Sport participation in the EU: trends and differences

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• Decline of social capital and civic engagement
• Less and less ties and trust
• Spending less time doing sports
• More and more bowling alone in stead of bowling together
The importance of social capital

- Making people more trusting and trustworthy
- Making people more active in society
- Making people fight illness more effectively
- Making trusting connections to others
- Resolving collective problems
Active club membership in no field as extensive in Dutch society as in sport

- Number of organizations with more than 50,000 members

- Sport
- Intern. solidarity
- Political parties
- Broadcasting corporations
- Health care organizations
- Nature and environment
- Churches and denominations
- Consumer organizations
- Trade unions
- Women's
Volunteering in no field as extensive in Dutch society as in sport

Volunteers as a percentage of total population (2002)

- Sports clubs
- Churches/denominations
- Schools
- Health care
- Other organizations
- Cultural organizations
- Youth work
- Hobby clubs
- Trade unions
- Political parties
Treaty establishing a constitution for Europe

• Article I – 17
  – *The Union shall have competence to carry out supporting, coordinating or complementary action in the field of sport.*

• Article III – 282
  – *The Union shall contribute to the promotion of European sporting issues, while taking account of its specific nature, its structures based on voluntary activity and its social and educational function.*
Focus attention on the data:

- What is the sport participation level?
- Is sport including all people?
- Which trends can be observed?
Research questions

1. To what extent are data on sports participation collected in the EU and its member states?
2. What is the scale and nature of sport participation in the EU and its member states?
3. Which trends and differences may be identified in this respect?
4. What are the key drivers of sports participation?
5. What are the research gaps with respect to sport participation trends and differences in the EU?
Research methods

- Collection and analysis of existing data on sport participation
  - Pan European sport participation surveys (Eurobarometers, COMPASS, HETUS, IPAQ)
  - National sport participation surveys and membership figures (with the help of researchers/contact persons in 25 member states)
- Literature study on key drivers
Levels of sports participation in the EU
Sports participation level strongly depends on definition of terms. The margins are often set very low.
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Sport participation in 15 EU member states, 15 years and over (2003). Big differences between member states, with a clear geographical pattern.
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The chart shows the percentage of the population in each country who participate in sport at least once a week, 1-3 times a month, or less often/never/dk. The countries are listed from left to right:

- Finland (76% at least once a week, 9% 1-3 times a month, 9% less often/never/dk)
- Sweden (72% at least once a week, 9% 1-3 times a month, 9% less often/never/dk)
- Denmark (60% at least once a week, 10% 1-3 times a month, 10% less often/never/dk)
- Ireland (53% at least once a week, 7% 1-3 times a month, 7% less often/never/dk)
- Netherlands (52% at least once a week, 6% 1-3 times a month, 6% less often/never/dk)
- UK (53% at least once a week, 45% 1-3 times a month, 10% less often/never/dk)
- France (45% at least once a week, 46% 1-3 times a month, 10% less often/never/dk)
- Belgium (43% at least once a week, 39% 1-3 times a month, 10% less often/never/dk)
- Luxembourg (43% at least once a week, 34% 1-3 times a month, 8% less often/never/dk)
- Germany (43% at least once a week, 39% 1-3 times a month, 8% less often/never/dk)
- Austria (43% at least once a week, 37% 1-3 times a month, 7% less often/never/dk)
- Spain (37% at least once a week, 27% 1-3 times a month, 5% less often/never/dk)
- Italy (26% at least once a week, 26% 1-3 times a month, 5% less often/never/dk)
- Greece (22% at least once a week, 22% 1-3 times a month, 5% less often/never/dk)
- Portugal (38% at least once a week, 11% 1-3 times a month, 11% less often/never/dk)

EU25 (53% at least once a week, 11% 1-3 times a month, 11% less often/never/dk)
No participation in exercise or sport in 25 member states in 2004 (>15 years). New member states do not close up the ranks.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1997 Meets PA Recommendation</th>
<th>1997 Recreational PA in typical week</th>
<th>1999 Free time spent on sport and PA</th>
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Meets the PA recommendation (>30 minutes per day), 1999

- Finland
- Sweden
- Ireland
- UK
- Denmark
- Netherlands
- Austria
- Germany
- Luxembourg
- Belgium
- France
- Spain
- Italy
- Greece
- Portugal
- EU 15

Yes
No
Participation in vigorous physical activities in a typical week

% of population

- Finland: 51% (none), 29% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Sweden: 59% (none), 24% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Denmark: 63% (none), 25% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Ireland: 59% (none), 24% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Netherlands: 34% (none), 22% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- UK: 25% (none), 24% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- France: 16% (none), 22% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Belgium: 15% (none), 15% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Luxembourg: 17% (none), 15% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Germany: 29% (none), 23% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Austria: 23% (none), 15% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Spain: 72% (none), 13% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Italy: 64% (none), 12% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Greece: 61% (none), 15% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
- Portugal: 61% (none), 15% (1-3 days), 20% (4-7 days)
Differences in sports participation between social groups
Sport participation at least once a year by age groups in eight COMPASS pilot countries
Sport participation at least once a year by SES in the UK

- Large employers and high managerial: 59%
- Higher professionals: 59%
- Lower managerial and professional: 51%
- Intermediate: 43%
- Small employers and own account: 43%
- Lower supervisor and technical: 38%
- Semi routine: 31%
- Routine: 30%
Trends in sports participation
Change of direction in sports participation: stagnation or decline in the Netherlands

- AVO survey
- TBO time use research diaries
- TBO time use surveys
- NOC*NSF-membership sportclubs
- RSO survey
Also stagnation in growth of sport participation in Spain

- Did not participate in sport in the last twelve months
- Participated in more than one sport in the last twelve months
- Participated in one sport in the last twelve months
Decrease of sport participation in the UK among almost all age groups
However, the number of private health clubs in the UK has strongly increased.
Key drivers of sport participation
Personal factors

- **Determinants:**
  - Self-efficacy
  - Perceived pleasure
  - Perceived barriers

- **Motives:**
  - Have fun
  - Belong to a group
  - Learn skills/techniques
  - Experience success
  - Getting fit and healthy
  - Getting a ‘good’ body
  - Relaxation
Motives for non-sportsparticipation

- Lack of time
- Lack of energy
- Lack of interest
- Lack of money
- Lack of facilities
- Having no partner
- Lack of support
- Having no transport
- Lack of skills
- Lack of success
- Lack of health
- Fear of injury
Interpersonal factors

- Cultural stereotypes (age, gender)
- Education
- Sporting behavior of parents
- Physical education
- Coaches/trainers
- Peers
- Key life events
Environmental factors

- Traffic volume
- Availability of footpaths and cycle paths
- Availability of sport and leisure facilities
- Access to nearby sports clubs
‘Sport for all’ campaigns were successful because they corresponded with wider economic and socio-cultural developments:

- Increase in affluence and leisure time
- Expansion of higher education
- Levelling out of income differences
- Individualisation and informalisation of interpersonal relations
- Emancipation of women, youth, elderly, etc.
• From ‘sport for all’ campaigns to ‘health enhancing physical activity’ interventions
  – Less directed at sport and exercise; more at physical activity.
  – Focus of attention shifted from young people to adults and the elderly.
  – Focuses less on infrastructure and more on individual mentalities.
Towards a differentiated policy

- European regions
- Gender
- Age groups
- Levels of educational attainment
- Social class
- Residential area
Thank you for your attention!