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COMPARISON OF POLICY GOALS
AND MODELS OF SERVICE
DELIVERY**

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MODERN SPORTS-FOR-ALL POLICY: AN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON OF POLICY GOALS AND MODELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY²

The paper provides a collection and analysis of modern sports-for-all policies in Europe, North America, Australia and China. Promoting a healthy lifestyle among community members by providing easy access to sport facilities has been a traditional function of sport-for-all policies. Modern policy goals now also include promoting racial and gender equity and diversity, fighting doping, harassment and violence, in particular child abuse, and promoting tourism. Despite the different administrative contexts the implementation of policy goals heavily relies on volunteers and voluntary non-for profit organizations.

Two in-depth case studies on sport governing bodies in Germany and England exemplify common patterns in service delivery and how policy goals have shifted from maintaining sporting facilities to non-sporting objectives like job creation, stimulation of tourism and gender equity.

The paper identifies and discusses five challenges for modern sports-for-all policies: tracking the quality of public service delivery, the link between outcomes and impacts, goal ambiguity and complexity, staff size, and managing collaborations in a hyper-complex environment.³

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1. Introduction: Why sports-for-all policy is important

To live a healthy lifestyle the World Health Organization recommends 30 minutes daily practice of sports five times a week. This ambitious recommendation comes along with the fact that developed countries in Northern America and Europe but also emerging economies like China are facing problems of widespread obesity among citizens, especially among kids. This has dramatic consequences both for individual and public health. In modern welfare states (un)healthy behavior directly links to the level public health care expenditures: Obesity among community members today means increasing expenditures to cure unhealthy lifestyle tomorrow. Society has a stake in healthy citizens; so public sport agencies administer a wide range of sport and recreation services (SRS). Such health promotion policies (Kokko et al. 2009, p. 5) are also labeled mass sports policy, amateur sports policy, or health enhancing physical activities (HEPA). Spending public money on implementing mass sports policies yields two main benefits: At the individual level physical activities have direct positive health effects. Participation in sports-for all activities further results in positive social interaction among individuals. At the organizational level sport clubs as civic organizations generate social capital. This helps building strong social communities and a culture of social responsibility and trust. Social networks in sport clubs contribute to the well-being both of individuals and communities (Kokko et al. 2009, p. 8-9). Public sector organizations designing and implementing sports-for-all policies thus play an important role in promoting public health, and social cohesion among community members. Promoting a healthy lifestyle among community members by providing easy access to sport facilities has been a traditional function of sport-for-all policies. Mass sport policies restrict to *non-for profit* sports clubs and sport providing organizations. Commercial fitness clubs (e.g. chains like Russian WorldClass, German McFit, Pfitzemeier or Venice Beach) are not covered. Amateur sport policies also do not cover government agencies overseeing *competitive* and *commercial* sport activities; national Olympic committees are therefore not included in this analysis.

Compared to commercial sports grassroots-sports policy attracts less attention from governments and scholars alike. Elite sport attracts more government funding, more political attention, more administrative human resources. The most evident reason for this gap between elite sport and mass sports (Bailey and Talbot 2015) is that mass sport is not a top political priority; while elite sports and the number of gold medals at Olympic Games are. Winning gold medals in highly visible international circuits is just a more promising aim in terms of voter turnout compared to uncertain long-term savings in the health care budget. In a similar vein high performance

(college) sport is a common topic in sport science and in business management. In contrast the management of mass sports has not received much attention among administrative science scholars. Existing literature mainly addresses the goal conflicts between elite and mass sports, and the politics of sports policy making. There is research on how amateur sports policy goals have shifted over time (Houlihan 2000). But we know little about what related government agencies do, why they do it and how they do it (Wilson 1989).

Against this backdrop the objective of the paper is to present and to analyze different approaches to mass sport policy in different administrative contexts: What similarities and differences can be identified in modern mass sport policy in Northern America, Australia, Europe and China? The paper starts with an overview of types of sporting organizations and models of service delivery (section 2). The paper continues with two in-depth case studies on sporting organizations in Germany and England, the Landessportbund Nordrhein-Westfalen (LSB-NRW), and SportEngland (sections 3 and 4). Section 5 provides details on mass sports in Australia, the United States, Norway and China. Section 6 summarizes and discusses five challenges for modern sports-for-all policies: tracking the quality of public service delivery, the link between outcomes and impacts, goal ambiguity and complexity, staff size, and managing collaborations in a hyper-complex environment.

2. Modern mass sport policy

Mass sports policies in Europe, Australia and North America share four key similarities (Table 1).

Table 1: Mass sports policy in Europe, Australia and North America

Similarities
1. Governments use mass sports as a vehicle to achieve non-sporting objectives like job creation and stimulation of tourism
2. Public sport organizations face multiple, ambiguous, often conflicting and complex agency goals
3. Responsibility for sports is usually shared with issues like education, health, or youth policy
4. Service delivery is divided among public sports agencies, sport governing bodies, and local sport clubs
5. There is a “life-consuming involvement of volunteers” in service provision (Collins 2006, p. 228)
Differences
Governance between national and local sport organization varies by country.
Level of successful collaboration across organizations varies by country.

