-91	1996-97	1999
no exercise at all	14	12	13	12	11
now and then	41	37	31	32	27
once a week	18	19	18	20	18
twice a week	16	19	23	23	25
Strenuously, at least twice a week	12	13	15	14	19

Source: SCB 2003.

From 1999 onwards, a shift seems to have occurred. During the period 1999-2002, the proportion of those who do not engage in exercise at all increased among the youngest population groups, while at the same time it continued to decrease among the elderly (see figure 3.1.).

Figure 3.1: Percentage of population between 16-74 years old in Sweden who do not take part in exercise according to gender and age groups, 1996/7, 1999 and 2002. Source: SCB 2003.



Social differentiation

Despite the highly egalitarian structure of Swedish society, there still appears to be a correlation between physical exercise on the one hand and social background in the other: exercise increases along with educational and income levels. This does not, however, apply to gender (see table 3.9.).

Table 3.9: Exercise among the Swedish population (16-84 years old) according to intensity, gender, education and income (in %).

		1999				
		no exercise at all	now and then	once a week	twice a week	strenuously, at least twice a week
Gender	Female	12	26	19	28	16
	Male	12	30	16	23	19
Education	Pre-secondary	16	29	15	25	15

	Secondary	12	29	17	24	17
	Post-secondary	7	24	21	27	20
	Lowest	16	27	15	23	19
Income	Low-middle	13	28	16	27	16
	High-middle	9	29	19	26	17
	Highest	8	25	21	28	17

Source: SCB 2003.

Organisational context

Various sources indicate that, in general, exercise during leisure time increased between 1990 and 2003, but that the proportion of the population who take part in sport in a club-related or competitive context has more or less stabilised.

In this regard, significant differences between the various age groups can be identified. While the percentage of youngsters between 7 and 14 years old who participated in sport within the context of clubs increased from 73% to 76%, for the age category of 15-19 years old it decreased from 59% to 54%. There were also increases among the age categories 30-39, 50-59 and 60-70 years old, whereas the percentages declined for the 20-29 and 40-49 age groups (see table 3.10.). An almost identical pattern can be observed with respect to competitive sport.

Table 3.10 Club membership among the Swedish population, 7-70 years old according to age category, in total and as a percentage of the total size of the respective age group.

	1998	%	2003	%
7-14 years	650,700	73	713,000	76
15-19	308,000	59	291,700	54
20-29	521,400	46	485,600	45
30-39	538,500	43	586,500	46
40-49	544,200	46	498,400	42
50-59	420,300	36	503,200	40
60-70	233,900	26	276,100	28

Source: Ola Stadler, Swedish Sports Confederation

At the same time, the percentage of active members in these associations decreased during the period 1992-2000.⁶³ In other words, among a stagnating proportion of members, an increasing number of members were no longer active participants in sport.⁶⁴ In spite of this, active club membership was in no field as extensive in Swedish society as in sport.⁶⁵

⁶³ Vogel et al. 2003

⁶⁴ Vogel et. al. 2003; SCB 2003; information from Ola Stadler, Swedish Sports Confederation

⁶⁵ Vogel et al. 2003.

The most popular sports

As illustrated by table 3.0, football is by far the most popularly played club-related sport in Sweden. This is mainly a consequence of this sport being played by boys and girls in the age categories of 7-14 and 15-29 years old. Football drops into third place for the 30-49 year olds and to sixth place among those between 50 and 70 years of age. Golf and skiing are the most prevalent sports among these older age groups.⁶⁶

Football is no longer a growth area. Indeed, between 2000 and 2003, the membership figures for the football union even declined. This membership loss, however, is not particularly significant, certainly when compared to the far greater losses experienced by, for instance, gymnastics and athletics. On the other hand, golf – and to a lesser extent – equestrian sports and unihockey experienced the greatest increase in popularity during the aforementioned period.

Sweden is the only country in the European Union where football is just as popular among women as men. Golf is another sport in which both genders appear in the top five. In contrast, gymnastics and equestrian sports are typical female activities, whereas ice hockey and floorball are popular pursuits for Swedish men and boys (see table 3.11.).

Table 3.11 Ranking order of organised sports, according to sports associations membership figures and gender.

2003			
Females		Males	
Sports	Club members	Sports	Club members
1 Football	197,285	1 Football	807,812
2 Gymnastics	182,867	2 Golf	370,022
3 Equestrian	176,275	3 Skiing	118,074
4 Golf	158,914	4 Ice Hockey	103,535
5 Athletics	139,000	5 Floorball	99,349

Source: Ola Stadler, Swedish Sports Confederation.

⁶⁶ SCB 2003.

3.3 Denmark

With particular thanks to Knud Larsen of the Research Institute for Sport, Culture and Civil Society and Dr. Laila Ottesen of the University of Copenhagen, Institute of Exercise and Sports for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

In Denmark, the Danish National Institute of Social Research conducted representative surveys of cultural and leisure activities among the Danish population over the age of 16 in 1964, 1975, 1987, 1993 and 1998. Although the questions and methodology have been modified a few times over the course of time, these surveys provide the opportunity for identifying fairly reliable trends. Unfortunately these data cannot be incorporated into the COMPASS framework, because they do not provide any information on the frequency of sport participation. However, the most recent national population research into sport participation, which was conducted by Lokale- og Anlaegsfonden in 2002, is suitable. Nonetheless, it is difficult to compare this research data with the aforementioned surveys. In particular, this is due to changes in the response card presented to respondents with respect to walking, cycling, hunting and fishing. In addition to the surveys already mentioned, there is a wealth of information in Denmark regarding the membership numbers of sports organisations over a period of time.

Levels of sport participation

The Eurobarometer revealed that Denmark followed hot on the heels of Finland and Sweden as the member state with the highest levels of sport participation in the European Union: 70% of the population exercise or play sport more than once a month. This virtually corresponds with research conducted in 2002, in which 72% of the Danish population answered the question ‘Do you normally practice sports or exercise’ affirmatively. What is actually meant by ‘normally’ was not further elucidated here (see table 3.12).

Trends in sport participation

A trend in sport participation among the Danish population of 16 years old and above can be identified on the basis of table 3.12. This table shows a massive increase in levels of sport participation. Whereas the percentage for the first survey conducted in 1964 was only 15%, by 1998 it had reached some 51%.

Table 3.12: Sports and physical activities engaged in by the Danish population (16 years and above) according to gender and age (in %).

	1964	1975	1987	1993	1998	2002
Total	15	29	43	47	51	72
Male	20	32	43	47	50	73
Female	10	27	42	47	51	71
16-19 years	53	56	61	67	67	80
20-29 years	27	42	49	56	59	77
30-39 years	17	41	46	49	52	73
40-49 years	10	27	44	48	50	74
50-59 years	5	21	31	42	46	73
60-69 years	3	13	31	33	47	75
70-74 years	2	12	27*	22	37	58

Source: Fridberg 2000; Larsen 2003b.

The growth in sport participation, clearly illustrated by these figures, does not just point to an expansion in participation in sport. It is also a consequence of methodological and cultural changes. This applies particularly to the differences between 1998 and 2002.

The methodological changes concern the broadening of the concept of sport in the questionnaire. In 1964, respondents were still asked: 'Do you practice sports?'; in 1975 this was extended to 'Do you practice sports (exercise)?' and in 1987 and 1993 to 'Do you normally practice sports or exercise?'. This broadening also found expression in the response card comprising a list of sports that was presented to respondents during these research studies. In 2002, walking, hunting, fishing and cycling were also added to the card, which means that these statistics cannot easily be compared to those dating from 1998.

The cultural change also refers to the broader meaning that the term exercise has acquired. It is likely that this notion has been given a wider connotation as a consequence of public health campaigns held by the government to promote more physical activity in its broadest sense. There are data that suggest that the concept exercise used to be strongly associated with specific sports, while today the term refers to everyday physical activities. Sport, exercise and physical activity are simply cultural phenomena whose meaning has changed throughout the course of time not only for the public, but also the policymakers and researchers. The interpretation of these concepts is given an extra dimension in Denmark due to the cultural significance of the term 'idraet': an old Norse concept that refers to Nordic physical culture including sport, games, playing and physical movement. Table 3.13 demonstrates that explanations for the expansion of sport participation should be sought in an augmentation or broader definition of exercise and a lesser degree of idraet.

Table 3.13 Participation in sport and exercise among the Danish population according to the questions (in %).

	1993	1998	2002
Are you practicing one or more of the 'idraet' activities from the following list?	48	59	59
Do you normally practise sport or exercise?	47	51	72
Participation in some sort of 'idraet' or exercise	57	69	83

In: Larsen 2003a.

Social differentiation

Just as in the other Scandinavian countries, the percentage of men that participate in sport and exercise is more or less equivalent to the percentage of women. During the 1960s, women still lagged behind men considerably, but during the course of the 1980s they caught up and the levels of sport participation actually evened out (see table 3.12.). The same proportion of women as men took part in sport within an organised and non-organised context.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, significant gender differences in the nature of sport participation are still visible. Firstly, men devote more time to sport than women (in 2002 5 hours and 56 minutes versus 5 hours and 8 minutes).⁶⁸ Secondly, comparatively more men take part in sport in club-related contexts and at work, while women practice their sport more frequently in commercial fitness centres (see table 3.14.). As a corollary to this, a larger proportion of men participate in sport in the context of competitions and tournaments.⁶⁹

Table 3.14 Participation in sport and exercise among the Danish population (16 years and above) according to organisational context (in %).

Organisational form of sport participation	1998	
	Men	Women
Voluntary sport clubs (publicly financed)	55	39
Evening classes (publicly financed)	3	15
Workplace (private)	20	14
Commercial centres (private)	16	26
Unorganised (individual)	84	84

Source: Ottesen 2002.

Older people have made up for lost ground with respect to sport participation to an even far greater degree than women. Table 3.12 illustrates how the differences in the levels of sport participation among young people under twenty and those over fifty have halved during the

⁶⁷ Fridberg 2000; Larsen 2003b.

⁶⁸ Larsen 2003b; cf. Ottesen 2002.

⁶⁹ Ottesen 2002.

period between 1964 and 1998. Furthermore, this table shows that the growth in sport participation among youngsters has stagnated since 1993, while it has rapidly gained evermore strength among the older age groups. This situation is highlighted in table 3.15. Between 1998 and 2002, young men of 16-19 years old devoted less time to sport and physical activity, in contrast to young women and both men and women of the higher age categories. In particular, people over the age of sixty devoted more time than ever before to sport.

Table 3.15: Time spent on sport and physical activities by the Danish population (aged 16 and above) according to age and gender (in hours: minutes).

	1998			2002		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
16-19 years	9:30	5:20	7:35	7:42	6:26	7:07
20-29 years	6:52	4:23	5:37	7:29	5:51	6:41
30-39 years	4:23	2:48	3:38	4:22	4:18	4:20
40-49 years	4:01	3:53	3:57	5:08	4:34	4:51
50-59 years	3:34	3:41	3:37	5:00	4:58	4:59
60-69 years	4:39	5:00	4:48	7:26	6:38	7:02
70+ years	3:38	3:17	3:26	6:52	4:32	5:33
Total	5:04	3:52	4:29	5:56	5:08	5:32

Source: Larsen 2003b.

Organisational context

From table 3.14, it appears that by far the most sport participation in Denmark takes place outside of the organisational context of sports clubs or fitness centres. Around eight out of ten people who participate in sport do so in a non-organised fashion. At the same time, a large proportion of them also take part in sport in another context. 39% are thus active within club-related and non-organised sports, while 8% participate exclusively in sport within the context of a club.⁷⁰

Club life continues to remain strong in Denmark: there are more than 14,000 sports clubs; that is one club for every 400 inhabitants. In addition, there are also 7,000 company sports clubs. In total, an estimated 3.2 million Danes are thought to be members of sports clubs.⁷¹

Nevertheless, club sport is losing its market share. While in a broad sense the levels of sport participation have increased between 1987 and 1989, the proportion of those who take part in sport within the context of competitions and tournaments has fallen from 17% in 1987 to 14% in 1998 (see table 3.16.).

⁷⁰ Ibsen & Jørgensen 2004.

⁷¹ Ibsen & Jørgensen 2004.

Table 3.16 Sport and exercise among the Danish population (16 years and above) in general and according to competitive form (in %).

	1987	1993	1998
Participates in sport and exercise	43	47	51
Regularly takes part in sport in the context of competitions or tournaments	17	15	14

Source: Larsen 2002.

At the same time, there has also been a growth in sport participation at commercial sport centres. Around 22% of adults and 10% of youngsters between the ages of 12 and 15 who take part in sport do so within a commercial context; particularly with respect to gymnastics, dance, horse riding, bowling and fitness.⁷²

The most popular sports

The relatively small number of those participating in competitive sports as compared to the total number of sport participants is also evident from their position in the popularity stakes. In 2002, jogging/running (18%), swimming (15%), gymnastics (13%) and weightlifting/bodybuilding (11%) were by far the most practiced sports, whilst football (9%) and badminton (8%) were the most popular competitive sports.

Within an organisational context, football enjoys the greatest popularity. The football federation has twice as many members as the gymnastics federation, which finds itself in second place in the ranking order. They are followed by the handball, swimming and badminton federations respectively.

Table 3.17 Ranking order of the five most popular sports in non-organised context according to gender and in a club-related context according to age and gender.

	2003				2002	
	Number of sports association members according to age		Number of sports association members according to gender		General sport participation according to gender	
	<18 jaar	>25	Men	Women	Men	Women
1	Football	Golf	Football	Gymnastics	Jogging	Walking
2	Swimming	Football	Badminton	Swimming	Walking	Gymnastics
3	Handball	Badminton	Golf	Handball	Cycling	Cycling
4	Gymnastics	Gymnastics	Handball	Horse riding	Football	Swimming
5	Horse riding	Sailing	Swimming	Football	Badminton	Jogging

⁷² Ibsen & Jørgensen 2004.

Source: Danmarks Idræts-Forbund; Larsen 2002.

The statistics on club membership also make the analysis of trends possible. From such an analysis, it appears that between 1993 and 2003, golf clubs experienced the most significant growth in club membership, followed by football, gymnastics, sport-dancing and racing cycling associations. Proportionally speaking, golf, sport-dancing, ice hockey and floorball showed the greatest increases. Equestrian sport also increased in popularity. The biggest losers during this ten year period were, in the following order, tennis, badminton, athletics, volleyball and table tennis.

Part Two: Western European member states

3.4 Republic of Ireland

With special thanks to Dr. Ann Bourke of University College Dublin for supplying us with information on sport participation in Ireland.

Introduction

In the Republic of Ireland, there is no longitudinal research tradition that periodically monitors levels of sport participation. The most recent and representative national survey on participation in sport was the Survey of Sport and Physical Exercise, which was conducted in 2003 by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) in Dublin.⁷³ Prior to this, a variety of other research studies were carried out in which, among other things, questions about sport, exercise and physical activity were asked. The most important of these are the 2001 National Omnibus Survey, the Survey of Lifestyles, Attitudes and Nutrition (SLÁN) in 1998 and 2002, and the 1994 National Survey of Involvement in Sport and Physical Activity. These surveys were conducted independently of each other and thus offer supplementary, but hardly comparable, data.

Levels of sport participation

According to the 2004 Eurobarometer 213 (62.0), 53% of the Irish population participated in sport at least once a week, whilst 31% did no sport or exercise at all. With the possible exception of Slovenia, this means that the Republic of Ireland has the highest level of sport participation in the European Union after the Scandinavian countries. The ESRI Survey of Sport and Physical Exercise records an even higher level of sport participation in the Republic of Ireland than the Eurobarometer. According to this study, only 22% of the population indicated that they had done no form of sport or physical exercise during the previous twelve months.⁷⁴ The National Omnibus Survey came up with the similar figure of 23% in 2003.⁷⁵ The research study conducted in 1994, which asked about sport participation in more general terms, indicated that 36% were non-participants in sport.⁷⁶ These differences are the result of divergent definitions of sport and the fact that the questions were posed differently.

⁷³ The data presented in this section is based mainly on this research study, which was published by the ESRI in 2004 under the title *Sports participation and health among adults in Ireland* (Fahey, Layte & Gannon 2004).

⁷⁴ Fahey, Layte & Gannon 2004.

⁷⁵ National Omnibus Survey 2001.

⁷⁶ COMPASS 1999.

Trends in sport participation

It is not possible to determine any trends for the participation in sport and exercise for the Republic of Ireland on the basis of the data available. This is due to the fact that the surveys that have been conducted throughout the course of time differ too greatly from each other.

Social differentiation

If walking is included, the levels of participation in sport and exercise are the same for both men and women in the Republic of Ireland. Furthermore, even the differences between lower and higher age categories and higher and lower professional groups are limited. Excluding walking, women are less active in sport and physical exercise and the elderly and lower professional groups also lag further behind. The differences between measurements with and without walking reach nearly fifty percentage points.⁷⁷

Table 3.18: Proportion of the Irish population of 18 years and above who have participated in sport or physical exercise at least once during the past 12 months, according to gender, age and level of profession (in %).

	2003	
	incl. walking	excl. walking
All	78	43
Male	78	52
Female	78	34
18-24	87	67
25-29	82	60
30-39	81	51
40-49	85	42
50-65	74	26
65+	56	16
unskilled manual	70	27
skilled manual	79	49
low professional	89	58
high professional	81	52

Source: Fahey e.a. 2004

It should be emphasised that table 3.18 concerns the percentage of groups that have participated in sport at least once during the previous twelve months. This definition deviates from the data derived from the Eurobarometers and the national surveys in the Scandinavian countries, which

⁷⁷ Fahey, Layte & Gannon 2004.

were presented above. Fahey et al. (2004) report that, on average, 33% of the Irish population participate in sport once a month and 28% once a week. However, these data do not include walking, while that is the case in most other countries. As has already been indicated, this can make a considerable difference.

Making comparisons on the basis of non-harmonised national surveys is skating on thin ice. Nonetheless, they offer a lot of interesting, additional information.

Earlier research into sport participation (dating from 1994) can be fitted into the COMPASS scheme. This not only reveals significant differences between men and women, but also age categories. Just as in Scandinavia, it is notable that the differences between men and women concern participation in competitive and organised sport only and not the sport that takes place within a non-organised context. Roughly the same amount of men and women participate in non-organised sport, irrespective of the intensity of sport participation. Yet more men than women take part in intensive, competitive sport in a club-related context.

Table 3.19 Sport participation among the Irish population (16 years and above) according to gender, intensity, competitive and organisational context (in %).

	1994		
	Male	Female	All
Competitive, organised, intensive	11	3	7
Intensive	11	11	11
Regular, competitive and/or organised	7	7	7
Regular, recreational	3	4	3
Irregular	16	14	15
Occasional	22	20	21
Non-participant	30	42	36

Source: COMPASS1999 (see also <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/ireland.htm>)

Bearing in mind this data concerns a study conducted over ten years ago, it can be concluded that there are greater differences between the proportion of young people and old people who participate in sport than in the Scandinavian countries. The ‘drop off’ is particularly great with respect to intensive sport participation.

Table 3.20 Sport participation among the Irish population (16 years and above) according to age category and frequency (in %).

	1994										
	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 +
>120 times a year	36	33	23	13	17	12	10	9	8	6	4
12-120 times a year	40	27	36	27	24	21	20	14	10	7	5
<12 times a year	24	40	41	60	59	67	70	77	82	87	91

Source: COMPASS1999 (see also <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/ireland.htm>)

Organisational context

According to the Eurobarometers and the European Social Survey, the Republic of Ireland is one of the countries with the strongest sports club cultures. Around 33% of the Irish take part in sport as members of a sports club. This percentage has remained relatively stable between 1987 and 2002.⁷⁸ There are little data available with respect to sport participation within commercial or non-organised contexts.

The most popular sports

Around half of the population engages in recreational walking every now and then.⁷⁹ When walking is left aside, swimming is the most practiced sport, followed by golf, aerobics/keep fit, football and cycling. The popularity stakes are to a large extent determined by the social background of participants, including gender and age.⁸⁰

Table 3.21 Ranking order of the five most popular sports in a non-organised context according to percentage of practitioners and gender (in %).

2003					
Total	% Men		% Women	%	
Swimming	15	Golf	17	Swimming	17
Golf	10	Football (soccer)	13	Aerobics/keep fit	10
Aerobics/keep fit	8	Swimming	12	Cycling for leisure	3
Football (soccer)	7	(Gaelic) football	8	Golf	3
Cycling for leisure	5	Billiards/snooker	6	Tennis	3
(Gaelic) football	4	Cycling for leisure	6	Jogging	2

Source: Fahey e.a. (2004).

It is striking that golf has driven football from the first place among men. Swimming is equally popular among men and women. There are significant age differences with respect to competitive team sports, such as Gaelic football and association football (soccer). These sports are played by far more 18-29 year olds than older age groups. In contrast, participation in swimming and golf is more evenly distributed across all of the age categories.⁸¹ Unfortunately, we have no data on the recent membership figures for the various sports organisations.

⁷⁸ Commission of the European Communities, Eurobarometer 28 1987; Commission of the European Union, Eurobarometer 50.1 1998; European Social Survey 2002.

⁷⁹ Irish Universities Nutrition Alliance 2001.

⁸⁰ Fahey, Layte & Gannon 2004.

⁸¹ Fahey, Layte & Gannon 2004.

3.5 United Kingdom

With special thanks to Beth Fowler, Louise Hammerton and Nick Rowe from Sport England and Jerry Bingham from UK Sport for references to and supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

The United Kingdom is a textbook case of good data supply and the use of such information in the field of sport policy. There are data readily available with respect to various aspects of sport and these data provide a starting point for the development of policy. Data collection is largely focused on the identification of trends and international benchmarks.⁸²

Indeed, the United Kingdom is one of the few member states of the European Union, which has longitudinal data on sport participation. Since 1973, the General Household Survey (GHS) has been conducted among the population of England, Scotland and Wales of sixteen years old and above. Amongst other things, the GHS includes questions on sport participation and physical activities and, since 1996, also on club membership and the use of sports facilities. In view of methodological modifications, trends for two periods can be identified on the basis of the GHS; namely, 1977-1986 and 1987-2002.⁸³ In this section, we shall restrict our discussion to the most recent period.

In addition to the GHS, the Young People and Sport Survey (held in 1994, 1999 and 2002) provides information on the sport behaviour of English youngsters between the ages of 6 and 16 years old, while special surveys conducted by Sport England (1999/2000) offer insight into sport participation among ethnic minorities and disabled people. This section will only deal with sport participation among adults in the UK and a number of target groups in England. Supplementary data on sport behaviour in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will therefore not be examined here.

Levels of sport participation

In the previous chapter, the United Kingdom was viewed within an international comparative perspective on the basis of the Eurobarometer research studies (see figure 2.1) and COMPASS data (see figure 2.7). The Eurobarometer revealed that the levels of sport participation in the UK were above the EU average, with 55% of the population doing exercise or sport at least once a month. Only in the Scandinavian countries, Ireland and the Netherlands were the percentages higher. The COMPASS data shows that British sports participants generally tend to practice sport more intensively (frequently) than southern Europeans, but less intensively than those living in northern Europe.

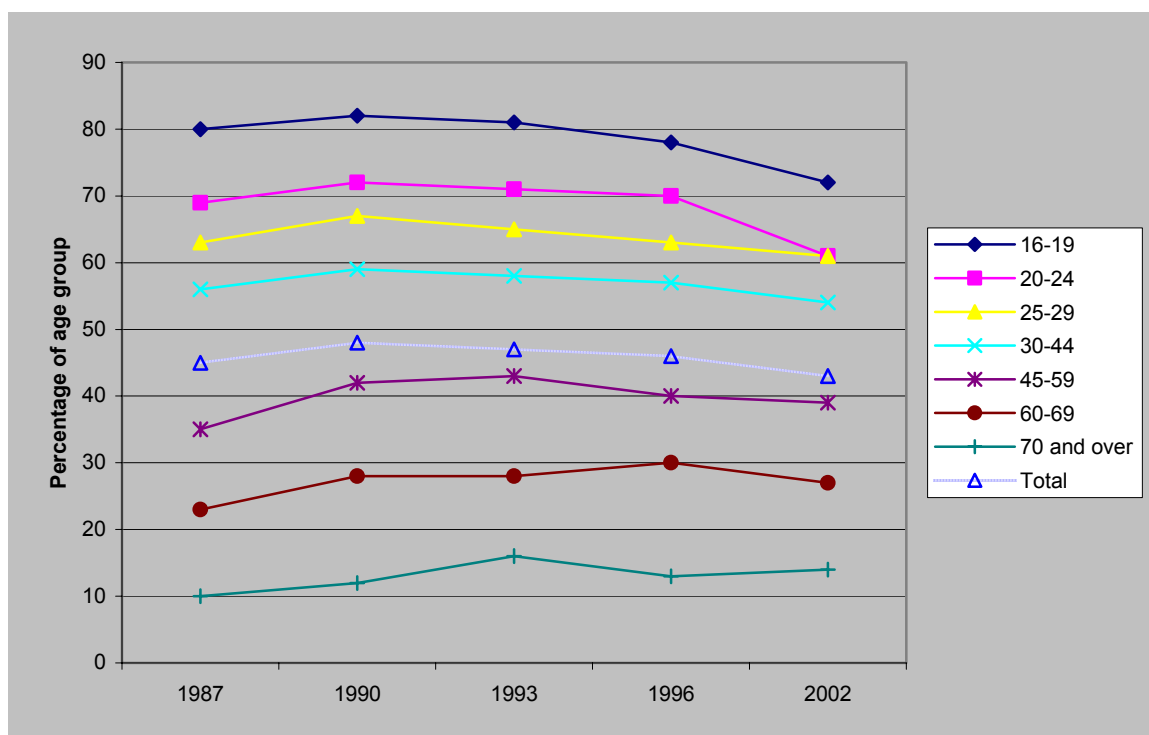
⁸² Sport England 2004a; Curry & Stanier 2003; UK government 2002.

⁸³ In 2004, a new national survey of culture and sport has been developed. This survey collects information for a larger sample than the GHS with data collection carried out continuously on a month-by-month basis.

Trends in sport participation

The GHS also allows sport participation in the UK to be situated within a temporal perspective. It reveals that overall participation in at least one sport, including walking, in the four weeks and twelve-months before the interview, increased from 1987 to 1990, remained stable at about 65% between 1990 and 1996, and then dropped to 59% in 2002. Excluding walking the percentage of adults participating in sport slowly but steadily declined between 1990 and 2002. In 1990, the percentage of those who at least took part in sport once a month (excluding walking) was 48%, whereas in 2002 (the most recent measurement) it had decreased to 43% (see figure 3.2).⁸⁴

Figure 3.2: Percentage of population in the UK who participated in sport in the four weeks before the interview, by age group, 1987-2002. Source: General Household Survey Office for National Statistics.



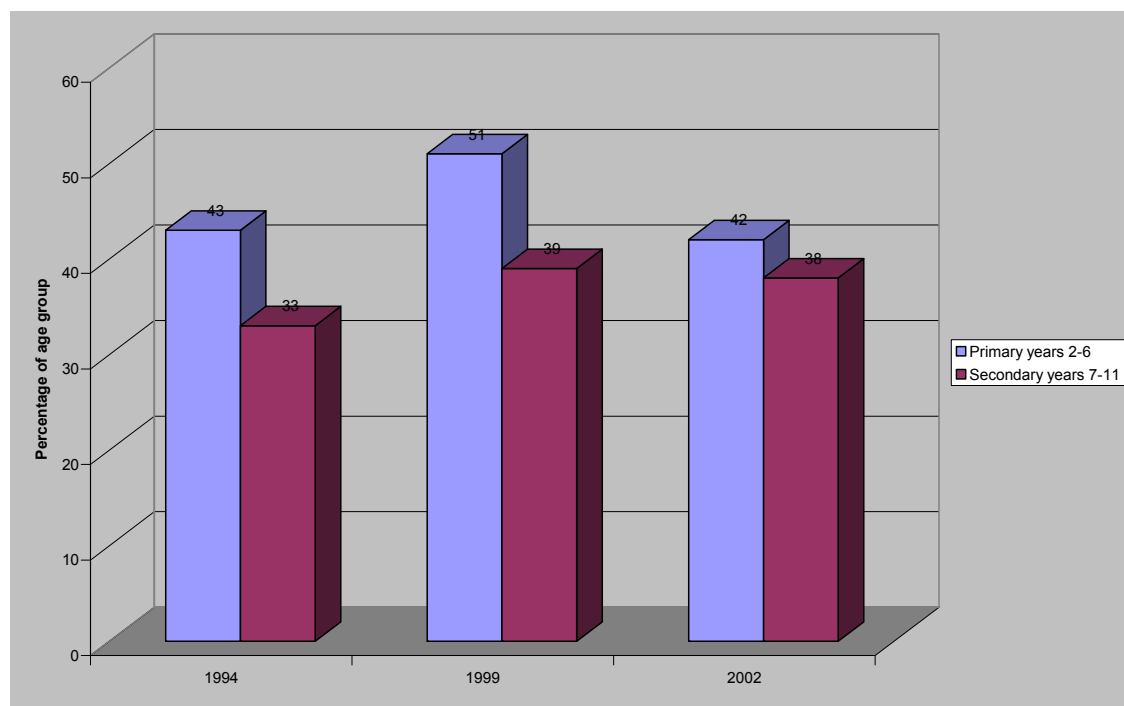
The decline in sport participation among adults was more prevalent in a number of demographic groups. Firstly, the percentage of those participating in sport fell more significantly among men

⁸⁴ Fox & Rickards 2004; Sport England 2004b. Including walking, the GHS shows that 59% of Britons participate in sport; this is closest to the score found in the most recent Eurobarometer survey.

(from 54% in 1996 to 51% in 2002) than women (from 38% to 37%). The decreasing sport participation among men was mainly the result of the waning popularity of cycling and cue sports. Cycling and swimming also declined among women. There were only comparatively minor shifts with respect to adult participation in all other sports. Secondly, during the period 1990-2002, the most significant drop in sport participation was found among young adults (16-19 and 20-24 years old), with a decrease of 10 and 11 percentage points respectively. This decline in sport participation among younger adults of 16-24 years old accelerated between 1996 and 2002.⁸⁵

Among young people between 6 and 16 years old the trend was more ambiguous. Just as in 1994 and 1999, 98% of those in this age category participated in 2002 in sport at least once out of lessons per school year. However, the percentage of young people who devoted ten hours a week to sport during their school holidays initially rose between 1994 and 1999, but then fell back between 1999 and 2002 (figure 3.3). The average number of sports played by them increased from 10.0 to 11.2 during the same period.⁸⁶

Figure 3.3: Percentage of young people aged 6-16 years who spent ten hours or more per week doing sport out of lessons during the school holidays. Source: Sport England 2003.



