

Sport policy, sport facilities and sport participation

A socio-ecological approach

Remco Hoekman

Sport policy

- European Sport for All Charter (Council of Europe, 2001)
- Responsibilities for sport policy mainly delegated to the local level
- Does sport policy, or aspects of sport policy matter?

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Sport policy issues as wicked problems

- Difficulties in problem definition
- Uncertainties regarding causal chains and mechanisms
- Propensity for remedies to result in new or unintended problems or to exacerbate existing challenges

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Aims of my research

- To examine local sport policy and its influence on the sport participation of individuals
- Contribute to better informed discussions on sport policy as well as to an evidence-based understanding of social inequality in sport participation

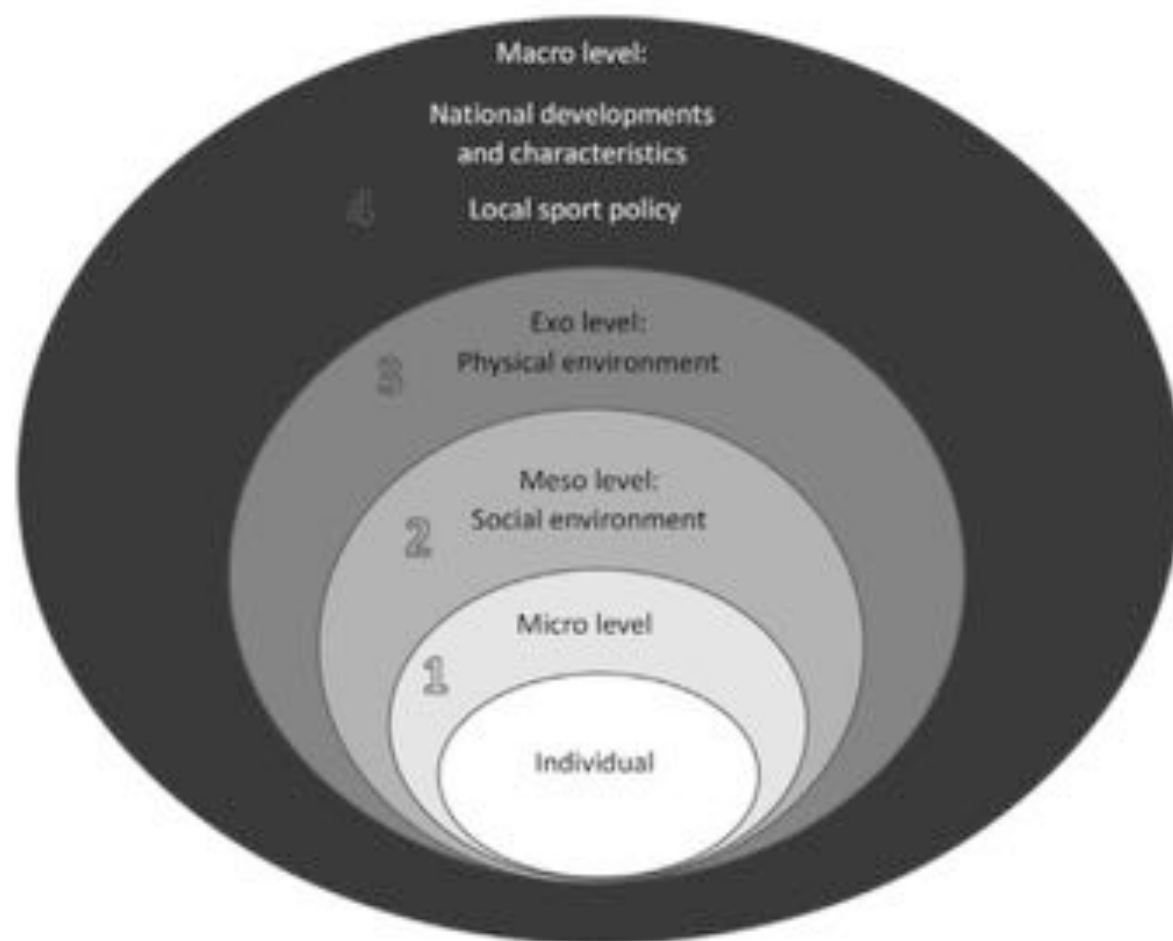
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Figure 1.1 Socio-ecological framework of dissertation



Two main questions, five studies

- To what extent are local sport policies influenced by the broader environment and exogenous developments?
- To what extent do local sport policy characteristics and the social and physical environment provide an explanation for differences in sport participation?