Note: Own table.

Governments across the globe use sport organizations as a vehicle to achieve non-sporting objectives, and a wide range of health objectives. Sporting organizations have been required to address new policy issues like creating social capital, improving health, job creation and stimulation of tourism. Sport policies in the English speaking countries Australia, New Zealand, England, and the United states (Casey et al. 2011), but also in Continental Europe are based on the notion that participation in mass sports contributes to social cohesion, social connectedness and community wellbeing.

Models of service delivery

Delivering sports-for-all-policy involves three types of sporting organizations and agencies; each of them pursuing different missions, goals and activities (Table 2). *Public sports agencies* set the broad policy goals, and develop related strategies. They allocate public funds to sport governing bodies and sport providing entities. Public funding comes from the regular budget; some revenues are generated via public gambling companies. England, Germany, and Norway (since 1948) are partly relying on publicly owned gambling companies to allocate fiscal resources to selected sport programs. Public sports agencies finally oversee traditional sport-for-all-activities and implement health enhancing physical activities (HEPA), modern life-style physical activities, special exercise programs and related health promotion policies respectively. *Sport governing bodies* govern one or more sport discipline in a country; examples include SportEngland, SportUk, the Landessportclub Nordrhein-Westfalen, or the Norwegian Olympic Committee. Another function of sport governing bodies is to distribute public funds to regional and local sport clubs to finance concrete sporting activities; they usually keep a share of public funding for their own administrative purposes. That means that both sport governing bodies and local sport clubs are paid for implementing mass sports policies. *Sport providing entities* encompass local and regional sports clubs, and community centers. Regional and local sport clubs are the „backbone of European sports movement” (Kokko et al, p. 5), since their role is to implement sports for all policies by running concrete sport programs “on the ground”. A fourth type of sporting organization, *sport spectacle organizations*, is usually engaged in for-profit activities (Gomez et al. 2007, p. 5), and is thus not covered by the subsequent analysis.

While work-sharing arrangements can be observed in most countries, governance between national and local sport organization varies by country. For example England and Northern Ireland have no systematic ties to local authorities, apart from allocating public resources. In contrast, Wales and Ireland do have regional offices to cooperate with local authorities.

Table 2: Four types of sporting organization

	(1) Public sports agencies	(2) Sport governing bodies	(4) Sport providing entities	(4) Sport spectacle organizations
Main activity	Make sport policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set policy goals, - develop strategies, - allocate public funds to sport governing bodies and sport providing entities (local sport clubs) 	Govern one or more sport discipline	Deliver sport programs, implement sports policy	Generate competition opportunities
Examples	Russian federal Ministry of Sports, German state ministry of families, youth, culture and sport	SportEngland, SportUK, Landessportclub Nordrhein-Westfalen (LSB NRW), Norwegian Olympic Committee (NOC)	Local sport clubs, community centres, university sport programs	Leagues, associations, circuits, tours. Deutsche Fußball Liga GmbH, Formula One Group

Source: Own work; Gomez et al. 2007, p. 5.

Second the promotion of mass sports in the US, Canada, Europe, and Australia but also China heavily relies on volunteers and voluntary non-for profit organizations. Some researchers say that there is an “irrational, life-consuming involvement of volunteers that is crucial to all sports systems” (Collins 2006, p. 228).

Third administrative responsibilities for mass sports policies are rather fragmented. Most countries do not have stand-alone ministries and departments of sports. Administrative responsibility for sports is usually shared with issues like education, health, or youth policy. Take England as an example: In England 326 local authorities are responsible of funding and promotion of mass sports. However, a study from 2012 finds that “only 50% of authorities had dedicated staffing” for sports and recreation services, and “33% did not have a ‘community sport’ unit” at all (King 2012). That means that administrative responsibilities are unclear, and service delivery often lacks a clear line of accountability.

Policy goal ambiguity and complexity

Fourth modern public sport agencies face multiple, ambiguous, complex, and sometimes contradictory agency goals. The traditional function of sport-for-all policies has been providing

easy access to sport facilities. To varying degrees policy goals for mass sports in Northern America, Australia and Europe now also include (Houlihan 2005; Spracklen et al. 2006):

- Promoting a healthy lifestyle
- Promoting racial and gender equity and diversity;
- Fighting doping,
- Fighting harassment and violence, in particular child abuse,
- Promoting tourism.

