

Aus dem Institut für
Sportökonomie und Sportmanagement
der Deutschen Sporthochschule Köln
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**Voluntary Sports Clubs' (Wider) Societal Role:
An Empirical Investigation of EU Sport Policy**

von der Deutschen Sporthochschule Köln
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades

Doktor der Philosophie (Dr. phil.)

angenommene Dissertation

vorgelegt von

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Köln 2019

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Datum der Disputation: 16.12.2019

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Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Prof. Dr. Christoph Breuer for the support of my Ph.D. study – for his patience, motivation, and guidance in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

Further, I would like to thank Prof. Dr. Jürgen Mittag for his willingness to review. I thank PD Dr. Pamela Wicker for providing me a "*kick-start*" in academic writing. Svenja (the best gatekeeper), thank you for the continuous training in data preparation of large scale surveys, providing me with all the journal articles an external PhD-student can't access, and your rigorous proofreading. Johannes, thank you for the shared love of L^AT_EX.

In addition, I would like to extend my gratitude to my mother, father, family, and friends for continuous encouragement.

Dedication

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED WITH LOVE AND AFFECTION TO MY WIFE CINDY.
MERCI POUR TON SOUTIEN MORAL, TA PATIENCE ET TA COMPRÉHENSION TOUT
AU LONG DE CE PROJET!

LOUISE JOSEPHINE ET MARIE AUGUSTINE – THIS ONE IS ALSO FOR YOU!

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List of Abbreviations

CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CPM	Cost per mille
DG EAC	Directorate General for Education and Culture
DFB	German Football Association
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
GOLogit	Generalized ordered logit model
HLG	High Level Group on Grassroots Sport
HR	Human resources
SNCESE	Not-for-profit European sport event
RC	Regional coordinator
RQ	Research question
SCP	Collaborative partnership
SSCP	Small collaborative partnership
OC	Organizational capacity
UEFA	Union des Associations Européennes de Football
UN	United Nations
VSC	Voluntary sports club
WPS	Work Plan on Sport

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1 Introduction

All people should be free to practise sport and to feel a part of society, and different sectors related to sport can do what is in their capacity to foster integration as well as to provide equal opportunities to engage in sport and avoid discrimination and social exclusion.

The Council of the European Union (2018, p.24)

1.1 Research Problem and Research Questions

The significant and growing impact of sport on Europe's economy and society is reflected in the fact that public sport policy has gained supranational status with the Lisbon treaty (European Commission, 2019d; European Union, 2012). Upon the enactment of the treaty, the European Union (EU) received supporting and coordinating competencies in the area of sport (Mittag, 2018a). Since 2011, three *Work Plans on Sport* (WPS) have been adopted (The Council of the European Union, 2011, 2014, 2017). Together with the *White Paper for Sport* (European Commission, 2007) and *The Communication on Developing the European Dimension in Sport* (European Commission, 2011), the WPS outline the areas of activities of the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) – the branch of the European Commission (EC) charged with Education, Training, Youth, Sport, and Culture. The DG EAC is responsible for the development of an evidence-based policy with respect to the societal role, the economic dimension, and the organization of sport and manages initiatives and activities to raise the profile and awareness of sport in policy-making while prioritizing public goods such as social inclusion in and through sport, the promotion of common European values, the fight against intolerance, and protecting the integrity of sports (European Commission, 2019b; 2019c).

In a (social) market economy like the EU (c.f. Claassen, Gerbrandy, Princen, & Segers, 2018), sporting services with positive externalities that contribute to the welfare of society are likely to be under-provided by profit actors (Feiler, Wicker, & Breuer, 2015; Gratton & Taylor, 2000). Such market failure (Weisbrod, 1986) – infused with a climate of austerity across European countries (Collins & Haudenhuyse, 2015) – led to increased attention to the participation in grassroots sport (Skille & Stenling, 2018; The Council of the European Union, 2017; The European Parliament, 2012). Grassroots sport can be defined

as (non-) organized physical leisure activity, practiced regularly at the local level by amateur sportspeople for health, educational or social purposes (European Commission, 2016, European Commission, 2019a). In 2015, the DG EAC set up a High Level Group on Grassroots Sport (HLG) to evaluate the place and the role of grassroots sport in the EU. In its final report, the HLG recommended prioritizing grassroots sport in future WPS and encouraged research that (re-) evaluates the societal benefits of the participation in grassroots sport (European Commission, 2016). Sport's grassroots in the EU are traditionally formed by non-profit voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) which provide the organizational basis for mass sport participation and characterize the European sports model (Feiler, Wicker, & Breuer, 2018; Vos et al., 2012). It is also at the grassroots level where the system of policy implementation intersects with the VSC's community and area of operation (Skille & Stenling, 2018). Due to their organizational dominance, structures, and extensive voluntary engagement, VSCs are increasingly urged to act as policy implementers based on the expectation that they fulfill policies less expensive and less bureaucratic than public actors (e.g., Breuer, Feiler, Llopis-Goig, & Elmoose-Østerlund, 2017; Vandermeersch, Meganck, Seghers, Vos, & Scheerder, 2017). Grassroots sports clubs can be considered as multifunctional aids to public welfare that have the potential to build bridges between the public sector and groups of society that are prone to social exclusion (Breuer & Nowy, 2015; Heinemann, 1999). Their capability to link with the grassroots of society through the provision of sporting services to groups affected by social exclusion makes VSCs important locations in which societal solidarity actually happens (see also Badelt, 1999).

However, the conditions under which VSCs could implement (social) sport policy more efficiently and effectively still need to be evaluated in more detail because they are founded initially to serve as the organizational unit oriented towards the interests of club members – and not as governmental agents for wider societal goals (Breuer, Feiler, & Wicker, 2015; Fahlén & Karp, 2010; Nagel, 2008). Accordingly, the willingness and capacity to adhere to policy goals or serve as a tool for governmental policy are quite heterogeneous among VSCs (Badelt & Weiss, 1990; May, Harris, & Collins, 2013; Stenling & Fahlén, 2016). The relationship between sports clubs and public policy makers may be "*hardly new or surprising*" (Waardenburg, 2016, p. 38). Yet, research in this context was mostly conducted at the national or local level (e.g., May et al., 2013; Stenling & Fahlén, 2016). Except for the work of Skille and Stenling (2018) and Corthouts et al. (2019), respective studies at the grassroots club level, "*the backbone of the sport delivery system*" (Slack, 2014, p. 459), are still scarce.

As a consequence thereof, the present thesis aims to contribute to the development of evidence-based EU sport policy and close existing research gaps based on a solid theoretical foundation. It centers around five main research questions (RQs) that guide the investigation on priority areas of EU sport policy concerning a (wider) societal role of VSCs. The evaluated policy areas were selected after a thorough analysis of policy documents from various EU institutions (e.g., European Commission, 2007, 2014, 2015, 2018; European Union, 2014; The Council of the European Union, 2010; The European Parliament, 2017). It is clearly indicated by the respective documents that VSCs are expected to function as providers of societal benefits (see Figure 1.1).

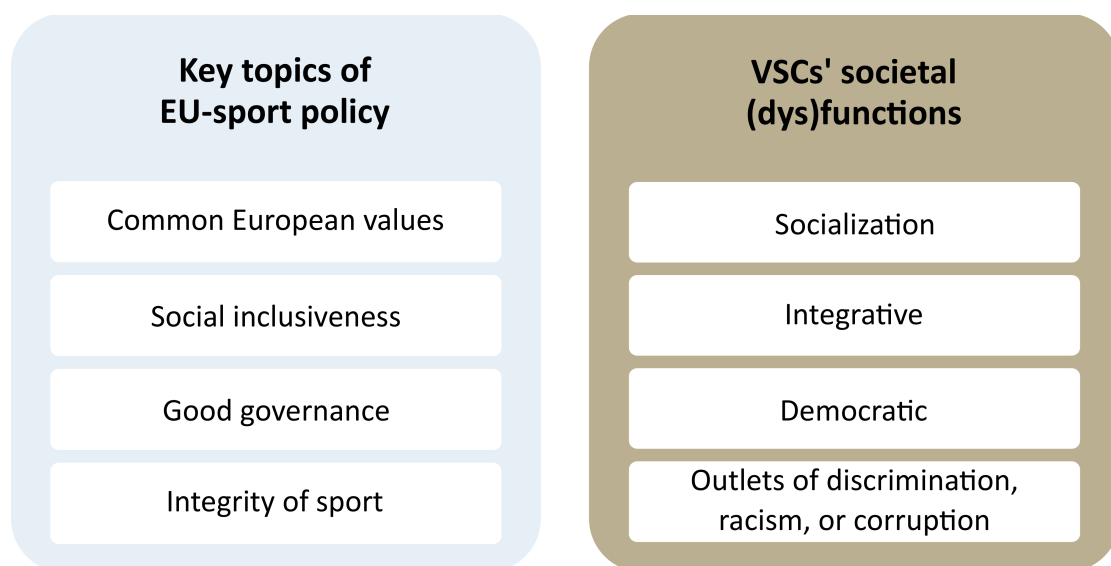


Figure 1.1 Key topics of EU-sport policy and VSCs' societal (dys)functions.