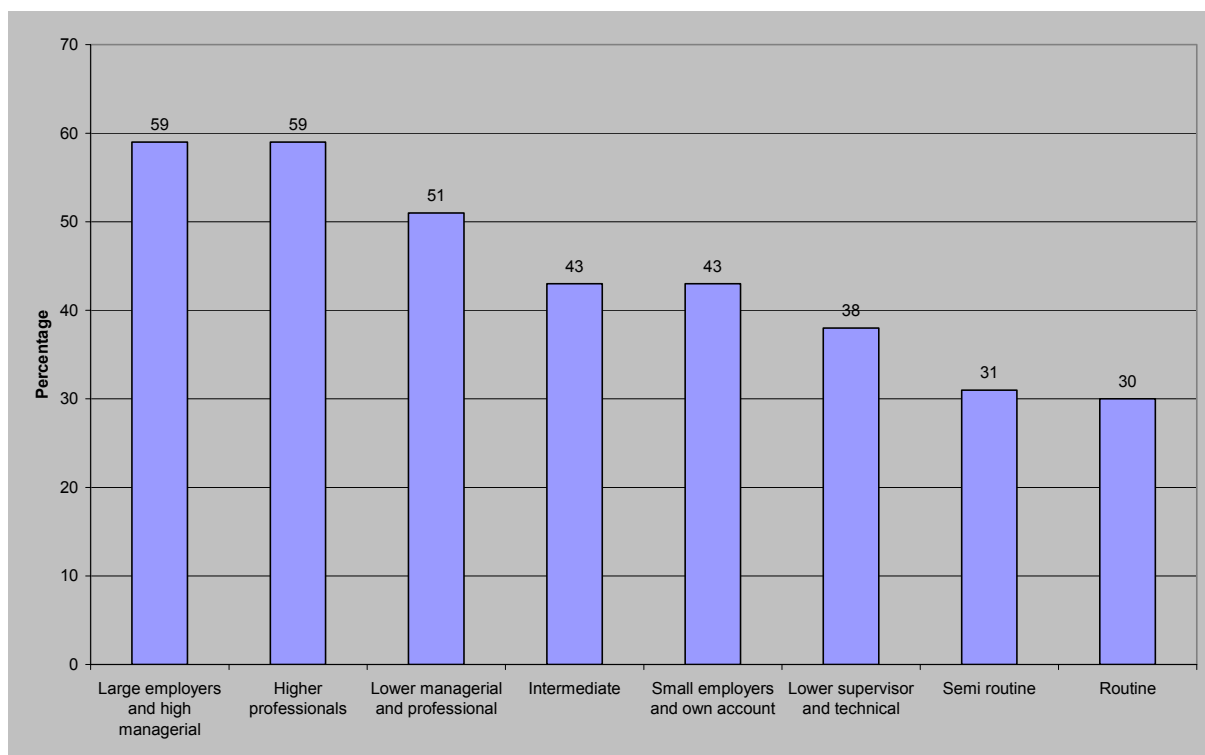
⁸⁵ General Household Survey Office for National Statistics; see also Sport England 2004b.

⁸⁶ Sport England 2003.

Social differentiation

Just as in the other EU member states, the social stratification of sport also comes to the fore in England. In 2002, men were more likely to have participated in at least one activity, including and excluding walking. Moreover, the proportion of adults who had taken part in at least one activity generally decreased with age: 77% of 16 and 19 years olds had taken part in at least one physical activity (including walking) in the previous four weeks compared with 30% of people aged 70 and over (and 72% versus 14% respectively if walking was excluded). There was a clear association too between socio-economic status and participation rates in sports and physical activities (see figure 3.4), also after controlling for age.⁸⁷ Furthermore, sport participation was lower than average among the disabled, ethnic minorities and in deprived areas.⁸⁸

Figure 3.4: Participation in sport in the UK by socio-economic classification, 2002. Source: Sport England 2004b.



When the 1996 GHS data is translated into the COMPASS scheme, one can see that women in the UK trail behind as regards both organised and non-organised intensive sport participation (see table 3.22). Earlier it was noted, with respect to Sweden and Finland, that while fewer

⁸⁷ Fox & Rickards 2004.

⁸⁸ Sport England 2001a and 2001b.

women than men played sport in an organised context, it was indeed the other way round as far as intensive sport participation in a non-organised context was concerned.

Table 3.22 Sport participation among the British population (16 years and above) according to gender, intensity, competitive and organisational context (in %).

1996			
	Male	Female	All
Competitive, organised, intensive	8	2	5
Intensive	15	10	13
Regular, competitive and/or organised	6	3	4
Regular, recreational	5	6	6
Irregular	20	18	19
Occasional	19	22	20
Non-participant	28	40	34

Source: COMPASS 1999 (see also <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/united.htm>)

In comparison to the Scandinavian countries, the differences in levels of sport participation among young and old people are greater. Compared to most of the other COMPASS pilot countries (Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Italy and Portugal), there was a higher frequency of sport participation among the youngest age groups in the United Kingdom (see table 3.23 and figure 3.7 in section on Portugal).

Table 3.23 Sport participation among the British population (16 years and above) according to age and frequency (in %).

1996											
	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 +
>120 times a year	53	44	35	34	30	25	21	20	18	14	10
12-120 times a year	25	25	28	27	30	25	23	20	15	17	8
<12 times a year	22	31	37	39	40	50	56	60	67	69	82

Source: COMPASS 1999 (see also <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/united.htm>)

Organisational context

The statistics from the GHS in 1996 and 2002 Young People Survey confirm the picture presented by the Eurobarometers, namely that relatively few people in the UK are members of sports clubs than in, for example, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany. This applies to adults in particular. While 47% of youngsters of 11-16 years old in the UK are sport club members, after leaving school, the proportion drops abruptly to 17% among 16-19 year olds and 13% among 20-24 years olds and then continues to fall as the age rises further. Moreover, the English clubs are even more than the aforementioned countries characterised by an over-representation of white, professional males and under-representation of women (4% versus 13%), semi and unskilled manual social classes (4% versus 16% professional), Asians and Afro-Caribbean and disabled people.

Of all adults, 16 years and over, 8% practised sport as a member of a sport club, 4% of a health or fitness club and 3% as a member of another kind of social club (see table 3.24.). Although more males than females were members of a sport club, more women than men could be found in health or fitness clubs. Young people and higher professional groups were over-represented in both sports clubs and fitness centres.⁸⁹

Table 3.24: Percentage of total population, 16 years and over, who practice sport in a club, according to type of club, gender and age.

	2002									
	Total	Gender		Age groups						
		Men	Women	16-19	20-24	25-29	30-44	45-59	60-69	70+
Health/fitness club	3.5	3.2	3.6	4.8	6.0	5.6	5.0	2.6	1.7	0.5
Social club	2.8	4.7	1.1	4.3	3.4	3.6	3.2	2.2	2.7	1.7
Sports club	8.2	13.2	4.0	17.0	12.6	10.5	8.9	7.7	6.0	2.9
Other club	2.8	4.2	1.6	5.2	4.4	2.5	2.9	2.9	2.6	1.1
Any club	15.4	22.3	9.6	26.2	22.8	19.8	17.9	14.1	12.1	5.7

Source: GHS 2002 in Fox & Rickards 2004; Sport England 2004.

Between 1996 and 2002, club membership, competitive participation and tuition increased significantly among men and women who participated in any physical activity or sport (excluding walking and darts). For example, whereas 32% of men who had played sports had participated competitively in the twelve months before interview in 1996, 40% did so in 2002.⁹⁰

Throughout the last decades, the fitness branch also increased significantly. The number of private health or fitness clubs in the UK rose - particularly during the 1990s - from around 200 in 1980 to around 600 in 1990 and 1400 in 2000. There are currently around 3 million members, with an annual increase of more than 10%.⁹¹

The most popular sports

In general, walking, swimming, keep fit/yoga, cue sports and cycling are the most popular activities. This applies to both men and women, although in a somewhat different order (see table 3.25).

⁸⁹ GHS 2002 in Fox & Rickards 2004 and Sport England 2004.

⁹⁰ Fox & Rickards 2004.

⁹¹ Leisure Database Company, in: UK government 2002.

Table 3.25 Ranking order of the most played sports among the British population (16 years and above) according to gender.

2002						
	Overall	% Men	% Women		%	
1	Walking	35	Walking	36	Walking	34
2	Swimming	14	Snooker/pool/billiards	15	Keep fit/yoga	16
3	Keep fit/yoga	12	Cycling	12	Swimming	15
4	Snooker/pool/billiards	9	Swimming	12	Cycling	6
5	Cycling	9	Football	10	Snooker/pool/billiards	4
6	Weight training	6	Weight training	9	Weight training	3
7	Running	5	Golf	9	Running	3
8	Football	5	Keep fit/yoga	7	Tenpin bowls/skittles	3
9	Golf	5	Running	7	Tennis	2
10	Tenpin bowls/skittles	3	Tenpin bowls/skittles	4	Horse riding	2

Source: GHS 2002

Participation in many activities is very strongly linked to age.⁹² For the 6-16 age group, the ranking order is quite different from the ‘top ten’ practised most by adults. Also the contrasts between boys and girls are far greater. In particular, football, roller skating/skateboarding, gymnastics/trampoline and cricket are more widely participated in by children than adults (see table 3.26.)

Football is more widely played by boys than girls, yet it decreased in popularity among boys (-3 percentage points) and grew in popularity among girls (+5 percentage points) between 1994 and 2002. Other sports, which also bore witness to a growth amongst girls during the same period, are roller skating/skateboarding (+8), gymnastics (+5), swimming and dance classes (+4), while netball (-9), cycling (-7) and aerobics/keep fit (-5) declined in popularity.

Table 3.26 Ranking order of the most popular sports among young people (6-16 years old) in England according to gender.

2002						
	Overall	% Boys	% Girls		%	
1	Cycling	49	Football	57	Cycling	45
2	Football	37	Cycling	53	Walking (>1hr), hiking	23
3	Roller skating/skate boarding	23	Snooker, billiards, pools	31	Gymnastics, trampolining	22
4	Walking (>1hr), hiking	22	Tennis	25	Roller skating/skate boarding	22
5	Tennis	22	Roller skating/skate boarding	25	Dance classes	21

⁹² Fox & Rickards 2004.

6	Snooker, billiards, pool	21	Cricket	22	Tennis	20
7	Gymnastics, trampolining	16	Walking (>1hr), hiking	21	Aerobics, keep fit	19
8	Athletics, running	13	Basketball	16	Football	18
9	Cricket	13	Darts	14	Rounders	14
10	Basketball	12	Athletics, running	13	Athletics, running	13

Source: Sport England 2003

Boys principally took greater part in roller skating/skateboarding (+13), but less in cycling (-9) and cricket (-5), and rounders (-4). There was also decline in the popularity of football, cricket and rounders amongst boys during this period.⁹³

Within an organisational context, football continues to be the most popular sport by far. The UK top ten is also strongly dominated by other sports whose origins lie in England.

Table 3.27 Ranking order according to sports organisations' membership figures.

Membership figures 2002		
1	Football	2,500,000
2	Golf	884,500
3	Gymnastics	830,000
4	Bowls	587,144
5	Cricket	442,499
6	Squash	350,000
7	Tennis	286,520
8	Rugby	256,938
9	Motor racing	250,000
10	Sailing	205,071

Source: Taylor et al. 2003.

⁹³ Sport England 2003.

3.6 The Netherlands

Introduction

The data supply is also comparatively good in the Netherlands. Longitudinal data on sport participation have been collected using a variety of research instruments. Since the 1970s, the Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) has periodically conducted both Time Use Studies (TBO) and Facilities Usage Surveys (AVO), which both include the issue of the level of sport participation among the Dutch population. More recently, several new and more specific research instruments have been added; in particular, the Physical Activity and Health Survey, the Sports Clubs Monitor and nationally and locally harmonised surveys according to the RSO-guidelines for sports participation surveys. The majority of the data that these surveys have generated were summarised in the Sport Report 2003.⁹⁴

Levels of sport participation

Sport in the Netherlands is characterised by not only a high degree of sport participation (only the Scandinavian countries and Ireland have higher levels still), and an exceptionally high level of organisation (with the highest percentage of sport played within a club-related context in Europe), but also an average low frequency of sport participation. Although 59% of the population exercised or played sport at least once a month according to the Eurobarometer 213 (62.0) in 2004, the RSO study in 2002 revealed that a mere 18% of the Dutch population of 6 years and above was sportingly active more than 120 times a year.⁹⁵ The time use research indicates that this disparity grew during the 1990s: while the percentage that take part in sport at least once a month has increased throughout the past decades, the percentage that devotes more time to sport has in fact decreased.⁹⁶

Trends in sport participation

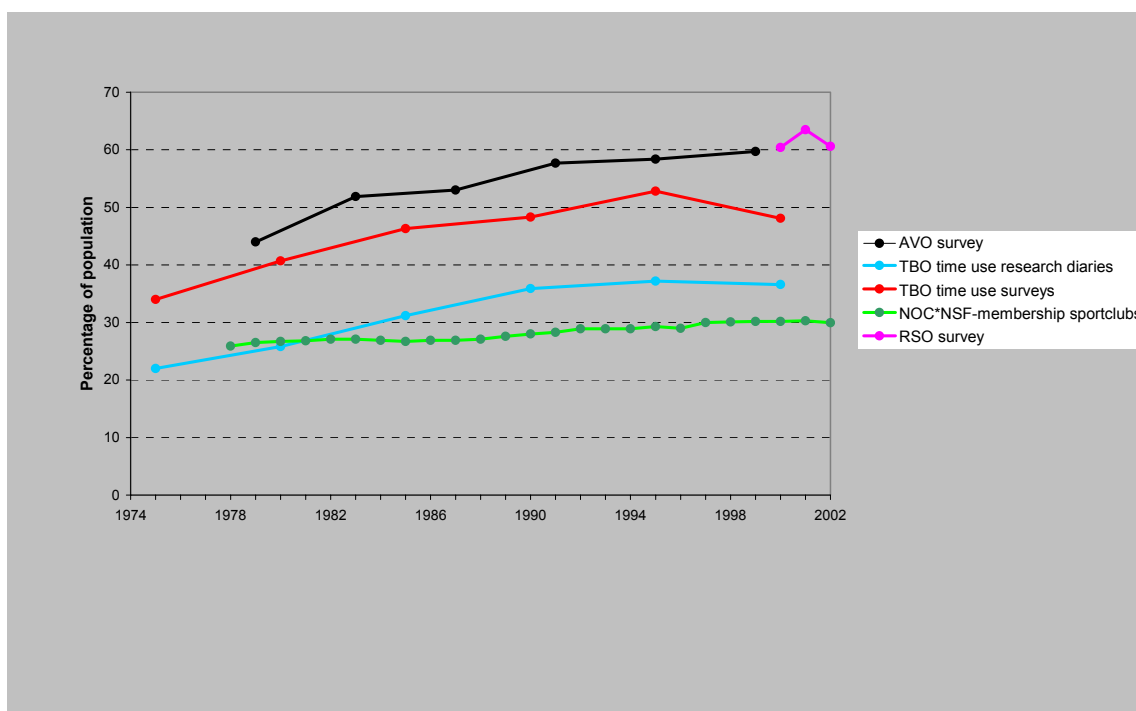
Although the various research instruments calculate participation in sport and exercise in different ways, they still bring comparable long term trends to light. They all reveal a significant growth in sport participation from the 1970s until the mid 1990s. How sport participation developed thereafter is, however, less evident. Whereas one study points to a deceleration in growth, others indicate a stagnation in growth or even a decline in sport participation (see figure 3.5).

⁹⁴ Breedveld ed. 2003.

⁹⁵ Hoyng, Roques & Van Bottenburg 2003.

⁹⁶ Breedveld ed. 2003.

Figure 3.5: Trends in sport participation in the Netherlands according to different studies using different research methods and definitions. Source: Breedveld (ed.) 2003.



The development of organised sport is easier to interpret since it is far less equivocal: the different studies show a growth during the 1970s, followed by a stagnation during the first half of the 1980s, and a rejuvenation during the second half of the 1980s, after which a slight decline ensued during the 1990s. Only the membership figure of the umbrella sports organisation NOC*NSF point to a persistent growth in organised club-related sport.

When the AVO data is recalculated according to the COMPASS framework guidelines, it appears that the number of non-participants remained stable between 1983 and 1999, the amount of incidental and irregular sport participants rose during the 1980s and subsequently stabilised and that regular and intensive sport participation declined slightly during the 1990s (see table 3.28.).

Table 3.28 Classification of sport participation among the Dutch population (6 years and above), according to the COMPASS framework, based on AVO-surveys 1979-1999.

	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999
Non-participant	50	42	42	41	41	41
Occasional	6	6	7	8	8	8
Irregular	24	29	29	34	33	33
Regular, recreational	7	7	6	4	4	5
Regular, organised	8	10	10	11	10	10
Intensive	3	2	2	1	1	2
Intensive, organised	3	4	3	2	2	1

Source: Breedveld & Van Bottenburg 2002.

Social differentiation

Just as in the Scandinavian countries, Dutch women have caught up with men as far as their participation in sport is concerned. Indeed, in 1999, the percentage of women who had taken part in sport during the preceding twelve months was higher than that of men. Six years before, women lagged behind by six percentage points. Nevertheless, women still devote less time to sport than their male counterparts.⁹⁷ There are also significant differences in the organisational context in which sport takes place: far fewer women participate in sport in a club-related context than men (in 2002 this was 20% and 32% of respondents respectively), yet far more women take part in sport in a commercial context (in 2002 19% versus 11%).⁹⁸

During the period 1979-1999, young people under 19 years of age began to participate in sport in ever-increasing numbers, but they were also devoting increasingly less time to sport. The levels of sport participation among 20-50 year olds has remained stable for a long time. In contrast, there has been a clear growth in sport participation among the over-50s.

Akin to the other EU member states, participation in sport in the Netherlands increases in proportion to the degree to which professional and income levels rise. Between 1979 and 1999, the disparity between the percentage of sports participants from higher and lower social classes diminished, but, in terms of the amount of time that they devoted to sport, these differences in fact grew. A higher percentage of those with a lower level of educational achievement and income have started to participate in sport, but they spend less time doing so. This is exactly the reverse for the higher social classes.

Table 3.29: Sport participation among the Dutch population according to gender, age, income and educational level.

	Participation in percentages*						Time spent in hours per week					
	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Gender												
Men	56	61	60	63	63	65	0.9	1.2	1.6	1.5	1.8	1.5
Women	50	56	57	62	64	65	0.5	0.7	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.0
Age group												
6-11 years	79	86	85	88	89	92						
12-19 years	81	85	82	84	85	86	1.9	2.3	3.0	2.5	2.9	2.6
20-34 years	66	73	72	76	74	74	0.8	1.0	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
35-49 years	46	57	58	62	64	63	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.1
50-64 years	20	29	31	39	45	48	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.6	1.0	0.9
65-79 years	8	15	19	23	26	35	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.9	0.9

⁹⁷ Breedveld ed. 2003.

⁹⁸ Hoyng, Roques & Van Bottenburg 2003. Both data relate to the population aged between 18 to 70 years old.

	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000
Income level												
Lowest	37	42	42	48	48	51	0.6	0.5	0.8	0.9	0.8	0.7
Lowest middle	50	55	56	61	60	64	0.6	0.7	1.1	1.0	1.0	0.9
Highest middle	56	65	63	68	70	69	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.0
Highest	67	75	74	75	78	76	0.9	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.7
Educational level												
Lowest	34	42	42	46	45	46	0.6	0.9	1.1	1.0	1.2	0.8
Middle	63	67	68	71	71	70	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.4
Highest	68	74	73	75	77	75	0.7	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.5	1.6

* A minimum of once in the twelve months prior to the interview

Source: Breedveld (ed.) 2003.

Organisational context

The Netherlands deviates from most other countries with respect to its high degree of sport within an organised framework. In 2001, there were some 29,600 sports clubs in the Netherlands; that is one sport club for every 539 inhabitants. Nearly 34% of the total population and 52% of all participants in sport are members of a sports club. There are a total of 4.9 million members registered with the sports clubs that are affiliated to accredited sport federations; more than any other not-for-profit organisation, including consumer organisations, trade unions, political parties, and so on.⁹⁹

However, the dominant position that the sports clubs occupies is under threat. Since the early 1990s, the sports clubs' market share has diminished (see table 3.30).

Table 3.30: Percentage of the Dutch population (6 years and above) and sportspeople who are members of a sports club (in %).

	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999
Total population	30	34	34	37	36	34
Sports participants	57	58	58	59	57	52

Source: Breedveld (ed.) 2003.

Moreover, a decreasing number of people are now taking part in training sessions and competitions, which are some of the core activities of sports clubs. The most striking decline has occurred among young people between 12 and 19 years old (see table 3.31.).

⁹⁹ Van Bottenburg & Schuyt 1996. The same holds true for many other countries, like Belgium, Germany and Sweden, as mentioned in other sections of this chapter.

Table 3.31: Participation in sport in the context of training sessions and competitions according to gender, age and educational level as a percentage of the sportingly active population (6-79 years old)

	%					
	1979	1983	1987	1991	1995	1999
Overall (excl. walking/cycling)	39	50	49	48	43	38
Gender						
Men	49	56	55	54	51	45
Women	28	43	43	42	36	31
Age group						
6-11 years	45	61	62	64	59	59
12-19 years	58	71	70	72	66	60
20-34 years	35	48	50	47	44	36
35-49 years	27	38	36	41	35	29
50-64 years	13	21	25	27	25	24
65-79 years	6	17	17	16	18	15
Educational level						
Lowest	29	39	39	39	32	25
Middle	34	44	44	41	39	32
Highest	30	43	42	42	41	32

Source: Breedveld (ed.) 2003.

In contrast to the diminishing appeal of sports clubs, there has been an increasing growth in fitness centres. There were an estimated total of between 1600 and 2000 fitness centres in the Netherlands in 2003, with a total of around 1.6 million members.¹⁰⁰ In this respect, the size of the fitness branch continues to remain substantially less significant than the sports clubs, but the gap between the two has clearly become smaller. In 2002, according to the RSO, 34% of the Dutch population over the age of six participated in sport in a club-related context, 14% in a commercial context and 46% in a non-committed fashion or by organising the sport for themselves.¹⁰¹

The most popular sports

At present, fitness is the most widely practiced sport in the Netherlands, followed by swimming, rambling/hiking, cycling, running/jogging and tennis. Between 1991 and 1999, the popularity of

¹⁰⁰ Luttikhuis 2003.

¹⁰¹ Hoyng, Roques & Van Bottenburg 2003.

fitness/aerobics, walking, skateboarding and horse riding increased, while ice-skating, tennis, volleyball and gymnastics declined.

Within an organised context, football is by far the most played sport, ahead of tennis, gymnastics, golf, ice-skating and hockey. In terms of absolute numbers, sports organisations for golf, hockey, darts, athletics and bridge enjoyed the greatest growth in membership, while sports organisations for swimming, badminton, gymnastics, volleyball and tennis lost the most members.

Table 3.32: Popularity ranking order for sports in general and in club-related context according to gender and age

	General 2002		Club-related context 2003			
	All (6 years and above)	All (6 years and above)	Men (18 years and above)	Women (18 years and above)	Juniors (6-18 years)	Seniors (6-18 years)
1	Swimming	Football	Football	Tennis	Football	Football
2	Fitness (condition)	Tennis	Tennis	Gymnastics	Gymnastics	Tennis
3	Walking	Gymnastics	Golf	Horse riding	Tennis	Golf
4	Cycling	Golf	Field hockey	Field hockey	Swimming	Ice-skating
5	Football	Ice-skating	Swimming	Swimming	Field hockey	Skiing
6	Tennis	Field hockey	Skiing	Volleyball	Korfball	Bridge
7	Gymnastics	Swimming	Athletics	Football	Horse riding	Horse riding
8	Running/jogging	Horse riding	Volleyball	Skiing	Ice-skating	Gymnastics
9	Aerobics/steps	Skiing	Bridge	Bridge	Volleyball	Volleyball
10	Fitness (strength)	Volleyball	Gymnastics	Golf	Judo	Water sports

Source: RSO (Hoyng, Roques & Van Bottenburg 2003); Membership figures NOC*NSF 2003.

3.7 Belgium

With special thanks to Luc Vandeputte (Brussels European Sport Management Centre) and Dr. Jeroen Scheerder (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Dept. of Sport & Movement Sciences / Ministry of the Flemish Government, Dept. of Welfare, Health & Culture) for providing us with data on sport participation.

Introduction

Belgium – in particular the Flemish-speaking part – has a long tradition of conducting time-lag studies on sport participation. Firstly, at the end of the 1960s, a research study on the sportive use of leisure time among Flemish schoolchildren and their parents was developed by the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Following the first measurement in 1969, this research has been replicated every ten years since. Drawing on this data, researchers at Leuven University have been able to analyse the trends between 1969 and 1999.¹⁰² Secondly, around the mid 1990s, the Ministry of Flanders commissioned the development of a survey, which charted various aspects of the population's behaviour, including participation in sport. This survey, which has been carried out annually since 1996, is known as the APS survey.¹⁰³ In addition to these data, BLOSO and the BOIC keep records on individual branches of sport, both within and outside of the context of sports clubs.

Together these research data provide a considerable amount of information on sport participation. Moreover, this data has been thoroughly analysed in a scientific fashion. This applies especially to the data on the social stratification of sport in Flanders.¹⁰⁴ However, the available data is not really suitable for international comparison, although comparisons with Dutch and Canadian data have been made by secondary analyses.¹⁰⁵ This means that, due to the different approaches and questioning, the information on the frequency and intensity of sport cannot be fitted into the COMPASS scheme. Furthermore, the questions on club membership and organisational context are formulated differently than has been agreed in the COMPASS guidelines.

Levels of sport participation

The Eurobarometers and Time Use Surveys offer the opportunity to examine sport participation in Belgium within an international context. According to Eurobarometer 213 (62.0), 52% of the Belgian population exercise or play sport at least once a month. In this regard, viewed within a

¹⁰² Scheerder et al. 2002; Scheerder, Pauwels & Vanreusel 2003.

¹⁰³ See Scheerder & Pauwels 2002.

¹⁰⁴ See for example Vanreusel 1985; Taks 1994; Scheerder 2003.

¹⁰⁵ Scheerder & Breedveld 2005.

European perspective, Belgium comes out as average. This average level also comes to the fore with respect to various other aspects of sport participation, such time use and club-related sport. Things are, though, different as regards sport participation among young people. In 2001, as indicated by Eurobarometer 55.1, Belgium found itself in bottom place of the list all EU member states with only 38% of youngsters taking part in sport. However, this low percentage is not confirmed by the results of the national sport participation research that is discussed below.

Trends in sport participation

In their analysis of thirty years of sport, Scheerder et al. established that sport participation in Flanders has increased over the long term. This growth applies to both men and women, as well as adults and young people. Whereas less than 40% of the adult Flemish population in 1969 claimed to have been actively involved in sport during their leisure time at some time of their lives, by 1999 this had risen to 75%. In 1969, 14% of respondents said they had taken part in sport during the past twelve months, while in 1999 this was 52%. The sport repertoire of the Flemish population has also grown. At the end of the 1960s, half of the men and women took part in more than one sport; at the end of the 1990s, this applied to six out of ten of them.

The most significant increase in sport participation occurred during the 1970s. In the 1980s, this growth stagnated, but began to pick up again during the 1990s.¹⁰⁶

Data derived from the APS surveys for the first years of the 21st century reveal a stagnation or decline (see table 3.35.). According to the Leuven University data, this decline had already occurred among young people (especially girls). Whilst the number of adult participants in sport rose by more than ten percent during the 1990s, sport participation among young people receiving a secondary school education declined slightly during the same period. However, at the same time, the diversity of sport participation actually increased.¹⁰⁷

Table 3.33 Sport participation (at least once in the last twelve months) among adults in Flanders according to gender and organisational context.

		1979	1989	1999
Sport participation (in % of total population)	General	41	41	52
	Men	48	44	54
	Women	34	37	49
Club based sport participation (in % of all sport participants)	General	34	46	49
	Men	38	50	50
	Women	29	40	48

¹⁰⁶ Scheerder et al 2001, 2002; Scheerder 2003.

¹⁰⁷ Scheerder 2003.

		1979	1989	1999
Non-organised sport participation (in % of all sport participants)	General	78	69	68
	Men	75	66	68
	Women	81	73	68

Source: Scheerder 2003.

Table 3.34 Sport participation (at least once in the last twelve months) among adults in Flanders according to age and organisational context.

		1979	1989	1999
Sport participation (in % of total population)	<35	45	45	49
	25-29	46	45	56
	40-44	43	41	53
	45-49	36	35	48
	>49	30	27	38
Club based sport participation (in % of all sport participants)	<35	38	46	53
	25-29	38	46	50
	40-44	32	48	48
	45-49	30	39	38
	>49	22	43	38
Non-organised sport participation (in % of all sport participants)	<35	75	68	62
	25-29	75	70	67
	40-44	78	68	70
	45-49	80	70	75
	>49	86	70	73

Source: Scheerder 2003.

Table 3.35: Sport participation among the Flemish population according to gender, age and educational level.

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Total	44	38	39	43
Men	46	44	44	48
Women	41	31	36	38
16-24	66	59	70	70
25-34	56	52	53	53
35-44	46	41	44	44
45-54	40	32	40	39
55-64	37	33	30	33
65-74	26	24	22	38
>75	15	11	11	22

	2000	2001	2002	2003
No/primary education	28	19	21	27
Lower secondary	43	34	33	40
Higher secondary	45	43	44	47
Higher non-university	57	52	49	57
University	65	58	64	69

Source: APS 2000-2003.