The level of goal ambiguity in mass sports policy is rather high since each element in this set of goals easily allows leeway for interpretation (Chun and Rainey 2005 p. 2). “Ambiguity is usually understood as the ability to express more than one interpretation of a given event or fact. Ambiguous circumstances are [...] situations in which goals [...] are [...] unclear, unknown, or vague, [and] contradictory interpretations are possible and probably present” (Jann 2015 p 303-304)

Managing public sports agencies

Given this very diverse set of goals managing a modern public sport agency also requires a wide range of managerial activities (Cavill et al. 2006):

- Collecting scientific evidence and use it for health policy. Public sports agencies in Finland, England and Switzerland are regularly doing this.
- Monitoring the level of physical activities among community members (citizens). In England large scale surveys about sporting activities have been conducted throughout the last couple of years.
- Reviewing evidence on what works in increasing physical activity to influence practice.
- Evaluation of sport-for-all practices. This is an area for improvement in most countries.

3. Case study A: The German state North Rhine Westphalia

The paper continues with two in-depth case studies on sporting organizations in Germany and England, the Landessportbund Nordrhein-Westfalen (LSB-NRW), and SportEngland. These two case studies exemplify that public sport agencies face multiple, ambiguous, complex, and sometimes contradictory agency goals. They further exemplify common pattern in service delivery.

The state ministry for sports

In Germany the 16 states (Länder) are responsible for the promotion of mass sports. Federal government in Germany only supports and finances competitive and high performance elite sports. Promotion of mass sports in the German states rests on multiple pillars:

- Government agencies and public sport agencies,
- sport governing bodies and organizations called *Sportverbände* (a German type of non-profit sports clubs),
- Local sport clubs.

The way how health promotion policies are actually delivered and implemented is subject to state regulation and thus varies from state to state. The system of the largest state, North-Rhine Westphalia (18 million inhabitants, Germany has 82 inhabitants in total), will be described as an example.

The ministry for children, families, culture and sports, MFKJKS, is responsible for policy making of mass sports. The ministry is not only responsible for mass sports but also for policy for families, culture, kids and youth policy. Within the overall ministry the functions for promotion of sports are split into five sub-departments (in German: *Referate*); not all five sub-departments deal with mass sports; some are responsible for elite sport (see Table 3). Table 3 displays selected functions and responsibilities of the five sub departments; the table also indicates the number of employees allocated to each sub department. The number of allocated working time is given in full time equivalents, '7.5 employees' means that seven civil servants working full-time and one civil servant working part-time have been assigned to the sub department. The work sharing plan of the ministry indicates that the policy goals have shifted from the traditional function of providing access to sport facilities to modern functions of mass sport policy:

- Promoting equality of opportunities in sport,
- the prevention of violence in sport,
- the fight against racism in sports,
- the fight against homophobia in sports,
- sport and science
- promotion of tourism
- sport and labor market
- Public relations and media

Table 3: Functions and staff size in a regional sporting organization: The ministry for children, families, culture and sports (MFKJKS) in the German state of North Rhine Westphalia (NRW)

Name and number of sub department within the overall ministry	Selected functions and responsibilities	Staff size (in full time equivalents)
51: Strategic and financial issues of sport and sport-for-all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintaining relationships with sport governing bodies - International sport affairs - Anti-doping - Promotion of mass sports - University sports 	7.5 employees
52: Sport facilities, Sport and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of excellent sport facilities - Funding of construction - Planning permits for sport facilities - Public Pools: Improvement of efficiency 	7.5 employees
53: High performance sports, competitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Talent seeking - Olympic training centers - High performance sports for the disabled - Sport competitions in schools 	4 employees
54: Sport for kids and youth, migrants; sport and science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - equality of opportunities in sport - prevention of violence in sport - fight against racism in sports - homophobia in sports - sport and science 	5 employees
55: Large scale sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - promotion of tourism - sport and labor market - PR and media 	3.5 employees

Notes: The number of allocated working time is given in full time equivalents, '7.5 employees' means that seven civil servants working full-time and one civil servant working part-time have been assigned to the sub department. Sources: Own compilation, based on the work sharing plan of the ministry (Geschäftsverteilungsplan)

https://www.mfkjks.nrw/sites/default/files/asset/document/2016_08_15_gvp_mfkjks.pdf.

Sport governing body: LSB NRW

The sport governing body in North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) is the Landessportbund Nordrhein-Westfalen (LSB NRW). The LSB NRW is the umbrella organization of 122 non-profit sport organizations at the local and city level covering some 19,000 sports clubs. About 500,000 citizens are volunteering in these 19,000 sports clubs, among them some 163,000 in training and competition activities; additional 31,000 persons are volunteering in accountancy for the sport clubs. The LSB NRW lobbies for its members, and consults schools on sports issues.

Similar to the pattern described above the ministry for children, families, culture and sports (MFKJKS) in the German state of North Rhine Westphalia (NRW) is responsible for policy making. The sport governing body is responsible for implementing the mass sport policies. The state funds the sport governing body; to this end the LSB NRW and the state government of North Rhine Westphalia both signed an “agreement for sports”. Over a four year period (2013-2017) the state government allocates 34 million euros to mass sport activities and programs. A special focus of the agreement is on promoting health enhancing activities among children from deprived families.