In functional analysis, society is generally analyzed in terms of its own workings as a system, with functions defined as observed consequences which make for the adaptation or adjustment of a given system (Berger, 1963; Merton, 1968). The examination of the consequences of social structures such as VSCs also includes whether the consequences contribute positively (functions) or negatively (dysfunctions) to the stability of society (Brinkerhoff, White, Ortega, & Weitz, 2008). Consequently, an empirical and analytical functional analysis should consist of studying functions of social structures *and* their dysfunctions (Merton, 1968). The current thesis considers the societal functions of VSCs to lay in the production of welfare effects that go beyond the utility maximization of club members (see also Mayntz, 1992; Rittner & Breuer, 2004). Those include socialization effects through the promotion of sport-specific norms and values (e.g., Elbe et al., 2018; Heinemann, 2005), integrative effects concerning marginalized

groups of society (e.g., Delaney, 2015; Malcolm, 2008), and the development of a positive understanding of democracy by club members (e.g., Newton, 2001; Waardenburg, 2016). The investigated dysfunctions within the VSC context include the elements discrimination, racism, or corruption (e.g., Andreff, 2018; Szymanski & Andreff, 2006).

The thesis's first RQ aims to determine the extent to which VSCs offering football in three EU countries intend to meet policy expectations with respect to fulfilling societal functions:

RQ1 To which extent are VSCs committed to emphasize societal functions that are highlighted in EU Work Plans on Sport?

Subsequently, facilitators and constraints for a desirably (wider and) positive societal role of VSCs are investigated from an organizational capacity perspective (Hall et al., 2003). Accordingly, the second RQ reads:

RQ2 Which organizational capacities can be considered as facilitators and constraints for VSCs' (wider) societal role?

The latest WPS explicitly considers grassroots sports as a tool for social integration of marginalized groups of society (The Council of the European Union, 2017). According to public policy rhetoric, programs and projects aiming to introduce marginalized members of society to sporting and leisure activities result in social contacts which are favorable for more connectivity with the host country (Waardenburg, Visschers, Deelen, & van Liempt, 2018). The evidence on such integrative power, however, remains largely anecdotal and the conflict between policy and practice is evident (McDonald, Dukic, & Spaaij, 2019; Hatzigeorgiadis, Morela, Elbe, Kouli, & Sanchez, 2013; Jeanes, O' Connor, & Alfrey, 2015). Nevertheless, public institutions in Europe continuously attempt(ed) to compel VSCs to provide integrative efforts towards marginalized groups of society, including refugees (Coalter, 2007; Stenling & Fahlén, 2016; Vos et al., 2011; Waardenburg et al., 2018). Civil society in mainland Europe – and VSCs in particular – have been affected by unprecedented numbers of refugees in recent years (Anderson et al., 2019; Breuer, Feiler, & Nowy, 2017). Recent studies in this context highlight the urgent need for more empirical research on the question of how VSCs can contribute to the process of integrating refugees – which are not the *traditional* target group of VSCs (Seiberth, Thiel, & Hanke, 2018; Waardenburg et al., 2018). Such research should be based on appropriate theoretical foundations and focus on the meso-level of organized sport, i.e., the grassroots sports club level (Michelini, Burrmann, Nobis, Tuchel, & Schlesinger, 2018; Skille & Stenling,

2018; Suzuki, 2017). The second included study (Chapter 3), therefore, fills the void of respective research by investigating VSCs' engagement in the process of integrating refugees. A representative sample of Germany's VSC population is used to empirically answer the thesis's third RQ:

RQ3 Which organizational and external factors drive a VSCs' engagement in the process of integrating refugees?

Another key topic within the WPS that should be prioritized by EU member states and the EC concerns the integrity of sport – and, in particular, the fight against match-fixing (The Council of the European Union, 2011, 2014). Match-fixing as a sub-dimension of corruption threatens the integrity of the game and has become a considerable problem in the European sports club context (Andreff, 2018; Gorse, Chadwick, & Byers, 2014; Haberfeld & Sheehan, 2013). Nonetheless, previous research on match-fixing has mainly focused on the documentation of such cases on the professional sports level (e.g., Gorse et al., 2014; Maennig, 2005; Streppelhoff, 2015), individual participation in match-fixing (Pitsch, Emrich, & Pierdzioch, 2015) or was of rather conceptual nature (e.g., Caruso, 2009; Forrest, 2013). The limited published research in the area of match-fixing has been characterized by a lack of consensus about the drivers and effects that actually constitute it, a lack of empirical evidence on the organizational level and/or international scale, and has often been based on weak theoretical foundations (Emrich & Pierdzioch, 2015; Gorse et al., 2014; Numerato, 2016). In order to overcome those short-comings, Chapter 4 investigates match-fixing from a sociological and economic perspective framed by the concept of organizational capacity and discusses potential drivers and effects. The focus is set on European grassroots football in order to answer the thesis's fourth and fifth RQ:

RQ4 Is match-fixing a serious organizational problem of European grassroots football clubs?

RQ5 Which organizational capacities – alone and in concert – can be considered protective factors against the organizational problem match-fixing – and if they are, how can they be explained theoretically?

A central contribution of the included studies to the current body of literature on the societal (dys)functions of VSCs can be seen in shifting the level of policy analysis to the EU level. Moreover, the present thesis contributes to evidence-based EU-sport policy by empirically evaluating potential facilitators and constraints. As a *by-product*, evidence on pressing societal issues of sport management, namely gender equality in leadership structures, integration of

refugees, and match-fixing is provided. A theoretical contribution lays in the advancement of the framework of organizational capacity since the framework is enriched by considering additional appropriate theoretical concepts, for example, information-decision-making model, institutional logics, and public secrecy. Also, the thesis answers the call of Doherty, Misener, and Cuskelly (2014), in which research in this context is suggested to examine the relative impact of each capacity dimension and its elements on club goal achievement with the help of larger samples.

The present introduction is structured in the following manner. First, the theoretical framework is presented; this includes the conceptualization of the (wider) societal role of VSCs and an introduction to the concepts of organizational capacity and institutional logics. Second, the focus and contribution of the included studies are presented.

1.2 Central Concepts

1.2.1 The (Wider) Societal Role of Voluntary Sports Clubs

VSCs as non-profit organizations impact their members, community and society at large "*like a ripple effect of a stone dropped into a pond*" (Edwards et al., 2015, p. 1543). The impact begins with the VSC's capacity to provide activities and a central sense of belonging for its members (Edwards et al., 2015). Eventually, and "*as a direct consequence of the organisational practices*" (Onyx, 2014, p. 14), VSCs induce changes to people's way of life, their shared customs and values, and their community's cohesion and character (Vanclay, 2003).