Social differentiation

In 1999, levels of sport participation were higher for all social groups than thirty years previously. Since the growth was higher than average among women, older people and members of lower social classes, the differences between the various social groups became less significant. Nonetheless, as tables 3.33 to 3.35 clearly illustrate, participation in sport is still characterised by a high degree of social differentiation. The chances of taking part in sport are still greater for men than women, diminish with increasing age and increase with a higher level of educational achievement. This social stratification is also found in the other EU countries and is corroborated time and again by the sociological literature on sport participation.¹⁰⁸

While there has continued to be a significant correlation between sport behaviour and variables of social background, such as gender, age and socio-economic status, between 1969 and 1999, the strength of these structural parameters in Flanders has indeed changed. The relationship between the sport behaviour of adolescents and the socio-economic status of their parents has weakened, whilst their education level and their behaviour in relation to the media has become a more important influential factor. Aside from age, the school program has an exceptionally strong influence on sport behaviour in Flanders, even after the socio-economic position of parent and sport participation at a younger age have been taken into account.¹⁰⁹

For the greatest part, during the 1970s and 1980s, women made up the distance that they had lagged behind men as regards sport participation. During the 1969-1999 period, women not only started to take part in more sport, but also in more kinds of sport at the same time. In this respect, there are few differences between men and women today.¹¹⁰ However, recent data from the APS surveys suggest that during the past few years sport participation among women has once again declined (see table 3.35.).

As people get older, sport participation still decreases in a linear fashion, but the trend indicators suggest that these differences have become more marginal than in the past few decades (see table 3.34). The share of sportingly active youngsters between 7 and 17 years old as compared to the total number of sport participants continues to remain greater than the share of this category in relation to the entire population. These social differences in youth sport can

¹⁰⁸ For Flanders see: Vanreusel 1985, Taks 1994, Scheerder et al. 2001, Scheerder 2003. Also see chapter 4 for more information.

¹⁰⁹ Scheerder 2003.

¹¹⁰ Scheerder 2003

be viewed as social inequalities. Young people from more socially deprived environments clearly encounter greater obstacles with respect to active sport participation than youngsters from socially stronger strata.¹¹¹

Organisational context

Alongside the general increase in sport participation, club sports participation also grew in importance. In the period 1969-1999, a higher percentage of Flemish youth and adults took part in sport as members of a sports club.¹¹² This applies to all age groups and women, while during the 1990s club sport participation among men appears to have declined in importance (see table 3.33). At the same time, non-organised sport seems to have not or hardly moved forward at all during the same period.¹¹³ Both forms of sport participation also seem to go hand in hand frequently: more than 20% took part in sport in an organised as well as a non-organised context.

Table 3.36 Sport participation in Flanders according to organisational context and gender, in % of the total population.

	Club membership	Sport participation in group context	Individual sport participation
Total	20	20	26
Men	25	20	28
Women	15	20	23

Source: APS 1999

In total, there are more than 15,000 accredited and subsidised sports clubs in Flanders, with around 1 million members (around 17% of the Flemish population); more than any other organisation in the leisure sphere.¹¹⁴ However, these sports organisations also have a high membership turnover. Around 25% of members did not renew their membership in 2002. Yet at the same time, a quarter of members were also new.

A majority (around six in ten) of sports club members are male, but even in this regard women are catching up. The growth in club-related sport during the 1990s was largely due to an increase in the number of women and girls joining up. At the same time, the number of male members between 16-25 years old decreased. The Flemish sports club can certainly no longer be seen as the bastion of young men. Indeed, girls now make up the majority of the under 18

¹¹¹ Scheerder 2003

¹¹² Scheerder, Pauwels & Vanreusel 2003.

¹¹³ Scheerder 2003.

¹¹⁴ Elchardus, Hooghe & Smits 2001.

age group.¹¹⁵ More generally, the distribution of sport participation according to organisational context became increasingly similar for men and women during the 1969-1999 period.¹¹⁶

Participation in club-related sport varies per sport. For example, judo, basketball, football and gymnastics have all emerged as distinctive association sports in Flanders, whilst cycling, jogging, swimming, walking, skiing and squash may be regarded as typical individual or 'free-booting' sports.¹¹⁷

The most popular sports

Cycling, swimming, walking, fitness and football are the sports, which are most frequently practiced in Belgium at least once a year, although there are slight differences between the Dutch speaking Flanders and the French speaking Walloon provinces.

Table 3.37 Ranking order of popularity of sports throughout Flemish and French speaking regions of Belgium as practiced at least once a year in terms of %of the population.

		2000				
		Flanders		Wallonia		
	Belgium					
1	Cycling	31	Cycling	39	Swimming	26
2	Swimming	23	Swimming	21	Football	21
3	Walking	20	Walking	20	Walking	20
4	Fitness	15	Fitness	17	Cycling	19
5	Football	13	Football	9	Jogging	16
6	Jogging	12	Jogging	9	Fitness	13
7	Tennis	9	Tennis	8	Gymnastics	12
8	Gymnastics	7	Mini/indoor football	5	Tennis	9
9	Basketball	4	Basketball	5	Martial arts	4
10	Badminton	4	Athletics	4	Equestrian sports	4

Source: APS 2001.

A number of sports have considerably more male than female participants and vice versa. 70% or more of participants in billiards, football, mountain biking, table tennis, badminton and motor racing are men, while 70% or more of women take part in aerobics, gymnastics and dance.

¹¹⁵ Evolution in the number of members of Flemish sport federations 1995-1998.

¹¹⁶ Scheerder et al. 2001.

¹¹⁷ Scheerder 2003.

Activities, such as tennis, skiing and equestrian sports, are equally popular with both genders. Ball sports are almost entirely the preserve of 16-24 year olds; fitness sports are mainly practiced by 25-34 year olds.

During the thirty years between 1969 and 1999, there have not been many changes in the general participation in each branch of sport. Football retains its uncontested position as the number one sport for men, followed by typical recreational sports like cycling, jogging and swimming. Women tend to participate mostly in swimming, gymnastics and fitness. Comparatively new successful sports, such as indoor football and mountain biking, are popular with men and aerobics with women. During the 1990s, new sports like fitness and squash have grown in popularity.¹¹⁸

It is difficult to get a complete picture of sport, which is played within an organised context. This is mainly because some branches of sport have more than one federation and not all sport federations are affiliated to the big umbrella federations. In addition to this, the data from Flanders and Wallonia do not sufficiently gel together to be able to create a ranking order for Belgium as a whole. On the basis of data obtained from the Flemish Sport Federation (VSF) and a number of supplementary sources, the following ranking order has cautiously been put together:

Table 3.38 Popularity ranking order of sports in Flanders according to membership figures.

1998	
1	Football* 305,006
2	Tennis 108,596
3	Gymnastics 83,965
4	Basketball* 54,542
5	Walking and jogging 48,953
6	Racing cycling* 41,070
7	Volleyball 36,842

* concerns 2000 (APS 2001)

Source: Flemish Sport Federation (VSF)

Social stratification can not only be found in sport participation in general, but it also characterises people's preferences for different branches of sport.¹¹⁹ By and large, people with different social backgrounds tend to have divergent sport preferences. In Belgium, Renson, Vanreusel, Taks and Scheerder have conducted time-lag studies into this very issue during the 1969-1999 period. Their research clearly reveals that the diversity of sport participation (per branch of sport) possesses a socially layered profile.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Scheerder 2003.

¹¹⁹ For a global, historical sociological perspective on this phenomenon see Van Bottenburg 2001.

¹²⁰ Scheerder et al. 2001.

Firstly, the number of sports participated in increases the higher the socio-professional status becomes. In 1969, 76% of uneducated labourers confined themselves to just one sport, while this applied to only 30% of the intellectual and socio-economic upper classes. The socio-professional classes choose from a much broader spectrum of sports, whereas those with a lower professional status tend to have a more limited sport repertoire. In the last decades of the twentieth century, the strength of this correlation has diminished. In 1999, the percentages for the aforementioned strata were 54% and 24% respectively.

Secondly, a social status hierarchy for sport seems to exist. Barely six percent of the sports were participated in to an equal extent by all socio-professional strata in Flemish society. A large proportion of sports can thus be ascribed to specific professional classes. Sports, such as angling, bodybuilding, motor racing, boxing and handball, are examples of activities that are generally done by the lowest professional classes. Typically high status sports include field hockey, sailing, golf, fencing, mountaineering and squash. Skiing, windsurfing and tennis may be added to this list for women. Renson has presented this hierarchy in the now widely renowned social status pyramid of sport.

It seems as if there has been little change in this social status hierarchy over the course of time. Both the top and the bottom layers remain more or less constant. The most significant shifts have taken place in the middle layers. A number of sports, such as football and martial arts, have undergone a process of democratisation, but most retain their class-related status. This was as much the case in 1969 as it is today. More importantly, as Scheerder puts it: “if we analyse the stratification in sports from a longitudinal point of view, hardly any social change can be detected. Rank correlations between the 1999 sports stratification pattern and the stratification patterns of 1969, 1979 and 1989 are almost all significant at the .05 level. The empirical data thus demonstrate that very little change in terms of social mobility occurred in the sports stratification in Flanders over the last three decades. Only new sports in the hierarchy caused any significant differentiation.”¹²¹

¹²¹ Scheerder et al. 2002: 225.

3.8 Luxembourg

With special thanks to Jean Krantz and Karin Schank from the Département Ministériel des Sports Luxembourg for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

Apart from the Eurobarometers, no representative national surveys on sport participation have yet been conducted in Luxembourg. The only data available are the membership figures for sports organisations. These figures concern the membership of clubs for a variety of years beginning in 1980 and provide details of participation according to gender and competitive or recreational context.

Levels of sport participation

The Eurobarometer is therefore the only source of information on levels of sport participation in Luxembourg. According to this data, 49% of the population takes part in sport at least once a month on average. With a total of 40% that never exercise or play sport, Luxembourg has exactly the average level of sport participation found within the 25 member states.¹²² As discussed in chapter 2, Luxembourg also finds itself taking this median position with respect to various other aspects of sport, with the exception of youth sport participation. A comparatively large number of young people take part in sport in Luxembourg: 63% of youngsters are sportingly active, which, in 2001, was above the 50% average for the 15 EU states. Moreover, these young people also play a lot of sport in a club-related context (42%); after the Netherlands and Sweden, this is the highest percentage in the European Union.¹²³

Trends in sport participation

Trends can only be identified with respect to organised sport. According to a report of the *Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de la formation professionnelle et des sports*, the total number of licenciés of the sports federations in Luxembourg rose from 85,884 in 1990 to 99,881 in 2000; this is an increase of around 16%.¹²⁴

¹²² European Commission, Eurobarometer 213 (62.0).

¹²³ European Commission, Eurobarometer 55.1 2003.

¹²⁴ For 2000, only the membership figures for sport federations that already existed in 1990 were counted.

Social differentiation

In 2002, far fewer women (26% of the total number of members) were affiliated to sports associations than men. Women were also more frequently members of such associations for purely recreational purposes. At 79%, competitive sport was clearly a male preserve.¹²⁵

Organisational context

In 2002, Luxembourg was home to 1,534 sport clubs; that is one association for every 300 inhabitants. The membership figures are broken down according to members that take part in official competitions and those sportspeople who do not. The ratio was 81% competitive to 19% non-competitive members in 2002.

The most popular sports

Football is by far the most popular club based sport in Luxembourg. In 1980, the second most popular club based sport was gymnastics, but by 2000 it had been superseded by tennis. Throughout this twenty year period, tennis is also the sport that has experienced the greatest growth, in both absolute and relative terms. During the 1990s, in terms of percentages, basketball was the fastest growing club based sport in the top five.

Table 3.39 Popularity ranking of sports according to club membership.

	1980	1990	2000
1 Football	19,238	21,752	26,318
2 Tennis	1,675	10,534	16,051
3 Gymnastics	6,414	7,442	7,747
4 Basketball	3,124	3,654	5,754
5 Table tennis	3,765	4,222	4,262

Source: Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de la formation professionnelle et des sports

Football is especially popular among men, while gymnastics is mainly practiced by women. Tennis and basketball are more or less equally popular with both genders. Although football is male dominated, this sport is now also enjoying increasing popularity among women. The total number of female football club members quadrupled between 1980 and 2000. However, in absolute numbers tennis was the sport that bore witness to the most significant growth (for both men and women) in this period.

¹²⁵ Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de la formation professionnelle et des sports.

Table 3.40 Popularity ranking of sport according to gender.

Women		Members	Men		Members
1	Gymnastics	5,944	1	Football	25,280
2	Tennis*	3,090	2	Tennis*	7,444
3	Basketball	1,889	3	Shooting	3,703
4	Golf	1,250	4	Skittles/bowling	3,645
5	Swimming	1,221	5	Basketball	3,570

Source: Ministère de l'éducation nationale, de la formation professionnelle et des sports

3.9 France

With special thanks to Professor Jean Camy of the University of Lyon and Patrick Mignon of INSEP for the analysis and supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

The most recent and far-reaching source of information on sport participation in France can be found in *Les pratiques sportives en France*.¹²⁶ This publication provides an analysis of a survey that the Ministère de la Jeunesse et de Sport (MJS) and the Institut National du Sport et de l'Éducation Physique (INSEP) commissioned to be held among the French population aged 15-75 years old. This survey was representative of the French population with respect to gender, age and social class.

During the past few decades, a variety of other national surveys on sport participation have been conducted. However, due to differences in questioning and research design, the data they have produced is difficult to compare. The only two surveys that offer the possibility of comparison are the surveys carried out by the French Statistical Office (INSEE) in 1967 and a survey conducted by INSEP and the Demographical Institute (INED) in 1986.

Apart from these surveys, membership figures for French sports organisations for the last few decades are also extant.

Levels of sport participation

In the various European comparisons that were made in the previous chapter, participation in sport in France came close to the European average. According to the Eurobarometer, in 2004, 53% of the population participated in sport at least once a month and 43% did so at least once a week; 36% never did any exercise or sport at all.¹²⁷ The measurements taken by the ministry and INSEP in 2000 differed in terms of questioning and reached a total of 60% who did some form of physical activity or sport at least once a week.

Trends in sport participation

Due to the differing samples and questionnaires, considerable caution is necessary when making comparisons between the research conducted by INSEE in 1967, INED and INSEP in 1986/87 and MJS/INSEP in 2000. Bearing this in mind, it can be determined that levels of participation in sport significantly increased between 1967 and 1986 and then seem to have stabilised

¹²⁶ INSEP/Ministère des Sports, 2002.

¹²⁷ European Commission, Eurobarometer 213 (62.0).

(regular and competitive sport participation) and possibly declined (incidental sport participation).

Table 3.41 Sport among the French population, in % of the population according to the age categories 14 years and above (1967), 12-74 (1986) and 15-74 (2000).

Years	At least once a year	At least once per week	In competitive context
1967	28	13	4
1986	74	60	11
2000	72	60	12

Source: Reworking of INSEE (1967), INED/INSEP (1986) en MJS/INSEP (2000) data by Jean Camy

The stagnation or decline is not visible in the growth of the number of sports organisation members. Between 1960 and 1980, a huge increase in membership has occurred. Although this was followed by a clear levelling off, it has still not changed course. The most recent data also reveals a continued growth in membership numbers.¹²⁸

Table 3.42 Growth of French sports organisation membership numbers, 1950-2000.

Year	Members	% members/population
1950	2,000,000	5
1960	2,800,000	6
1970	5,200,000	10
1980	9,500,000	18
1990	12,200,000	21
2000	13,900,000	23

Source: Reworking of INSEE en MJS-INSEP data by Jean Camy

Social differentiation

Women take part in less sport than men. While 22% of French women in 2000 did no sport or exercise whatsoever during the previous year, the same applied to only 12% of men. There are also some limited differences visible as regards age and educational level. Indeed, women aged 35 to 44 years old participated in more sport than men of the same age category and the greatest gender differences can be found among those with the medium levels of educational attainment. Across the board, women participate in less club-related (22% women versus 31% men) and competitive sport (respectively 11% and 33%). There are also significant differences as far as specific branches of sport are concerned. Women accounted for the majority of participants in gymnastics (79%), dance (80%), figure skating (71%), horse riding (60%), walking (57%) and

¹²⁸ Sports STAT-info No 04-02, February 2004.

swimming (53%). Extremely limited numbers of women are involved in rugby (6%) and football (8%).¹²⁹

As people grow older, participation in sport by both men and women declines, not only for sport in general, but sport in club-related and competitive contexts too (see table 3.43). Comparatively speaking, gymnastics, judo and basketball associations have the most members under the age of fifteen (60-70%). Strength sports, sportive walking, golf, boules, bowling and aerial sports have the smallest number of young members (10%). Older people mainly participate in walking, boules and gymnastics, with 32%, 24% and 24% of the members being 55-75 years old respectively.

Table 3.43 Sport participation among the French population aged 15-75 years according to gender, age, intensity, club membership and participation in competitions.

		At least once a year	None	Club membership	Participation in competitions
	Total	72	17	27	23
Age men	15-24	83	3	44	54
	25-34	74	8	32	38
	35-44	65	15	33	31
	45-54	66	12	25	28
	55-64	81	18	22	16
	65-75	80	24	22	13
	Total	74	12	31	33
Age women	15-24	65	14	29	28
	25-34	67	17	24	13
	35-44	70	16	21	8
	45-54	68	25	21	7
	55-64	76	27	19	3
	65-75	85	36	14	3
	Total	70	22	22	11

Source: MJS/INSEP 2002.

The same development with respect to educational level, which was identified earlier in the section on Belgium, has also occurred in France. There was a significant growth in regular sport participation among people with a lower vocational education (from 3% in 1969 to 58% in 2000), though this group continues to lag behind those with a secondary or higher level of education (of whom 77% and 81% respectively regularly took part in sport in 2000).¹³⁰ The percentage of those taking part in sport also increased among the higher income groups. For

¹²⁹ INSEP/Ministère des Sports 2002.

¹³⁰ INSEP/Ministère des Sports 2002; data reworked by Jean Camy.

men this applies to sport participation in general, club-related and competitive sport, but no correlation can be found between income level and general sport participation for women. However, women's participation in club-related and competitive sport is definitely related to their level of income.

There are also no discernable differences with respect to urbanisation. Proportionally speaking, as many people living in big cities take part in sport as those in less urbanised areas.¹³¹

Organisational context

In 2001, there were an estimated 170,000 sports clubs in France to which some 14.7 million licensees and other sportspeople were affiliated.¹³² There are no data available that allow one to compare the extent of sport participation in voluntary sport clubs with commercial sport centres.

The most popular sports

Based on the broadest definition of sport participation (sports that are participated in at least once a year), walking, swimming and cycling are the most popular sports in France. In comparison to the population aged 15-75 years old, proportionally more youngsters (aged 12-17) took part in swimming, cycling, football, table tennis, basketball and racket sports. Just as in many other European countries, football is by far the most popular club sport, followed by tennis. As regards the huge popularity of basketball, the French patterns of sport more closely resemble the country's South European neighbours, while the large numbers of golf and rugby players betrays some British influences. The great popularity of judo/jujitsu and pétanque is culturally specific to France.

Table 3.44: Popularity ranking order according to branch of sport, general and club-related participation.

		At least once a year*		Club-related**	
		Population 15-75	Young people 12-17	Licensees and other titles of participation	
1	Walking	21	1 Swimming	39	1 Football 2,140,133
2	Swimming	15	2 Cycling	38	2 Tennis 1,064,773
3	Cycling	13	3 Football	32	3 Judo/jujitsu 564,783
4	Running/jogging	7	4 Walking	24	4 Horse riding 432,498

¹³¹ INSEP/Ministère des Sports 2002. A decreased and currently restricted influence of urbanisation on levels of sport participation was also noted by Scheerder (2003) with respect to Belgian Flanders.

¹³² Sports STAT-info No 04-02m February 2004.

5	Boules	6	5	Table tennis	19	5	Basketball	426,888
6	Gymnastics	6	6	Running/jogging	19	6	Pétanque	423,234
7	Skiing	5	7	Basketball	18	7	Golf	301,902
8	Football	5	8	Badminton/squash	17	8	Handball	300,545
9	Tennis	4	9	Tennis	16	9	Rugby	255,982
10	Strength sport	3	10	Boules	15	10	Sailing	224,495

Source: * INSEP/Ministère des Sports 2002; ** Sports STAT info 2004.

The social stratification according to branch of sport, which was determined for Belgium, can also be clearly found in France. Golf, canoeing/kayaking and sailing have the highest percentage of participants with a high level of income and education. Tennis, mountaineering, winter sports and sportive walking are situated immediately below these sports in the French social status pyramid. Boules, basketball, martial arts and motor racing can be found at the bottom of the pyramid. There one can also find the non-participants with the lowest levels of both income and education. The position of rugby and athletics is certainly of note, the practitioners of these sports are characterised by a comparatively low level of average educational achievement (cultural capital), but by a relatively high average income (economic capital).¹³³

¹³³ INSEP/Ministère des Sports 2002.

3.10 Germany

With special thanks to Dr. Karen Petry and Dr. Dirk Steinbach of the German Sport University Cologne and Dr. Gert Mensink of the Robert Koch Institute for the supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

The most important source of data with regard to the development of sport participation in Germany is the research study, which was conducted by the Deutschen Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung using the Sozioökonomische Panels (SOEP) from 1984 to 2001. Questions on sport participation were included in polls that took place in 1987, 1989, 1991, 1993 and 2000 and the data have since been analysed from the perspective of sport science.¹³⁴

Aside from this longitudinal research, a variety of ad hoc surveys regarding sport participation have also been conducted, not only at a national and provincial level as well as in municipalities and cities, but also among specific target groups, such as young people, the elderly and girls/women.¹³⁵ However, these studies differ significantly with respect to research design and questioning.¹³⁶

The Deutsche Sportbund (DSB) offers an additional source of data, given that it has published the membership figures of German sports federations since the early 1970s. There is, therefore, a longitudinal series of annual membership figures for the individual branches of sport readily available, broken down according to gender and age category. Moreover, detailed studies of the characteristics and development of voluntary sports clubs and their position in German society have also been conducted.¹³⁷

Levels of sport participation

According to Eurobarometer 213 (62.0), 47% of the German population exercised or played sport at least once a month in 2004, whilst 36% did no sport whatsoever. As is the case in Germans neighbouring countries Belgium, Luxembourg, France, and Austria, these figures are close to the European average. With respect to questions on heavy physical exertion, the German population appears to be more significantly physically active than most other member states of the European Union.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ Breuer 2003; Wagner 1997.

¹³⁵ Opaschowski 1987; Hübner, Pfitzner & Wulf 2003; Baur, Burrmann & Krymanski 2002; Brettschneider & Bräutigam 1990; Pache 1998.

¹³⁶ Hartmann-Tews 1996.

¹³⁷ See for example Heinemann & Schubert 1994; Rittner & Breuer 2000.

¹³⁸ European Commission, Eurobarometer 183-6, 58.2 2002 (published 2003).

Trends in sport participation

The SOEP research studies make the identification of trends in sport participation possible. Although small modifications have been made to the questionnaire over the course of time, on the basis of this research it may be concluded that a larger proportion of the German population of 16 years and above took part in sport on a weekly basis in 2001 than in 1994. During this period, the percentage increased from 21% to 27%.¹³⁹

Between 1985 and 2001, the proportion of weekly sport participants increased for all age categories, though most significantly in the 45-64 age group. The numbers of women participating in sport on a weekly basis (in all age categories) also displayed a greater increase than for men. The category of men between 25 and 44 years old was the only category that did not experience any growth with respect to weekly sport participation.¹⁴⁰

The membership figures of the German sports organisations reveal a strong and more or less uninterrupted growth in organised sport participation. An explosive growth during the 1970s was followed by a slower, but stable increase during the 1980s and 1990s. Subsequently the number of members declined slightly during the first years of the twenty-first century, followed by a renewed (but limited) increase in 2003.

Table 3.45: Growth of DSB membership figures.

	DSB membership totals	As % of German population*
1970	9,148,459	15
1980	15,647,713	25
1990	21,032,444	26
2000	23,357,987	28
2004	23,565,544	29

* This is membership (and not persons) as % of German population. The data of DSB include plural memberships. Source: DSB/Statistisches Bundesamt Deutschland

Social differentiation

The correlation between sport participation, on the one hand, and age, gender and social class on the other, which we have already encountered with respect to other countries, is also characteristic of the German situation. The differences in sport participation between men and women, and between young and old, have significantly decreased in Germany during the past

¹³⁹ Breuer 2004.

¹⁴⁰ Breuer 2004.

few decades. From age 35 and above, the proportion of women in particular age categories who regularly take part in sport even exceeds the proportion of men.

Table 3.46 Weekly sport participation among the German population (16 years and above), according to gender and age, in % of the population.

	Total		Men		Women	
	1985	2001	1985	2001	1985	2001
16-25	38	42	45	49	31	37
25-34	29	31	34	35	23	29
35-44	23	29	27	28	20	31
45-54	16	25	16	25	16	25
55-65	12	22	13	20	11	25
>64	8	13	9	14	7	13

Source: Breuer 2003.

Moreover, from Breuer's analysis of the SOEP data, it appears that regular sport participation does not necessary decrease in a linear fashion during the course of life. Women, in particular, have begun to regularly take part in sport in increasing numbers after the age of 35. The number of middle-aged women who are physically active is greater than the number of men.¹⁴¹

Apart from age, gender and social class, there are also differences between the old and the new German Federal Republic (see table 3.47.).

Table 3.47 Intensity and duration of participation in sport/exercise and exerting physical activities in the old and new German Republic, in % of the population.

		Old Federal	New Federal	
2003*	Number of times sport and exercise	Once a week or more	34	27
		1 to 3 times a month	13	15
		less often/ never	52	57
		4-7 days	23	26
2002**	Number of days vigorous exercise per week	1-3 days	30	27
		None	45	46
		Every week	27	12
1994***	Number of times sportingly active	Each month	6	4
		Seldom	18	16
		Never	50	68
		>2 hour per week	16	9
1990/92****	Number of hours sportingly active	1-2 hour per week	23	15
		<1 hour per week	18	23
		None	44	53

Sources: *European Commission, Eurobarometer 60.1; **European Commission, Eurobarometer 58.2; ***Wagner 1997; ****Kreuter et al. 1995.

¹⁴¹ Breuer 2003; Breuer 2004.

Organisational context

There is no recent data on the distribution of sport participation across the diverse organisational contexts, which offer sport or make it possible. In 1989/90, sport participation most frequently occurred as a result of individual initiatives outside an organisational context. Sport clubs were, however, the most frequently used providers of sport (see table 3.48.).

Table 3.48 Sport participation according to organisational context, population of old German Federal Republic (14 years and above), in % of responses.

Organisational context	% of participants
Privately organised	64
Sports association	18
Open sport facility	8
Commercial context	6
Companies/schools/colleges	3

Source: Weber et al. 1994.

Compared with other sectors of society, German sport is characterised by an exceptionally high degree of organisation. Indeed, the DSB has more members (nearly 24 million) than any other member-based organisation in Germany. It has to be added, however, that almost half of these members are not active as sport participant!¹⁴² Nonetheless, in no other sector are there as many voluntary associations as in sport (circa 85,000).¹⁴³

The degree of organisation was higher in the old than the new Federal Republic. Furthermore, a higher percentage of men than women are members and the percentage of members decreases with an increase in age. Since 1990, the membership figures have declined for those in the 19-27 and, especially, the 27-41 age groups, while there has been a significant increase in youngsters under the age of 15 and older people over 60.¹⁴⁴

Apart from the sports associations, the fitness branch has also established a firm footing in the German sport world. In 2003, there were 5,651 fitness centres in Germany with a minimal surface area of 200 m². 4,5 million Germans, or rather 5.4% of the German population, are estimated to be members of commercial fitness centres. Of these, 22% belonged to a fitness centre that is part of a fitness chain, although these account for only 10% of the total number of centres. During the past few years, the growth of the fitness branch appears to have somewhat waned. In 2003, there were fewer new members signing up and in 2002 fewer new fitness centres opened. Nevertheless, the average number of members per centre did show an increase.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Heinemann ed. 1999.

¹⁴³ Rittner & Breuer 2000.

¹⁴⁴ DSB Bestandserhebungen.

¹⁴⁵ Press release Deloitte & Touche GmbH, www.deloitte.com/dtt/press_release, 01-06-2004.

The SOEP surveys clearly indicate that the choice of the organisational context in which sport takes place changes over the course of people's lives. Team sports and competitive sports are particularly popular during their youth. Health considerations become more important to adults and the need for fitness related sports thus increases. This is then followed by a demand for specific health sport programmes at an older age. In line with this, the non-profit sports club is the major organisational setting for sport activities during youth, while sport participation at a later age increasingly takes place in fitness centres and in informal sporting settings.¹⁴⁶

The most popular sports

Until the age of nineteen, the team sports of football and basketball are the most popular sports outside of the context of competitions and matches. After this the popularity of basketball diminishes rapidly and is slowly followed by football, in favour of more individual and fitness-related sports, such as running and fitness. For the highest age categories, health oriented sports, such as cycling, walking, gymnastics and swimming, gain the upper hand (see table 3.49.).

Table 3.49: Popularity ranking order for general sport participation according to branch of sport, in % of the population.

2001									
14-19 years	20-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60-69 years	70+			
Football	27 Fitness	19 Running	22 Running	20 Cycling	19 Cycling	23 Walking	35		
Basketball	12 Running	16 Fitness	18 Cycling	16 Running	17 Gymnastics	22 Gymnastics	25		
Running	11 Football	13 Swimming	13 Swimming	14 Swimming	16 Walking	22 Swimming	16		
Swimming	9 Swimming	13 Cycling	11 Fitness	13 Gymnastics	15 Swimming	15 Cycling	13		
Fitness	6 Cycling	12 Aerobic	9 Gymnastics	10 Fitness	12 Running	8 Running	8		
Cycling	6 Basketball	6 Football	8 Tennis	8 Walking	11 Tennis	7 Fitness	3		
Dance	6 Aerobic	6 Gymnastics	7 Aerobic	7 Tennis	10 Fitness	5 Gymnastics	3		
Badminton	6 Badminton	6 Walking	5 Football	6 Football	3 Aerobic	3 Aerobic	2		
Tennis	5 Dance	4 Badminton	4 Walking	4 Aerobic	2 Gymnastics	2 Football	2		
Horse riding	4 Volleyball	4 Tennis	3 Dance	3 Gymnastics	2 Football	2 Aqua-aerobics	2		

Source: Breuer 2004.

In terms of organised sports, there are two sports in Germany that stand out above all others: football and gymnastics. Although both sports occupy the first two positions in the popularity ranking orders for both genders, 86% of footballers are male and 70% of gymnasts female. In comparison to most other European Union member states, shooting, athletics and handball also enjoy remarkable popularity in Germany. Furthermore, it is striking that there is a

¹⁴⁶ Breuer 2004.

comparatively great similarity between the patterns of sport preference for men and women and boys and girls.