4. Case study B: England and Scotland

Sports-for-all became a public policy concern in the UK in the 1970ies. In 1975 a white paper concluded that sports are among a community’s every day needs. The focus of mass sports was on encouraging participation among target groups, e.g. deprived families, kids, and teenagers (Spracklen et al. 2006). In the 1980s and 1990s the *zeitgeist* shifted from the post war “consensus-politics of social democracy to the liberal individualism” (Spracklen et al. 2006, p. 490), an ideological turn which also influenced public sports policy. Mass-sports were no longer considered to be an essential part of welfare policy and many public leisure services were privatized accordingly (Henry and Theodoraki 2000, p. 491). The making of mass sports policy today results from a collaboration of national sport governing bodies, national sports organizations, local authorities, and also equity organizations.

Local authorities

In England local authorities are responsible for funding and delivering sport and recreation services. 326 local authorities are responsible for provision of parks, public swimming pools, and indoor sports facilities. They also provide the largest part of subsidies for sports and recreation (Gratton 1984, p. 59). Local governments in England in 2007 spent about 1 billion British

pounds in sports and leisure (Houlihan and Green 2009). Sport and recreation services in England are in a difficult situation since they have been under pressure due to severe budget cuts in central government funding since 2010 (Neil 2010). At the same time, as for most social services, it is difficult for mass sports policies to demonstrate social impact and value for money.

Models of service delivery vary across local authorities: some councils provide sports services themselves (in-house delivery), others use PPPs, while still others use third party suppliers (outsourcing) or transferred services to leisure trusts (Hull 2014, p. 12). Until 1988 English local councils managed sports facilities in-house. In 1988 Competitive Compulsory Tendering (CCT) was introduced, and councils shifted to management by contracts, and later to management by trusts. The share of trust-managed facilities is now at 21 percent (2006), facilities managed through contracts with private sector organizations account for 17 per cent of all local sporting facilities. “In England and Scotland, it is increasingly common for local authorities to deliver their sports services through third party provider.” (Hull 2014, p. 12) The majority of facilities are still managed directly by councils. Also the provision of sports and recreation services in community centers in England is fragmented: 83 community centers provide sport and recreational facilities, they are either run by competitive public, private and hybrid enterprises. In addition many local authorities ran their own sports centers (LAOs), and there are so called Leisure Trusts (Benson 2005, p. 252). The English Audit Commission (Audit Commission 2006) analyzed the three different models for service delivery of public indoor sport centers and swimming pools, namely in-house management, leisure trusts, and contracts with private sector providers. The Audit Commission concluded that “[n]o single approach delivers the best overall value of money, or higher levels of participation. However, providing services in-house is significantly more expensive, the effect increases over time.”

An even more important issue than the actual model of service delivery is the fact that policy implementation often lacks clear administrative structures and lines of accountability. A study from Neil King reports that “only 50% of authorities had dedicated staffing” for sports-for-all; and “33% did not have a ‘community sport’ unit” at all (King 2012). Seemingly a significant number of local public sport agencies in England maneuvers without a clear strategic guideline; “only 60 per cent of councils in England publish a stand-alone strategic document for sport and recreation services (SRS)” (King 2014, p. 154).

Sport governing body: SportEngland

SportEngland is the sport governing body which is responsible for mass sports. While SportEngland takes care about “grassroots sports”, its sister agency UKSport is responsible for supporting elite sports.

The main role of SportEngland is to strategically invest almost 500 million British pounds per year in 46 National Governing Bodies (NGBs). NGBs are “non-profit organizations, managing both professional and amateur sports, and administering the allocation of considerable amounts of funds, especially public funds.” (Taylor and O’Sullivan 2009) A current focus of funding activities is on closing the gender gap and on promoting physical activities among children and young people. To inform its decisions SportEngland uses and also publicly provides a benchmarking tool, the Local Sport Profile tool. This web-based tool contains data on sport participation, and demographics. In 2016 SportEngland had around 250 employees; 242 (2015: 244) permanent and fixed term temporary staff; and a total of 18 (2015: 12) agency staff. SportEngland is organized into six directorates: community sport, national governing bodies (NGBs) and sport, facilities and planning, insight, corporate services, and business partnerships.

The two major sport governing bodies, SportEngland and SportUK, saw a major administrative reform in the late 1990ies, when the New Labour government modernized the two key non-departmental public bodies for sport. The white paper which outlined the new strategy was fittingly entitled ‘Game Plan’. Game plan essentially stated that SportEngland and SportUK should focus on four key activities: 1. developing strategies for sports, 2. specifying, evaluating and monitoring contracts with third party suppliers, 3. advising and guiding local sport clubs, and 4. conducting sports-related research and collecting data to inform decision making (Houlihan and Greene 2009, p. 682). For local authorities new key performance indicators were developed by SportEngland and the former Audit Commission: Performance was now measured in terms of increased levels of participation, increased opportunities for volunteers, and easy access to sport facilities. After the reform SportEngland had more narrow objectives, and adopted business like principles and a command and control governance approach in dealing with stakeholders. Reducing the number of staff, from about 550 to around 250 today, was part of the modernization strategy. There is now more intense routine audit, KPIs and inspections for professional staff.