In their study on the societal relevance of organized sport in Germany, Rittner and Breuer (2004) demonstrated that VSCs are important actors and suppliers with respect to the welfare production of a society. A given society benefits through the sheer existence of VSCs as they satisfy the demand for organized sport, competition and social activities that generally aim to enhance physical fitness (see also Breuer, 2005; Mayntz, 1988; Mittag, 2018b). VSCs are the organizational unit that provides benefits for its members – individuals that are not members of the club are generally not able to enjoy the described benefits. Next to their mandate to provide programs and services for members, clubs additionally impact their community and society at large through external effects of their organizational activities (Robertson, Eime, & Westerbeek, 2018). Observable consequences for society – i.e., societal functions (Merton, 1986) – include socializing

effects through the promotion of sport-specific norms and values (such as fair play and respect), integrative effects concerning marginalized members of society, and a higher appreciation and application of democratic principles. Through their functions sports clubs may play a vital role in improving societal cohesion by serving as (local) platforms of societal identification (Heinemann, 1999; Nicholson, Brown, & Hoyer, 2013; Sommerfeldt, 2013). As such multi-functional aids to welfare, VSCs accomplish (governmental) tasks of social services to a significant extent and even obtain public character (Heinemann, 1999). Following Badelt (1999), it can be followed that VSCs – with their capability to link with the grassroots of society – bundle the production of collective goods and services to their members (operating as a mutual benefit association) and to the public (society at large; operating as a public benefit association) that vary with respect to the collectiveness of output.

EU policy documents likewise emphasize the important potential of sport with respect to inclusive societies (e.g., European Commission, 2007). The organized sport movement – represented at the meso-level by VSCs – is assumed to promote common European values, i.e., respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law and respect for human rights – including the rights of persons belonging to minorities: "*These values bind Europeans together and are worth fighting for*" (The Council of the European Union, 2018, p. 23).

It may not be ignored, however, that VSCs produce negative externalities resulting from their organizational activities (see also Rittner & Breuer, 2004; Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson, & Tayleur, 2015). Negative externalities can result from, for example, incidents of discrimination, violence, or racism during match-days or any issue that undermines the integrity of sport such as match-fixing. Such darker sides of sport not only affect club members, but can be considered as dysfunctions that affect the welfare of society at large (Brinkerhoff, White, Ortega, & Weitz, 2008). Mitigating negative consequences and actively combating darker sides can be considered as a central element of the welfare orientation of grassroots sports (see also Rittner & Breuer, 2004; Robertson et al., 2018) and has been recognized as a priority in the field of sport policy at the European level (e.g., European Commission, 2017). Furthermore, such darker sides have the potential to cause negative publicity and raise doubts on the beneficial societal contributions of sports (Andreff, 2018; Breuer & Nowy, 2018). Consequently, sport governing bodies and clubs have initiated systematic efforts (e.g., DFB, 2017; UEFA, 2017) to ensure continuous public (financial) support.

For the sake of reducing complexity, and in line with Mayntz (2001), a selective perspective on the (wider) societal role of VSCs is taken. Consequently, the present thesis focuses on welfare effects of VSCs that go beyond the utility maximization of club members (see also Mayntz, 1992; Rittner & Breuer, 2004). A particular emphasis is put on key priorities in the WPS: development of social and citizenship values, social inclusiveness, and (the avoidance of) dysfunctions (Figure 1.2).

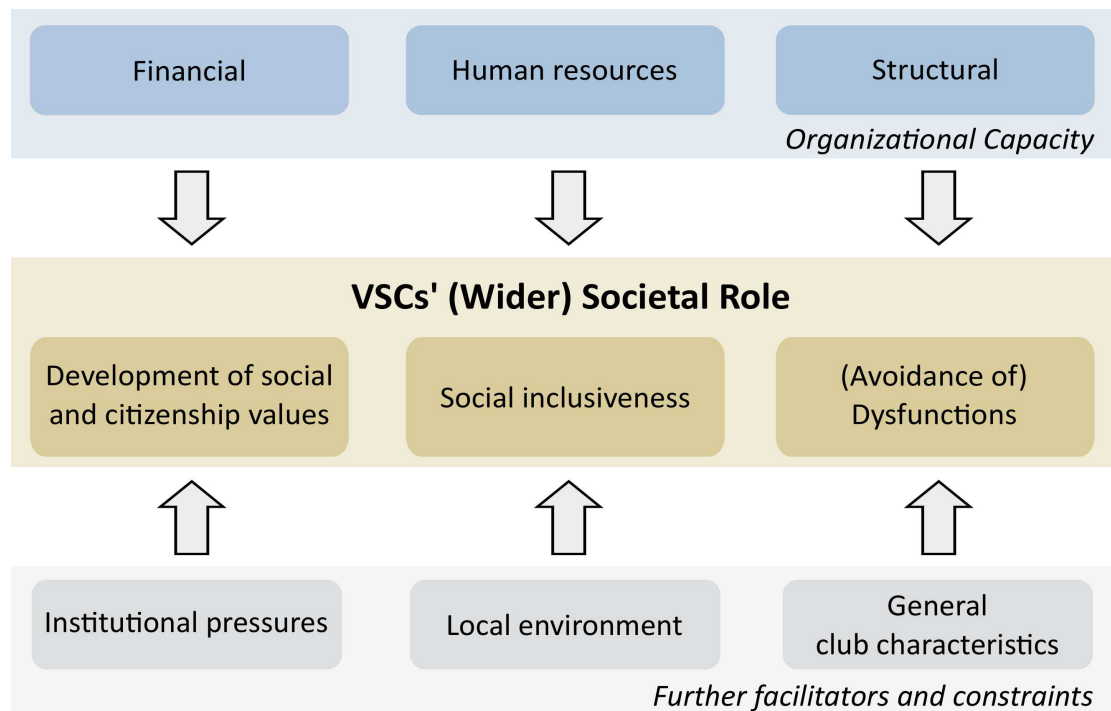


Figure 1.2 Conceptual model for a (wider) societal role of VSCs.

1.2.2 Organizational Capacity

In order to meet organizational goals and, eventually, to take on a wider societal role, VSCs at the grassroots level rely on organizational capacity – the ability to draw on or deploy various assets and resources (Hall et al., 2003). Interest in the concept of capacity has significantly increased in the past decades among scholars in the non-profit literature and among funders such as federal governments (see also Bryan, 2019; Eisinger, 2002). A well-established model of organizational capacity in the VSC context (e.g., Balduck, Lucidarme, Marlier, & Willem, 2015; Doherty et al., 2014) that allows a holistic analysis of relevant factors for goal achievement (Millar & Doherty, 2016) was developed by Hall et al. (2003) for the Canadian non-profit sector and includes three main dimensions: human resources (HR), financial and structural capacity.

HR capacity can be considered the key element that affects all other capacity dimensions and refers to "*the ability to deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and volunteers) within the organization*" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 5). This capacity dimension has been a primary research focus within the VSC context (e.g., Breuer & Nowy, 2018; Kitchen & Crossin, 2018; Millar & Doherty, 2016).

The second crucial dimension of organizational capacity is financial capacity (Hall et al., 2003). VSCs operate under the non-distribution constraint (Hansmann, 1980), they do not follow profit-maximization goals (Breuer, Feiler et al., 2015); however, they still need to manage their financial sustainability (Nowy, Wicker, Feiler, & Breuer, 2015). Previous research suggested that European VSCs are likely to report notoriously low financial resources and substantial financial problems (e.g., Breuer, Hoekman, Nagel, & van der Werff, 2015; Wicker, Breuer, Lamprecht, & Fischer, 2014). Revenue diversification and resource acquisition were found to be critical as they give more flexibility to achieve club goals (e.g., Doherty et al., 2014; Wicker & Breuer, 2013).

The third dimension of organizational capacity, structural capacity, is the ability to deploy or rely on infrastructure, processes and practices, culture, and support structures within the organization that help it to function effectively (Hall et al., 2003). It refers to "*the ability to deploy non-financial capital that remains when the people from an organization have gone home*" (Hall et al., 2003). This capacity dimension can be subdivided into three components: planning and development, relationship and network, and infrastructure and process. Planning was found to be a critical issue for grassroots clubs (Misener & Doherty, 2009); however, Wicker and Breuer (2013) reported that only a few clubs have strategic plans in place. Relationship and network capacity refers to an organization's ability to build and maintain relationships with external stakeholders and includes the engagement with partners and balanced relationships (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016). Infrastructure and process capacity results from the effective use of infrastructure, processes, and organizational culture (Hall et al., 2003). Crucial capacities in this dimension refer to (sporting) facilities and elements of formalization (Doherty et al., 2014; Svensson & Hambrick, 2016). Organizational culture consists of cultural and socio-structural systems (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984). Both systems were found to contribute to organizational effectiveness in the grassroots sports club context (e.g., Wicker & Breuer, 2013).