Table 3.50: Popularity ranking order of sports in Germany, according to sports association membership and gender.

All ages (2003)								
Total		Men			Women			
1	Football	6,274,021	1	Football	5,423,487	1	Gymnastics	3,557,874
2	Gymnastics	5,074,011	2	Gymnastics	1,516,137	2	Football	850,534
3	Tennis	1,840,311	3	Shooting	1,197,963	3	Tennis	747,943
4	Shooting	1,550,580	4	Tennis	1,092,368	4	Horse riding	539,023
5	Athletics	866,197	5	Table tennis	518,415	5	Athletics	421,740
6	Handball	827,905	6	Handball	517,293	6	Shooting	352,617
7	Horse riding	761,314	7	Athletics	444,457	7	Swimming	331,060
8	Table tennis	673,868	8	Mountaineering	419,000	8	Handball	310,612
9	Skiing	671,914	9	Skiing	379,573	9	Skiing	292,341
10	Mountaineering	666,824	10	Swimming	307,106	10	Volleyball	263,683

Source: DSB Bestandserhebung 2003

Table 3.51: Popularity ranking order of sports in Germany among young people under 18, according to sports association membership figures and gender.

<19 years (2003)								
Total		Boys			Girls			
1	Football	2,037,890	1	Football	1,822,893	1	Gymnastics	1,236,703
2	Gymnastics	1,973,554	2	Gymnastics	736,851	2	Horse riding	246,880
3	Tennis	426,188	3	Tennis	241,066	3	Football	214,997
4	Athletics	362,335	4	Handball	185,490	4	Athletics	187,827
5	Swimming	361,081	5	Swimming	175,928	5	Swimming	185,153
6	Handball	338,663	6	Athletics	174,508	6	Tennis	185,122
7	Horse riding	281,416	7	Table tennis	155,104	7	Handball	153,173
8	Table tennis	212,895	8	Judo	133,902	8	Volleyball	98,949
9	Judo	195,327	9	Shooting	113,136	9	Skiing	85,648
10	Skiing	184,053	10	Skiing	98,405	10	Dance	81,371

Source: DSB Bestandserhebung 2003

Of all big sports, only gymnastics has continued to grow in popularity during the last few years. Since 1999, the number of footballers has more or less stabilised; the influx of girls and women has compensated for the exodus of men and boys. Tennis, the third sport in the ranking order, has sharply declined in popularity since 1993, at least in its organised form, while the membership numbers of the fourth most popular sport, shooting, have also declined since 1997. Since 1990, the next major sports in the ranking order, namely athletics, handball, skiing and swimming, have also experienced no growth.

In absolute terms, the greatest increase in membership numbers between 1999 and 2004 were experienced by gymnastics, golf, mountaineering, horse riding and dancing organisations. Proportionally speaking, golf, roller/inline skating, martial arts (taekwondo, jujitsu and boxing), baseball/softball and mountaineering gained the most new members. Percentage-wise, the biggest losers during the same period were tennis, billiards and bowling and, in absolute terms, once again tennis, football, shooting, table tennis, volleyball and bowling.

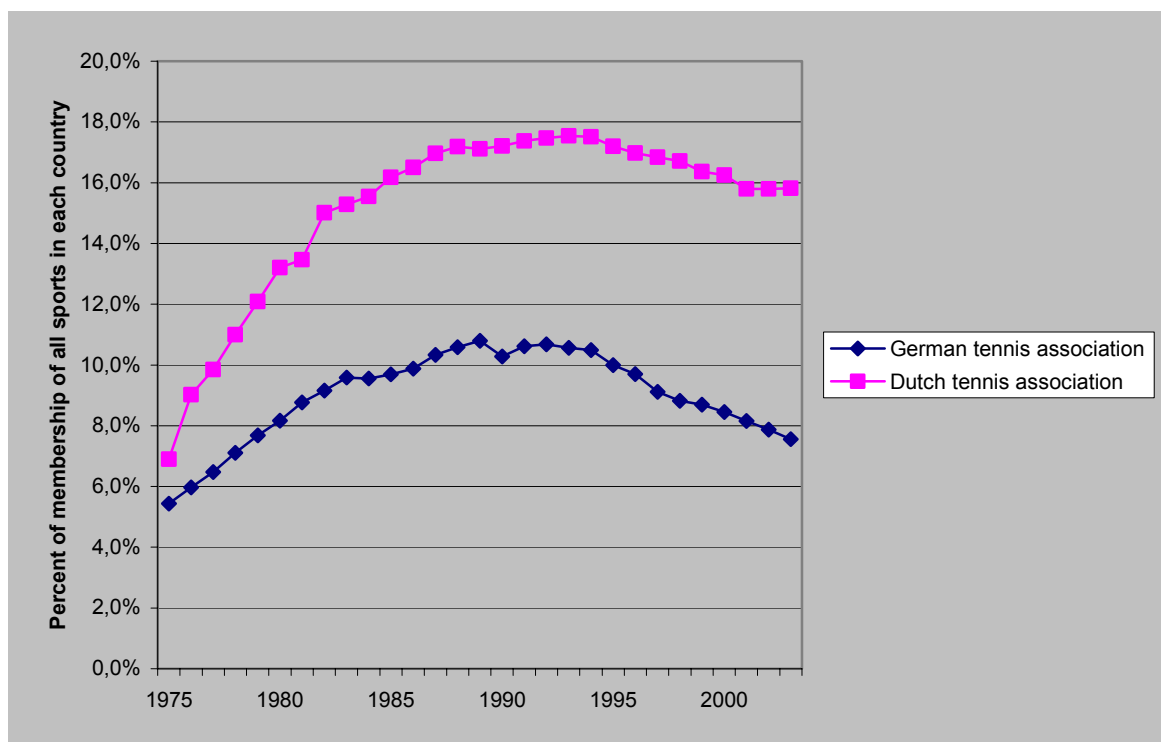
Without a doubt, the two sports that really stand out are tennis and golf. Whereas golf has borne witness to the most spectacular growth in popularity since 1986, the popularity of tennis has declined in an equally spectacular fashion. This development is certainly not exclusive to Germany, for it has also occurred in many other European countries, such as Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria, Spain, Italy and Czech Republic. There is probably a correlation between the two. The popularisation of tennis emerged during the 1970s and 1980s almost simultaneously in most western countries and was, at the time, the result of a significant increase in the general level of education and affluence, which was accompanied by the levelling out of social inequalities. There was an increase in the numbers of people who came to belong to the social class - with respect to educational achievement, income and professional status - from which tennis players had always been recruited. The status value of tennis depreciated as a result of this popularisation and, over the course of time, many people crossed over to another sport where they could still experience the atmosphere, relationships and social interactions that they desired and that were more fitting in terms of status value. In the Netherlands, for example, 47% of golf club members were previously members of tennis clubs. It is also likely that age considerations have intensified such social considerations. Undoubtedly, golf is currently profiting from an aging population and the fact that older people are continuing to participate in sport at a far greater age.¹⁴⁷ Golf was the fifth most popular sport among Germans over the age of 60 in 2003 and for every five tennis players there were three golfers.¹⁴⁸

This explanation is far more convincing than a reference to what has been called the Becker/Graf effect. Boris Becker won Wimbledon in 1985, 1986 and 1989, while Steffi Graf earned these titles in 1988, 1989 and 1992. In addition, these German tennis stars won various other Grand Slam titles during the same period and the German team were the victors in the Davis Cup in 1988, 1989 and 1992. When the numbers of tennis players is seen in terms of the percentage of the total number of members of German sports organisations, it appears that during Becker and Graf's reign of success the popularity of tennis grew faster than organised sport in Germany as a whole. This significant growth of tennis was, however, an international development that also occurred in many other European countries that could not boast of a Boris Becker or Steffi Graf. Indeed, the relative growth of German tennis was more marginal than the relative growth experienced by tennis in the Netherlands at that time, which did not have any major tennis championship winner in its midst during this period (figure 3.6). Only in 1996 did Richard Krajicek become the first Dutchman to have the victory of a Grand Slam tournament to his name.

¹⁴⁷ Van Bottenburg 2001.

¹⁴⁸ DSB Bestandserhebung.

Figure 3.6 Relative growth in membership of the German and Dutch Tennis Federations, 1975-2004.
Source: NSF, Ledentallen 1975-1992; NOC*NSF, Ledentallen 1993-2004; DSB, Bestandserhebung 1971-1991; Deutsche Sportbund, Mitgliederzahl 1992-2004.



3.11 Austria

With special thanks Mag. Beatrix Haslinger and Professor Mag. Peter Zellmann of the Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung for the supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

Various sources provide information on sport participation in Austria. During the past 25 years, there have been more or less comparable and representative national population surveys into sport participation, which have been conducted on a fairly regular basis. These are research studies that were carried out in 1979, 1991, 1997 and 2000 by commercial market research bureaus (FESSEL, IFES, GfK, Gallup) and the University of Vienna. More recent, trend-related data has been provided by the research studies into leisure time activities, which have been carried out on a more or less yearly basis by the Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung since 1997.

Levels of sport participation

The previous chapter indicated that sport participation in Austria was at an average level, with 45% of the population taking part in sport at least once a month and 34% who never do any exercise or sport whatsoever. Although they employ different research designs, most of the Austrian studies arrive at approximately the same figures.

Trends in sport participation

Between 1979 and 1997, a larger proportion of the Austrian population began to participate in sport. Moreover, the frequency of sport participation increased during this period. The figures presented in table 3.52 derive from a variety of research studies. However, they all ask more or less the same question: “do you practice a sport every now and then?” and if so, “how often do you play sport or train?”. Only in 1989 did the main question refer to physical activity as well as sport participation. The percentages for this year may, therefore, be higher than may be the case if the question had only asked about sport participation. This cautionary note reinforces the conclusion that there was an increase in sport participation during the 1979 and 1997 period.

Table 3.52: Sport participation among the Austrian population, according to frequency, in % of the population.

	1979*	1989**	1997***	1998****	2000*****
≥ 3x weekly	7	16	14	18	
1-2x weekly	18	22	27	22	48
1-2x monthly	5	7	9	8	
Rarely	4	3	20	12	19
Only in the past	29	22	31	8	
Never	37	30		33	33

Sources: * FESSEL, GfK/IFES 1979; ** Weiss, Russo 1991; *** FESSEL/GfK 1997; **** BSO/ISW 2000; *****Pratscher 2000.

It is, however, less evident how sport participation has developed since 1997. The research studies dating from 1998 and 2000 indicate a stabilisation and possibly a slight decline in the percentage of those who take part in sport. According to the leisure time research, which the Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung has conducted since 1997, the percentage of the population (older than 15 years) who take participate in sport at least once a week has declined from 23% in 1997 to 20% in 2000, only to rise once again to 26% in 2002 and subsequently drop to 24% in 2003. This means that the level of sport participation in 2003 was just one percentage point higher than in 1997. In this respect, one can speak of a stagnation in comparison to the growth that was witnessed during the previous decades.¹⁴⁹

Social differentiation

In Austria, the patterns of sport participation according to social categories do not deviate from the dominant pattern in Europe: men participate in sport more and more frequently than women. The same applies to young people in relation to the old.

Table 3.53: Sport participation among the Austrian population (14 years and above), according to gender, age and intensity, in % of the population.

	every day	often a week	once a week	once/twice a month	rarely	Never
Total	5	19	16	8	19	33
Men	5	26	14	7	19	29
Women	5	13	17	8	20	37
14-29 years	11	32	19	9	21	9
30-49 years	2	18	17	8	19	35
>50 years	4	5	7	3	19	63

Source: Pratscher 2000

Likewise, other familiar patterns of social differentiation can also be determined in Austria. The Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung once again confirms that more men than women and more young than old people regularly participate in sport (at least once a week). They also demonstrate that the likelihood of sport participation increases with a higher income and, more particularly, a higher level of education (see table 3.54).

¹⁴⁹ Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung 2001, 2004

Table 3.54: Sport participation at least once a week among the Austrian population (15 years and above), according to gender, age, level of education and income (in % of the population).

2003	
Total	24
Men	28
Women	20
13-34	34
35-54	25
55 and above	13
Lower education	13
Secondary education	24
Higher education	40
Low income	18
Medium income	22
High income	36

Source: Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung 2004.

Further to this, a Viennese research study suggests that non-native Austrians in the 16-24 age group participate in sport less frequently than native Austrians. This is almost entirely a result of the lower degree of sport participation among women of this age category.¹⁵⁰

Organisational context

Sport in Austria largely takes place within an informal context. Only 21% of those who participate in sport do so as members of a sport club and 5% practice their sport at commercial sport centres. The use of commercial sport centres is far greater in the larger cities than in rural areas.

Table 3.55 Sport participation according to organisational context and urbanisation for the Austrian population (aged 14 and above), in % of the population.

	Total	Big cities (> 1 million)	Small villages (< 2.000)
Sport club	21	17	20
Commercial sport centres	5	12	1
Informal sport participation	74	71	79

Source: BSO/ISW 2000

¹⁵⁰ Wiener Jugendgesundheitsbericht 2002.

The number of sports associations and their affiliated members has undergone a significant growth. According to the Austrian sports organisations, this growth has not levelled off during the last seven years. The number of clubs grew from 15,460 in 1998 to 15,841 in 2003. Likewise, the membership figures rose from 1.475 million in 1998 to 1.625 million in 2003.¹⁵¹ In 2003, the fitness centres could bank on the custom of some 0.4 million members.¹⁵²

The most popular sports

In general terms, (racing) cycling, swimming, hiking/walking and skiing are among the most popular sports in Austria. Football and tennis are the most popular sports played within an organised context, but these activities are less dominant than in the other countries that are discussed in this book. Partially due to the geographical circumstances, typical alpine sports, such as mountaineering and skiing, are widely practiced in Austria. Indeed, mountaineering clubs even have more members than football clubs.

Table 3.56: Popularity ranking order according to sport, general and club-related sport participation.

2000*		2003**		
in % of total population (14 years and over)		in number of members		
1	Cycling	53 1	Mountaineering	455,312
2	Swimming	45 2	Football	427,600
3	Hiking	34 3	Tennis	184,853
4	Skiing	28 4	Skiing	151,901
5	Walking	26 5	Gymnastics	128,803
6	Tennis	16 6	Eisstocksport	127,591
7	Inline skating	12 7	Golf	74,085
8	Gymnastics	12 8	Swimming	70,591
9	Mountain Biking	8 9	Equestrian sports	45,101
10	Football	8 10	Cycling	39,034

Source: *Pratscher 2000; **BSO 2003.

The most significant change in sport participation during the past decades concerns the increasing popularity in inline skating and fitness and the decreasing interest in skiing,

¹⁵¹ BSO. These figures are also contested by the Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung (2004).

¹⁵² Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung 2002.

gymnastics and mountain biking. However, the growth of fitness in Austria is probably less significant than elsewhere in Europe.

A more detailed analysis of each branch of sport is necessary to reveal greater insights into these developments. For example, between 1993 and 2000, fewer Austrians under the age of 15 took up running, but those who already belonged to the group of runners in 1993, particularly men and women between 15 and 49 years old, increased the frequency of their participation in this activity. Between 2000 and 2003, the number of runners remained constant, but the percentage that regularly runs has once again declined.¹⁵³

As far as organised sports are concerned, football, golf and mountaineering successively made significant gains in membership in the last fifteen as well as the past five years. In terms of percentages, golf, equestrian sports and basketball gained the most members during both periods. Once again, the success of golf is particularly conspicuous. Between 1988 and 2003, the membership numbers grew from 6,600 to 74,000; this is more than an eleven-fold increase.

Akin to Germany, golf gains contrast sharply with tennis' losses. During the past five years, the Austrian tennis association lost some 20,000 members; this amounts to a -10% decline in membership. Aside from tennis, cycling and swimming clubs also lost many members. Throughout the last fifteen years, cycling has in total suffered the loss of more than 6400 members (-10%). In the last five years, swimming also declined with the exodus of some 5000 members (-7%). The most striking membership losses have been experienced by gymnastics, which seemed to have been in freefall due to a loss of nearly 67,000 members (-41%) between 1988 and 1989, but has been able to turn things around gaining nearly 32,000 (+33%) members in the five years leading up to 2003.

¹⁵³ Institut für Freizeit- und Tourismusforschung 2002.

Part Three: Southern European member states

3.12 Portugal

With special thanks to Professor Salomé Marivoet of the University of Coimbra for the analysis and supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

In the past, two national surveys on sport participation have been conducted in Portugal: the CPPD (Carta da Procura da Prática Desportiva) in 1988 and the IHDPP (Inquérito aos Hábitos Desportivos da População Portuguesa) in 1998. Although these surveys concern different research populations (respondents of 15-60 years old and 15-74 years old respectively), it is possible to compare their results through secondary analysis. Moreover, these surveys comply with the guidelines established by the COMPASS working group, thus also rendering comparison with other COMPASS pilot countries possible. Professor Marivoet of the Universidade de Coimbra has published extensively on this research data.¹⁵⁴ More recent data has been provided by market research studies, commissioned by Nike in Portugal and Spain, which have been conducted annually between 2001 and 2004 by MPG. This research specifically focuses on a segment of the sports' market and thus cannot be compared with the aforementioned studies.

Levels of sport participation

In her publications, Marivoet draws attention to the fact that the data on sport participation reveal a clear asymmetry between the European countries. There are a higher proportion of participants in northern countries than southern ones. The balance between men and women and young and old is also less disproportionate in the northern countries than in those situated in the south.¹⁵⁵ This issue was already addressed in the previous chapter: when viewed from various perspectives, it appears that the levels of participation in sport and exercise in Portugal are among the lowest in the whole of the European Union. In 2004, 27% of Portuguese citizens exercised or took part in sport at least once a month, while the European average was 49%.¹⁵⁶

Nonetheless, comparatively speaking, those Portuguese who participated in sport did so intensively. According to data collected in 1998, 11% practiced sport intensively (≥ 120 times a year), while 7% regularly played sport (≥ 60 - < 120 times) and 5% irregularly or incidentally (≥ 1 - < 60 times). The reverse applies to the UK and the Netherlands, where the percentage of participants in sport decreases as the frequency increases.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ In particular, see Marivoet 2001; Marivoet 2002.

¹⁵⁵ Marivoet 2002.

¹⁵⁶ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0, 2004.

¹⁵⁷ COMPASS 1999. See also <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/map.htm>

Trends in sport participation

From the research data collected in 1988 and 1998, it appears that sport participation has not changed during the ten year period in between.

Table 3.57: Sport participation among the Portuguese population, 15-60 years old, according to frequency, in % of the population.

	1988	1998
At least once a year	27	27
> 60 times per year	22	22
< 60 times a year	5	5

Source: Marivoet 2001.

Research data offered by MPG suggest that there has been a slight increase in the number of Portuguese who usually practice sports during a period of the last thirty days: from 23% in 2001, 25% in 2002, 24% in 2003 and 26% in 2004.¹⁵⁸

Social differentiation

In comparison to northern and western European countries, there are comparatively significant differences between men and women as regards the degree of sport participation. According to the IHDDP data, in 1998 34% of men took part in sport, as opposed to 14% of women. The MGP market research study recorded a total of 31% of men and 19% of women in 2004. Given the differences between these two studies, it cannot be concluded that this gender imbalance has diminished. Indeed, the MPG data points to a very small increase in the percentage of women. Between 2001 and 2004, the percentage of women in relation to the total number of sport participants increased from 39% to 40%.

¹⁵⁸ MPG/Marktest/Consumer 2004.

Table 3.58: Sport participation among the Portuguese population, 15-74 years, according to gender, frequency and competitive/organisational context, in %.

		1998		
		Male	Female	All
Intensive (≥120 times/year)	Competitive and/or organised	6	1	3
	Non-competitive and non-organised	12	4	8
Regular (≥60-<120 times/year)	Competitive and/or organised	5	4	4
	Non-competitive and non-organised	4	2	3
Irregular (≥12-<60 times/year)		5	3	4
Occasional (≥1-<12 times/year)		2	0	1
Non-participant (0 times/year)		66	86	77

Source: COMPASS 1999. See <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/portugal.htm>.

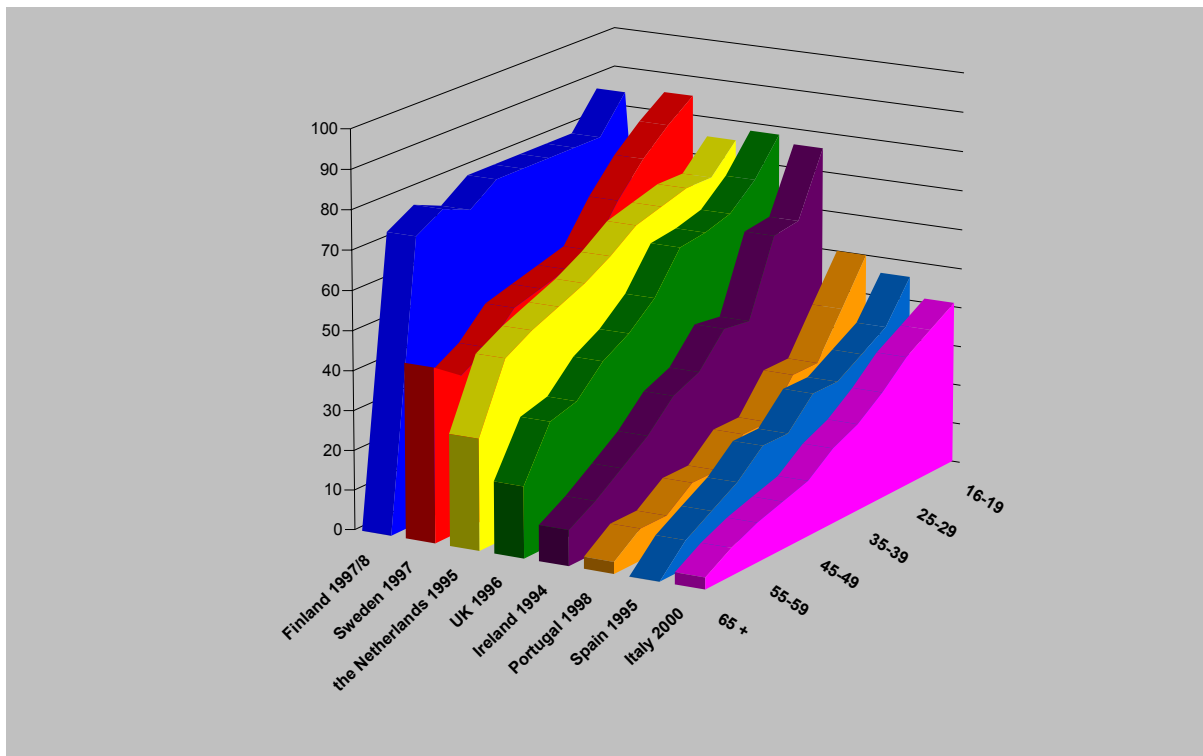
Table 3.59: Sport participation among Portuguese population, 15-74 years, according to age and frequency, in %.

		1998										
		16-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64	65 +
Intensive (≥120/year)		26	21	14	14	8	8	7	7	3	3	2
Regular (≥12-<120/year)		24	18	14	14	11	11	6	6	5	5	1
Occasional/non-participant (<12/year)		50	61	72	72	81	81	87	87	92	92	97

Source: COMPASS 1999. See <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/portugal.htm>.

Just as in Spain and Italy, the level of sport participation is lower than that in the northern and western EU member states for all age groups. Moreover, sport participation decreases more markedly with an increase in age. In the southern European member states, there is hardly any participation in sport among the oldest age categories (see figure 3.7).

Figure 3.7: Percentage of the population participating in sport during the past twelve months in eight EU member states, according to age category. Source: Marivoet 2002; <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass>.



Statistics provided by MPG suggest that these differences have decreased during the past few years. The proportion of elderly participants in sport in relation to the total number of sport participants in fact grew during the 2001-2004 period.

Figure 3.8: Age distribution of sport participants among the Portuguese population, 15 years and above, 2001-2004. Source: MPG/Marktest/Consumer 2004.



Sport participation among 15-74 year olds also varies significantly with respect to levels of income and educational attainment. While an average of 23% of the entire population takes part in sport more than once a year, this varies between 5% among the uneducated to 49% of those with higher education and from 9% among farmers to 46% of managerial personnel.¹⁵⁹

Organisational context

In 1998, according to the IHDPP data, most participants in sport did so within the context of a sports association (43%). Those who took part in sport also made considerable use of the public infrastructure (36%), a private infrastructure (24%) or the natural environment (15%). A limited number (2%) participated in sport in the context of a commercial club.¹⁶⁰

It is unclear how these figures relate to the MPG research data. According to the MPG studies, between 2001 and 2004, just over half of sport participants made use of gyms and health clubs. Consistent with the patterns identified in other countries, women, 25-34 year olds

¹⁵⁹ Marivoet 2001.

¹⁶⁰ Marivoet 2001.

and higher social classes were overrepresented among the visitors to these gyms and health clubs in comparison to those who practiced sport in general.¹⁶¹

According to the Instituto Nacional do Desporto, the total number of registered club members stood at around 300,000 in 2000. The statistics that are available for the past decades fluctuate considerably and thus seem to be unreliable. However, they do indicate that the number of clubs in existence has more than trebled over a long period (1970-2000).

The most popular sports

Football is by far the most played sport in Portugal. In comparison to the northern and western European countries, it is most striking that this applies not only to club-related sport, but also to sport in general. Amongst other things, this is mainly due to - in contrast to the other European countries - the low number of women and older people who participate in sport. Football is the most popular sport among men of all age groups up to 54 years old and among women between 15-19 years of age. Women over 19 years old mainly participate in swimming, aerobics/jazz ballet/break-dance and gymnastics. Basketball also rates highly among young people.

Within an organised context, three team ball sports are played the most: football, followed at a great distance by handball and then basketball. During the 1990s, the membership figures of football clubs grew the most in absolute terms, while in terms of percentages among the sports top ten golf, skating, tennis, judo and basketball enjoyed the greatest growth.¹⁶²

Table 3.60 Popularity ranking order according to sport, general and club-related sport participation

1998		2000	
Most practiced sports, 15-74 years*	%	Club membership**	Members
1 Football	30	1 Football	113,895
2 Swimming	11	2 Handball	22,032
3 Athletics	8	3 Basketball	20,278
4 Fitness/jogging	7	4 Athletics	12,524
5 Gymnastics	6	5 Judo	10,352
6 Cycling	6	6 Skating	10,319
7 Aerobics/jazz dance	5	7 Tennis	10,204
8 Basketball	4	8 Volleyball	9,813
9 Volleyball	3	9 Golf	9,438
10 Tennis	2	10 Gymnastics	6,339

Source: *Marivoet 2001; **Instituto Nacional do Desporto, 2002

¹⁶¹ MPG/Marktest/ Consumer 2004.

¹⁶² Cf. ISI/CONI 1994.

3.13 Spain

With special thanks to Professor Manuel García Ferrando of the University of Valencia and free lance researcher Tilbert La Haye for the supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

Spain is one of the countries that has the most reliable body of statistical data on participation in sport. This is the result of a longitudinal research tradition that has revealed information on trends across several decades with respect to sporting behaviour in general as well as sport within an organisational context. After two completely independent surveys had been held on sport participation in 1968 and 1975, the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS), under the direction of García Ferrando, has conducted a more or less identical sport participation survey every five years from 1980 onwards. The last survey (carried out in 2000) was attuned to the COMPASS model and thus also permits international comparison. In addition to these recurring surveys, there are also recent market research data (2001-2004) that have been collected by MPG, who were commissioned by Nike to obtain data on Portugal and Spain for a number of consecutive years. Further to this, annual membership figures for Spanish sport federations are available from 1941 onwards.

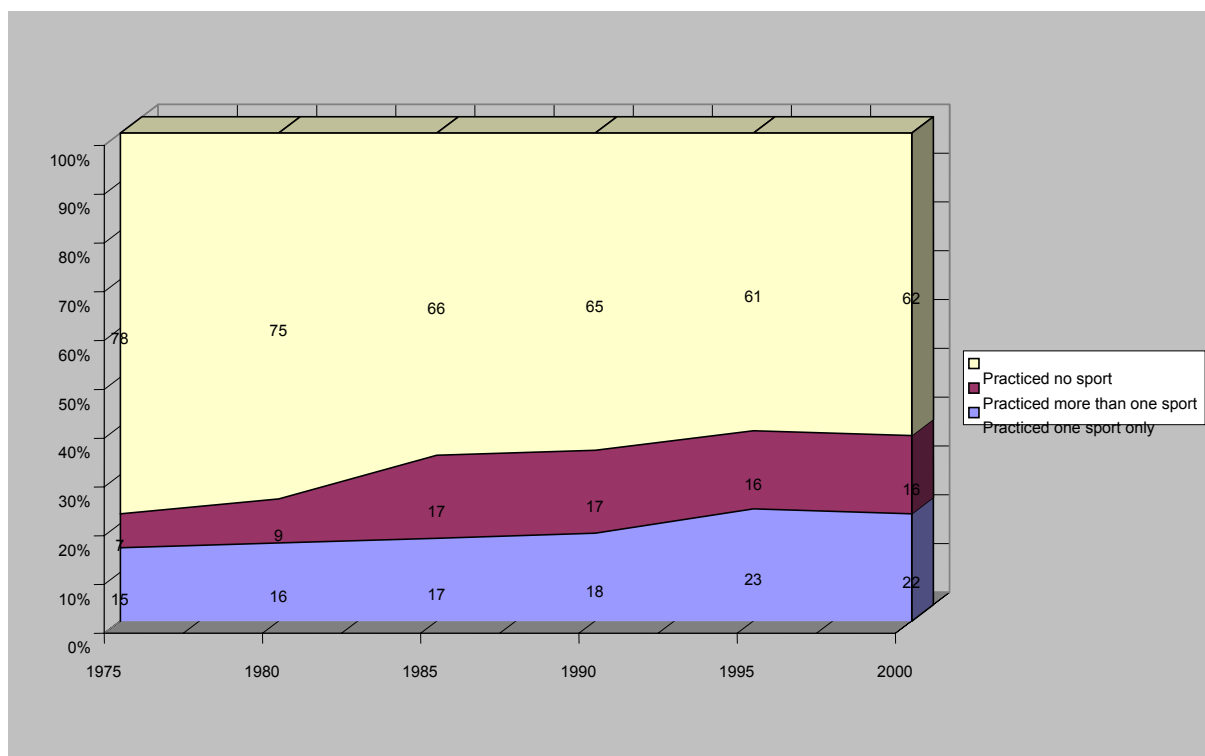
Levels of sport participation

The levels of sport participation in Spain are somewhat higher than for neighbouring Portugal, with 44% doing exercise or sport at least once a month. However, just as all the other southern European countries, this is still below the European average. The CIS survey confirms the picture that is presented by the COMPASS comparison, namely that those in Spain who do participate in sport do so in a comparatively more intensive fashion.

