UNDERSTANDING THE GAME

Sport participation in Europe

Jeroen Scheerder

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4 WJH Mulier Institute, the Netherlands
5 Policy Research Centre for Culture, Youth & Sport, Belgium
Outline

1. Sport participation research in Europe
2. Some findings from recent report on sport participation
3. Implications for sport policy at European level

A free copy of the full version of the SPM10 report is available at http://faber.kuleuven.be/spm/
European Sport for All Charter
Principles for a policy of Sport for All
(Defined by the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Sport in Brussels (1975) under the title "European Sport for All Charter")

Article 1
Every individual shall have the right to participate in sport.

Article 2
Sport shall be encouraged as an important factor in human development and appropriate support shall be made available out of public funds.

Article 3
Sport, being an aspect of socio-cultural development, shall be related at local, regional and national levels to other areas of policy-making and planning such as education, health, social service, town and country planning, conservation, the arts and leisure services.

Article 4
Each government shall foster permanent and effective co-operation between public authorities and voluntary organisations and shall encourage the establishment of national machinery for the development and co-ordination of sport for all.

Article 5
Methods shall be sought to safeguard sport and sportsmen from exploitation for political, commercial or financial gain, and from practices that are abusive and debasing, including the unfair use of drugs.

Article 6
Since the scale of participation in sport is dependent, among other things, on the extent, the variety and the accessibility of facilities, the overall planning of facilities shall be accepted as a matter for public authorities, shall take account of local, regional and national requirements, and shall incorporate measures designed to ensure full use of both new and existing facilities.

Article 7
Measures, including legislation where appropriate, shall be introduced to ensure access to open country and water for the purpose of recreation.

Article 8
In any programme of sports development, the need for qualified personnel at all levels of administrative and technical management, leadership and coaching shall be recognised.

Source: www.coe.int/t/dg4/sport/Resources/texts/sportchart2_en.asp#TopOfPage
LEISURE TIME SPORT
- professional
- international
- mediatised
- often paid
- non-paid
- active or passive
- during leisure time

MEDIA SPORT
- watching sport
- physically passive
- sport public

ELITE SPORT
- professional
- international
- mediatised
- often paid

PERFORMANCE SPORT
- competitive
- result driven
- competing and winning
- principle of exclusion

PARTICIPATION SPORT
- recreational
- process driven
- having/taking part
- principle of inclusion

MASS SPORT
- doing sport
- physically active
- sport participant

Informally organised
(non-traditional forms of organisation)

Club organised

Individual

Source: Scheerder et al. (2011: 17)
Pyramid Model of Sport

- European sport federations
- National sport federations
- Regional sport federations
- Sport clubs

Source: European Commission (1999)
Church Model of Sport

- Elite Sport
- High Level Competitive Sport
- Competitive Sport
- Recreational Sport

Source: Scheerder et al. (2011)
Sport participation in Europe

- from a welfare state perspective sport participation/inclusion in sport = human right (cfr. Sport for All Charter)
- increasing participation/inclusion should be at core of any sport policy
- demand for basic data, f.i. benchmarks, facts & figures, monitors, ...

available data
- rather isolated research projects
- weaknesses wrt comparability / trends
European Sport Participation Research – the early days

Council of Europe as a driving force

1970
1973
1975
1977
1978
1982
present

Council of Europe Committee of Ministers

Benito Castejon Paz et al.

Brian Rodgers

Brian Rodgers

Urbain Claeys
European Sport Participation Research

Eurobarometer on Sport by the EC

EB 60.0
European Commission EU15
2003

EB 62.0
European Commission EU25
2004

EB 72.3
European Commission EU27
2010

EB 58.2
European Commission EU15
2003

EB 64.3
European Commission EU25
2006

…

present

2003

2004

2006

2010

EB 62.0
The citizens of the European Union and Sport

EB 60.0
LES CITIZENS DE L’UNION EUROPÉENNE ET LE SPORT

EB 72.3
Sport and Physical Activity

EB 58.2
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

EB 64.3
Health and food

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European Sport Participation Research

COMPASS study, Nike study, Special Issue EJSS, SPM10 Report

CONI, UK Sport & Sport England 1999

Van Bottenburg et al. 2005

Hoekman et al. 2011

Scheerder et al. 2011

Present
European Sport Participation Research

Non-sport specific surveys including sport participation

Harmonised European Time Use Survey (2000)

International Social Survey Program (2007)

European Values Study (2007)
10 years after COMPASS ... MEASURE

Meeting for European Sport Participation & Sport Culture Research
MEASURE Network?

- Meeting for European Sport Participation & Sport Culture Research
- Launched in 2010 by KU Leuven and Mulier Institute
- 3 main goals
  - **Increase** understanding of sport participation
  - **Improve** quality of sport participation data
  - **Exchange** knowledge and expertise
- More information at:
  - [www.measuresport.eu](http://www.measuresport.eu)
One of the main goals of MEASURE

- enhance knowledge and exchange of information on sport participation:
  - stimulate data collection
  - develop benchmarking
  - provide easy access to information
Comparison wrt sport participation across Europe

**National data**

- advantages
  - rich data – many countries
  - take cultural differences into account
  - comparison possible in short-time

- disadvantages
  - different methodology
  - different definitions
  - validity

- examples
  Rodgers (1977), Van Bottenburg et al. (2005), ...