All organizational capacity dimensions are expected to influence organizational achievement (here: a (positive) societal role) alone and in concert (Breuer & Nowy, 2015; Hall et al., 2003). General club characteristics and the (local) environment and institutional pressures from the (local) economic, legal, and regulatory environment in which the VSC is operating in, are considered as further potential facilitators and constraints.

1.2.3 Institutional Pressures

Institutional pressures affect the club's ability to produce desired societal outcomes (Fahlén & Karp, 2010; Hall et al., 2003). In this thesis's context, VSCs are likely to be influenced by (increased) EU expectations in terms of policy goals concerning societal problems (see also Corthouts et al., 2019) and coercive pressures through regulations and conditioned subsidies (Badelt & Weiss, 1990; Vandermeerschen et al., 2017). Moreover, originally volunteer-based grassroots clubs are subject to increasing pressure for more professional management in and by governing bodies (Adriaanse & Schofield, 2014; Ferkins & Shilbury, 2015; Nagel, Schlesinger, Bayle, & Giauque, 2015). Such institutional pressures create a tendency to take on attributes of other organizations they interact with and/or depend on. As a consequence, organizations become more and more homogeneous within their organizational field (Edwards et al., 2009; Vos et al., 2011).

The role of VSCs as (sport) policy implementers is often analyzed from an institutional logics perspective (e.g., Skille, 2011; Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011; Stenling & Fahlén, 2016). Institutional logics can be understood as the formal and informal rules of behavior and interaction which guide and limit decision-makers in achieving the tasks of the organization to acquire social status (Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011). Such rules comprise a set of values and assumptions about an organization's reality, appropriate behavior, and success (March & Olsen, 1989). Institutional logics are influenced by institutional pressures stemming from any actor that has the potential to sanction an organization for not complying with wishes or demands (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Fahlén & Karp, 2010; Vos et al., 2011). The current body of literature implies that VSCs are not only heterogeneous with respect to institutional logics but that there is a lack of research on how such logics affect VSCs' willingness to comply to or act upon governmental policies, programs and expectations (e.g., Stenling & Fahlén, 2016; Waardenburg, 2016). When VSCs are expected to embark on EU policy goals successfully, it is necessary that their institutional logic(s) normatively align with the values promulgated in policy (Garrett, 2004).

1.3 Focus and contribution of each chapter

1.3.1 Facilitators and constraints for a wider societal role

The first included paper in this thesis (Chapter 2) focuses on the deliberate consequences of VSCs' organizational activities, i.e., manifest functions in the sense of Berger (1963). In particular, it is investigated to which degree VSCs are committed to three different dimensions of a (wider) societal role specified in the EU WPS (Figure 1.3). A special focus is set on the relationship between (increased) gender diversity on VSCs' boards and the societal welfare production.

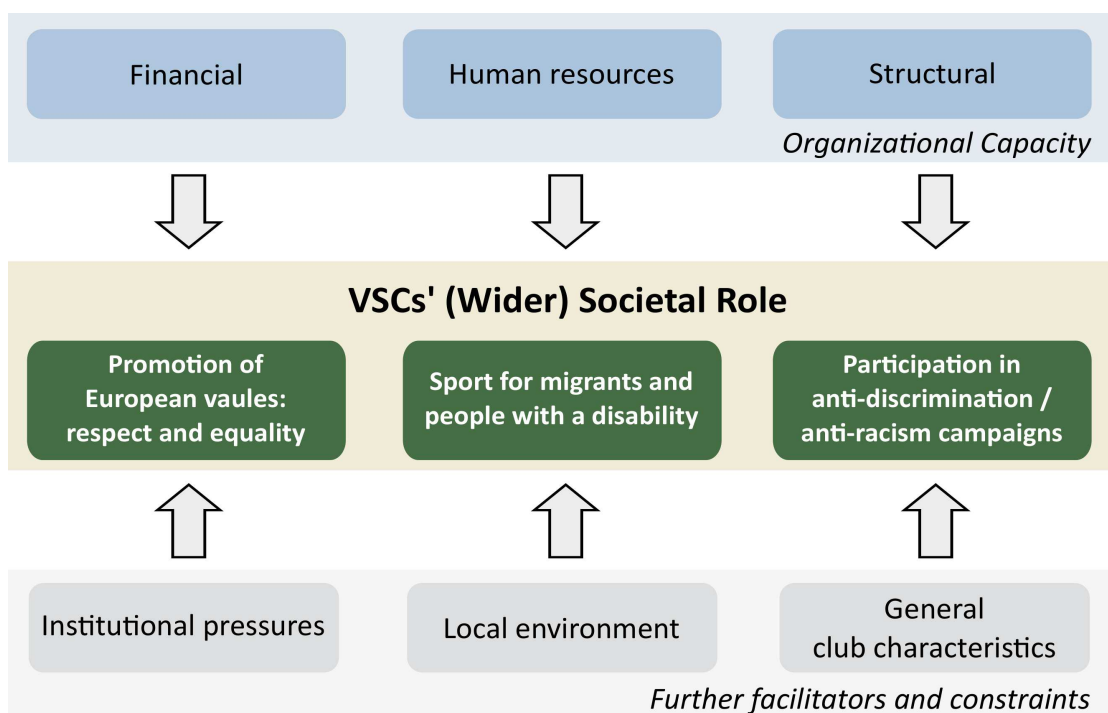


Figure 1.3 Focus of Study #1 (RQ 1 and RQ 2).

With the help of data on $n=1,586$ grassroots football clubs in Germany, Italy and Poland, and seven logistic regression models, it can be demonstrated that the sampled grassroots football clubs generally intend to take on a wider societal role next to their original purpose of serving their members. The majority reports to be committed in the promotion of the European value RESPECT and the provision of football for people with a migration background. However, significant differences across the countries exist, and the commitment to integrate people with a disability and the commitment to fight intolerance is far less pronounced. The statistical models accentuate that higher female board representation is relevant and beneficial for a VSC's fulfillment of societal functions.

The study contributes to the existing body of literature as it provides an understanding of *how* women may change board dynamics; it demonstrates that gender diversity at the board level can be considered as a beneficial organizational capacity – even after controlling for other capacity dimensions. Moreover, the study highlights that the fulfillment of societal functions is significantly less likely to be found in VSCs residing in smaller communities and, generally, at lower levels in small clubs.

1.3.2 Investigating Grassroots Sports' Engagement for Refugees

Potential drivers of VSCs' engagement in the area of refugee integration are investigated in the second included paper (Chapter 3; Figure 1.4). A particular focus is set on the role of institutional logics and a potential fusion with the concept of organizational capacity. In line with Seiberth et al. (2018), the integration of refugees into the social system of voluntary sports clubs in Germany is considered to occur in three stages: initial, implementation, and consolidation phase.