Trends in sport participation

During the 25 year period between 1975 and 2000, a greater percentage of the Spanish population has begun to participate in sport. However, the CIS data point to a stagnation in the number of sport practitioners during the second half of the 1990s.

Figure 3.9: Percentage of the Spanish population, 15-64 years, who have practiced sport during the past twelve months, according to number of sports participants, 1975-2000. Source: García Ferrando 2001.



In contrast, more recent data from EGM indicate a continued growth with 45% of the population in 2001 and 48% in 2004 who had participated in sport during the past thirty days.¹⁶³ Furthermore, between 1985 and 2000, the sporting population has begun to participate in sport with a higher frequency, also during the second half of the 1990s (see table 3.61).

Table 3.61: Frequency of sport participation among the Spanish sporting population, 1985-2000.

	15-64 years		15-74 years	
	1985	1990	1995	2000
≥ 3 times/week	20	31	42	49
1-2 times/week	25	28	38	38
<1 times/week	36	24	14	10
Only during holidays	19	17	6	3

Source: García Ferrando 2001.

¹⁶³ EGM in MPG 2004.

Social differentiation

As far as the levels of sport participation are concerned, women lag behind men by nearly 20 percentage points. Moreover, women more frequently practice only one sport, while men are often involved in more sports at the same time.

Table 3.62: Sport participation during the past twelve months among the Spanish population, 15-64 years, according to gender.

	Men			Women		
	1990	1995	2000	1990	1995	2000
Practiced sport	47	48	46	29	30	27
Practiced just one sport	24	26	24	19	20	18
Practiced more than one sport	23	22	22	10	10	9
	15-24 year olds			55-65 year olds		
	1990	1995	2000	1990	1995	2000
Practiced sport	57	60	57	9	15	22
Practiced just one sport	26	32	29	6	12	17
Practiced more than one sport	31	28	28	3	3	5

Source: García Ferrando 2001.

The CIS research data also do not point to women catching up with men at all during the 1990-2000 period. The research that EGM has annually conducted between 2001 and 2004 reveals a very minimal increase in the proportion of women that usually take part in sport during the past thirty days (rising only slightly from 36% in 2001 to 37% in 2004).¹⁶⁴

However, it appears that older people are drawing level with their younger counterparts far quicker. While the level of sport participation among 15-24 year olds hardly increased between 1990 and 2000, there was almost a two-fold increase in the percentage of older people participating in sport (see table 3.62). The EGM research indicates that this trend is persistent. In relation to the total number of sports participants, the percentage of those over 35 and of 55 plus who usually practiced sport during the past 30 days has risen slowly, but steadily during the 2001-2004 period (cf. figure 3.8. in the section on Portugal).

¹⁶⁴ EGM in MPG 2004.

Figure 3.10: Age distribution of sport participants among the Spanish population, 15 years and above, 2001-2004. Source: EGM in MPG 2004.



Just as differentiating as age and gender are the levels of professional and, in particular, educational achievement. In 2000, 48% of those with a university education participated in sport, whereas only 23% of those with only a secondary school education and 11% without any educational qualifications practiced one or more sports. With respect to professional strata, the percentage of sport participation declined from 49% among the highest category and 38% for the middle category to 27% for the lowest category.¹⁶⁵

Organisational context

In 2000, the majority of those who participated in sport (66%) did so for themselves outside of an organisational context, while a quarter (25%) was involved in club-related sport. Both percentages increased slightly as compared with 1990, at the expense of sport played at educational institutions and elsewhere.

During the past few decades, the total number of licensees that were affiliated to a sports association grew most significantly between 1970 and 1990 (from 725,000 to 2,300,000),

¹⁶⁵ García Ferrando 2001.

after which the growth levelled off to 2,900,000 licensees in 2003.¹⁶⁶ The CIS research also shows a slight increase in the number of those who are members of a sports association from 18% in 1990 to 20% in 2000. According to the same research, participation in official sports competitions remained stable during the aforementioned period, after a significant growth from 12% to 27% during the 1980s.¹⁶⁷ The CIS research also reveals that during the 1990s proportionally more women than men were members of sports associations. In 1990, the percentage of men was four times as high as the percentage of women; in 2000 this had trebled.¹⁶⁸ However, this is contradicted by the INE data on the number of licensees. According to these figures, the number of male sports association licensees rose from 1,600,000 in 1985 to 2,900,000 in 2003, whereas the number of female licence holders only grew from 300,000 to 470,000 during the same period.¹⁶⁹

Data on gym and health club membership are only available for the past few years. As indicated by the EGM research, in 2004 around 8% of the Spanish population and 15% of those participating in sport made use of a gym or health club. These percentages remain more or less stable during the 2001-2004 period. Gender seems to be the most important determining factor for gym and health club use, rather than age or social class. Whilst the EGM research indicated that 37% of all sport participants were women in 2004, this applied to 53% of gym and health club visitors. Nevertheless, the percentage of men taking part in sport at such clubs increased considerably between 2001 and 2004.

The most popular sports

In general, swimming is the most practiced sport, with football and racing cycling taking the second and third places respectively. Football is by far the most popular club-related sport, followed by basketball and golf.

Table 3.63: The most popular sports in percentage of population and in numbers of licensees.

2000*	%	2003**	Members
1 Swimming	39	1 Football	671,581
2 Football	36	2 Basketball	291,445
3 Cycling	22	3 Golf	239,782
4 Fitness	15	4 Judo	106,683
5 Mountaineering/hiking	13	5 Tennis	99,469
6 Tennis	13	6 Handball	90,370
7 Aerobics/dancing	12	7 Mountaineering	88,323

¹⁶⁶ INE 2003.

¹⁶⁷ García Ferrando 2001.

¹⁶⁸ García Ferrando 2001.

¹⁶⁹ INE 2003.

8	Basketball	12	8	Karate	59,835
9	Running/jogging	11	9	Shooting	57,623
10	Athletics	7	10	Underwater sports	43,170

Source: *García Ferrando 2001; **INE 2003.

In particular, the percentage of those participating in mountaineering/hiking (+9 percentage points), football, racing cycling and aerobics/dance (all +7) increased, while the popularity of basketball (-11 percentage points), tennis (-5) and running (-4) declined.

With respect to club-related sport, during the last five, ten and twenty years, football gained the most members, followed by golf and basketball. Proportionally speaking, golf was by far the sport that experienced the most significant growth during these periods, with an increase of more than 800% (from 26,000 to 214,000 members) since 1983. There were also sports that lost out; during the past ten years, particularly athletics, a number of martial arts (taekwondo and karate) and volleyball suffered membership losses.¹⁷⁰ However, great caution must be exercised when interpreting these figures on membership losses due to the greatly fluctuating membership figures.

¹⁷⁰ INE 2003.

3.14 Italy

With special thanks to Professor Antonio Mussino of the University of Rome 'La Sapienza' and Bruno Rossi Mori of the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI) for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

As far as the collection of data on sport participation is concerned, Italy also numbers among the countries with 'good practices', even though the harmonisation and longitudinal comparability of data remains a stumbling block. The first extensive study into sport participation was carried out by the Italian Statistical Institute (ISTAT) in 1959, just prior to the Olympic Games being held in Rome. ISTAT also conducted similar research in the framework of the 'leisure time omnibus' in 1982, 1985, 1988, 1995 and 2000. However, only the last two surveys are actually fit for comparison (nationally and, by employing the COMPASS guidelines, also internationally).

Alongside these surveys, which ask wide-ranging questions about the sporting behaviour of the population aged 3 and above, ISTAT has collected more limited data on sporting behaviour in the context of various other surveys, such as the annual 'quality of life' survey and its longer term time use surveys. In addition to this, since 1983 the Association of Market Research Institutes (IARD) has conducted a study every four years among young people between 15-34 years old, in which several questions on sport participation are also included. Furthermore, in 1993 and 1997, the AC Nielsen-SITA research bureau has also carried out research on sport participation among the Italian population aged 4 and above. However, the research data of these diverse research institutions cannot be compared with each other.¹⁷¹

Since 1981, data on the members affiliated to Italian sports federations have been gathered bi-annually by CONI.¹⁷²

Levels of sport participation

According to the standardised pan-European research studies that were discussed in chapter 2, levels of sport participation in Italy are lower than the European average. The Eurobarometer 62.0 in 2004 indicated that 33% of the population aged 15 and above take part in sport at least once a month. In this regard, the level of sport participation in Italy lies somewhere in between that of Spain and Portugal.¹⁷³

ISTAT's leisure time monitor arrived at a lower percentage (26%) in 2000. This research study offers more specific detail on the frequency of sport participation in Italy. 7% of

¹⁷¹ Caliò et al. 2002.

¹⁷² See <http://www.coni.it>

¹⁷³ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 2004

16-74 year olds took part in sport more than 120 times per annum, while 8% did so between 60 and 120 times and 11% between 12 and 60 times a year.¹⁷⁴ Moreover, the ISTAT survey demonstrates that there are significant regional differences. In some areas, namely the southern regions of Puglia, Campania and Sicily, participation figures are well under the national average, whereas much higher percentages are to be found in the northern regions of Valle d'Aosta and Friuli and the mid-Italian region of Umbria.

Trends in sport participation

Although the research studies that ISTAT have conducted since 1959 differ with respect to research design and questionnaires, they still point to a significant increase in sport participation. In 1959, a mere 3% of the population were found to participate in sport, but by 1982 this had risen to 15% and in the subsequent studies the figure had increased to more than 20%.¹⁷⁵ Whereas the total number of sportspeople in Italy was estimated at 7 million in 1981, in the year 2000 the figure stood at 17 million (see table 3.64). During the same period, the total Italian population only experienced limited growth, from 56 to 58 million. It is, however, striking that, particularly during the 1990s, the number of sports association members indeed decreased. The growth in general sport participation thus went hand in hand with a decline in organised sport participation.

Table 3.64: Number of sports participants in Italy, according to organisational context (estimations based on membership figures and percentages from ISTAT surveys).

	1981/82	1987/88	1990/91	1994/95	2000/01
Members of NSFs and associated disciplines	3,600,000	4,400,000	4,600,000	3,500,000	3,300,000
Participants in initiatives of sport for all organisations	2,500,000	3,700,000	3,800,000	3,400,000	4,900,000
Informal sports participants	1,300,000	4,000,000	4,200,000	4,800,000	8,500,000
Total sports participants	7,400,000	12,100,000	12,600,000	11,700,000	16,700,000

Source: Rossi Mori 2004; CONI 1994; CONI 1995.

Social differentiation

In Italy, women participate in sport considerably less than men. This applies to young people as well as adults. As in various other EU member states, this is primarily due to a lower degree of participation in club-related and competitive sport. Beyond these organised contexts, women take part in sport as much as men, irrespective of the frequency of participation.

¹⁷⁴ <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/italy.htm>.

¹⁷⁵ Calìo et al. 2002.

Table 3.65: Sport participation among the Italian population, 6-15 and 16-74 years, according to gender, frequency and club-related and competitive context.

	2000					
	Age 6-15			Age 16-74		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Competitive, organised, intensive (≥ 120 /year)	16.5	6.7	11.8	4.7	1.3	3.0
Intensive (≥ 60 -<120/year)	5.2	6.2	5.7	4.0	3.5	3.7
Regular, competitive and/or organised (≥ 60 -<120/year)	22.7	16.4	19.7	6.0	3.8	4.9
Regular, recreational (≥ 60 -<120/year)	6.0	7.3	6.6	2.8	4.1	3.5
Irregular (≥ 12 -<60/year)	14.3	12.6	13.5	15.2	6.9	11.0
Occasional (≥ 1 -<12/year)	3.2	2.2	2.7	4.5	2.0	3.2
No sport, but participant in other physical activities	17.1	26.2	21.5	30.3	36.9	33.7
No sport and no other physical activities	15.0	22.4	18.6	32.5	41.4	37.0

Source: <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/italy.htm>.

Throughout the past decades, the differences between men and women have become smaller. While only one in ten sport participants were women in 1959, by 1982 this had become one in three. By the year 2000, these differences had diminished even further.

The highest percentage of those taking part in sport can be found in the 10-14 year old age group with respect to both genders. After this age, the percentage decreases along with an increase in age. In contrast to a number of western and northern EU member states, this applies to both men and women and all age categories.

Organisational context

Of the estimated 16.7 million Italians who practice sport, 10.3 million do not actively do so in a competitive context. 2.5 million of the remaining sportspeople are active in unofficial championships or competitions. 1.8 million Italians participate in competitions or championships at a provincial level; 1.3 million at a regional level and 820,000 in a national or international level.

Collectively the sports federations have a total of 3.3 million members, who are distributed throughout around 65,000 sports clubs. Of the sport participants between 6-15 years old, 69% of boys and 56% of girls are members of a sports association; 61% of the boys and 43% of the girls play sport in a competitive context. These percentages are though considerably lower for adults.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁶ <http://w3.uniroma1.it/compass/italy.htm>

Although there are no reliable data with regard to the fitness branch – an unequivocal definition thereof has never been produced - a number of sources suggest that at the end of the 1990s nearly four million people in Italy regularly visited fitness centres or gyms. If this is the case, then the fitness branch is now bigger than organised association sport.¹⁷⁷ However, CONI has estimated on the basis of ISTAT data that only 1.4 million people participate in fitness. Nevertheless, it is clear that the collective membership total for the sports federations was lower in 2001 than twenty years before, while since the beginning of the 1980s the fitness branch has borne witness to a quite unruly growth.

The most popular sports

Just as in Portugal, football is the most played sport, in general terms as well as in a club-related context. In Spain football is by far the biggest club-related sport, but loses out to swimming as a recreational sport. The great popularity of fitness in general and basketball in a club-related context also corresponds to the situation in Portugal and Spain.

Table 3.66: The most popular sports in percentage of population and in numbers of licensees.

	2000*	%	2001**	Members
1	Football	26	1 Football	1,000,288
2	Gymnastics/aerobics/fitness	21	2 Basketball	282,795
3	Swimming, water-polo	23	3 Volleyball	242,361
4	Winter sports, alpinism	13	4 Tennis	145,853
5	Racket sports	8	5 Winter sports	128,855
6	Cycling	8	6 Athletics	125,199
7	Volleyball	6	7 Martial arts	105,791
8	Athletics	6	8 Bocce/Bowls	95,236
9	Basketball	4	9 Motorcycling	93,331
10	Running, jogging	3	10 Sailing	79,379

Source: *ISTAT; **CONI. For both see Rossi Mori 2004.

The popularity of football is certainly not uncontested. Firstly, football is clearly a male-dominated activity for it is only played by 1.4% of women. Most women (44%) participate in gymnastics/aerobics/fitness, followed by swimming (30%), winter sports (13%) and volleyball (10%). Secondly, football experienced growth until the early 1990s, but in absolute terms it in fact lost the most members of all sports during the 1990s, followed by tennis, golf, winter sports and bowls. In contrast, organisations for golf, handball, athletics, horse riding and sailing experienced the greatest growth in membership numbers between 1991 and 2001.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ http://www.fitnessstrend.com/foro/target_mercato_del_fitness_en.html

¹⁷⁸ CONI, I numeri dello sport, various years.

3.15 Greece

With special thanks to Konstantinos Alexandris of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki and Konstantinos Agriodimos of the Ministry of Education & Religious Affairs for information on sport participation research in Greece.

Introduction

Unfortunately Greece does not have any tradition with respect to national population research on sport participation. For this reason, in contrast to the other old EU member states, there are hardly any data available on the frequency, nature, differentiation and organisational context of sport participation. The only available sources of information about the entire Greek population are the Eurobarometers. In addition, local studies have been conducted, but these are not representative of the whole population.¹⁷⁹

Levels of sport participation

The Eurobarometers indicate that the level of sport participation in Greece is under the European average. In 2004, 32% of the population exercised or played sport at least once a month and 57% did no sport or exercise whatsoever, as compared with a European average of 49% and 40% respectively.¹⁸⁰ In 1999, 12% of the Greek population spent most of their free time to sport and physical activities, which is also less than in the other EU states.¹⁸¹

Trends in sport participation

Trends cannot be determined for Greece.

Social differentiation

The non-representative local studies confirm the general picture found in other countries, namely that more men participate in sport than women, more young people than old people and that the level of educational achievement is a specific determining factor for sport participation.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁹ See Larissa (Alexandris & Carroll 1997; Alexandris 1998) and Thessaloniki (Alexandris & Stodolska 2004).

¹⁸⁰ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 2004.

¹⁸¹ European Commission, Eurobarometer 52.1 1999.

¹⁸² Alexandris & Carroll 1997.

Organisational context

According to the Eurobarometer, in 1998 8% of the Greek population claimed to be members of a sports club. However, the European Social Survey arrived at a figure of around 4% for 2002, of whom a little over half were actually active members.¹⁸³ The percentage for young people of the 15-24 year is group are higher. The Eurobarometers from 1987, 1990 and 1997 indicated that 15 to 16% of Greek youth are affiliated to a sports club. In 2001, a Eurobarometer put this figure at 21%.¹⁸⁴

The most popular sports

The only source of information regarding the differential popularity of sports in Greece is the local study conducted by Alexandris in Larissa. Walking, keep fit, jogging, basketball, weight training, aerobics and football were found to be the most practiced sports. Although this study concerns an urban population with an under-representation of older people and those with a lower level of educational attainment, it is noteworthy that the most popular sports included fitness sports and two 'national' competitive sports, namely basketball and football.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ Commission of the European Union, Eurobarometer 50.1 1998. European Social Survey 2002.

¹⁸⁴ Commission of the European Union, Eurobarometers 28.2 1987; 34.2 1990; 47.2 1997 and Christensen, Eurobarometer 55.1 2001.

¹⁸⁵ Alexandris 1998.

Part Four: New European member states

3.16 Cyprus

With special thanks to Dr. Nicos Kartakoullis of the Center for Leisure, Tourism and Sports Research and Development for information on sport participation in Cyprus.

Introduction

There is only very limited information with respect to sport participation in Cyprus. The only available data on sport participation derive from a number of Eurobarometer studies and a survey that was conducted in 1994-1995 by the Cypriot Sports Research Centre. However, there are now concrete intentions to conduct a new survey in accordance with the COMPASS agreements.¹⁸⁶

Levels of sport participation

According to an edition of the Sports Information Bulletin, which is based on a research study carried out by the Cypriot Sports Research Centre, 45% of the Cypriot population is physically inactive during their leisure time. More recent data derive from the special Eurobarometer 213 on sport and the citizens of the European Union. However, only a written report – and not even the raw data - was available at the time of writing. The initial report reveals that in 2004 47% of Cypriots never exercised or played sport, compared with the 40% average for all 25 member states. According to the Eurobarometer 2003.1, which was specifically directed at young people between 15-24 years old in thirteen new and candidate member states, 47% regularly took part in sport. The average for these countries was 46%.

Trends in sport participation

Trends for Cyprus cannot be determined.

Social differentiation

There is a lack of relevant data.

Organisational context

According to an edition of the Sports Information Bulletin, 5% of the population were members of one of the estimated 550 sports clubs in 1996. The Eurobarometer held among young people

¹⁸⁶ European Commission, Eurobarometer 2003.1 2003 en 62.0 2004; Sports Information Bulletin, 44, 10, 1997.

indicated that one fifth of youngsters between 15 and 24 years old are active sports club members.

The most popular sports

In 1996, football and basketball were widely played by boys, whereas gymnastics, dance, volleyball and basketball were popular among girls. Football and, to a lesser extent, athletics, basketball, and volleyball were popular as club-related sports. Data provided by sports organisations for 1991 reveal the following ranking order according to membership figures:

Table 3.67: Popularity ranking order according to sports clubs membership figures.

	1991	Members
1	Football	10,000
2	Athletics	2,100
3	Basketball	1,800
4	Volleyball	1,200
5	Table tennis	602
6	Karate	500
7	Taekwondo	450
8	Badminton	431
9	Judo	400
10	Bowling	350

Source: The Cyprus Sport Organisation in ISI/CONI 1996.

3.17 Malta

With special thanks to Rose Ann Gatt of the University of Malta for the supply of data on sport participation.

Introduction

In recent years, there have been various research studies conducted with respect to physical activity and sporting behaviour in Malta, but the issue of active sport participation has only played a limited role in these studies. In the First National Health Interview Survey, which was held in 2003, questions on sporting activities were only posed as a part of a broader category of moderate and/or vigorous activities. The time use survey of 2002 and the lifestyle survey of 2003, which were conducted by the Maltese National Statistics Office (NSO), only included a limited number of questions with respect to sporting behaviour. As far as we are aware, there has only ever been one specific research study conducted on sport participation of the whole Maltese population, namely by MISCO International. This study is now more than twelve years old. Membership figures for the individual sport federations are maintained by the NSO.

Levels of sport participation

The results of the aforementioned MISCO study revealed that in 1992 45% of the Maltese population of ten years and above participated in sport every now and then. According to the Eurobarometer 62.0, the level of participation in 2004 was at 57%, just under the average for the 25 EU member states (60%).¹⁸⁷ In 2003, the First National Health Interview Survey revealed that 18% of men and 11% of women regularly exercised (at least once a week).¹⁸⁸ In the same year, 41% of young people between the ages of 15 and 24 regularly took part in sport during their leisure time. This was lower than average for the 13 new and candidate member states (46%).¹⁸⁹

Trends in sport participation

Due to the fact that the available data cannot be compared, no trends can be determined.

¹⁸⁷ The questionnaire employed in the MISCO research study is not known to us. Data were supplied by Rose Ann Gatt and are partly also reported in the Sports Information Bulletin 44, 10, 1997. In the Eurobarometer 62.0, the question posed was 'How often do you exercise or play sport?'. The figure given here is the percentage of respondents who did not answer this question with 'never'.

¹⁸⁸ Department of Health Information 2003.

¹⁸⁹ European Commission, Eurobarometer 2003.1 2003.

Social differentiation

The MISCO study points to significant gender differences. While in 1992 62% of men participated in sport, this applied to just 29% of women. It also demonstrated that the chances of sport participation diminish with an increase in age and a lower socio-economic status.¹⁹⁰ On the basis of the time use survey conducted by the NSO, it can be determined that men devote more time to sport and outdoor activities than women (32 versus 24 minutes during the week and 53 minutes versus 31 minutes at weekends). This time use also varied significantly according to age category. Young people between 15-24 years old devoted the most time to sport and outdoor activities (of whom the majority mainly took part in sport during the weekend). Time spent on sport and outdoor activities then decreases for the 25-34 and 35-44 year old age groups. Older people above the age of 45 devote even less time to sport and outdoor activities.¹⁹¹

Organisational context

In no other EU member state is the percentage of the population who participate in sport outside of an organisational framework so high as in Malta (69%).¹⁹² Nonetheless, around 65,000 people in Malta are members of sports associations, that is nearly 18% of the population distributed among 405 sports associations. Once again, significant gender and age differences may be discerned. 77% of all club members are male and 43% are younger than 20 years old.¹⁹³ Among youngsters there are fewer differences between club membership and participation in competitions between boys and girls than between adult men and women, but these differences are nonetheless still statistically significant.¹⁹⁴

The most popular sports

Walking and swimming are the most practiced sports by both men and women. Within an organised context, football is clearly most favoured by men, followed by bodybuilding/gyms. Together with gymnastics this fitness sport is also popular among women.

¹⁹⁰ MISCO 1992, information supplied by Rose Ann Gatt. See also Sports Information Bulletin 44, 10, 1997.

¹⁹¹ NSO time use survey 2002.

¹⁹² European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 2004

¹⁹³ NSO, Sports organisations 2000-2002, 2004.

¹⁹⁴ Gatt 2004.

Table 3.68: Popularity ranking order for sport in general and in club-related context, total and according to gender.

		% of population, 2003*			Members, 2002**				
		Men	Women	Total					
					Men	Women	Total		
1	Walking	51	62	56	1	Football	21,876	273	22,149
2	Swimming	23	23	23	2	Bodybuilding/gyms	5,672	4,662	10,334
3	Cycling	3	4	4	3	Martial arts	2,473	818	3,291
4	Running/jogging	5	3	4	4	Diving	2,183	651	2,834
5	Aerobics	0	2	1	5	Gymnastics	376	2,257	2,633
6	Gymexercise/weighttraining	2	5	4	6	Volleyball	1,288	971	2,259
7	Exercise at home	8	13	11	7	Bocci/boules	2,108	26	2,134
8	Tennis	1	1	1	8	Athletics	1,102	405	1,507
9	Basketball	1	0	0	9	Basketball	812	673	1,485
10	Football	8	0	4	10	Sailing	928	264	1,192

Source: *NSO, Lifestyle survey 2003; **NSO, Sport organisations 2000-2002, 2004

3.18 Slovenia

With special thanks to Dr. Boris Sila of the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport, Alenka Burica of Media Publikum, and Meta Arh of GfK Gal-Iteo for supplying the information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

The sporting behaviour of the Slovenian adult population has already been monitored for several decades through a long series of surveys. Since 1973, the Slovenian Institute of Public Opinion has held representative surveys every three years among the population of eighteen years old and above, which include questions about sporting behaviour. From 1996 onwards, these surveys have taken place annually. Further to this, questions regarding sporting behaviour have also been included in surveys that have been carried out since 2001 by TGI, a market research bureau, among the Slovenian population of 15-75 years old. Additionally, data on the membership of sports organisations are provided by the Slovenia National Olympic Committee.

Levels of sport participation

Quite surprisingly, Slovenia came to the fore in the Eurobarometer 213 as the EU member state, which, after the Scandinavian countries, had the lowest proportion of inhabitants that never participated in sport (in 2004 this was 24% compared with the 40% EU average). Moreover, the Eurobarometer 2003.1 conducted among young people between 15 and 24 years of age and the time use surveys also indicated an exceptionally high degree of sport participation in this new EU member state. This youth poll revealed that around 71% of youngsters take part in sport during their leisure time, which was the highest percentage of all the thirteen new and candidate member states and 25 percentage points above the average of these countries. The research that has been coordinated from Slovenia itself is based on other definitions and research designs, which result in figures that significantly deviate from this. According to research carried out by the Slovenian Institution of Public Opinion in 2000, 54% of respondents were not sportingly active, while 41% of the population participated in sport or recreation during their leisure time more than once a month (see table 3.69).

Table 3.69: Participation in sport or recreation during leisure time during the past twelve months among Slovenian population of 18 years and above.

	1996*	1998**	2000***	2004****
Not active	50	46	54	34
Some times in the year	7	8	6	9
1-3 times a month	11	11	10	11
Once a week	13	17	13	19
2-3 times a week	11	10	11	15
4-6 times a week	4	4	4	5
Every day	5	3	3	7
Total	100	100	100	100

Sources:

* Petrović et al. 1996.

** Petrović et al. 1998.

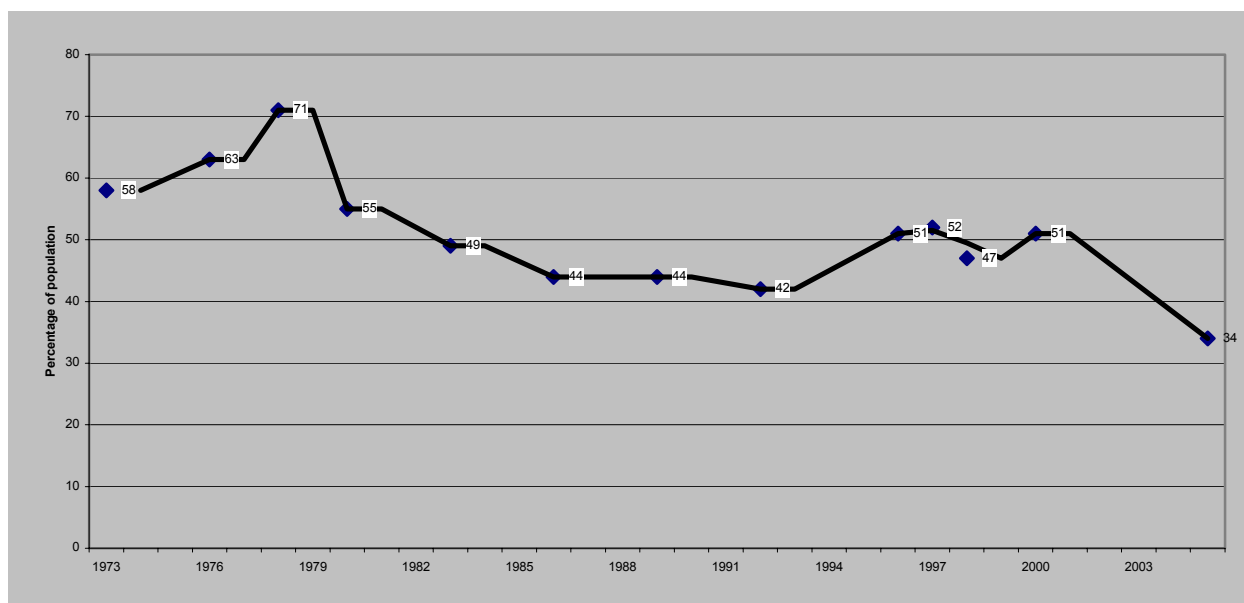
***Petrović et al. 2001.

****Završnik et al. 2005.

Trends in sport participation

No trends can be determined on the basis of table 3.69. However, the data collected by the Slovenian Institute of Public Opinion over a thirty year period, at least suggest some decline in the percentage of the population who are not actively involved in sport or recreation during their leisure time (see figure 3.11). Due to the possible differences in the methodology and questionnaires that have been employed, it is necessary to be cautious with respect to confirming this trend.

Figure 3.11: Percentage of the Slovenian population of 18 years and above who have not actively participated in sport or recreation during leisure time. Source: Petrović et al. several years.