Participation in sports and physical activity 2013 Comparing the Netherlands to the European Union (%)

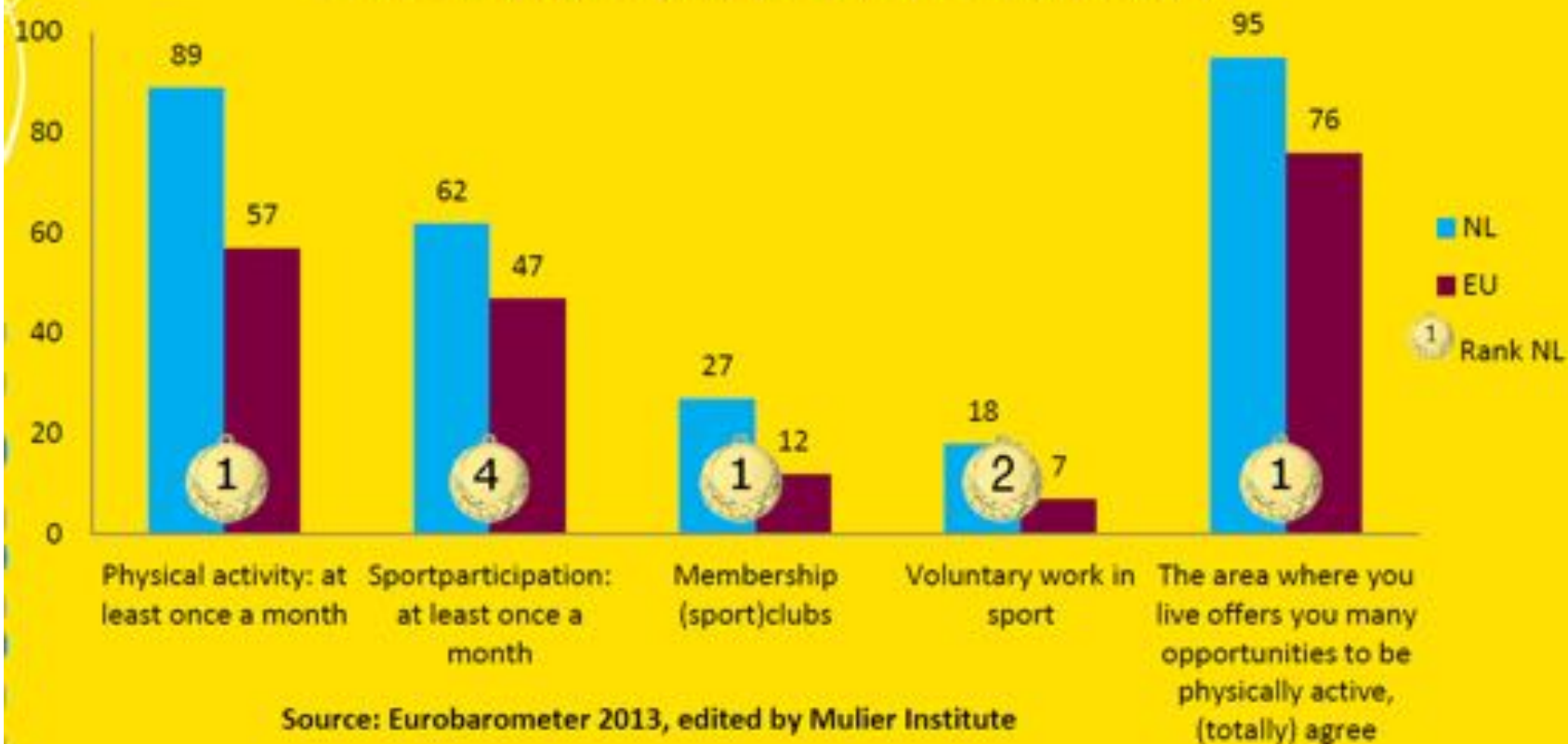


Table 2. Analysis of variance, all sport facilities by area level urbanity and deprivation.

	Mean number of facilities per 10.000 inhabitants	Mean distance (metres) to nearest facility	Mean number of different types of facilities
Categories of urbanisation			
1 – extremely urbanised	3.49	419	2.1
2	5.22	543	2.9
3 – moderately urbanised	6.07	629	3.5
4	8.59	722	4.4
5 – not urbanised	11.38	912	2.5
Total	6.68	630	3.1
	$F = 45.325;$ $p < 0.001$	$F = 334.433;$ $p < 0.001$	$F = 179.428;$ $p < 0.001$
Deprivation score quintile			
1 – most deprived	5.89	544	2.9
2	6.95	654	3.4
3 – middling	7.46	645	3.5
4	6.97	673	3.1
5 – most affluent	5.70	632	2.7
Total	6.55	624	3.1
	$F = 12.599;$ $p < 0.001$	$F = 27.030;$ $p < 0.001$	$F = 22.826;$ $p < 0.001$

Findings: development of local sport policy

- Sport policy is influenced by broader environment and exogenous developments
- Instrumental value of sport more important than sport for sport's sake
- Local sport managers still mainly focused on facilitating sport