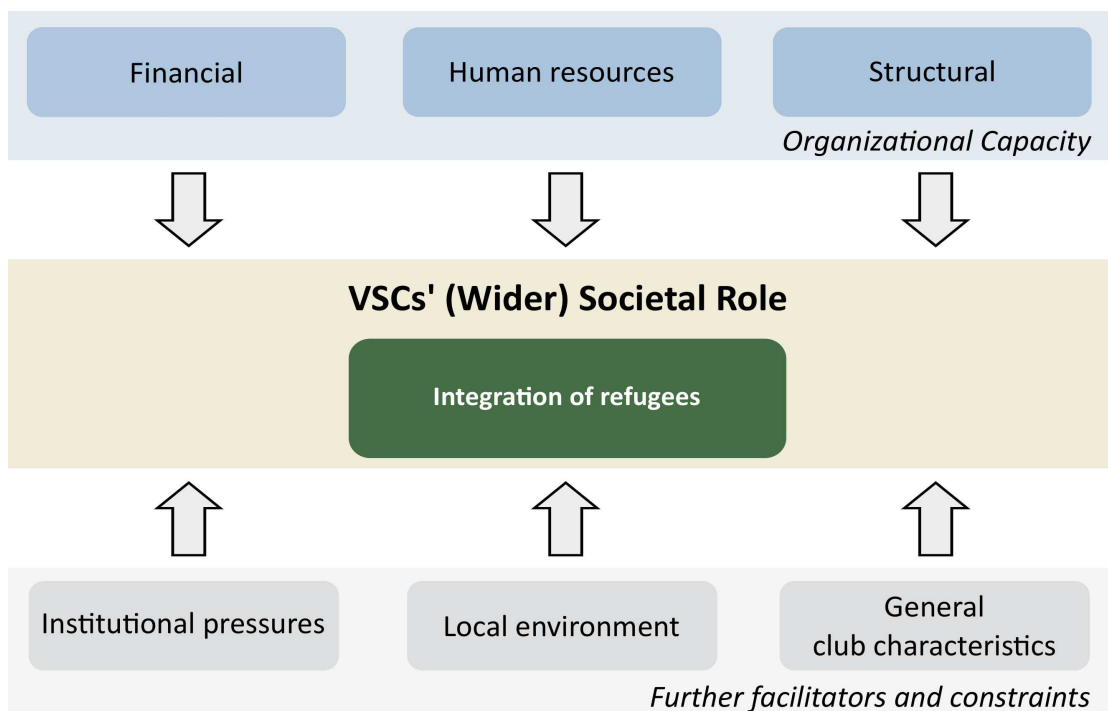


Figure 1.4 Focus of Study #2 (RQ 3).

The results suggest that 28% of Germany's VSCs consider themselves to be involved in the process of integrating refugees. However, only 14% have undertaken concrete measure. It appears that – at the end of 2015 – integrational

efforts of VSCs in Germany were comparatively unspecific and mainly existent within the initial phase. The transition into the implementing phase was yet to be accomplished. The employed regression models indicate that structural capacity and high voluntary engagement correlates with a higher likelihood to be involved in the integration process. In the context of integrative efforts towards refugees, it seems particularly necessary that VSCs carefully handle the balancing act between business-like management and intensive voluntary work (Dowling, Edwards, & Washington, 2014; Misener & Misener, 2017).

With the help of advanced statistical models, the study contributes to evidence-based sport policy and highlights the importance of accounting for VSCs' institutional logics. The finding that engagement in the integration process of refugees was found to be realized rather through more time dedicated by core volunteers than through more money has important implications for the involved stakeholders.

1.3.3 Match-fixing in European grassroots Football

The third included paper (Chapter 4; Figure 1.5) focuses on a sub-dimension of corruption, i.e., match-fixing, as an example of potential negative externalities caused by the organizational activities of VSCs. Match-fixing has the potential to threaten the integrity of the game and, consequently, the societal reputation of VSCs and continuous public (financial) support (Andreff, 2018; Constandt, 2019). It is assumed that the problem is more widespread in countries that demonstrate higher levels of general corruption (measured with the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) of Transparency International, 2015) and that affected clubs are more likely to be burdened by inefficient bureaucracies.

The empirical evaluation is based on a sample of $n=3,004$ grassroots football clubs in Germany, Poland, Italy, Norway, and France. Based on the results of this study, it can be concluded that match-fixing is indeed a problem for the grassroots of European football and embedded in its culture. The cross-national comparison finds support for the idea that when general corruption is widespread, the sub-dimension match-fixing follows. While problem levels are relatively low in all sampled countries, match-fixing was least problematic in the only considered non-EU country, i.e., Norway (best respective CPI-ranking) and most problematic for Italian clubs (worst CPI-ranking). The results also support the hypothesis that football clubs might accept fixed games in an attempt of a hedge against bad policy. A detailed analysis of the problem levels across

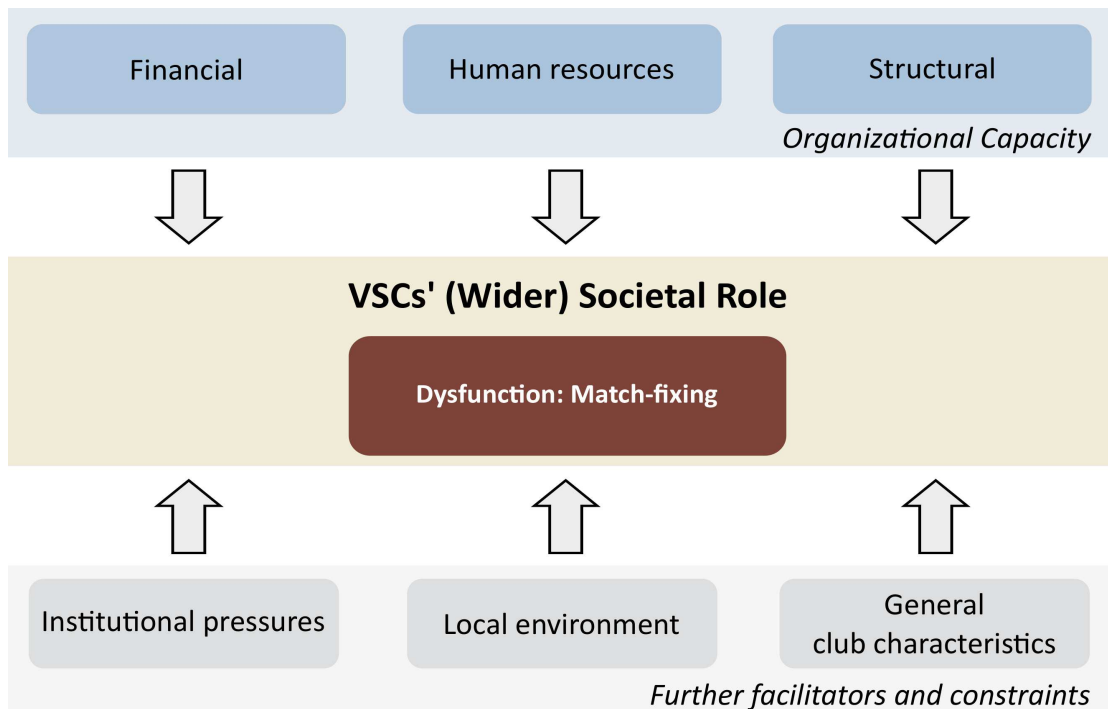


Figure 1.5 Focus of Study #3 (RQ 4 and RQ 5).

different club sizes shows that the level is highest in very small clubs, decreasing with club size, and increasing again for very big clubs. The results of the logistic regression models further allow the conclusion that higher shares of formalized voluntary engagement increase the odds of being affected by match-fixing; revenue diversification can be regarded as a protective organizational capacity.

The study contributes to the body of research in this context as it combines sociological and economic perspectives to conceptualize match-fixing as a serious organizational problem in the European grassroots football context. Moreover, it provides unprecedented empirical evidence on the public secrecy concerning match-fixing. From an organizational capacity perspective, it demonstrates that it is vital to analyze the effect of organizational capacities alone and in concert with each other.

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2 Facilitators and constraints for a wider societal role of voluntary sports clubs – evidence from European grassroots football

This chapter has been published as:

Nowy, T., & Breuer, C. (2019). Facilitators and constraints for a wider societal role of voluntary sports clubs – evidence from European grassroots football *International Journal of Sport Policy and Politics*, (11) 4, 727-746.

DOI:10.1080/19406940.2019.1630469

3 Investigating Grassroots Sports' Engagement for Refugees – Evidence from Voluntary Sports Clubs in Germany

This chapter has been published online-first as:

Nowy, T., Feiler, S., & Breuer, C. (2019). Investigating Grassroots Sports' Engagement for Refugees – Evidence from Voluntary Sports Clubs in Germany. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* (forthcoming). DOI:10.1177/0193723519875889

4 Match-fixing in European grassroots football

This chapter has been published as:

Nowy, T., & Breuer, C. (2017). Match-fixing in European grassroots football. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, 71 (1), 24-44.