**Harmonised data**

- advantages
  - same methodology
  - validity
  - comparability

- disadvantages
  - loss of information
  - time consuming – expensive?
  - few countries

- examples

**Country Fact Sheets approach – focus on time trends**

- advantages
  - based on strong national survey data
  - time trends are comparable (cross-national)
  - results on short term + possibilities to move beyond

- disadvantages
  - different methodologies
  - different populations
Fact sheet approach

Two-phase approach

PHASE 1

- autumn 2010
- standardised fact sheet
- no restrictions

PHASE 2

- winter 2010-2011
- standardised fact sheet
- age restriction (15-64 yrs)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country / Region</th>
<th>Reference period one year</th>
<th>Sport participation ≥ weekly</th>
<th>Sport participation ≥ monthly</th>
<th>Competitive sport</th>
<th>Club sport</th>
<th>Popularity of sports</th>
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</table>
Some general trends...

...with regard to sport participation research and available data:

most countries have
- a rather broad definition for sport participation (opposed to 30min/week)
- a reference period of one year
- data wrt sport participation $\geq$ month, club participation, sports preferences
Sport participation

Sport participation ≥ weekly
% of total population

The Netherlands

Finland

Denmark

Poland

Germany

Austria

England

Northern Ireland

France

Portugal

Spain

Italy

Flanders

The Netherlands

Spain

Italia

Poland

Northern Ireland

Portugal

England

France

Italy

Spain

Denmark

Finland

< 40 %

40-50 %

50-60 %

60-70 %

> 70 %

Not available
Sport participation

Sport participation ≥ weekly gender difference female - male
## Availability of trend data (N=16)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country / Region</th>
<th>Most recent data collection</th>
<th>Time trends wrt sport participation</th>
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<td>1983 1991 2006</td>
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</table>
Trends

Sport participation (% 2000 = index 100)

- Denmark
- England (UK)
- Finland
- Flanders (Belgium)
- Italy
- The Netherlands
- Scotland (UK)
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland
Trends

Club sport participation (% 2000 = index 100)
Some general trends....
...with regard to sport participation:

- sport participation is on the rise
- club sport participation is more or less stabilizing, in some cases under threat
- geographical differences wrt gender
- ‘best pupils of the class’ in terms of sport participation:
  - Finland, Denmark, Germany
- interestingly, large differences in club sport participation between those ‘best pupils’:
  - low (Finland) vs. high (Denmark) club sport participation
  - Germany takes an intermediate position
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## Sports preference: fitness (9 countries)

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### Sports preference: cycling (10 countries)

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## Sports preference: swimming (11 countries)

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<td>Gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>Fitness / aerobics / gymnastics</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Running / jogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Fitness / aerobics</td>
<td>Running</td>
<td>Walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland (UK)</td>
<td>Swimming / diving</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Exercise bike / running machine / spinning class</td>
<td>Jogging</td>
<td>Dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Jogging / walking</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Volleyball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Football</td>
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<td>Fitness</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Hiking / walking</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Downhill skiing</td>
<td>Running / jogging</td>
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</table>
## Sports preference: running (11 countries)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country / Region</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tr>
<td>Austria</td>
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<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
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<td>Running</td>
<td>Fitness</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>England (UK)</td>
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<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Football</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Athletics / running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Walking</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Gym / weight exercise</td>
<td>Cross country skiing</td>
<td>Jogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flanders (Belgium)</td>
<td>Running</td>
<td>Recreational cycling</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td>Walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>Pétanque / bowling</td>
<td>Walking &amp; trekking</td>
<td>Running / jogging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<td>Running</td>
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</table>
Some general trends....

...with regard to sport preferences:

- large similarity in sport preferences among countries
- popularity of individual, recreational leisure-time sport activities
- importance of so-called ‘LIGHT SPORTING COMMUNITIES’
Collecting fact sheets ...

... is a useful tool

- short term
- cross-national comparisons possible
- first step towards policy makers
- needs to be further elaborated
Challenges to sport policy

• Structural differences in levels of participation
  – Gender, age
  – Socio economic status (income, education)
  – Ethnic divides and minority groups

• Preferences of sport practicing:
  – Club membership under threat
  – Due to time pressure interest in more competitive and organised sports dwindles
  – Voluntary work
Challenges to policy makers

• Demand for basic data
  – facts and figures, benchmarks, monitors

• Demand for theoretical models

• Demand for effective interventions

• Demand for sound local implementation schemes
Challenges to researchers

- Need to further develop data-quality
- Need for international debate and for collective efforts

**MEASURE Network** Workshop on Sport Participation on Wednesday 4.45pm Seminar Room 5
A free copy of the full version of the SPM10 report is available at http://faber.kuleuven.be/spm/
More information

MEASURE Network

www.measuresport.eu

SPM Report:

http://faber.kuleuven.be/spm/

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