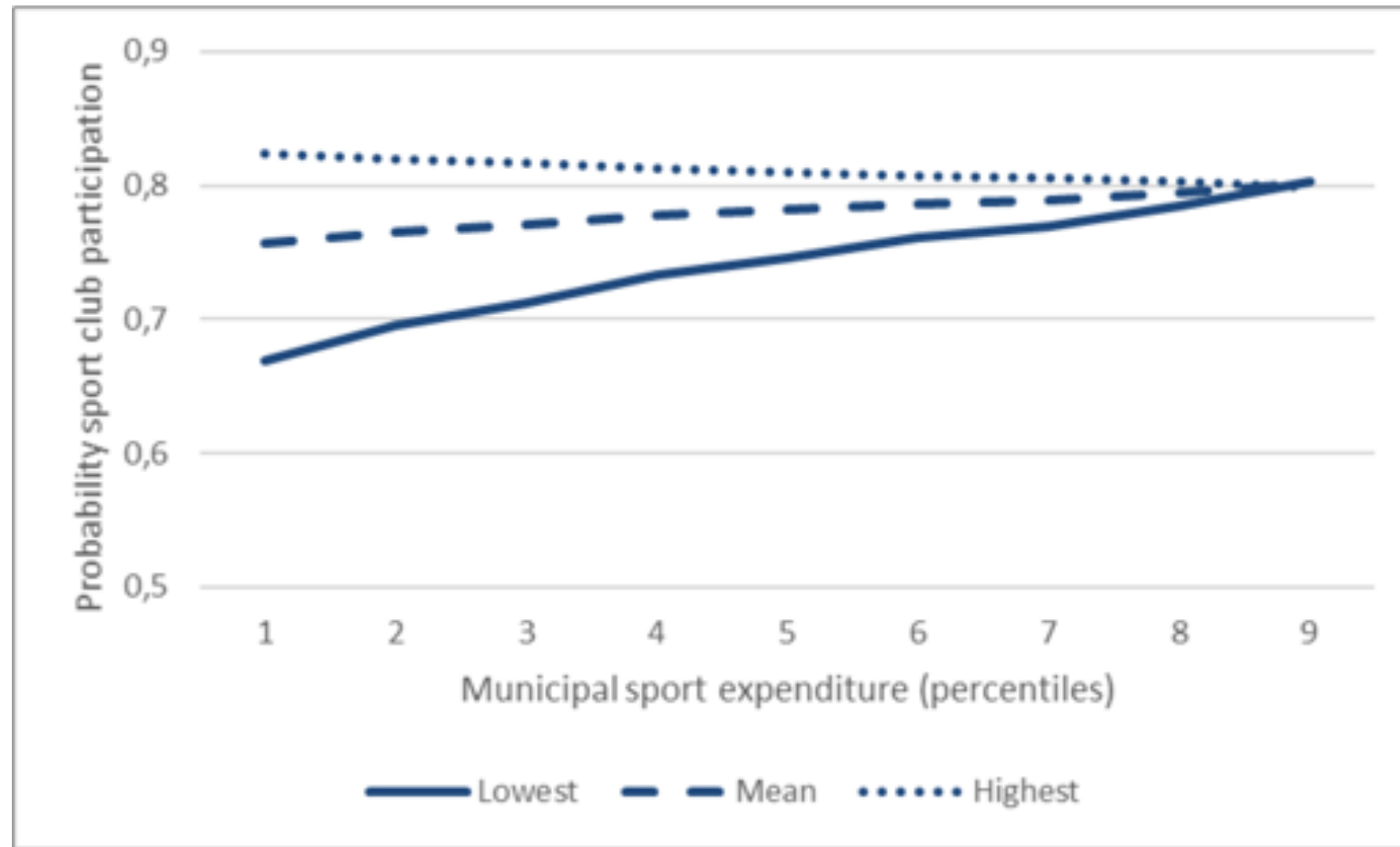
Focus on austerity and participation society

- Grassroots sport relatively immune for austerity measures
- Grassroots sport as an (vital) element of the participation society
- Differences expected across Europe, based on degree of financial crisis and weighting of positive external effects of sport

Findings: differences in sport participation

- Social environment and socio-economic characteristics most important
- Sport policy has meaning
- Diversity of sport facilities is of importance
- Stronger effect of sport policy and sport facilities anticipated in other countries.

Figure 1. Cross level interaction household income and municipal sport expenses, 6-17 years old, sport club participation, visualized.



Implications

- More reflection on functioning and impact of local sport policy is needed
- Sport infrastructure is well-developed, focus should now be on making better use of this sport infrastructure
- Focus on specific target groups paying attention to the different environmental systems

Future perspectives

- Optimizing use and connection of elements of 'local sporting capital' (Hardware, Orgware, Software)
- What is optimal depends on context and intended goal
- Sporting landscape develops over time and requires adaptive 'learning' policy
- Growing need for research on sport sector and on working mechanisms of sport policy

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