DOI:10.1080/16184742.2016.1193212

5 Conclusion and Outlook

5.1 Research questions revisited

This thesis investigated dimensions of VSCs' wider societal role specified in EU sport policy. It was assumed that such non-profit clubs at the grassroots of the organized sport system fulfill societal functions by developing social and citizenship values, serving as arenas of social inclusiveness and combating potential dysfunctions of sport. Five RQs guided the empirical analysis which aimed to contribute to the development of evidence-based EU sport policy.

- RQ1** To which extent are VSCs committed to emphasize societal functions that are highlighted in EU Work Plans on Sport?
- RQ2** Which organizational capacities can be considered as facilitators and constraints for VSCs's (wider) societal role?
- RQ3** Which organizational and external factors drive a VSCs' engagement in the process of integrating refugees?
- RQ4** Is match-fixing a serious organizational problem of European grassroots football clubs?
- RQ5** Which organizational capacities – alone and in concert – can be considered protective factors against the organizational problem match-fixing – and if they are, how can they be explained theoretically?

The included papers make evident that European VSCs are more than pure membership organizations. Besides satisfying members' interests, they meet external expectations of policy makers and society at large (RQ1). Accordingly, they bundle the production of collective goods and services to their members and society at large as mutual *and* public benefit organizations (Badelt, 1999).

An organizational capacity (OC) perspective (Hall et al., 2003) was employed to identify internal and external drivers for a wider societal role of VSCs. Based on well-established measures for OC in the European VSCs context (e.g., Balduck, Lucidarme, Marlier, & Willem, 2015; Breuer & Feiler, 2013, 2015, 2017, 2019; Breuer & Wicker, 2009, 2011; Lamprecht, Fischer, & Stamm, 2012; Lamprecht, Murer, & Stamm, 2005; Swierzy, Wicker, & Breuer, 2018; Vandermeersch, Meganck, Seghers, Vos, & Scheerder, 2017), the concept of OC was refined in

each capacity dimension to account for the international context and developments in the NPO-literature (see Figure 5.1). The present thesis, moreover, contributes to an understanding that the effect and importance of different capacity dimensions are highly context-specific: *"what is critical in one context may not be as relevant in other contexts"* (Doherty, Misener, & Cuskelly, 2014, p. 125S). For the first time in the respective research context, empirical evidence on the relative impact of different capacity dimensions is provided. In general, capacities in the structural dimension of OC can be considered beneficial; the importance of financial capacity in this context, however, appears to be less relevant compared to what previous findings had suggested (RQ 2). The statistical results allow the conclusion that a wider societal role of VSCs is not accomplished by merely raising money (revenues per member). Instead, higher degrees of inner cohesion within the club and diversity – at the board level and concerning a club's membership structure – are undervalued capacities. Unlike previous studies in the respective field¹, the present thesis accounts for the external context, i.e., environmental facilitators and constraints, to a greater extent. In the process, the concept of OC is coupled with other (socio)-economic concepts and theories, such as institutional logics or public secrecy.

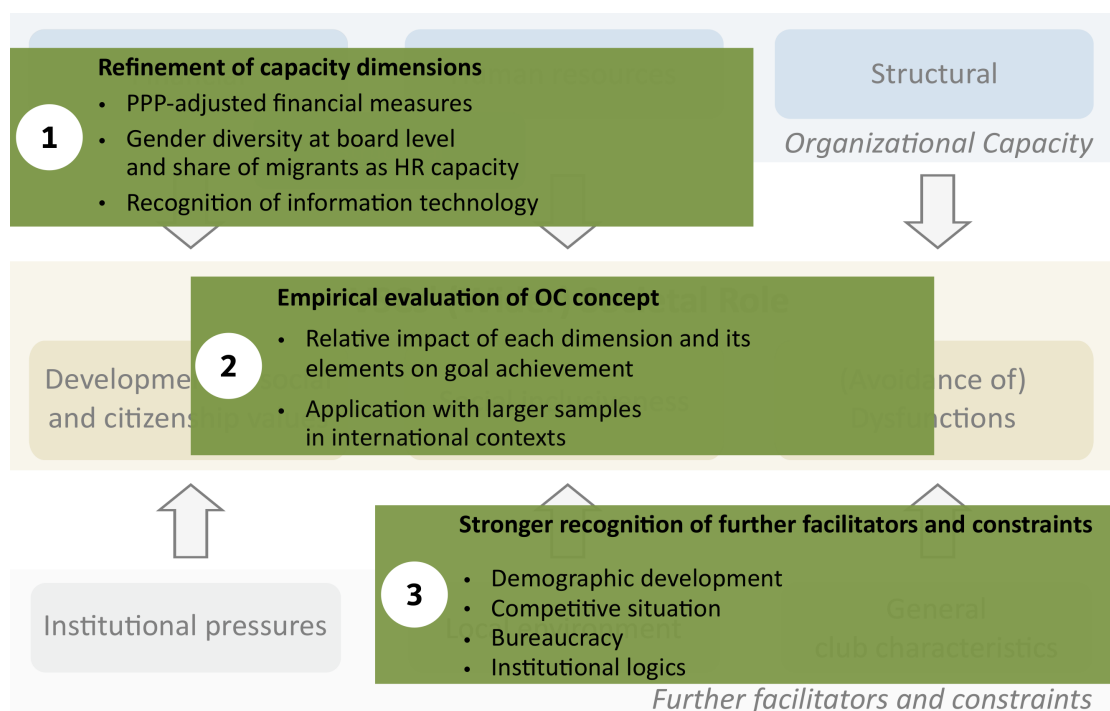


Figure 5.1 Contribution to the development of the OC framework.

¹A recent exception would be the study of Cortouts et al. (2019).

Next to extending the body of literature on OC, the present thesis further adds to the research field by studying contemporary societal issues of sport management. This includes (the process of) integrating refugees into the organized sport system and the underrepresentation of women in leadership structures of non-profit organizations. Moreover, the discussion on the relationship between institutional logics and the implementation of sport policy (e.g., McDonald, Spaaij, & Dukic, 2019; Skirstad & Chelladurai, 2011) is infused with the provision of empirical evidence. The statistical analysis demonstrates the importance of accounting for institutional logics since they are responsible for the largest share of explanatory power in the respective logistic regression models (RQ3).

While the present thesis primarily focused on the assumed societal benefits caused by the organizational activities of VSCs, it did not ignore dysfunctions such as incidents of discrimination, racism or match-fixing. The active combat against negative externalities can be considered as an integral part of the welfare-orientation of VSCs (Rittner & Breuer, 2004), which (once more) demonstrates that sports clubs at the grassroots level are mutual *and* public benefit associations (Badelt, 1999; Badelt & Weiss, 1990; Valentinov, 2005). The limited research on match-fixing at the grassroots level (Heilemann, 2014; Pitsch, Emrich, & Pierdzioch, 2015) is enriched with the third included paper. It constructed match-fixing as a serious organizational problem (RQ4), and discussed how such organizational capacities like strategic planning and *better* money might serve as protective factors (RQ5).

5.2 (Future) EU sport policy priorities – theory and practice

Building on the results of the included studies, Figure 5.2 suggests priority areas of EU sport policy. For example, within the dimension *development of social and citizenship values*, there remains significant potential for VSCs to develop a stronger emphasis on the equal participation of girls/women and boys/men, while the commitment level for the European value *respect* is already quite high. This does not imply that the involved stakeholders should abandon the promotion of this European value; rather, resources need to be dedicated to maintaining such commitment levels. Within the dimension of *social inclusiveness*, the second included paper suggested that providing refugees access to sporting activities was mainly random and unspecific. Accordingly, the topic should have high priority on the agenda of policy makers in Europe. The commitment levels

Development of social and citizenship values	Social inclusiveness	(Avoidance of) Dysfunctions
1 Equal participation	1 Refugees	1 Discrimination
2 Good governance	2 People with a disability	2 Racism
3 Respect	3 Migrants	3 Match-fixing

Figure 5.2 Suggested priority areas of EU policy action.

to provide sporting services to people with a disability is relatively low and, therefore, has substantial room for improvement. Except for German clubs, this is also true concerning people with a migration background. Looking at the considered dysfunctions, it can be concluded that incidents of discrimination, racism, and match-fixing are indeed challenges for VSCs. It has to be noted, however, that a substantial share of the considered football clubs was actively campaigning against discrimination, and – to a lesser extent – against racism.