To address the diverse landscape of service provision on the local level the labor government in 2007 introduced so called community sports networks (CSN). In the run-up to the 2012 Olympic Games the aim was to improve the collaboration between local sports organizations to reach

national sports and health policy goals; the community sports networks covered local authority departments, and sport clubs among others. However, in an assessment of the CSN reform Colin Baker and his co-authors conclude that relationships between local sports departments and sport clubs are still diverse and diffuse (Baker et al. 2016). Similarly Dan Hull concludes that “[i]n England there is [still] little formal liaison between SportEngland and local authorities. Indeed, models of sports delivery vary across the complex network of 152 ‘upper tier’ authorities and the 326 ‘lower tier’ authorities” (Hull 2014, p. 11).

Managing collaborations across different sporting organizations thus remains a critical issue of mass sports policy in England. A second ongoing challenge is contract management in service provision. Mass sports policy heavily relies on sport governing bodies and local sport clubs. Managing these relationships is key essential for achieving both a high level of service quality and value for money. The study from Dan Hull (Hull 2014, p. 9) also reports that “UK Sport, Sport England and Sport NI [Northern Ireland] do not appear to have any kind of formal or structural relationship with local authorities (or local councils), although both Sport England and Sport NI do collaborate with local councils through the provision of funding, training, and some degree of strategic liaison.”

Scotland

In Scotland the national agency for sport is named SportsScotland; the agencies’ functions include advising the Scottish Government on sport policy, coordinating key deliverers of sport, allocating (“investing”) National Lottery and Scottish Government funding, and running own programs to Scottish athletes. According to its mission statement SportsScotland work[s] “with partners to build a world class sporting system for everyone in Scotland” (SportsScotland 2016). These partners include “local authorities and their leisure trusts, Scottish governing bodies of sport (SGBs), other representative bodies, sports clubs, higher and further education institutions and third sector organisations” (SportsScotland 2016). Similar to SportEngland one of the agencies’ main jobs is to allocate funding from the Scottish government and the national lottery to so called Scottish Governing Bodies of sport (SGBs). SGBs are autonomous, non-profit organizations that govern and administer a sport discipline in Scotland. Although volunteer-managed, many of these agencies have paid staff. The main functions of a governing body of sport include:

- Preparing and implementing a vision and a strategy for the sport
- Promoting the sport
- Managing the rules and regulations of the sport, including anti-doping

- Administrating officials to the sport
- Encouraging participation
- Developing athletes and coaches
- Organizing sport events

Dann Hull reports that collaboration among sporting organizations in Scotland and Wales is more developed compared to England: “Sport Scotland, Sport Wales and the Irish Sports Council all have regional offices, employ local sports officers with the explicit remit of liaising with local councils, and have set up some form of strategic forum at local authority level, such as Local Sports Partnerships or Local Sports Councils.” (Hull 2014, p. 9)

5. Mass sports in Australia, the United States, Norway, Greece, and China

The following section provides further evidence on policy goals and models of service delivery in Australia, the United States, China, Norway, and Greece. The sections demonstrates similarities and differences of mass sports policy in different administrative contexts.

Australia

Australia has an ambitious approach to sporting and recreation services. Similar to the UK community recreation became a priority of social policy in Australia in 1973 in the aftermath of the so called Bloomfield report. This priority was lost under following liberal governments; later there was an emphasis on lifestyle issues, typified by health and fitness campaigns (Collins 2006, p. 228). The government also issued a National Physical Activity Plan (Collins 2006).

The Australian Sports Commission is the government agency which is responsible for distributing funds and providing guidance for sporting activity. The agency is part of the ministry of health. Sport policies not solely focus on health problems of individuals. The Australian Sports Commission promotes a vigorous health and recreation scheme which also recognizes problems of child abuse, under-representation of women and minorities. Moreover sport policy attempted to balance elite sports and community sports, since there is a strong belief that sport clubs yields social support and social capital. The underlying idea of sport policy is that sport organizations generate an environment which supports population-wide changes in individual level behavior. In tightly defined areas (settings) government sponsors and sport organizations should influence individual behavior in an attempt “to make the healthier choice the easier choice” (Casey et al. 2010, p. 110). A main policy instrument is called health-related sponsorship of sport organizations. Health-related sponsorship means that sport clubs are sponsored by

government to implement smoking free areas, and to promote healthy food choices and safe alcohol practices. For example sport clubs are asked to ban alcohol from stadiums, or they are paid to transport health messages. This “active use of sport and recreation agencies to achieve broad public health objectives is a relatively new strategy by governments and health organizations” (Casey et al. 2010, p. 110). It is noteworthy that funding is only provided to a group of 67 selected disciplines (out of a total of 125 disciplines). “[T]he top 10 [sports] have 15 percent of participants but 51 percent of the total [state] funding” (Collins 2006, p. 229).