Social differentiation

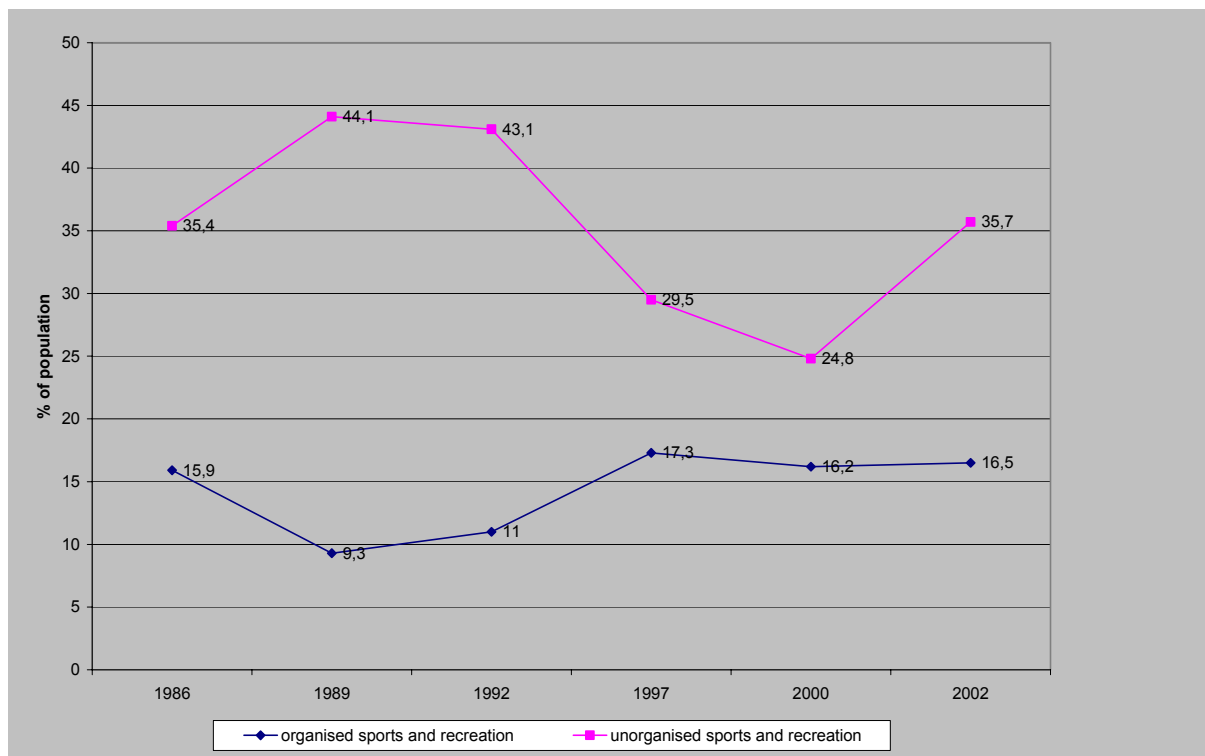
The level of participation in sport and recreation decreases with an increase in age, but this applies less to women than to men. At a younger age women take part less in sport and recreation than men, but over the age of forty a higher percentage of women are actually active in this regard. Women are also particularly under-represented in sports clubs: in 2000, 18% of women were affiliated to a sports club as opposed to 38% of men.¹⁹⁵

Organisational context

Participation in sport takes place more frequently within a non-organised than an organised context. According to data from the Institute of Public Opinion, the difference between both kinds of sport participation diminished during the 1990s, but has once again appeared to have grown after 2000 (see figure 3.12)

¹⁹⁵ Petrović et al. 2001.

Figure 3.12: Participation in sport or recreation in leisure time among the Slovenian population of 18 years and above within an organised or non-organised context, 1986-2002. Source: Petrović et al. Various years.



In 2004, there were a total of around 4,800 sports associations in Slovenia with approximately 350,000 members, of whom nearly 90,000 played sport competitively.¹⁹⁶ Sports associations thus had the greatest market share of all sport providers in Slovenia. Between 1996 and 2000, this seems to have declined. Whereas 18% of Slovenians were members of a sports association in 1996, four years later this had dropped to 17%.¹⁹⁷ In contrast, the percentage affiliated to a fitness centre or other commercial sport provider rose from 8% in 1996 to 9% in 2000. Relatively few Slovenians (2% in 1996 and 3% in 2000) were concurrently members of a sports association and a commercial sports club.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Statement Slovenian National Olympic Committee.

¹⁹⁷ This percentage comes fairly close to the measurement taken in the framework of the European Social Survey. According to this research, 16% of the Slovenian population of 15 years and older were members of a sports club in 2002.

¹⁹⁸ Petrović et al. 2001.

The most popular sports

The ranking order for the popularity of sports in general more closely resembles the western and northern European member states than the southern ones. Walking, swimming and racing cycling are placed at the top of the list; team sports such as football, volleyball, handball and basketball are in general less frequently played by Slovenians, but still rank among the most popular sports played within a club-related context. Further to this, the popularity of martial arts in a club-related context is worth mentioning. Together the martial arts would assume second place in the ranking, after football. Further to this, on the basis of the data available, few differences between men and women can be discerned from the ranking order as regards general sport participation. Seven sports feature in the top ten of the most practiced sports for both men and women. The divergence concerns football, basketball and fitness (which appear in the men's top ten, but not in the women's) and aerobics, home exercise and badminton (vice versa).¹⁹⁹

Table 3.70: Popularity ranking order for sport participation in general and in club-related context.

	2004*	%	2004**	Members
1	Walking	59	1 Football	25,700
2	Swimming	28	2 Volleyball	8,327
3	Cycling	25	3 Handball	7,800
4	Alpine skiing	15	4 Basketball	6,126
5	Mountaineering	13	5 Ninepins/bowling	4,652
6	Home exercises	12	6 Karate	3,840
7	Running	11	7 Taekwondo	3,268
8	Badminton	11	8 Dancing	3,154
9	Dancing	10	9 Judo/aikido/jujitsu/kendo	2,870
10	Football	10	10 Athletics	2,695
11	Fitness	9	11 Badminton	1,586
12	Aerobics	8	12 Swimming	1,473
13	Basketball	8	13 Mountaineering/alpinism	1,348

Sources: * Završnik et al. 2005; **Statement Slovenian National Olympic Committee, 2004

¹⁹⁹ Petrović et al. 2001.

3.19 Hungary

With special thanks to Zsuzsanna Bukta of the Sport Department of the Ministry of Children, Youth and Sports and Agnes Nagy of Nike Hungary for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

In 2004, GfK Hungary conducted a large-scale survey into general sport participation; this research was commissioned by the Hungarian government. The study is representative of the Hungarian population aged 18 years and above. Further to this, in 2000 and 2004, the market research bureau TGI Hungary carried out research into the degree to which the individual branches of sport were practiced. Prior to 1989, the membership figures for Hungarian sports organisations were held by the Local Sport Supervisory Offices, but since this date they have been kept up-to-date by the National Statistical Office.

Levels of sport participation

Chapter two revealed that the level of sport participation in Hungary was relatively low in European perspective in various respects. According to Eurobarometer 62.0, 40% of the Hungarian population took part in sport or exercised every now and then in 2004; this figure is the lowest within the European Union, with the exception of Portugal. Furthermore, the percentage of young people in Hungary who regularly participate in sport during their leisure time (43%) was below the average (46%) for the new and candidate EU member states. In addition to this, the time use studies suggest that in comparison with nine other European member states both men and women devote little time to sport and exercise.

The research conducted by GfK Hungary provides supplementary information on the frequency and intensity of sport participation. As indicated by this research, 16% of the population aged 18 and above regularly took part in sport, that is at least twice a week for half an hour. The percentage cannot be compared with previous research studies or data from other countries.²⁰⁰

Trends in sport participation

Due to the lack of comparable data, no trends can be identified.

²⁰⁰ GfK data provided by Szusanna Bukta; see also Anders et al. 2004.

Social differentiation

The limited data reveal a number of familiar patterns. Firstly, the under-representation of women: while 20% of men took part in sport twice a week for half an hour in 2004, this only applied to 13% of the women. Secondly, participation in sport decreased along with an increase in age: in 2004 the level sport participation among children of 10-11 years old was still high (80% of boys; 72% of girls), but in the 16-17 year old age category this was substantially lower, respectively 58% and 42%. Among adults this decline continued further with a rise in age. Although 28% of 18-29 year olds did at least one hour of sport twice a week, for the total population over the age of eighteen the percentage of those who took part in sport with this regularity was a mere 9%.²⁰¹

Organisational context

According to the European Social Survey, 4% of the Hungarian population of 15 years old and above were members of a sports club in 2002, while 6% participated in sport or outdoor activities in or through a sports club. The frequency among sportspeople was much higher. The GfK research study suggests that half of those who took part in sport at least twice a week were members of a sports organisation.²⁰²

In 2002, Hungary had a total of 5,400 sports associations with 700,000 members, which included around 200,000 registered sportspeople who participated in official competitions. In addition, there were approximately 3,100 sport school communities in Hungary, which were financially managed by the educational institutions to which they were connected, and around 12,000 commercial sport providers of all kinds.²⁰³

The number of sports clubs significantly declined between 1975 and 1990, though began to increase once again during the 1990s. Since 1990, the membership numbers of these clubs has grown more rapidly than the population as a whole.

Table: 3.71 Number of sports clubs and sport-related clubs in Hungary.

	Number of sport clubs	Estimated number of sport club membership	Sport club / population	Sport club membership / population
1975	4,154	540,020	2,410	5%
1987	3,263	424,190	3,065	4%
1990	2,716	353,080	3,682	4%
1994	3,240	421,200	3,086	4%

²⁰¹ GfK data provided by Szuzsanna Bukta; see also Anders et al. 2004.

²⁰² GfK data provided by Szuzsanna Bukta; see also Anders et al. 2004.

²⁰³ National Statistical Office and information provided by Szuzsanna Bukta.

1999	5,603	728,390	1,785	7%
2002	5,385	700,050	1,857	7%
2004	7,008	840,000	1,427	8%

Source: Local Sport Supervisory Offices and National Statistical Office, reworked by Bukta.

Only non-profit organisations have been included in the table above. It therefore does not take account of the commercial sport providers, such as fitness centres in Hungary. These figures also reflect the fact that the climate for establishing and maintaining civil non-profit organisations in Hungary was greatly improved in 1989 by the 'law on free association'. Since then many associations have been set up in all societal sectors, including sport, many of which have small membership bodies and are directed at one specific activity or sport.²⁰⁴

The most popular sports

Cycling is the most popular sport in Hungary for both genders. Other sports that have equally high participation rates among men and women include swimming, jogging, badminton, billiards, darts and basketball. In the Hungarian ranking orders, football and chess come to the fore as typical male pursuits, while proportionally more women take part in dance and aerobics/fitness. There are also few differences between young and older people (in virtually all age categories) as regards the popularity rankings for sport. The sports found in the top ten are practiced by proportionally fewer older than young people, but this is the case across the board.

Table 3.72 Regularly* practiced branches of sport, in % of Hungarian population, 14-69 years, in total and according to gender.

		2004				
Total		% Men		% Women		%
1	Cycling	17	1 Cycling	16	1 Cycling	19
2	Swimming	9	2 Football	12	2 Dancing	9
3	Billiards	8	3 Billiards	10	3 Swimming	9
4	Jogging	8	4 Swimming	8	4 Jogging	9
5	Football	7	5 Jogging	7	5 Aerobics, fitness	8
6	Dancing	7	6 Darts	6	6 Badminton	7
7	Badminton	6	7 Chess	6	7 Billiards	7
8	Darts	5	8 Badminton	4	8 Darts	5
9	Aerobics, fitness	5	9 Dancing	4	9 Skating	4
10	Chess	4	10 Table tennis	4	10 Basketball	3
11	Basketball	3	11 Basketball	3	11 Handball	3

* The interpretation of 'regular participation' is left up to the respondents.

Source: TGI 2004.

²⁰⁴ Information provided by Szuzsanna Bukta.

There are no current data available on membership figures per branch of sport. Membership figures dating from 1989 indicated that football clubs had by far the most members, followed by handball, athletics and basketball.

3.20 Slovakia

With special thanks to Renáta Mašánová of Tambor Slovakia, Vladimír Cicmanec of the Slovakian Statistical Office and Ján Tokár of the Ministry of Education of the Slovakian Republic for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

The data on sport participation in Slovakia is more or less restricted to statistics about the number of clubs and members that are affiliated to the various sports federations. Further to this, the research bureaus Tambor and Fabrika have also gathered data on the social profiles of several branches of sport and the degree to which they are practiced.

Levels of sport participation

The Eurobarometers suggest that a comparatively large proportion of the Slovakian population participate in sport and exercise. In 2004, 36% of the population said that they never engaged in sport or exercise, while the average for the 25 European member states stood at 40%. In 2003, 59% of youngsters between the age of 15 and 24 regularly took part in sport during their leisure time, whereas the average for the new and candidate EU member states was just 46%.

Trends in sport participation

On the basis of the data available, no trends in general sport participation among the Slovakian population can be determined.

Social differentiation

There are no data available on population differences with respect to general sport participation. However, there is limited information of the gender and age of skiers, swimmers, joggers, footballers, golfers, tennis and squash players and cyclists and the frequency with which they practice their sport. This information concerns the population aged 16-64 years. It reveals that the aforementioned sports are practiced by more men than women. These gender differences are the smallest with respect to golf and squash and by far the most extensive as far as football is concerned. Skiing, swimming and jogging are taken part in less as people get older, while golf, in particular, but also football, tennis and racing cycling have a relatively large proportion of adherents in the 35-44 year old age category.

Organisational context

The relationship between sport participation in club-related or commercial contexts and outside of an organisational framework is also unknown. However, there is data on the number of sports clubs and members available for the past few years. This data indicates that the number of clubs dropped at the end of the 1990s, but have recently increased by 2% from 4,685 in 2000 to 4,780

in 2003. The most significant growth occurred with respect to indoor football, basketball, equestrian sports and (ice) hockey, while the total number of karate, softball and darts clubs showed the greatest decreases. Together the sport specific federations (excluding the Slovakian Fishing Union) had a total of 687,000 members in 2003, of whom 568,000 (86%) also took part in competitions.

The most popular sports

From the research into the social profile of a number of sports, which was conducted by Tambor/Fabrika, cycling comes to the fore as the most and most frequently practiced sport, followed by swimming and football. The study restricted itself to the sports listed in table 3.73.

Table 3.73: Frequency of participation in seven selected branches of sport during the past six months by the Slovakian population, 15-64 years.

	≥52	25-51	12-24	9-11	5-8	1-4	0
Cycling	16	10	11	10	12	15	26
Swimming	2	4	8	9	15	20	42
Football	4	4	4	4	6	12	67
Skiing	0	1	2	3	3	12	78
Tennis	1	0	2	2	4	11	81
Squash	0	1	1	1	1	4	93
Golf	0	0	1	0	1	4	93

Source: Fabrika/Tambor 2003.

Within an organised context, football stands at the top of the popularity ranking order. There are 25 times as many football club members and competitive football players than for basketball, which finds itself in second place in these popularity stakes. Ice hockey, handball and table tennis are also widely played sports in Slovakia. Tennis, bodybuilding and karate are only practiced to a limited extent within an organised context.

During the past three years, the football federation has enjoyed the greatest increase in members in absolute terms, with around 33,000 new members, followed by the basketball federation that gained nearly 8,000 new members. Bodybuilding and power-lifting organisations experienced the biggest membership losses. Percentage wise, the basketball federation enjoyed the greatest gains. The number of members grew by 77%; the number of participants in basketball competitions increased by 135%. Further to this, the member figures of the tennis federation swelled appreciably, but, at the same time, the number of participants in tennis competitions fell significantly.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁵ However, one needs to be cautious in the interpretation of the membership data because of inaccuracies and changes in methodology (information of Ján Tokár).

Table 3.74 Popularity ranking order of sports in Slovakia, according to number of club members and participation in competitions

2003					
Members			Participants in competition		
1	Football	457,867	1	Football	426,967
2	Basketball	17,785	2	Basketball	16,164
3	Handball	17,500	3	Ice hockey	12,680
4	Tennis	15,190	4	Handball	10,950
5	Ice hockey	15,004	5	Table tennis	10,900
6	Bodybuilding/power-lifting	13,180	6	Volleyball	6,680
7	Table tennis	12,520	7	Mountain running	6,181
8	Karate	9,800	8	Athletics	5,150
9	Volleyball	8,320	9	Field hockey	4,844
10	Mountain running	6,915	10	Indoor football	4,500

Source: Ministry of Education

3.21 The Czech Republic

With special thanks to Professor Antonin Rychtecký of Charles University, Petr Janousek and David Cisar of Nike Czech & Slovakia, and Jan Prerovský of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

During the 1990s, three sport participation studies were conducted in the Czech Republic (1994, 1995 and 1999); each of them involved a different research population and research design. The last survey, held in 1999 among the population aged 9-74 years, was adjusted to the COMPASS guidelines and forms the most important source of information on sport and physical activities in the Czech Republic. In addition to this, a research study commissioned by Nike Czech and Slovakia and conducted by GfK Prague provides data on the sporting behaviour of young people of 14-30 years old. Moreover, one can make use of the details on the number of clubs and members that are affiliated to the Czech sports organisations. These data are published in the Czech Sports Association Yearbook.

Levels of sport participation

Chapter two already revealed that - when viewed from a European perspective - there are high levels of sport participation in the Czech Republic. In 2004, only 35% of the population never exercised or took part in sport; 62% of young people between the age of 16 and 24 regularly participated in sport in 2003 (see figures 2.2. and 2.9).²⁰⁶ A comparison with the COMPASS pilot countries also shows that a comparatively large proportion of the Czech population takes part in sport; and that they also do so frequently (see figure 2.7 and table 3.75).

Table 3.75: Frequency of sport participation during the past twelve months by the Czech population, 16-74 years.

1999	
Frequency	%
0	32
≥1 - ≤12	3
≥12 - >60	18
≥60 - >120	16
≥120	31

Source: Rychtecky 2002.

²⁰⁶ European Commission, Eurobarometer 213 2004; 2003.1 2003.

GfK's research on the age category 14-30 years old also reinforces this picture. In this age category, only 10% never took part in sport, while 53% indicated that they participate in sporting activities more than three times a week.²⁰⁷

Trends in sport participation

Given that the various sport participation surveys are not attuned to each other, no trends can be determined.

Social differentiation

Table 3.76 provides a variety of information. Generally speaking, young people do more sport than older people and men do more than women. However, in the 16-24 age category, women participate in sport more than men and just as intensively, although the intensively sporting men do so more often in the framework of competitions and/or organisations. Young people generally took part in sport more intensively than older ones and also more frequently within a competitive and organised context. The percentage of men who regularly participated in competitive and/or organised sport continues until the 45-64 age category, while for women this ends at the youngest age category. An increasing percentage of women belonging to the higher age categories can be discerned among those who regularly engage in recreational sport or take part in sport irregularly. Incidental participation in sport occurs more or less equally in all age categories.

Furthermore, Rychtecky's analyses demonstrate that the percentage of sport practitioners increases with a higher level of educational achievement. People with a higher education also take part in sport more frequently and more often in an organised context. The differences with respect to education are smaller in the category for regular sport participation (≥ 60 - < 120 times a year) than the one for incidental/irregular sport participation, on the one hand, and intensive sport participation, on the other.

²⁰⁷ GfK 2004.

Table 3.76: Nature and frequency of sport participation, according to age and gender, in % of the Czech population, 16-74 years.

		Competitive, Intensive organised, intensive	Regular, competitive and/or organised	Regular, recreational	Irregular	Occasional	Non-participant	
		(≥120 times a year)	(≥120 times a year)	(≥60-<120 times a year)	(≥60-<120 times a year)	(≥12-<60 times a year)	(≥1-<12 times a year)	
16-24	Men	19	28	6	9	11	3	24
	Women	8	36	6	8	17	2	21
	All	14	32	6	9	14	2	22
25-34	Men	19	21	7	14	21	3	14
	Women	3	20	5	19	23	2	29
	All	11	21	6	16	22	2	21
35-44	Men	11	21	9	11	19	2	26
	Women	2	19	3	10	22	5	39
	All	6	20	6	10	21	4	33
45-64	Men	5	23	5	9	14	4	40
	Women	1	12	3	6	18	5	54
	All	3	17	4	8	16	5	48
65-74	Men	2	18	5	11	9	4	52
	Women	0	11	0	9	5	5	70
	All	1	15	3	10	7	4	60

Source: Rychtecky 2002.

Organisational context

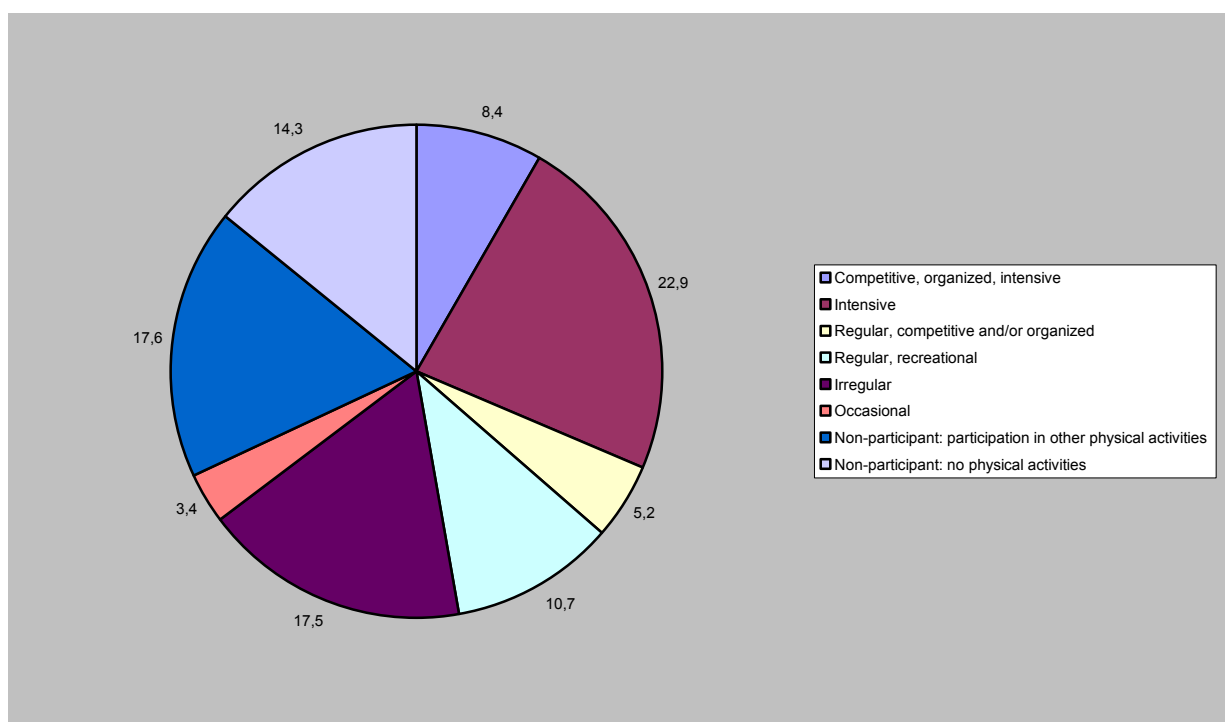
Sport in the Czech Republic largely takes place within a non-organised context. As figure 3.13 illustrates, in 1999 14% of the Czech population between 16-74 years old participated in sport within an organised or competitive framework.

The percentage of the population that are members of a sports club must be higher. According to Eurobarometer 2003.1, a total of 34% of young people between the age of 16 and 24 were sports club members. In total, the Czech Sports Associations had 1,275,000 registered members in 2000. In comparison to 1997, the membership figures had risen by around 7%.

Alongside these sports organisations, which generally represent competitive sports, the Czech Sokol Organisation (which is related to the gymnastics movement) had 186,000 members, the Czech Association of Sports for All totalled 257,000 members, the Association of School Sports Clubs had 228,000 members and many other smaller organisations numbered around 100,000 members.

In 1997, 7,530 clubs were affiliated to the Czech Sports Association. Together with all the other organisations, it is estimated that the Czech Republic was home to some 20,000 clubs in that year.

Figure 3.13: Sport participation according to intensity, frequency and organisation, in % of the Czech population, 16-74 years, 1999. Source: Rychtecky 2002.



The most popular sports

Since cycling is the most popular sport practiced generally and football and tennis enjoy the greatest popularity as club-related sports, the Czech Republic clearly does not deviate from most of the other EU member states. However, the country's own sports culture does come to the fore with the great popularity of ice hockey as a club-related sport. It is also striking that few differences between men and women can be found in the ranking orders for general sport participation. The only dissimilarities are the popularity of football and bodybuilding among men and aerobics and equestrian sports among women. As far as club-related sports are concerned, the enormous popularity of ice hockey attracts one's attention.

With respect to organised sport, football (+110,000), floor ball (+20,682) and racing cycling (+13,461) enjoyed the greatest gains in membership numbers between 1999 and 2003. The growth of the last two sports and aerobics in terms of percentages is the most noteworthy development. Floor ball appeared from nowhere and within a few years has gone on to gain a place in the top ten of the most practiced club-related sports in the Czech Republic. In contrast, serious membership losses were suffered by handball (-67%) and, to a lesser extent, basketball (-17%), while although in the top ten volleyball (-7%) and tennis (-2%) also lost ground between 1999 and 2003.

Table 3.77: Ranking order of the most practiced sports in the Czech Republic, general sport participation in % of the population 16-74 years, and organised sport participation in membership figures for sports federations.

		1999*		2003**		
	Men	%	Women	%	Organised sports	Members
1	Cycling, mountain biking	10	1 Cycling, mountain biking	11	1 Football	478,205
2	Soccer	9	2 Aerobics	9	2 Tennis	61,013
3	Swimming	3	3 Swimming	5	3 Ice Hockey	58,439
4	Volleyball	3	4 Volleyball	4	4 Volleyball	53,047
5	Jogging	2	5 Jogging	3	5 Basketball	34,121
6	Body building	2	6 Basketball	1	6 Athletics	33,249
7	Basketball	2	7 Equestrian sports	1	7 Skiing	30,917
8	Table tennis	1	8 Tennis	1	8 Floor ball	27,682
9	Tennis	1	9 Table tennis	1	9 Equestrian sports	23,271
10	Athletics	1	10 Athletics	1	10 Cycling	20,265

Source: *Rychtecky 2002; ** Český svaz tělesné výchovy 2003.

3.22 Poland

With special thanks to professor Lech Jaczynowski of the Jozef Pilsudski Academy of Physical Education, Pawel Kotnowski of GfK Polonia and Witold Kowalski of Nike for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

The level of information on sport participation in Poland is more or less equivalent to that found in Slovakia and Hungary: some market research data and a fairly extensive overview of the number of clubs and members affiliated to sports federations. The market research data concerns research that was conducted by IPSOS-Demoskop in 1997, 2002 and 2003 and by GfK Poland from 2000 to 2003. In addition to this, the Jozef Pilsudski Academy of Physical Education held a new representative population survey on sport and physical activity, which is partly attuned to the COMPASS guidelines. The results of this study could not yet be included in this volume. The Main Statistics Bureau (GUS) publishes data on the number of clubs and their membership figures annually.

Levels of sport participation

In the Eurobarometers, Poland comes to the fore as a country that finds itself fairly close to the European average as regards sport participation. According to Eurobarometer 213 in 2004, 46% of the population never participated in sport or did any exercise (the average for the 25 EU member states is 40%). 50% of youngsters between 15-24 years old regularly took part in sport during their leisure time; this is four percentage points higher than the average of the thirteen new and candidate EU member states. The IPSOS-Demoskop's data suggests that 21% of the Polish population of 15 years and above exercised or played sport regularly or relatively often. Likewise, 21% seldom did so and 59% not at all.²⁰⁸

Trends in sport participation

In the period between 1997 and 2003, the percentage of the Polish population that participated in exercise or sport rose from 26% to 42%. The proportion that did so regularly or relatively often was seven percentage points higher in 2003 than 1997.

During the period 1990-2002, the number of sports club members rose by 40% from 283,000 to 396,000.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁸ SGI Europe 2004.

²⁰⁹ Statistical Yearbooks, 2002-2004 (www.stat.gov.pl/english).

Table 3.78: Participation in sport or exercise among the Polish population 15 years and above, according to frequency, in % of the population.

	1997	2002	2003
Yes, on a regular basis	7	9	9
Yes, rather often	7	14	21
Yes, seldom	12	18	21
No, not at all	74	59	59

Source: IPSOS Demoskop data in SGI Europe 2004.

Social differentiation

No data are available with regard to social differentiation in sport participation in Poland.

Organisational context

According to the European Social Survey, around 4% of the Polish population of 15 years and above were members of a sports association in 2002. More than 2% were active participants in sports or outdoor activities organised by sports clubs. Along with Greece, these are the lowest percentages for all the nineteen countries that were involved in this research study. The Eurobarometer measurements also point to a low degree of organisation in Polish sport: 15% of the young people between 16-24 year old were members of a sports club in 2003; this was the lowest percentage of all the new member states. To our knowledge, there are no public data available on the fitness branch in Poland.

The most popular sports

Walking, cycling, hiking and swimming were the most popular sports amongst the Poles, according to the Euro Socio Styles research study that GfK has conducted annually since 2000; of these cycling and walking were the most frequently practiced sports.

Table 3.79: Most practiced sports by Polish population, 17 years and above, by frequency (in % of population).

	2004		
	Very often	Often	Rarely
Walking	8	43	38
Cycling	9	27	35
Hiking	3	21	40
Swimming	1	9	35
Gymnastics/aerobics/body building	2	9	30
Running/jogging	1	4	22
Football	2	6	17

Source: GfK Poland

This ranking order looks very different when one looks at the club membership figures. Football is the most popular club-related sport, followed at a significant distance by athletics, volleyball and basketball. Between 1998 and 2002, football was also the sport that enjoyed the biggest increase in absolute membership numbers. However, proportionally speaking, karate had the greatest gains in membership. Of all the sports in this top ten, only basketball and handball experienced losses during this period.

Table 3.80: Sports with the most members in club-related context

		1998	2002
1	Football	151,979	182,802
2	Athletics	18,125	18,400
3	Volleyball	15,693	17,256
4	Basketball	16,393	14,309
5	Karate	8,148	13,611
6	Table tennis	10,437	11,855
7	Handball	12,040	10,113
8	Swimming	8,191	8,868
9	Tennis	6,492	7,863
10	Judo	6,883	7,812

Source: GUS 2005 (www.stat.gov.pl)

3.23 Lithuania

With special thanks to Inga Smalinskaitė of the Department of Physical Education and Sports for supplying information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

In 2001, a survey on physical exercise and sport under the population of 7-80 years old was commissioned by the Lithuanian Sport Information Centre (LSIC). The LSIC also possesses statistics from 1998 to 2003 with regard to the number of people who participate in sport in sports clubs and (sports) schools.