The following section takes a closer look at current funding priorities that mirror the financial dimension of contemporary EU sport policy (Dickmann, 2018). Within the *E+ Sport* chapter, the EU is dedicating a total of €265.9 million to develop the European dimension of sport during the period 2014-2020 (European Commission, 2019a; European Commission, 2019b; Le Lostecque, 2017). For the *E+ Sport 2018* selection round, 199 projects and not-for-profit events² were selected for a total grant sum of almost €37 million (European Commission, 2018, European Commission, 2019b). A detailed look into the list of

²According the *Erasmus+ Programme Guide*, three different forms of project collaboration can be distinguished (European Commission, 2019b):

- Small collaborative partnerships (SSCPs) involve at least three organizations from three different Programme Countries and target the cooperation between organizations established in Programme Countries. The duration of the projects ranges between 12 and 24 months. The maximum awarded grant sum in 2018 was €60,000
- Collaborative partnerships (SCPs) require at least five organizations from five different Programme Countries; Collaborative Partnerships should promote the creation and development of European networks in the field of sport, foster synergy with, and between, local, regional, national and to address sport sport-related challenges. The maximum awarded grant sum in 2018 was €400,000
- Not-for-profit European sport events (SNCESEs) are European-wide sport events organized in one Programme Country, or national events organized simultaneously in several Programme Countries to a) increase awareness as regards the role of sport in promoting social inclusion, equal opportunities and health health-enhancing physical activity or b) increase participation in sport, physical activity and voluntary activity. The maximum awarded grant sum in 2018 was €450,000

successful applications reveals that 71 projects (35.7% of all supported projects) covered the thematic area *social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport* for a total grant sum of € 9.5 million (25% of the total awarded grant sum; Table 5.1). Among the projects were 51 SSCPs, 15 SCPs, and five SNCSEs (European Commission, 2019b). Eight projects (only SCPs) for a total of roughly € 3 million fall under the category *avoidance of dysfunctions*.

Table 5.1 Successful applications within the *E+ Sport 2018* selection round.

Thematic area	Total Grant Sum (in €)	Average Grant Sum (in €)	Share of total awarded grant sum (in%)
Social inclusion and equal opportunities (71 projects)	9,483,321.68	133,567.91	25.76
Good governance (8)	2,749,932.00	343,741.50	7.47
Violence, racism, discrimination and intolerance (6)	2,332,747.00	388,791.17	6.34
Match-fixing (2)	763,079.00	381,539.50	2.07
Other areas (112)	21,479,688.60	191,782.93	58.35
Total (199)	36,808,768.28	184,968.68	100

Note: own estimations based on European Commission (2018).

The selection results also provide information on the number of members of sport organizations involved by the specific projects (European Commission, 2018). This allows the calculation of the cost to involve 1,000 members of sport organizations (cost per mille (CPM); Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer, & Reibstein, 2010). It is indicated by the highest respective CPM that the EC is particularly willing to provide financial support in the area *violence, racism, discrimination and intolerance* (Table 5.2) – even though the number of projects supported might suggest otherwise. The thematic area *good governance* demonstrates the lowest CPM which could be interpreted as the most cost-efficient dimension in this regard.

Table 5.2 CPM of successful applications within the *E+ Sport 2018* selection round.

Thematic area	Members involved	CPM (in €)
Violence, racism, discrimination and intolerance	3,230	722,210
Match-fixing	28,820	26,480
Social inclusion and equal opportunities	861,901	11,000
Good governance	1,970,052	1,400

Note: own estimations based on European Commission (2018).

For the most recent call for proposals *E+ Sport 2019*, the indicative allocation to projects in different categories of collaborative partnerships are specified as follows (European Commission, 2019a; Figure 5.3). Half of the budget will be dedicated to projects that combat dysfunctions of sport, support the integrity of sport, and encourage social inclusion and equal opportunities in sport. More than two-thirds of the budget involve projects that go beyond the original purpose of VSCs, i.e., providing the organizational setting for sport and physical activity. To conclude, the *E+ Sport Programme* particularly incentivizes the public benefit component of non-profit VSCs.

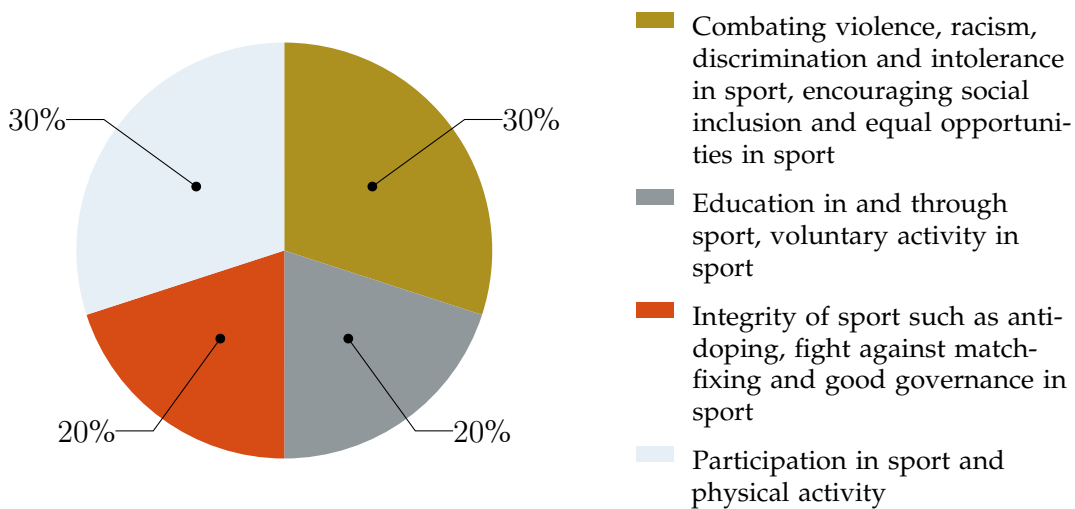


Figure 5.3 Indicative allocation of *E+ Sport 2019* budget according to European Commission (2019).

Within the introductory section, it was assumed that VSCs would implement (social) sport policy more efficiently and effectively when their organization goals align with those promulgated in policy documents and when they can rely on sufficient organizational capacity. In order to effectively build capacity, internal and external strategies should be combined to ensure short- and long-term outcomes (Millar & Doherty, 2016; Nu'Man, King, Bhalakia, & Criss, 2007). External strategies are developed and offered by an external source and may be of greater utility to a VSC because time is not spent internally developing and managing the strategy itself (Millar & Doherty, 2016; Vita & Fleming, 2001). When the EC, as an external source of capacity development, wants to successfully *support, coordinate and supplement* the commitment of VSCs to take on a wider societal role, it may want to consider (closer) co-operation with regional governing bodies – in particular through the installation of (co-financed) regional coordinators (RCs). This suggestion is based on the observation that participating partners within the *E+ Sport 2018* selection round are only marginally organi-

zations at the regional (or grassroots) level of the organized sport movement. For example, only one regional (youth) sports federation and one grassroots sports club in Germany led respective projects. In this context, it is also worth noting that only 0.4% of all German VSCs received grants from EU-programs in 2016 (Breuer & Feiler, 2019). RCs could reduce bureaucratic burdens during the process of applying for EU-grants. Such burdens may result in service delivery delays (Fredericksen & London, 2000) and were found to constrain a wider societal role in the present thesis. Additionally, RCs could act as potential platforms for the exchange of best-practice examples and infuse the beneficial effect of relationship and networking capacity concerning VSCs' wider societal role. Furthermore, RCs might serve as contact persons for policy actors and club officials – particularly in the case of (smaller) clubs in smaller communities where the fulfillment of societal functions was found to be at significantly lower levels. Through the installation of such coordinators, policy action could, moreover, be better monitored and controlled.