The United States: Physical activities in afterschool programs

Three facts about the United States exemplify the wide range of approaches to sporting and recreation services in the country. Health-promoting-physical activities for kids and teenagers often do not take place within a school setting solely, but are often delivered through community organizations. A small number of US states have established standards for physical activity in such afterschool programs (ASP) serving school age children (5-18 years), that is, how many sport teachers and instructors are needed for promoting afterschool physical activities. This is a kind of methodology for determine staff size in local sports organizations; the number of staff results from the number of school children attending such programs. In California the standard for the staff/student ratio is 1:20; in North Carolina the standard is a 1:15 staff/participant ratio (Beets et al. 2010, p. 414-415). However, a study of Beets, Wallner and Beighle (2010) reviewing state level policies for promoting physical activities within the ASP setting find that “[t]he majority of [US-] states (70%) lacks policies/standards regarding physical activity in the afterschool setting.” (Beets et al. 2010, p. 413) A noteworthy organization at the federal level is the President’s Council on Fitness, Sports and Nutrition (PCFSN). The agency’s staff size is eight persons, including an executive director, a manager of digital communications, and a manager for strategic Partnerships for minority and underserved populations. The council has been playing a prominent role in the government’s efforts to spread the message that is ‘cool’ to live a healthy lifestyle. Finally also the Secretary of Health and Human Services is partly responsible for promoting physical activities.

Norway

Norway serves as another European example for work-sharing arrangements in service provision: public sport agencies make sports policy; while volunteers in sport clubs implement them. “[T]he policy is most often made by full-time employees and takes place in a state department or in the central staff of the umbrella organization of sports, while the implementation of policy is usually conducted by volunteers in local sport clubs” (Skille 2008, p.

181). Sport policy and sport policy decision making in Norway results from interaction between public sport administration, elected decision makers, and sport organizations (e.g. the Norwegian sport confederation, Bergsgard and Rommetvedt 2006). Norway has some 7,000 sports organizations, 19 regional associations and 56 national associations. The Norwegian Olympic Committee (NOC) receives state funding and allocates state money to the sport organizations. NOC is highly autonomous regarding regulation and fund allocation (Enjolras and Waldahl 2007).

Greece

Delivery of sports and recreation services (SRS) heavily relies on local sport providing entities. The case of Greece reveals potential problems in the governance of voluntary sport clubs. These governance problems might result in mediocre quality of service delivery. Dimitra Papadimitriou (Papadimitriou 2002) studied 41 local sport clubs (LSC) in the third-largest city of Greece, Pankras. He reports that the overwhelming majority of local sport clubs (82 per cent) have technical staff of three to five employees, or even less. Scientific staff is rare, one in two local sports clubs has no additional scientific staff, and another 40 percent have between one and two scientific employees (Papadimitriou 2002, p. 211). Local sports clubs are based on voluntarism; and the number of volunteers clearly outperforms the full time staff. Table 4 reports the organizational size of Greek local sport clubs (in the year 2000) using different operationalization.

Table 4: Organizational size of Greece Local sport clubs (in year 2000), in terms of different operationalization

Active volunteers	In %
1-3 persons	19.5%
4-10	68.3%
11 and over	12.2%
Athlets served	
<50	31.7
51-200	46.3
201-500	12.2
501 and more	9.8
Technical staff	
1-2 employees	34.1
3-5	48.8

6 or more	17.1
Scientific staff	
None	48.8
1-2	39
3 or more	12.2

Notes: Source: Papadimitriou (2002) p. 211.

Only few volunteers participate in leadership, and day-to-day operations of the Greek LSCs (Papadimitriou 2002, p. 212). Technical staff is a necessity, but LSCs at that time had not understood the importance of scientific staff for success, like doctors or physiotherapists. This weakens the opportunities for improvement. Greece LSC often have an informal design, but decision making is highly centralized, there is an excessive concentration of power on one or two board members. Another reported problem is that volunteers with insufficient knowledge decide on important matters, like management of coaches, procurement of equipment; and they completely lack standards and standard operating procedures (SOP) for routine actions (Papadimitriou 2010 p. 213-214). Division of labor between board members and technical staff remains unclear, due to information agreements, concentration of power but high reliance on volunteers.

Another issue is inappropriate funding of local sports clubs. In the year 2000 a local sports club in Greece received 15,000 Euros of government funding on average. However, local sports clubs report that they lack success because they lack significant financial resources to secure survival (Papadimitriou 2002, p. 211).

Yet another issue is that Greek local sport clubs deliver services only for a very narrow set of popular disciplines, usually basketball, volleyball, or handball. Most Olympic sports, like swimming, cycling, gymnastics, and table tennis are missing (Papadimitriou 2002, p. 212). Sport service delivery through LSC is strongly biased towards popular sports, and so is public funding.