Levels of sport participation

According to the 2004 Eurobarometer 213, 48% of the Lithuanian population never exercises or takes part in sport. This is eight percentage points above the average for the 25 EU member states. The LSIC survey from 2001 puts the figure of those who do not participate in sport or exercise at 52%. Furthermore, this survey also offers insight into the frequency of sport participation (see table 3.81).

Table 3.81: Exercise and sport according to frequency, in % of the Lithuanian population, 7-80 years.

2001	%
>4 times a week	8
3-4 times a week	16
1-2 times/week	23
No exercise and sport	52

Source: LSIC 2002.

Viewed alongside the COMPASS pilot countries the intensity of sport participation in Lithuania can be situated somewhere between the southern European and Scandinavian countries.

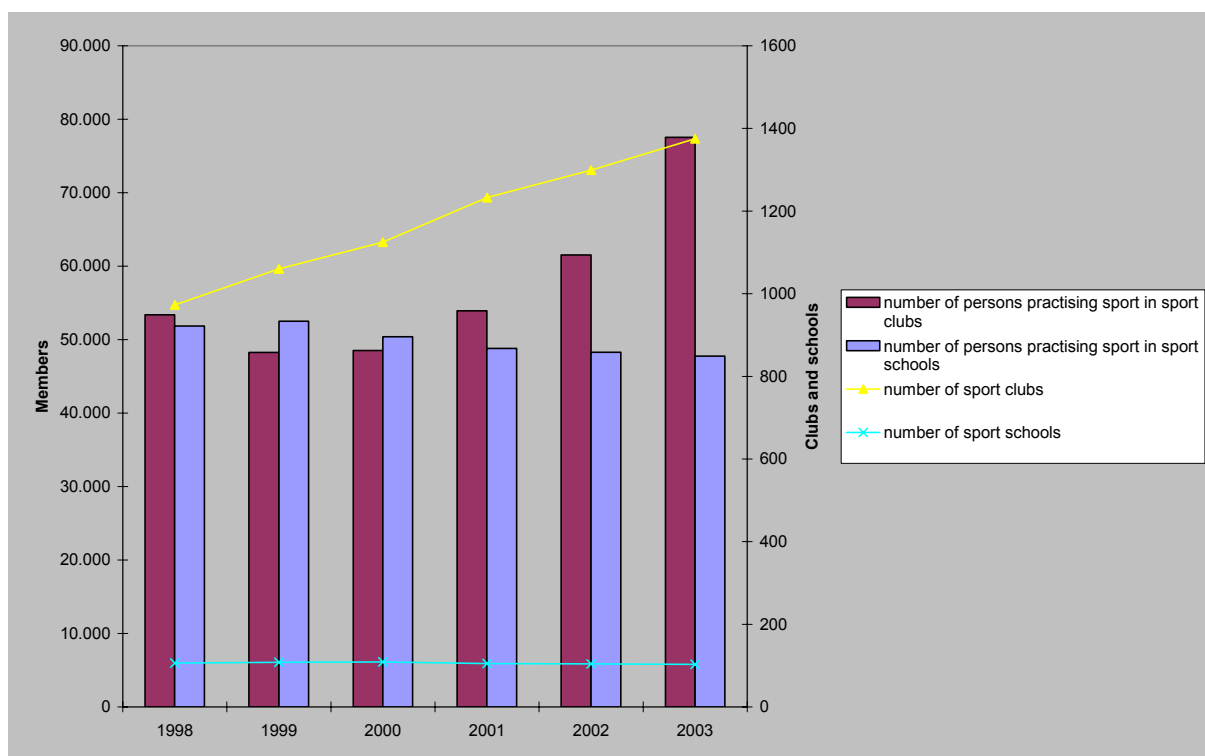
In addition, more is known about the average duration of sport participation among the Lithuanian people. According to this data, in 2001 one fifth of the population devoted less than two hours a week to exercise and sport, one seventh spent two to three hours on it and an eighth of the population dedicated four hours a week to it. These data cannot be analysed from a comparative perspective.

Trends in sport participation

Given that the 2001 survey was the first and only representative population research into sporting behaviour that has been conducted in Lithuania, no trends in sport participation can be identified. There are, however, data on trends within the sphere of organised sports. These reveal a significant growth in the number of people participating in sport in an organised context

and a slow, but steady decline in the number of those taking part in sport in the context of (sport) schools.

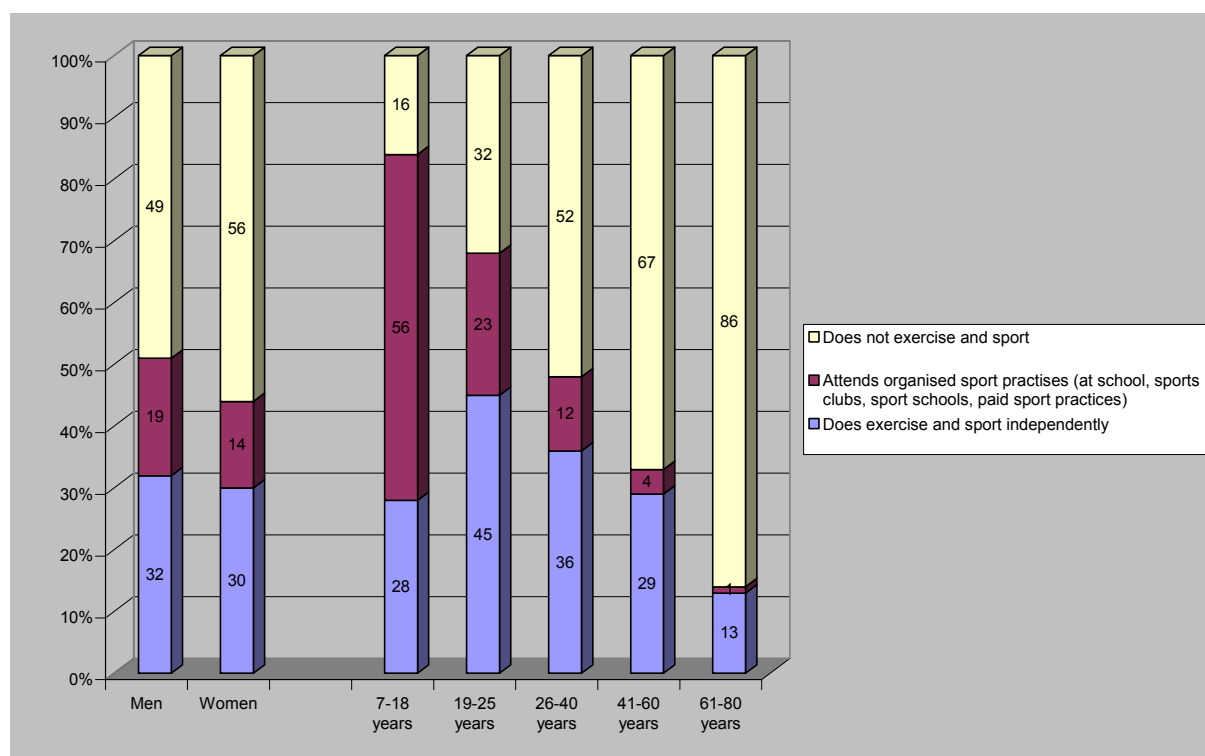
Figure 3.14: Number of (sport)schools and (sport)clubs and number of people that participate in sport in these contexts. Source: www.kksd.lt.



Social differentiation

In Lithuania, a higher percentage of men also participate in sport and exercise than women. Men also do so more frequently within an organised context. There is also a sharp decline in participation with a rise in age. Only 14% of those over sixty still do any sport or exercise. In the 7-18 age category sport generally takes place within an organised context, but in adulthood sport participation occurs (primarily among young adults and almost exclusively for older people) mainly in a non-organised setting (see figure 3.15; see also table 3.83 in the section on Latvia).

Figure 3.15: Nature of sport participation, according to gender and age, in % of the Lithuanian population, 7-80 years. Source: LSIC 2002.



Organisational context

One third of the Lithuanian population between the ages of 7 and 80 years old take part in sport independently of any organisational context. Just under 17% practice sport within an organisational framework. This primarily concerns schools (the survey was partly directed at young people of a school going age). Aside from sport in schools, the commercial providers of sport also seem to be popular in Lithuania (see table 3.82).

Table 3.82: Nature of sport participation, in % of the Lithuanian sports participants, 7-80 years.

2001	%
Training sessions in sports education institutions (free)	32
Paid sport practices	29
Supplementary education sport practices at education institution	17
Training sessions at the sports club	15
Practices at the health school/club	8

Source: LSIC 2002.

The most popular sports

The data on sport participation in Lithuania are unfortunately not broken down according to each branch of sport.

3.24 Latvia

Introduction

In contrast to Lithuania, there is virtually no data on sport participation in Latvia. As far as we are aware, the Eurobarometers 213 and 2003.1 are the only publicly available sources of information. However, the joint research study on nutrition and lifestyle in the Baltic states, which was conducted by the European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition and the World Health Organisation, does provide some detail on the extent of physical activity in Latvia.

Levels of sport participation

According to the Eurobarometer 213, 48% of the Latvian population in 2004 never participated in any sport or exercise. This corresponds with participation levels in neighbouring Lithuania and is also eight percentage points above the EU average.

Trends in sport participation

There are no available data from which trends in sport participation may be identified.

Social differentiation

It is possible to construct a limited picture of social differentiation in Latvian sport participation with the help of a few unrelated sources of data.

Firstly, the Eurobarometer 2003.1 suggests that 51% of Latvian young people between the ages of 16 and 24 regularly participated in sport in 2003. This is five percentage points above the average for the ten new and three candidate EU member states (Bulgaria, Turkey and Romania).

Secondly, the health research conducted by the WHO and the European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition shows that there was a lower percentage of women who were regularly physically active during the week than men and that this also significantly decreases with increasing age. The same applies to the frequency of physical activity. Moreover, this research suggests that both the male and female population in Latvia are less physically active than their counterparts in the other Baltic states. This also applies to all age categories (see table 3.83).

The same research demonstrated that fewer Latvians participated in hard training and sport competitions than in neighbouring Lithuania and Estonia. This applies to men as well as women, in all age categories.

Table 3.83: Weekly participation in regular physical activity (such as jogging, cycling) long enough to break out a sweat, according to frequency, age and gender, in % of population 18 years and over.

1997									
	Estonia			Latvia			Lithuania		
	never	1-2 days a week	3 days or more a week	never	1-2 days a week	3 days or more a week	never	1-2 days a week	3 days or more a week
	Men			Men			Men		
18-34 years	64	16	21	67	18	15	63	13	24
35-49 years	74	17	9	82	11	7	79	7	14
50+ years	78	13	9	90	5	5	85	6	10
Total	70	16	14	80	11	9	75	9	17
	Women			Women			Women		
18-34 years	70	15	15	70	18	12	68	14	18
35-49 years	81	12	7	88	6	6	79	6	15
50+ years	92	5	4	94	2	4	84	4	7
Total	79	12	9	85	8	7	77	8	15

Source: WHO/European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition 1999.

Organisational context

The only available information regarding sport participation in Latvia according to organisational context suggests that 25% of 16-24 year olds are involved in club-related sport; this is more or less comparable to Lithuania, Hungary and Slovenia.

The most popular sports

No information was obtained on the differential popularity of sports in Latvia.

3.25 Estonia

With special thanks to Peeter Lusmägi for supplying us with information regarding sport participation.

Introduction

The supply of information on sport participation is much better for Estonia than Latvia, though it is still fairly limited. In 2003, the Estonian Olympic Committee conducted a survey among the Estonian population, but we have only been able to extract a few main points from their report. Further to this, the Estonian Olympic Committee also keep records of the membership figures for sports organisations. Additional information on sporting behaviour in Estonia can be found in the research study, which was referred to in the section on Latvia, and the homogenised research studies conducted on a European scale that were discussed in chapter two.

Levels of sport participation

According the recent Eurobarometers, the levels of sport participation in Estonia are (almost) exactly at a European average: 60% of the adult population take part in sport every now and then, thus 40% do not at all. 45% of young people between 16-24 years old also regularly participate in sport.²¹⁰

The research study carried out by the Estonian Ministry of Culture offers supplementary information about the sporting behaviour of the Estonian population. This research reveals that 55% of Estonians take part in sporting activities. 16% thereof do so a number of times a month and 25% at least twice a week. More specific information with regard to this study was not obtained.

Table 3.84: Hard training and competitive sport more than once a week in the Baltic states, according to age and gender, in % of the population of 18 years and above.

	1997		
	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
	Men		
All	5.1	3.0	2.8
18-34	7.6	6.3	6.6
35-49	3.4	2.4	1.1
50+	2.7	0.6	0.4

²¹⁰ European Commission, Eurobarometer 213 2004, 2003.1. 2003.

1997			
	Estonia	Latvia	Lithuania
Women			
All	2.4	0.8	0.3
18-34	4.1	2.6	0.6
35-49	1.9	0.3	0.3
50+	0.4	0.0	0.0

Source: WHO/European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition 1999.

The European Centre on Health of Societies in Transition and the World Health Organisation joint research study of the Baltic states demonstrated that the percentage of the Estonian population that is physically active does not differ significantly from the Latvian and Lithuanian populations, but that the Estonians did participate in sport more intensively than their Baltic neighbours (see table 3.84).

Trends in sport participation

The limited data available show a sharp increase in both the number of sport clubs and the number of persons practising in sport clubs in the last five years. At the same time, the number of sport schools and persons participating in sport schools decreased.²¹¹

Social differentiation

Estonia does not deviate from the usual patterns that have been found in most European countries. Across the board, more men take part in physical activities, sport and exercise than women, and also more young people than older people do so.

Organisational context

According to data provided by the Estonian Olympic Committee, there were approximately 2,000 sports clubs in Estonia in 2004, which had a total membership body of 140,000 people (around 10% of the population). The Eurobarometer 2003.1 suggests that around 28% of young people aged 16 to 24 years old were members of a sports association in 2003.

The most popular sports

No information on the differential popularity of sports in Estonia could be obtained.

²¹¹ Statistical Office of Estonia.

4. Key drivers of sport participation

The national data on sport participation reveal that there are great differences in both sport preferences and developments in sport in the European Union. This differentiation is characteristic of the cultural diversity that is found within Europe. Yet, at the same time, a variety of different patterns may still be identified. It appears that sport participation is asymmetrically distributed; not only between the member states according to levels of affluence, but also within the member states, particularly with respect to gender, age, social class and ethnicity. As a rule, a number of social groups appear to be less involved in sport and exercise, irrespective of the member state. Likewise, the trends in sport participation are both varied and structured. One cannot speak of a complete increase or an integral decline in sport participation, although there do appear to be specific developments in certain areas of sport at a European or regional level.

An overview of the differences and trends in the European member states will be given in the following chapter. The present chapter will instead examine the key drivers behind these differences and trends: what determines participation in sport and exercise, how can structural differences between social groups and developments therein be explained and in which ways can sport participation be influenced? The answer to these questions will not be sought in an analysis of the data that has been given for each individual country. Instead, this chapter will offer an overview of the insights into participation in sport and exercise that have been offered by existing social-psychological and sociological literature.

Indeed, there has been a considerable amount of research conducted into the issue of why people are physically active and take part in sport and how they may be motivated to do so. Hundreds of studies have already provided many insights into the determinants for this behaviour, revealing a broad range of significant correlations. This has led to the conclusion that participation in sport and exercise is determined by a myriad of interacting personal, interpersonal and environmental factors. The most frequently encountered determining factors are age, gender, education, socio-economic status, perceived advantages and barriers, perceived health/fitness, intention, self-efficacy, self-motivation, social support and the subjective experience of the living environment and everyday surrounds. Contrary to expectations, a correlation between sport and physical activity and a number of other variables cannot or hardly ever be found. This applies to knowledge, expenditure, body image and self-esteem in particular.²¹²

Qualitative research into sport participation demonstrates that the determinants and correlations that have been identified should not be interpreted as statistically proved 'cause and effect' relationships that can always be applied under all circumstances. Complex decision-making processes, which are dependent on the time and context, lie behind the choice of whether to take part in sport or physical exercise or not. The meaning that people attach to sport

²¹² Armstrong & Welsman 1997; Bouchard & Shephard 1994; Sallis & Owen 1999; Sallis, Prochaska & Taylor 2000; De Bourdeaudhuij & Rzewnicki 2001. Dishman & Buckworth 1997. In their overview of 108 studies, Sallis et al. reported on the inconsistent results of research into the relationship between physical build and physical activity among children and adolescents.

and physical activity emerges as a result of their interaction with the social environment; it varies for each stage of life and is characteristic of a specific phase in history.

4.1 Personal factors

The most important psychological factors, which have an impact on sport and physical activity, are the perception of one's own competency, perceived pleasure and perceived barriers. People tend to focus on physical and sporting activities for which they feel they have some kind of aptitude, while preferring to avoid the activities that they have previously had less success in. This is why past positive experiences have a favourable effect on later sporting and exercise behaviour. Moreover, research has shown that this self-efficacy (the 'I can do it' feeling) may be positively influenced through interventions. However, this effect quickly evaporates after a period of physical inactivity.²¹³

Likewise, the fact that individual motives play an important role in participation and non-participation in sport and exercise is also beyond dispute. Nevertheless, motivation is not easy to interpret as a determinant for sport and physical activity behaviour. The motives that lie behind sport participation or the choice to do other things are often manifold, conflicting and inconsistent. People's behaviour is often based on an appraisal of many, partly conflicting motives. The desires to sit around watching television, to go out with friends and to play sport together all compete with one another for precedence. What is more, the reason why one chooses to take part in sport on one day does not necessarily have to serve as a guiding principle for one's behaviour on another. Additionally, these motives may be significantly influenced, by former experiences, the social environment and physical and societal circumstances. This is why there are also considerable discrepancies when people in the various different EU member states are asked about their motives and reasons for (not) being physically active.²¹⁴

Nonetheless, it is important to understand the most significant motives people give as regards to their participation in sport. These differ with respect to both age and gender. The most important motive for children and young people is to have fun, to learn skills and techniques, to make new friends, to belong to a group, to take on new challenges and to experience success. This also holds for young adults, but getting and remaining fit and healthy also plays an important role, just as the development or maintenance of the body does too. As people get older the motivational emphasis shifts to health and relaxation, although enjoyment also continues to be of importance to older people. Women are guided by other motives than men, with a greater emphasis being placed on body shape and weight control.²¹⁵

The motivation to participate in sport or be physically active can be both intrinsically and extrinsically determined. The impetus may be viewed as extrinsic when participation is stimulated by external rewards (money, medals, T-shirts, stickers, etc.). In contrast, intrinsic

²¹³ Biddle & Mutrie 2001; Sallis 1994; Yang et al. 1999; Health Education Authority 1997.

²¹⁴ Zunft et al. 1999; Weinberg & Gould 1995.

²¹⁵ Biddle & Mutrie 2001; Health Education Authority 1997; Zunft et al. 1999; Weinberg & Gould 1995; Laverie 1998; Deforche & De Bourdeaudhuij 2000.

motivation primarily relates to the pleasure and satisfaction that participant derives from the activity itself: the enjoyment of the game, the experience of speed, learning new techniques and the excitement of a difficult move.²¹⁶ Csikszentmihalyi has introduced the term the ‘flow experience’ to encapsulate these experiences. The flow experience reaches its zenith when the activity opportunities (challenges) and capabilities (skills) are in complete balance.²¹⁷

Research into the effects of both forms of motivation show that intrinsic motivation has a greater impact in the long term than extrinsic motivation. Moreover, it appears that extrinsic motivation can also have a negative effect on intrinsic motivation.²¹⁸ Although they do not apply to all situations, a number of do’s and don’ts have been formulated for the promotion of sport and exercise. Emphasise individual mastery. Promote perceptions of choice. Promote the intrinsic fun and excitement of exercise and sport. Do not over-emphasise peer comparisons of performance. Exercise restraint with respect to material rewards.²¹⁹

When people are asked why they do not take part in sport or exercise, or alternatively have stopped participating in it, many intuitive, subjective and superficial motives and reasons come to the fore, which also mean little without further analysis. In particular, a lack of time, a lack of energy and a lack of motivation or interest are often given as reasons for not participating in sport. Other reasons listed include a lack of money, a lack of facilities, having no partner, a lack of support, having no transport, a lack of skills, a lack of success, a lack of health and fear of injury.²²⁰ These reasons also vary significantly according to EU member state.²²¹

There also seems to be an underlying cause behind many of these motives.²²² Although financial expense is frequently used as an argument for not taking part in sport, various research studies have indicated that costs are not a decisive factor for sport participation.²²³ It also appears that a lack of time is more a matter of perception than reality. Physically active people more frequently cite lack of time as a reason for non-participation than those who lead a sedentary lifestyle.²²⁴ Moreover, it often appears that a diminishing investment of time in sport and exercise is accompanied by an increase in time spent watching television and doing other leisure activities. Indeed, non-participation often seems to do more with having another priority than having an actual lack of time.²²⁵

²¹⁶ Weinberg & Gould 1995.

²¹⁷ Csikszentmihalyi 1975.

²¹⁸ Borms, Rzewnicki & De Bourdeaudhuij 2001; Weinberg & Gould 1995; Pargmann 1998.

²¹⁹ Biddle & Mutrie 2001; Ryckman & Hamel 1993.

²²⁰ Weinberg & Gould 1995; Biddle & Mutrie 2001.

²²¹ See, for example, European Commission 1999b.

²²² Lindner 1991.

²²³ Taks 1994.

²²⁴ Morgan 1997.

²²⁵ Weinberg & Gould 1995; Moran 2004. See chapter 2 of this report also.

The motives that lie behind sport participation and non-participation should also be understood in the context of the stage of life and social context of those involved. For instance, Coakley and White's research illustrated that for adolescents withdrawing from sport can give expression to the new opportunities and challenges, which they encounter in their lives. In the process of becoming adults and developing their identity, the significance and place of sport diminishes in comparison to a variety of other aspects of their lives. In this way, their attrition from sport should not necessarily be regarded as negative or problematic.²²⁶

Leaving (a) sport does not automatically mean that the link with sport is 'seriously damaged' or that the person who is dropping out is 'lost' to sport forever.²²⁷ In principle, every participant in sport will eventually drop out. However, many dropouts find their way back to sport. In this regard, alongside the sport participant who permanently drops out, Lindner et al. also makes a distinction between the Sampler Dropout, who tries out various different sports, and the Transfer Dropout, who leaves one sport for another. The motives and factors that lie behind the choice of dropping out are quite different for each of these types.²²⁸

4.2 Interpersonal factors

It is important to gain insight into individual motives and self-perception. However, this is not enough to be able to understand exercise or sport behaviour. Exercise and sport take place within a socio-cultural context, which means that social and cultural factors can also influence participation.

People are often not or hardly even aware that their behaviour is subject to cultural influence. The influence exerted by culture revolves around the fact that many of our insights and attitudes are learned, they are a form of 'taken for granted' knowledge that we rarely consider or question. There are all kinds of behavioural codes in societies, and also in specific societal groups, which determine what kind of sporting behaviour is acceptable. The fact that women, older people and various ethnic minorities lag behind in sport participation has nothing to do with biology, nor is it the result of formal rules and restrictions. Instead, it is the result of culturally rooted attitudes (stereotypes) about what is or is not appropriate physical and sport behaviour.²²⁹

The social influence of sport participation is related to this. Through participating in society (particularly through interaction with parents, friends, acquaintances, teachers and trainers/coaches and the media), people see examples of sport and exercise and develop attitudes towards the attractiveness, advantages and pleasure value of them. It should therefore not be surprising that the knowledge and attitudes towards sports are highly socially structured. Indeed, the level of educational achievement seems to be the most important determinant of

²²⁶ Coakley & White 1992.

²²⁷ Coakley 1993.

²²⁸ Lindner et al. 1991.

²²⁹ Brustad & Babkes 2003; Breuer 2004.

sport behaviour, far more so than age or gender. The variables of profession and income are less reliable as indicators given that they are strongly correlated to education.²³⁰

The sporting behaviour of parents also appears to be an important condition for a child to maintain a sporting lifestyle.²³¹ This influence goes much further than fulfilling the task of being a role model (giving a good example). By taking a positive attitude toward sport, playing sport together, organising sporting activities and driving children to sports facilities or supervising them, parents can also stimulate the sport behaviour of their children in a very effective way.²³²

Depending on the place and status of sport within the curriculum in each country, it also seems that experiences with physical education can have an influence on later sporting behaviour.²³³ When children reach adolescence, the influence of parents and teachers diminishes, while peer-group pressure increases and young people allow themselves to be more greatly lead by the norms and behaviours that are standard within their circle of friends. This phase is very important for the sporting career. It appears that terminating or continuing sport participation during adolescence has a significant impact on sport participation at a later age.²³⁴

This strong impact also applies to other key life events. Although there is comparatively little known about this due to a lack of longitudinal research, there are various indications that people experience various breaking points during their sporting careers, which are related to key life events and experiences. Examples of these are changes in the educational and working career, moving home and starting or expanding a family. Classic moments for dropping out of sport are the transition from education to work and starting a family.²³⁵

4.3 Environmental factors

Along with socio-cultural factors, increasingly more attention has been paid to the influence of the physical environment in recent years. Thus far only limited research into this has actually been conducted, but it has demonstrated that there is a link between the degree of physical activity and the level of available facilities. This applies as much to how the presence of facilities is experienced subjectively as the objective determination of them. Traffic volume, the availability of footpaths, cycle paths and sport and leisure facilities and access to nearby sports clubs appear to be positively related to the extent of physical activity and sport.²³⁶

²³⁰ Scheerder & Pauwels 2002.

²³¹ Scheerder 2004.

²³² Health Education Authority 1997.

²³³ Health Education Authority 1997.

²³⁴ Duquet, De Knop & Bollaert 1993; Scheerder 2003.

²³⁵ Breuer 2004; Brustad & Babkes 2003.

²³⁶ De Bourdeaudhuij & Rzewnicki 2001; Armstrong & Welsman 1997; Health Education Authority 1997; Rütten et al. 2001; Rütten & Ziemainz 2001; Wendel-Vos 2004.

It is important that a greater understanding of the influence of environmental factors be achieved, certainly in the light of Sallis and Owen's view that environmental interventions have a greater impact on physical activity in the longer term and are possibly even cheaper than educational and information programmes.²³⁷ In this regard, it is striking that the citizens of the southern EU member states, who have markedly lower levels of sport participation, have a more negative view of the possibilities to engage in physical activity in the surrounding environment and the efforts being made by local authorities to improve this.²³⁸ In the new EU member states, there also seems to be a significant shortage of adequate, well-maintained sports facilities that are focused on recreational sport.²³⁹

4.4 Societal factors

The possibilities and impediments for sport participation are not usually seen as part of broader societal developments. Nevertheless, the opportunities to be able to take part in sport are partially determined by the broader historical context in which one is situated. The sporting behaviour of Europeans brings individual biographies, the structure of society and culture together with national and European history.²⁴⁰

A century ago, mass participation in sport was still a phenomenon that was unheard of. It was only at the end of the nineteenth century that sport began to spread across the world, with Great Britain and the United States being most important centres for the dissemination. From the very outset, sport was seen as something new, innovative and distinctive. Although the dynamic, competitive and democratic character of sport was initially at odds with the societal norms for decent behaviour, it immediately became a culturally significant phenomenon that expressed modernity and was desirable and worth striving for. While it was initially practiced by a limited group, mainly young men from higher class social milieus, increasingly more groups also became involved in sport over the course of time.

During the second half of the twentieth century, sport developed into a mass phenomenon in most European countries as levels of education and affluence generally grew. The scepticism and resistance that sport for, for example, the working class, women and the elderly, had initially encountered gave way to a pervasive belief that sport should be promoted for all given its positive effects. Playing fields, sports halls and other sports facilities were constructed on a large scale. Sports organisations and governments also stimulated the practice of sport in these European countries. To this end, major campaigns were developed using the motto 'sport for all' to spread their message. The north-western European countries took the lead with respect to this sport stimulation policy, while the southern states lagged behind. Moreover, sport policy was also developed in the East behind the former Iron Curtain, though

²³⁷ Borms, Rzewnicki & De Bourdeaudhuij 2001; Sallis & Owen 1999.

²³⁸ European Commission, Eurobarometer 58.2, 183-6, 2003.

²³⁹ Information gained from the contact people involved in this research in the new member states; see also Wagner 1997; Rütten & Ziemainz 2001; Rütten et al. 2001.

²⁴⁰ Mills 1959.

this was directed more to the early selection of talented sportspeople than the advancement of sport and physical activity throughout all layers of society.

During the 1960s and 1970s, the policy to stimulate sport in the north-western countries was part of a far broader welfare policy, which aimed to increase the opportunities for everyone to become involved in sport and recreation. This 'sport for all' policy was successful because it corresponded with wider economic and socio-cultural developments in society: the increase in affluence and leisure time, the expansion of higher education, the levelling out of income differences, individualisation and the informalisation of interpersonal relations and the emancipation of the working class, women, youth and the elderly. European society became less hierarchical, there was an expansion of alternative behaviours, people became more independent and began to live in smaller family units.

One of the consequences of these societal developments was that behaviour became more informal. Whereas during the first half of the twentieth century it was still unthinkable for someone to publicly go jogging or cycling in sports clothing, by the second half of the twentieth century it has become a completely normal phenomenon. While it was once not deemed appropriate for elderly women to take part in sport and exercise, throughout the course of the twentieth century the behavioural norms have been liberalised and sporting behaviour has become a positively valued phenomenon for all. The 'sport for all' policy reinforced this development and fostered the establishment of the necessary amenities for this.

In countries where the aforementioned societal developments occurred at an earlier stage, the practice of sport and exercise became generally accepted in wider circles at a far greater rate. However, this trend was far less applicable to newer social groups, which had experienced and internalised these social and cultural developments to a far lesser extent, if at all. Although immigrants tend to do more exercise and sport than in their country of origin, they continue to lag behind the native inhabitants in all EU states. This applies to women, the elderly and first generation male immigrants in particular. This deficit is further amplified by the societal position and the physical environment in which people of immigrant origin generally find themselves.

During the 1980s and 1990s, the welfare theme has largely been supplanted by one of health in most European countries. Sport and exercise has been increasingly dominated by idealistic notions of fitness, slenderness and youthfulness.²⁴¹ As a consequence, there has been a huge growth in fitness-based sports, which take place in commercial settings. The quest for good health, stamina and a slim, muscular body has gone on to play a greater role in individual self-worth and the competition for social status. This has led to other sporting values, such as sociability and the competitive dimension of sports club life, being forced into the background.