5.3 Avenues for future research

While this thesis contributes to closing the research gap in this context, it certainly cannot close it entirely and instead provides avenues for future research in this context. Above all, the limitations acknowledged in the respective studies need to be addressed. This particularly concerns the use of panel data instead of cross-sectional data in order to analyze how the subjective (perceived) and objective societal role of VSCs changes over time and in how for the societal role is affected by changes in any dimension of organizational capacity, (adjusted) institutional logics, public (financial) support, and shifts in policy priorities. Panel data would also allow for the possibility to analyze dynamic cause-and-effect relationships and the possibility that VSCs do not have the capacity to deliver services or effectively administer projects over time (Fredericksen & London, 2000).

The statistical evaluation of the present thesis is based on anonymous online surveys and, thus, prone to respondents bragging or malingering when they know their answers cannot be checked for accuracy (Richman, Kiesler, Weisband, & Drasgow, 1999). In order to control for potential social desirability, future studies should consider implementing instruments like (short versions of) the Marlowe–Crowne Social Desirability Scale (e.g., Andrews & Meyer, 2003; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960; Reynolds, 1982; Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972).

Only selected EU member states in Central Europe were investigated in the present thesis. It seems reasonable to assume that VSCs in other EU countries perceive their societal role differently and that some sports have more potential for social inclusiveness or matching with common European values. Accordingly, future research on the (wider) societal role of voluntary sports clubs in the European Union could investigate the implementation of EU sport policy in other (smaller) members states. Last, it could be analyzed if particular team and/or individual sports offered by VSCs are especially effective towards a more democratic, respectful, and inclusive Europe.

5.4 References

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Abstract

The significant and growing impact of sport on Europe's economy and society is reflected in the fact that sport policy reached supranational status with the Lisbon treaty in 2011. Since then, the European Commission (EC) as the executive branch of the European Union supports and coordinates the societal role, the economic dimension, and the organization of sport. The societal benefits of the participation in grassroots sports – traditionally formed by voluntary sports clubs (VSCs) – are explicitly recognized. Based on their assumed capability to link with the grassroots of society through the provision of (sporting) services, their organizational dominance, structure, and extensive voluntary work, VSCs have increasingly been cited to promote social and citizenship values, to serve as arenas of social inclusiveness, and to combat dysfunctions of sport. However, research on the conditions under which VSCs could implement (societal) sport policy more efficiently and effectively is still scarce. Consequently, this cumulative thesis aims to contribute to the development of evidence-based EU sport policy by evaluating potential facilitators and constraints for a (wider) societal role of VSCs.

The present thesis begins by introducing three central concepts: the (wider) societal role of VSCs, organizational capacity, and institutional pressures. The subsequent chapters focus on different societal (dys)functions. Chapter 2 investigates three dimensions of a wider societal role that are specified in current EU Work Plans of Sport. Particular attention is given to the role of gender diversity in leadership structures of VSCs. Chapter 3 develops potential drivers of VSCs' engagement in the process of integrating refugees with an explicit focus on the effect of institutional logics. Chapter 4 combines sociological and economic perspectives to conceptualize match-fixing as a serious organizational problem in the VSC context. Potential protective factors concerning this dysfunction of sport are empirically evaluated. In the concluding chapter of this thesis, potential priority areas of EU sport policy are derived from the empirical results of the included studies, and compared to current funding priorities within the *Erasmus+ Sport* programme. Implications for the involved stakeholders are developed from a capacity-building perspective; avenues for future research are delineated.

The current body of literature on the societal (dys)functions of VSCs is extended by shifting the level of policy analysis to the EU level. Moreover, the present thesis contributes to evidence-based EU-sport policy by empirically evaluating potential facilitators and constraints or a wider societal role. As a *by-product*, evidence on pressing societal issues of sport management – namely gender equality in leadership structures, the integration of refugees into the organized sport system, and match-fixing – is provided. A theoretical contribution lays in the advancement of the framework of organizational capacity. For example, the framework is enriched by considering additional appropriate theoretical concepts such as the information-decision-making model, institutional logics, and public secrecy.

Kurzfassung

Die signifikanten und wachsenden Auswirkungen des Sports auf die europäische Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft spiegeln sich in der Tatsache wider, dass die europäische Sportpolitik mit dem Vertrag von Lissabon im Jahr 2011 supranationalen Status erlangte. Seitdem unterstützt und koordiniert die Europäische Kommission als exekutive Säule der Europäischen Union die gesellschaftliche Rolle, wirtschaftliche Dimension und Organisation des Sports. Der gesellschaftliche Nutzen der Teilnahme am Breitensport, traditionell von freiwilligen Sportvereinen (SV) organisiert, wird dabei ausdrücklich betont. Aufgrund der Annahme, dass sich SVs mit den Wurzeln der Gesellschaft durch das Angebot von (Sport-)Dienstleistungen verbinden können, sowie aufgrund ihrer organisatorischen Dominanz, Struktur und ihres umfangreichen freiwilligen Engagements werden SVs zunehmend zur Förderung sozialer und bürgerschaftlicher Werte, zu Beiträgen zur sozialen Inklusion und zur Bekämpfung von Dysfunktionen des Sports herangezogen. (Erfolgs-)Faktoren, die zu einer effizienteren und effektiveren Umsetzung (gesellschaftlicher) Sportpolitik beitragen könnten sind jedoch kaum erforscht. Die vorliegende Arbeit zielt darauf ab, durch die Untersuchung potenzieller Einflussfaktoren für eine (umfassendere) gesellschaftliche Rolle von SVs, einen Beitrag zur Entwicklung einer evidenzbasierten EU-Sportpolitik zu leisten.

Drei zentrale Komponenten werden zu Beginn der Dissertation dargestellt: die (umfassendere) gesellschaftliche Rolle von SVs sowie die Konzepte *organizational capacity* und *institutional pressures*. Die darauffolgenden Kapitel befassen sich mit verschiedenen gesellschaftlichen (Dys-)Funktionen des Sports. Basierend auf aktuellen EU-Arbeitsplänen werden in Kapitel 2 drei Dimensionen einer umfassenderen gesellschaftlichen Rolle des Sports untersucht. Ein besonderes Augenmerk wird dabei auf die Rolle der Geschlechterdiversität in den Führungsstrukturen von SVs gelegt. Kapitel 3 untersucht potenzielle Erfolgsfaktoren für das Engagement von SVs in der Integration von Flüchtlingen mit einem expliziten Fokus auf den Effekt institutioneller Logiken. In Kapitel 4 werden soziologische und ökonomische Perspektiven kombiniert, um Spielmanipulationen als relevantes organisatorisches Problem im Breitensport zu konzipieren. Mögliche Schutzfaktoren für diese Dysfunktion werden empirisch evaluiert. Das abschließende Kapitel der Dissertation dezidiert aus den vorangegangenen empirischen Ergebnissen potenzielle Prioritäten europäischer Sportpolitik und stellt diese aktuellen Finanzierungsprioritäten im Rahmen des *Erasmus + Sport* Programms gegenüber. Implikationen für beteiligte Stakeholder werden aus der Perspektive des Kapazitätsaufbaus entwickelt; zukünftige Forschungsfelder werden skizziert.

Der Forschungsstand bezüglich gesellschaftlicher (Dys-)Funktionen von SVs wird durch die Verlagerung der Analyse auf die EU-Sportpolitik-Ebene erweitert. Die vorliegende Arbeit trägt zu einer evidenzbasierten EU-Sportpolitik bei, indem potenzielle Erfolgsfaktoren für eine umfassendere gesellschaftliche Rolle empirisch untersucht werden. Als *Nebenprodukt* werden empirische Belege bezüglich drängender gesellschaftlicher Fragen des Sportmanagements aufgezeigt, z.B. Geschlechterdiversität in Führungsstrukturen von SVs, Integration von Flüchtlingen durch SVs und Spielmanipulation im Breitensport. Ein theoretischer Beitrag liegt in der Weiterentwicklung *organizational capacity* Konzepts. Beispielsweise wird das Konzept durch die Berücksichtigung zusätzlicher geeigneter theoretischer Konzepte wie das *information-decision model*, *institutional logic(s)* und *public secrecy* bereichert.