China

The case of China serves as an example of mass sports policy in emerging economies. In China Grassroots sport activities in China have been heavily promoted since a governmental white paper in 1995; the underlying aim was to improve health and fitness, among kids in particular, but also among workers and intellectuals. Back then the Chinese government introduced a six-pillar network to fund mass sport activities: a sports lottery fund was introduced, additionally central government provides funds to sport providing entities; local authorities are required to

allocate their funds more efficiently. In the central level there is a China General Administration of Sport (CGAS), while in cities voluntary sport organizations emerged, providing citizens with choice about their physical activities (Huan 2007). The city of Guangzhou serves as an example of local sporting strategies. Guangzhou's sports-forall strategy includes four main objectives: 1) developing sport facilities; 2) providing diverse sport activities; 3) establishing a service delivering system; 4) evaluating citizens' physical fitness. The city also wants to develop a methodology for efficient use of human resources to fulfil "people's needs for leisure" (Chin et al. 2007).

Mass sports policy in China follows the common model of top-down funding, while implementation on the ground heavily relies on local sporting clubs. Mass sports policy in China focuses on the traditional objective of providing sporting facilities. But it is also evident that government has a strong interest in an efficient use of public money and human resources.

6. Challenges for modern mass sports policy

This section identifies and discusses five challenges for modern mass sports policy: tracking the quality of public service delivery, the link between outcomes and impacts, goal ambiguity and complexity, staff size, and managing collaborations in a hyper-complex environment.

Tracking the quality of public service delivery

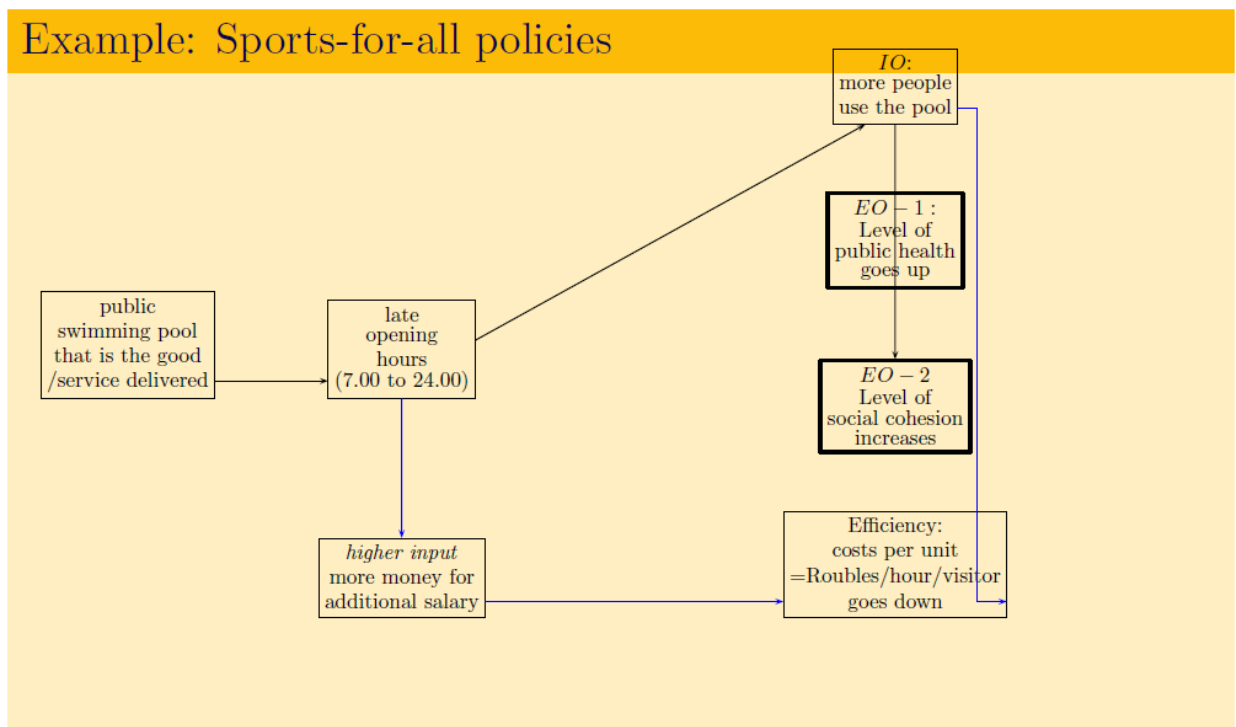
Performance measurement enables public officials "to identify where progress is, and is not, being made" (Hatry 2015 p. 331). Given the set ambiguous policy goals described above tracking the quality of service delivery is getting more complex. Since performance has multiple dimensions and policy programs usually have multiple elements, a single indicator is seldom sufficient to measure overall performance. There is a "need for multiple types of performance indicators" (Hatry 2015 p. 333), including

- Output indicators (the amount of work completed),
- Outcome indicators (intermediate, IO and end-outcome EO), and
- Efficiency indicators, which capture the amount of cost to amount of product, and are usually reported as cost per unit of product, or output, e.g. average costs per customer served (Hatry 2015 p. 333, 334).