In various EU member states, these developments have been reinforced by governmental policy. This policy has particularly focused on the prevention of typically Western diseases (heart and pulmonary diseases, obesity), which have become an increasingly significant social problem during the past few decades. This health problem is the consequence of an increasingly sedentary lifestyle, which in turn cannot be viewed separately from the fact that physical labour has generally been superseded by inactive office work, the use of motorised

²⁴¹ Breuer 2004.

transport has grown enormously and new technological developments have appeared that make interpersonal communication far easier and quicker.

The increasing importance of health has changed the character of sport policy in three different respects. Firstly, it is less directed at sport and exercise than it was previously and now focuses more on physical activity. The 'sport for all' campaigns of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were supplanted by the 'Europe on the move' campaign during the 1990s, which had HEPA (Health Enhancing Physical Activity) as its central goal.

Secondly, the focus of attention has shifted from young people to adults and the elderly. This shifting focus is partly related to the aging society. In the near future, the percentage of those over 50 in relation to the total population will increase throughout the entire European Union; in some member states this will be by more than 10 percent. Older people structurally take part in physical activity, sport and exercise far less than the young. This focus on the elderly has given sport policy a new significance, but it has consequently also lost a crucial dimension. Health is generally the most important motive for older people to take part in sport, which means that fun and sociability take more of a back seat.²⁴² The resulting policy tends to place a greater emphasis on physical activities, which avoid risk and are regularly done in a moderately intensive fashion, such as climbing stairs, cycling and walking, and can be incorporated into people's everyday way of life.

This approach does not coincide with the social, innovative and unruly character that has made sport so great and part of the experiential culture that exemplifies modern society. Young people look to sport to commit themselves, to distinguish themselves from others and thus also to develop their own identities. This process of commitment and distinction imbues sport with an innovative power: time and again young people create new sports within their own subcultures, such as the adventure and Xtreme sports, which deviate from the dominant sport culture. These are to a large extent focused on experiencing sensation, beyond the well-trodden tracks of the dominant culture.

Thirdly, this approach focuses less on the infrastructure (sports organisations and sports facilities) and more on changing individual mentalities. Intervention programmes, which are designed to further physical activity, tend to be based on individualistically orientated theoretical models. These models, such as the Health Belief Model, the Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Stages-of-Change model, are founded on the hypothesis that intention is the direct determinant of behaviour. This intention is then determined by the attitudes and perceptions of the individual. The interventions thus focus on changing these attitudes and perceptions.

The first models of this nature were developed during the 1950s in order to understand why so few people participated in screenings for asymptomatic diseases such as tuberculosis.²⁴³ Later, they were tailored to physical activity, but for a number of reasons the usefulness of these models for stimulating exercise and sport proved limited. The aforementioned models primarily laid the responsibility for a lack of physical activity and the solution for this problem at the individual's door, while it is in fact a broader societal problem, which also requires action to be

²⁴² Breuer 2004.

²⁴³ Becker 1974.

taken at the level of the family, educational institutions, business community, health care institutions and the government. Furthermore, the premise of these theoretical models is also problematic, namely that individuals will alter their behaviour by consciously activating 'cognitive' processes within individuals. Particularly within the domain of leisure, the influencing of behaviour has proved to be an exceptionally complex process within which the shift from intention to behaviour is influenced by many interrelated factors and options.²⁴⁴ In this regard, an understanding of the potential effects of sport and physical activity hardly plays a role, certainly not as far as children and adolescents are concerned. Interventions that concentrate on the enhancement of knowledge about the value of sport and physical activity have also proved to be rather ineffective. This is also partly the reason why the mass media campaigns to promote sport and physical activity have had little effect, both in the short and long term.²⁴⁵ The problem also does not lie in the understanding of the positive impact of exercise and sport. This appears to already be sufficiently present in the European member states.²⁴⁶

In response to these shortcomings, new models have been developed in recent years, which do not only strive for changes by and through the individual, but also in the physical, social and societal environment.²⁴⁷ These models are also more compatible with modern developmental psychological and sociological theories concerning the development of human behaviour, which understand it as an ecological, transactional or dialectic process in which the individual, the social and the physical environment mutually influence one another.

Such models allow interventional strategies to be given a new dimension. In order to do justice to the heterogeneity and complexity of the factors that influence physical activity, exercise and sport, they necessarily employ an integral approach, which brings together organisations that work at different levels.²⁴⁸ Given the social differentiation by which sport is characterised and the factors upon which this is based, these strategies need to be manifold in nature and find expression at a local level. They have to account for the fact that the provision of sport in the north-western part of Europe is at a quite different level to southern or eastern Europe. That young people have different sport preferences to older ones. That women tend to play sport in a different organisational context to men. That women of immigrant origin are influenced by other cultural stereotypes than native-born women. That the urban situation is fundamentally different from that in rural areas. Sport policy interventions have to give account of these differences and thus need to adopt a differentiated approach. And that is why it is essential to possess reliable information on the trends and the differences in sport participation; not only at a European, but also a national level.

²⁴⁴ McElroy 2002.

²⁴⁵ Health Education Authority 1997; De Bourdeaudhuij & Rzewnicki 2001; Borms, Rzewnicki & De Bourdeaudhuij 2001.

²⁴⁶ European Commission, Eurobarometer 62.0 (213) 2004.

²⁴⁷ De Bourdeaudhuij & Rzewnicki 2001.

²⁴⁸ Weiss 2004; Brettschneider & Naul 2004; McElroy 2002.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Level and trends in sport participation

In 2004, 60% of all European Union citizens (271 million people) claimed to take part in sport or exercise every now and then. Moreover, 70 million of these individuals (15% of the EU population) were also members of sports associations. These figures clearly show that participation in sport is very extensive within the member states of the European Union. Yet in a way they perhaps paint a far too rosy a picture.

Firstly, the margins have been set very low. In the present research, the terms sport and exercise have been defined very broadly along the lines of the usual norms for international sport participation research. The concepts of sport and exercise include, for example, recreational walking, swimming and cycling. Moreover, the duration, intensity and frequency of the practiced activity are not stipulated. This leaves the percentage of sportspeople identified wide open to interpretation: four out of ten Europeans are thus sportingly inactive and indicate that they do not do any kind of exercise or sport whatsoever during an entire year. Once the frequency norm is raised to, for instance, sport participation at least three times a week, then it appears that only 17% of all European citizens actually fit the bill. Furthermore, if other criteria are set with regard to the duration and intensity of the sporting activity, this percentage will drop even further. The extent to which it will drop is unclear, since questions about duration and intensity are seldom posed in sport participation research. Research into physical activity conducted in 1997 found that 5% of the inhabitants of (the fifteen original) EU member states were physically active for more than six hours beyond having to stand or walk at work.²⁴⁹

Secondly, the number of sports association members is not equivalent to the number of active participants in sport. On the one hand, the comparatively high sports club membership figures point to a flourishing club social life. Indeed, chapter three observed that, in various countries (Sweden, the Netherlands, Germany and the Flemish part of Belgium), the voluntary participation of citizens in the social sector is nowhere so extensive as in sport. On the other, from the perspective of sport participation, it must be added that the sports association membership figures in various EU member states include many double counts and non-active members; in Finland, this is estimated to be up to nearly one third and in Germany it is thought to possibly account of half of all the registered members.

Thirdly, the present study confirms that, in spite of the popularisation and democratisation of sport, the differences in sport participation are so great that it is indeed almost pointless to speak of average sport participation in the European Union. The disparities that occur both within and between the EU member states also concern quite different forms and branches of sport. This diversity, with its multitude of styles, contexts and branches of sport, is one of the most charming aspects of the sport world, but it should not disguise the fact that there are structural inequalities in the opportunities for individuals to participate in it.

²⁴⁹ European Commission 1999b.

Fourthly, the data on trends for the various countries indicate a possible change in direction for the growth that sport participation has experienced during the second half of the twentieth century. Throughout pretty much the whole of Europe, there was a significant rise in the number of people taking part in sport between the 1960s and 1990s. However, during the past ten years this development appears to have stagnated in a number of countries (Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, Spain and Slovenia), or has begun to decline (UK and, possibly, France; among young adults in Sweden and, as regards time devoted to sport, the Netherlands and Denmark; in a competitive and championship context in Sweden, the Netherlands and Italy).

It is, however, necessary to be rather non-committal about trends in sport participation. Even the comparability of longitudinal national sport participation surveys can often be brought into question. Moreover, the most recent data is often several years old, which means that the latest developments are not included in the trends that have been identified. In addition to this, a dearth of longitudinal data means that no trends at all can be observed for at least half of the 25 EU member states. There is not so much a need for statistical data on sport participation, but a necessity to gather comparable data, across time and between countries.

5.2 Patterns and differences in sport participation

There are clearly identifiable geographical and social patterns with respect to sport participation. The highest proportion of the population takes part in sport and exercise in the Scandinavian member states, followed by the western and central European countries. There is a far lower level of sport participation in the southern European member states. Due to a lack of comparable data, the extent of sport in a number of new member states cannot (yet) be properly determined. The geographical structure of sport participation is related to socio-economic differences. As the GDP per capita for the EU member states increases, so does the percentage of those who take part in sport.

The differences between the countries with a high or low level of sport participation are not only mainly due to the higher degree of sport participation of older people and women in the western and northern parts of Europe, but also to the massive participation in recreational walking, cycling and swimming and similar exercises and sporting activities in these countries. The geographical structure that has been identified does not, however, apply to participation in football, basketball, volleyball, handball and other sports.

In many respects, Finland and Sweden come to the fore as the countries where the highest percentage of the population exercises or takes part in sport. They also do so the most intensively as regards frequency and duration. This goes hand in hand with a relatively low level of physical activity beyond the leisure sphere. Scandinavians seem to be involved in sporting activities to a large extent, while (or possibly because) they are comparatively inactive at work, in and around the house or when moving from place to place. The opposite applies to the Portuguese and Greeks who do not belong to the group of Europeans that are the least physically active in this regard, although they do the least amount of exercise, sport and physical activity.

There are also patterns in sport participation that can clearly be discerned within individual countries. In general, the rule that men play more sport than women and more young people than old people applies. The chances of sport participation are also greater for those with

a higher level of educational achievement, income and professional status. Further to this, there are various other social differences that can be found with respect to levels of sport participation, such as the disparities between people from richer (higher) and poorer regions (lower) and between those of native (higher) and immigrant origin (lower).

As the level of affluence increases, these differences tend to diminish. In a number of northern and western European countries, the levels of sport participation for men and women have levelled out; in certain age categories women now do even more exercise and sport than their male counterparts. In these countries, the differences between young and old have also become less pronounced than elsewhere. There the percentage of older people taking part in sport and exercise has also risen significantly, while the proportion of younger people who do so has stagnated or even declined. This also applies when demographic developments are taken into account: not only has the number of elderly people increased, but the percentage of them who take part in sport and exercise has also grown. Although one may observe that the levels of participation are converging, this does not necessarily mean that there are no differences between the sporting behaviour of men and women and the young and old (see below).

The differences in levels of participation with respect to social class appear to be more impervious to change than variables such as gender or age. This fact is often overlooked in sport policy and sport research. In an age of mass consumption and media communication it often appears that the traditional parameters may indeed have a less structural effect than in the past.²⁵⁰ Certainly sport participation seems to have acquired a greater degree of differentiation. It also appears that the respondents' media preferences and television viewing habits are more important to explaining sports participation in general and participation styles in particular. However, this is only true along the lines of traditional structural mechanisms, like age, gender and education. Multivariate analyses demonstrate that education and age are the most important determinants for sport participation.²⁵¹

The differences are more far-reaching than the overall participation in sport. There are, for instance, indications that, proportionally speaking, sport and exercise in Finland, Sweden and most of the new member states takes place more frequently in a non-organised context; in western European countries it occurs more in a club-related context and in the southern European countries sport is more often practiced in a commercial context. At the same time, it may be observed that club-related sport in Western Europe, with the exception of the UK and Belgium, is under pressure. For some time, participation in competitive sport, which is primarily the mainstay of these sports associations, has declined in a number of West European countries; particularly among young adults. This is also evident in Italy and Slovenia, though not in Spain. In contrast, in various new member states, including Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, there seems to be fertile ground for association sport to be able to thrive. Stimulated by new legislation with regard to the autonomy of associations, these countries have borne witness to the increasing establishment of new sports associations throughout the past ten years.

During the 1990s, the fitness branch has also experienced a massive growth, though it is unclear whether this will indeed continue. In contrast to the growing market for fitness in the

²⁵⁰ Theberge 1997.

²⁵¹ Scheerder 2003; Wagner 1997.

UK and the Netherlands, there seems to have been stagnation in this sector in both Finland and Germany. Ascertaining the extent of sport participation as regards this trend is hampered by the fact that there are few publicly available data with respect to this branch. However, it is clear that organisational context of sport participation is gender-dependent and changes throughout the course of life. Proportionally young people participate in team-sports and competitive sports more frequently and are more attracted by sport in a group context, which means that they take part in sport more often within a club-related context. Stamina and physical condition is comparatively more important to young adults, which is why they are more frequently found within the fitness branch, while older people tend to participate in sport within a non-organised context and strive for relaxation and recreation.²⁵² In virtually all the countries where statistics on the organisational context of sport were available, it appeared that men were overrepresented in sports associations. Women tend to practice their sport in fitness centres more than men.

Differences between and within countries can also be found with regard to the popularity of the individual branches of sport. Compared with the steady development of sport participation in general, the popularity curves for sport seem to be far more capricious. The levels of participation in one branch of sport can drop drastically and the other may grow significantly, while the total level of sport participation remains more or less stable. On the basis of the sport profiles of the various EU member states, a number of conclusions can be drawn about the differential popularisation of sports.

Firstly, swimming, cycling, walking and the activities found in the cluster fitness/gymnastics/keep fit/aerobics are the most practiced sporting activities in almost all of the EU member states. Football may be added to this list for the southern European countries and the new member states.

Secondly, football enjoys the greatest popularity as a club-related sport in virtually every EU member state. In western European countries on the European mainland, football is generally followed by tennis, while gymnastics can also be found within the top three. In southern Europe after football other team-sports, particularly basketball, volleyball and handball, are the ones that are most frequently played within a club-related context.

Thirdly, a number of sports are experiencing growth throughout more or less the whole of Europe. This certainly applies to golf, but also to equestrian sports and the cluster of gymnastics/dance/fitness/aerobics, which are mainly participated in by women. Various forms of skating (inline, roller, speed and freestyle) and skiing/snowboarding (freestyle, off-piste, race) have also become increasingly popular among young people. A regional increase in the popularity of football (southern and eastern Europe), basketball (southern Europe) and floorball (northern and eastern Europe) can also be discerned.

Fourthly, quite the reverse can be said of several other sports for which the interest now seems to be waning throughout the whole of Europe. This applies to tennis and volleyball in particular. A regional decline in the popularity of jogging/athletics and badminton in Scandinavia and handball and basketball in Eastern Europe can also be traced.

The almost simultaneous rise of golf and fall of tennis is not entirely unrelated. They may be viewed as international developments upon which national policy in individual

²⁵² Breuer 2004; Zarotis 1999.

countries has hardly any influence. Tennis has suffered a loss in status due to its popularisation during the 1970s and 1980s, which led to a shift in interest among the increasingly growing group of affluent older people towards the more prestigious sport of golf.

Sports preferences of adults are related to their social backgrounds. Longitudinal research conducted in Belgium has demonstrated that there is a status pyramid for sport, which has changed little throughout the past decades (at least in Flanders). The growth in sports higher up in the status pyramid may be attributed to a loss in other status sports, or rather an expansion in the upper middle class and the upper layers of society due to an increase in affluence and higher education.

5.3 Key drivers and policy interventions

The differences, patterns and trends in sport participation that have been outlined, emphasise the fact that the world of sport is a changing and highly differentiated socio-cultural phenomenon. Insight into the four characteristic features – changing, differentiated, social and cultural – is vital to the development of sport policy and the implementation of policy interventions.

Since the end of the nineteenth century, sport has rapidly spread across the globe, as something new, dynamic and distinguishing to which young men, particularly from higher social milieus, initially applied themselves. Their sporting behaviour was partly at odds with the existing societal norms for decent behaviour. At the same time, from the very beginning, sport was also considered to be somewhat desirable, which led to increasingly more people adopting this culturally significant phenomenon. The innovative, dynamic and competitive efforts of these early sportspeople corresponded with the innovations and structural changes that were taking place in wider society as a whole. During the second half of the twentieth century, the increasing levels of educational attainment and affluence transformed sport into a mass phenomenon, which was not only practiced in the closed and hallowed circles of (private) sports clubs, but increasingly took place in an informal, spontaneous and individualistic fashion.²⁵³

The scepticism and resistance initially encountered with respect to sport participation among young people, workers, women and old people were transformed into a broad conviction that taking part in sport had a positive impact not only on the individuals who participated in sport, but also on society as a whole. To an increasing extent, both politicians and researchers pointed to the (potential) contribution, which sport could make to the self-image and self-esteem, social ties and identity formation, socialisation and integration and people's physical and psycho-social functioning. Increasing concerns about the upsurge in medical conditions relating to affluence (in the 1970s and 1980s, heart and pulmonary diseases in particular; in the 1990s and at present obesity) as a result of an increasingly sedentary lifestyle also contributed to this reevaluation. As a consequence, the current societal norm is to promote exercise, sport and physical activity due to its important health benefits. Policy interventions, which specifically

²⁵³ Van Bottenburg 2001.

focus on the advancement of sport and physical activity, have thus been developed in a variety of countries.

These policy interventions are, however, primarily grafted on to approaches used to tackle other problematic health behaviours, such as smoking, diet, dental care and seat belt use. There are two main problems related to this. The first problem is that by accentuating the norm 'sport is good, one must take part in sport', the perception of sport may be affected, particularly among young people. Whereas sport was once 'cool' and stood for one's own identity and allowed one to distinguish oneself from others, it has now been integrated and accepted into mainstream culture. The question remains whether the decline in sport participation among young people of 16 years and above, particularly in the traditional competitive and club-related contexts, is a first sign of this. Sport is not only changeable, the valuation and perception thereof is also bound to time. Promoting exercise and sport among children and the elderly because it is good for them and placing the emphasis on the avoidance of (health)risks in sport may indeed diminish the attractiveness of sport to young people.

Fortunately, sport is a highly differentiated phenomenon. When certain types of sport fall out of favour with young people, they do not necessarily exit the sport world altogether. Just as golf offers older people an alternative to tennis, snowboarding offered young people a way out of the mainstream ski culture. With new fashion norms, new expressions and new styles of skiing, they quite literally and figuratively left the well beaten tracks of skiing.²⁵⁴ Through the development of new forms of sport, sporting contexts and sport cultures, young people continue to distinguish themselves and the sport world retains its dynamic and attractive character. It is necessary to foster the innovative and unruly aspects of sport by giving or leaving young people ample space and possibilities to develop it.

Undoubtedly the participation in sport among older people will continue to further expand during the coming decades. Population prognoses predict a more than 10% increase in the proportion of those over fifty in relation to the rest of the population. Moreover, this will be the first generation of older people who were brought up en masse with sport and physical activity in their youth. Sport really took off in the 1960s and from the mid 1970s onwards it can be described as a mass phenomenon in various western and northern European countries. The teenagers of that time will become the fifty plus generation during the next decades. It can be expected that the changes in the behavioural norms of older people will persist and that sport and exercise will become an ordinary part of the grey culture. This development can already be clearly seen in Scandinavian countries. There is no specific policy that can shape this development, but it can possibly be facilitated and accelerated.

The second problem with regard to the usual policy interventions, which aim to promote sport and physical exercise, is that they attempt to bring about behavioural changes through cognitive manipulation, without actually interceding in the physical, social and cultural environments that are all partly responsible for this behavioural problem.

These policy interventions are typically based on theoretical models on the determinants of individual behaviour with respect to health, such as the Health Belief Model, the Model of Planned Behaviour and, most recently, the Stages of Change Model, which are discussed in

²⁵⁴ Heino 2000.

chapter four. Their point of departure is a cognitive approach through the use of mass media campaigns. They work on the assumption that people are rational to such a degree that they will modify their behaviour when more frequently confronted with the consequences thereof and are also aware of the importance of behavioural change.

A variety of evaluative studies have demonstrated that the effectiveness of such campaigns is actually rather disappointing in both the short and, particularly, the long term.²⁵⁵ It appears that purely raising people's awareness is insufficiently effective with respect to altering their behaviour.²⁵⁶ What is more, this is also not so strange given that, in comparison to other health behaviours such as excessive coffee drinking and the use of safety helmets, environmental, socio-economic and cultural variables are more powerful determinants with regard to exercise and sport (particular in unsupervised settings).²⁵⁷ Exercise and sport are thoroughly social phenomena, which take place and find their meaning for individuals within a broader societal context. Moreover, they must be understood and approached as such.

Much of the policy and research, which have been developed around the issue of a lack of exercise and health problems, do not succeed in raising this problem above the level of the individual. Indeed, the problem is laid at the door of the individual, while the intensification of the problem is tied to broader social and technological developments and changes in the physical environment on which the individual only has marginal influence. It is, however, understandable. Influencing individuals cognitively is far easier and thus more attractive than improving the dismal everyday surroundings of underprivileged areas, fashioning a living environment that encourages people to participate in physical activities and creating conditions that allow for the development of broader repertoire of sport and physical activities.

Successful interventions in the domain of sport and physical exercise recognise that these are changing, differentiated, social and cultural phenomena, which are directly related to broader societal, technological and physical developments. They do not just deal with changing individual attitudes, but also the social, cultural and physical environment in particular.

A restructuring of this is both complex and difficult. Moreover, it demands that action be taken on the level of the family, education (physical education), work, the design of the living environment and everyday surrounds, sports organisations, commercial sport providers, business world, media and government, with special attention being paid to gearing all these factors and actors to one another. The complex interplay that is necessary between these all levels is important at the micro-level (in the district and neighbourhood, at school, at work, in the local newspaper), as well as at the macro-level (government at a municipal, regional, national and European level, national and international sports organisations, media and corporations) and meso-level (intermediary organisations).²⁵⁸ This can only be achieved through the collective action of many collaborating organisations. In practice, this is difficult to

²⁵⁵ Borms, Rzewnicki & De Bourdeaudhuij 2001; Sallis & Owen 1999; Armstrong & Welsman 1997.

²⁵⁶ Morgan 1998; Biddle & Mutrie 2001; Schutz & Park 2004; Rittner & Breuer 2000.

²⁵⁷ Sallis & Owen 1999; McMurray et al. 1993; Dunn & Blair 1997; De Bourdeaudhuij & Rzewnicki 2001; Deforche & Bourdeaudhuij 2000.

²⁵⁸ King 1992; Biddle & Mutrie 2001; McMurray 1993.

accomplish, but given the common interests that would be served, it is not unthinkable that it could be achieved within sport. With respect to the European Union, in view of its constitutional task and popular support, a stimulating role could possibly be played through coordination, the setting of agendas, research and funding.

The divergent trends and differences in sport participation throughout Europe provide a second point of departure in as much as sport politics should result in a differentiated policy; that is differentiated according to European regions, gender, age groups, levels of educational attainment, social class and residential areas.

Each level has its own problems. In Northern and Western Europe, the drop out rate among adolescents and young adults is the biggest concern, which again must be differentiated according to educational level, in particular, and possibly also living environment too. The question here is whether sports associations can be sufficiently modernised in order for club life to be made more attractive to young people, or whether the future lies with new structures that stimulate young people to innovate and disseminate sporting behaviour. In Southern Europe, the greatest sticking point is the fact that women and older people lag behind as far as sport participation is concerned. The task here is to gain a greater understanding of the way in which sporting behaviour is influenced by socially imposed gender and class cultures and how these in turn may be influenced. In the new member states, there seems to be a need for the reinforcement of the sport structure: the advancement and support for the establishment of sports associations, school sports clubs and an innovative commercial provision of sport with all the necessary facilities.

Policy interventions aimed at women should bear in mind that, in comparison to men, women are under-represented in sports associations (and competitive sport) and overrepresented in the commercial sport sector. This is partially due to their different motives for taking part in sport, but these differences are also partly rooted in the masculine culture of the associations. The decline in competitive sport, which has manifested itself in many countries, reveals the need for cultural change in the sports associations.

Among young people, the greatest problems do not concern those of primary education age. In general, youngsters under the age of twelve tend to take part in a lot of sport, although this too is strongly dependent on social class and the sport culture found within families (sport participation of parents). If there is no participation in sport whatsoever at this early age, then this appears to have a negative impact on sport participation at a later age. However, if sport throughout the course of life is viewed in its totality, then the greatest decline in sporting behaviour does not occur among these young age groups, but at various transitional moments in the lives of young people and adults: the transition from primary to secondary and then also tertiary education, the transition from school to work, the creation of a family and dealing with the combination of work and family.

Little is known about such critical events during the course of life and their relationship to people's sporting careers. In this regard, recent sociological research into socialisation and dropping out has rightfully observed that sport participation, especially among young people, is not an experience that is removed from other aspects of life. The choice to take part in sport, how, where, what and with whom is directly related to the issue of how people see and wish to present themselves. They do not make rational considerations with respect to health consequences, however important they might find these, but instead base their choices for a sport, the kind of sport and sporting context primarily on the significance that this has for their own identity, their relationships with others and the appreciation or rejection that this may bring

to mind. As one would expect, socio-culturally determined views and expectations also play a role in this.²⁵⁹

5.4 Research gaps

Aside from the statistical data on participation and non-participation, much greater knowledge is needed about the way in which decision-making processes take place and how they relate to transitions within the course of life. There is much *data* on the extent, motives and determinants of sport participation, dropping out and non-participation (although improvements can be made as regards comparability), but there is far too little *knowledge* about the more profound background thereof. As discussed in chapter four, the motives behind choosing and continuing to play sport persistently point to the same direction (keeping fit, losing weight, excitement and challenge, being successful, relaxation), just as the reasons that people give for giving up sport (lack of time, lack of interest, lack of money, other things to do, lack of confidence). Yet all these motives and reasons apply to regions and categories with both a low and high level of sport participation. Moreover, they are not consistent with the other data on how people spend their time and money.²⁶⁰ To gain a real insight into the dynamics of sport participation and non-participation, sportspeople and non-participants in sport should be studied with respect to their development and social context. This demands a qualitative research approach (longitudinal and contextual) alongside the quantitative approach to sport participation, with a differentiation according to social characteristics (age, gender, social milieu, ethnicity) on the one hand, and sporting characteristics (branch of sport, organisational context of participation) on the other.²⁶¹

Such an approach might also offer more insight into the question of how sport can retain its attractiveness for adolescents and young people. In the above, it was already noted that sport should ideally retain the elements that make it possible to innovate and push back boundaries in a sporting, physical, social and cultural sense. We know precious little about the way in which young people develop new trends, in which respects the current sport culture relates or fails to relate to their world of experience, which kinds of sport satisfy their ‘quest for excitement’²⁶² and what the effects are of the increasing normative approach to sport as something that is good and ‘must’ be done. Our understanding of why people drop out is also very limited. There are hardly any data on turnover in sport (influx and outflow), about why people leave one branch of sport (directly or after a period of time) and take up another, or stop participating in sport altogether, and which dynamics lie behind these changes.

A lack of knowledge about the impact of the physical environment and environmental planning is a distinctive feature of the individualistic approach to research and policy. Research

²⁵⁹ Coakley & Donnelly (eds) 1999; Coakley & White 1992; Coakley 1993.

²⁶⁰ Biddle & Mutrie 2001, Taks 1994.

²⁶¹ Coakley & White 1992; Donnelly & Young 1999; Schutz & Park 2004.

²⁶² Elias & Dunning 1986.

has only been conducted sporadically into the correlation between the quality of the living environment and (the extent and nature) of sporting behaviour. Although the range of these studies are limited, they point to a significant impact of these factors, not only as regards objective criteria (for example, the proximity of facilities), but also subjective ones (perceived level of quality).²⁶³

Our inventory of data on sport participation in the 25 EU member states demonstrates that although there is a lot of information on this topic, the knowledge that it gives rise to is still skewed and rather limited due to the lack of comparability across time and between countries. There is also an especial dearth of information on sport in the new member states. It is thus important that research in these countries be stimulated, so that sport policy can be based on comparable participation data. In this regard, the United Kingdom – with Sport England and UK Sport – can be taken as a shining example, not only for the new member states, but also the existing ones. This is due to the fact that sport policy and sport research in the UK are highly integrated, with the emphasis being placed on trend research, national and international benchmarks and research into the societal impact of sport and sport policy. It would be a good idea for the good practices in evidence-based sport policies in the various member states to be developed into a European model.

The development, validation and implementation of standardised and homogenised questionnaires are of great importance in this regard. Given the time-consuming and costly nature of this, national and European support for research activities is vital. At a European level, the COMPASS, HETUS and IPAQ questionnaires deserve to be further propagated. Moreover, the integration of these questionnaires should be contemplated, particularly in order to gain more insight into the correlation between physical activity and sporting behaviour. Further to this, it is also crucial that a longitudinal research tradition be established with the help of these questionnaires and the sport-related Eurobarometers. Indeed, it is not a lack of information that forms the greatest stumbling block with respect to the supply of data in the field of sport in most of the 25 EU member states, but a lack of longitudinal and comparable data.

²⁶³ Wendel-Vos 2004; Rütten & Ziemainz 2001; Rütten e.a. 2001.

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About the W.J.H. Mulier Institute

The *W.J.H. Mulier Institute – Centre for Research on Sports in Society* is a joint venture of Tilburg University, Utrecht University, the University of Amsterdam and the University of Groningen. The institute (called after Pim Mulier who can be seen as the founding father of Dutch organized sports) was founded on April 12th 2002. However, the history of its predecessor (Diopler – Janssens & Van Bottenburg bv, which has merged into the Mulier Institute) goes back to 1992. The Mulier Institute carries out both academic research and research conducted for private bodies, like sports organisations, governmental organisations, and business organisations. The Supervisory Board of the Mulier Institute consists of representatives of the Dutch Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport, the Netherlands' Olympic Committee/Netherlands' Sports Federation (NOC*NSF), the Royal Association of Teachers of Physical Education (KVLO), the Netherlands Institute for Sport and Physical activity (NISB) and the Netherlands Institute for Local Sport and Recreation (LC).