The link between outcomes and impacts

Effective service delivery requires a clear understanding about what impacts are likely to result from a particular activity or output (treatment effect). Figure 1 depicts an outcome sequence diagram for a traditional activity of public sports agencies: providing access to a public pool. Such outcome sequence diagrams, or logic models, serve as a mental map, a map in which activities, outputs, and outcomes are causally related to each other.

Figure 1: Sequence outcome diagram



Notes: Own figure.

In the example depicted in Figure 1 the policy goal is to promote a healthy lifestyle among community members. In other words a public sport agency intends to nudge people to do sports regularly. To this end the agency provides access to a public pool (=public good provided. I gloss over a potential discussion whether access to a pool is actually a public good. Technically people can be excluded from its consumption, namely if they do not pay their user fee and are simply denied access to the facility. But generally the purpose is to provide access to all community members. For-profit fitness clubs also offer pools; but doing so is driven by a different objective, namely making a profit). To increase the level of mass sport activities the public sporting agency running the public pool introduces longer opening hours, say, until noon (=administrative activity, work completed: longer opening hours=output). Regular people have

to work during the day, and unusually wish to spend early evening hours with their family. A pool which is open until midnight allows them to go swimming in the late evening. The expected intermediate outcome (IO) is that more people will go swimming; the level of public health is likely to increase (=end-outcome, EO-1). Also the level of social cohesion is likely to increase (EO-2, end-outcome 2). According to the diagram longer opening hours will help to achieve the policy goal of promoting a healthy lifestyle among community members by providing easy access to sport facilities. Public managers may expect the level of public health and cohesion to rise because they might expect more people to go swimming in the late evening. On the expenditure side longer opening hours require more input since additional staff needs to be hired. However, since more people are expected to use the pool the efficiency of the pool, in terms of costs per unit service is likely to increase as well.

Goal ambiguity and complexity

Figure 1 implies a high level of understanding about cause-effect relationships between organizational output, outcome and efficiency indicators. In contrast for policy goals like promoting racial and gender equity and diversity there is a low level of understanding about cause-effect relationships between organizational output, outcome and efficiency indicators. The same goes for the policy goals fighting doping, harassment and child abuse. A low level of understanding about what actions are likely to yield what results additionally increases the level of goal ambiguity and complexity.

Staff size

Mass sports policies in Europe, North America, Australia and China have in common that public sport agencies set broad targets and strategies (policy making), but it is the task of voluntary non-for profit organizations to implement these sport policies on the ground. Because voluntary non-for profit organizations are responsible for delivering policies, public sports agencies employ relatively little own staff. The German State ministry for children, families, culture and sports in North Rhine Westphalia employs 27.5 civil servants related to sports; and not even all of them deal with amateur sports. Non-for-profit sport governing organizations have much more staff. For examples SportEngland has about 250 employees (down from about 450 in the mid-1990s). In other countries local authorities are responsible for providing, running and maintaining facilities for mass-sports, but often they outsource these services.

Given the rather small number of civil servants directly involved in service provision public sport agencies hardly make use of methodologies to determine their staff size. There are only a

couple of standards (e.g. in some US states) how many staff is needed in school related sport activities. Virtually no research exists on determining staff size in public sport organizations. The analysis of sport agencies' activities suggests that for public sporting organizations the question is not 'how many staff do we need', but

- What policy goals do we want to achieve in mass sports? I argued that policy goals have shifted to issues like gender equity and diversity, among many others.
- What is an appropriate and fair level of funding? How much money do we spend, which disciplines do we fund (and which not), and according to what formula?
- What is the value for money (VfM) from public funding of sporting organizations, in terms of public health and social capital?

Managing collaborations in an hyper-complex environment

Sport policy results from coordinated actions of various government and non-for-profit actors; mass sports policy is thus hyper-complex and hyper-interdependent: Interdependence means that "power is shared among [...] layers of government, even within policy sectors. Nearly any [policy] change requires mutual accommodation among several layers of government." (O'Toole 2015 p. 65) Hyper-interdependence means that it is difficult to anticipate the consequences of any given action, operating strategically is though. Complexity means that the number actors which are involved in decision making and policy implementation "is large [...], no one participant can possess enough information [...] to consistently make rational decisions on his own " (O'Toole 2015 p. 65) Hyper interdependence and network complexity result in "high levels of uncertainty and risk as public administrators seek to coordinate people and resources [...] whose moves can be anticipated and planned for only partially" This is a significant constraint for effective service delivery. Governments allocate money to local sport clubs via centralized and hegemonic sporting governing bodies. Sport subsidies from the state traditionally go to monopolistic umbrella organizations; it is questionable whether this is an effective policy instrument. "Differentiation is needed to challenge the hegemonic structures and institutional relationships" (Skille 2011). And a handful of popular sports, e.g. football, get the biggest part of public sports funding. Other important disciplines, like swimming, are underfunded. Funding schemes have to be revised.

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