

Reports

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Sports Governance in Finland



**Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu
Finnish Sports Federation**

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to introduce and analyse the history, the present situation and the future of the Finnish physical culture. As concepts like sport ('urheilu') and physical activities ('liikunta') suggest, physical culture is understood very broadly in Finland. It comprises organised activities as well as unorganised activities, competitive as well as recreational activities, top-sport, youth sport and health-related physical activities. Organised competitive sports is typically carried out in sports clubs. However, most Finns engage in physical activities self-sufficiently, spontaneously and recreationally on their own; they ski in the forests or swim in public pools. Sports and physical activities are the most popular leisure activities for children and youth. Women also participate as equally as men in physical culture.

Sport and physical activities have a significant and recognised role in Finnish society. Sport and physical activities are a means of socialisation into society, especially regarding children and youth. Top-sport is a major factor contributing to national identity. Physical activities have a role in national health and well-being, in preventing social problems and even in fostering employment. Professional sport is relatively marginal in international perspective, even though competitive sport is visible in the media and Finns have succeeded markedly in some international sports events.

Basically, the Finnish sports system consists of two major elements: voluntarism in the sports clubs and the preconditions created by the municipalities for sports and physical activities. Finns participate actively in the activities of voluntary associations, it is backbone of sports clubs and thus the whole physical culture. As the number of paid staff is relatively low in sports clubs, it is typically the parents that organise local level training sessions, competitions, tournaments etc. The municipalities provide most of the facilities sports clubs use. They also support sports clubs especially by subsidising the use of these facilities, which means they are either free or relatively inexpensive.

The beginning of the new millennium is posing major challenges to the Finnish physical culture and its voluntary activities. Cultural and structural changes affect both the volunteers and the municipalities. Even if the number of volunteers is increasing, they are less committed to the long term voluntary activities. The municipalities are facing major structural changes as well as financial challenges, which undermine their role in providing the preconditions for sports and physical activities. However, the popularity of sports and physical activities and the benefits they have for both the individual and the society are the key factors in securing the future of Finnish physical culture.

2. History of Finnish Physical Culture

To understand the present we must briefly review the history of Finnish society and physical culture. The background of this review is formed from the nation's relatively short period of independence. Finland was part of the Swedish realm from the 12th century to 1809 and then part of Russia from 1809 to 1917. In the latter part of the Russian realm Finns also had autonomy. Independence was gained in 1917. The 19th century was the time of spontaneous civil activities, including first signs of physical culture and sports associations. The first sports club was formed in 1856. The time of autonomy till 1917 was also a kind of preparation time, Finns were active in various associations practising organised civil activities, creating the basis of the rather rapidly formed institutional democracy 1917 onwards. It was also the time when first Finns participated in international sports competitions such as the Olympics, which had a major impact on national identity.

Independence in 1917 and the following civil war in 1918 marked both a new era of growth as well as division. New sports organisations were formed, but some of them also along the lines of political left and right. This structural division has lasted until the 1990's, even if culturally the division began to dissolve somewhat earlier. The period from independence to the second world war was marked by slow growth both in sports related civic activities as well as the state's increasing interest in providing support for sports and physical activities.

The two wars Finns fought against the Soviet Union and a defeat in the latter had a major impact on the whole society as well as sports. There were both political and social consequences. The 1940's and 50's especially were the times of '*Realpolitik*', when a nation having just secured its independence also had to adjust to the political pressure from the Soviets. However, the rebuilding of the society also formed the basis of major social and economic growth especially in the 1960's and 70's. These were the decades of building the welfare state.

The welfare society provided both national prosperity in general as well as public resources. In sports and physical activities this meant an era of growth in organisations, facilities and forms of sports and physical activities. In spite of the growth the 1960's and early 1970's, these can be called the decades of amateurism and free-time activities. During that time all levels of physical culture were operating with limited resources, rather unsystematically, and chiefly on a traditional basis. Activities were concentrated mainly on organising competitions, spreading information related to particular sports events and maintaining and developing the core activities of that sports event itself.

What is crucial in Finnish physical culture is the coexistence of a strong state and a strong civil society. Sports federations have always maintained (at least a relative) independence, but especially since the 70's they were also engaged in national politics in many ways. Thus were formed the two major value orientations in Finnish physical culture: sports as an end in itself and physical activities as an instrument of wellbeing. Sports and physical

activities were both self-sustained social realms as well as means to securing the physical and social health of the whole population.

The major growth in physical activities, sports clubs, facilities and resources dates back to the 1980's. This time can be described as the decade of institutionalisation. Physical culture became more and more part of the society, having a significant role in enhancing national wellbeing. Especially in sports federations and municipalities financial resources, the number of personnel and various forms of activities related to sports and physical activities grew strongly and relatively steadily. In sports federations systematic forms of action were established. Systems of education were developed with a focused purpose. Along came public relations and marketing, generally speaking the first features of managerialism. Some pioneers sought models of organisation in the business world, not in the public administration, as was traditionally done.

The fundamental changes in Europe in the 1980's had major impacts on Finland also. The national institutional democracy remained in good form and intact, but the opening of capital markets at the beginning of the 1990's plundered the nation into a deep economic recession. As a consequence, the structures of the Finnish welfare society began to shake. Even if welfare society is still characteristic of Finland, the fiscal problems municipalities face pose a major challenge to sports and physical activities especially in terms of preconditions such as the facilities.

Finnish physical culture has also become highly differentiated on terms of both the forms of physical activity as well as the forms of organising these activities. Both the rather homogenous Finnish society and its physical culture have become much more like a mosaic. The 1990's can be characterised as the decade of structural change and differentiation. As a result of the public economy crisis, municipalities faced a new situation of downsizing which is still affecting the whole public sector. Sports organisations' public and private financial resources decreased and the traditional hierarchical organisation structure was dissolved at the same time. This created tension which lasted the whole decade. All in all, the 90's meant a transition from a centralised sports system to polycentric physical culture.

Voluntary activities are still the backbone of the Finnish physical culture, but the public sector, namely, the state, the municipalities and the political system still form an essential factor with steering mechanisms and financial resources. Moreover, particularly in top-sport, organisational models and financial resources from the business world have become increasingly more important. In the past two decades the Finnish physical culture has sought a new position amongst three dimensions: voluntarism (local-level voluntary activities), the state (public administration and national welfare) and the market (private businesses and market mechanisms). The same process of repositioning among these three dimensions has been going on in most Western societies. Certain type of liberalisation and emphasis on market mechanisms as well as reform efforts by the state are also reflected in the Finnish physical culture and its organisations.

The Finnish physical culture has become more differentiated in terms of its core values (figure 1). During the 50's and the 60's physical culture was mainly dominated by competitive sports. In the 1970's and the 1980's mass sport or sport for all became more and more popular. Especially from the late 1980's onwards, many new forms of physical activities such as health-related activities, experiential physical exercises, and adventure sports arose to accompany traditional competitive sports. The most fundamental questions concerning the existence and core values of sports organisations have been discussed – more or less explicitly – regarding the dominance of competitive sports and the increase in recreational physical activities.

At the beginning of the 21st century Finnish physical culture remains in relatively good shape. For example, most Finns participate in physical activities, sports is a popular form of entertainment, the number of volunteer has increased in the last two to three decades. The differentiation of Finnish physical culture has continued and it has the above mentioned characteristics and core values: it is a combination of three sectors, public, private and third sector, it consists of children's and youth recreational and competitive sport, top-sport as well as leisure and health-related physical activities. In this respect, differentiation also means heterogeneity and thus the widening spectrum of sports and physical activities in the Finnish physical culture.

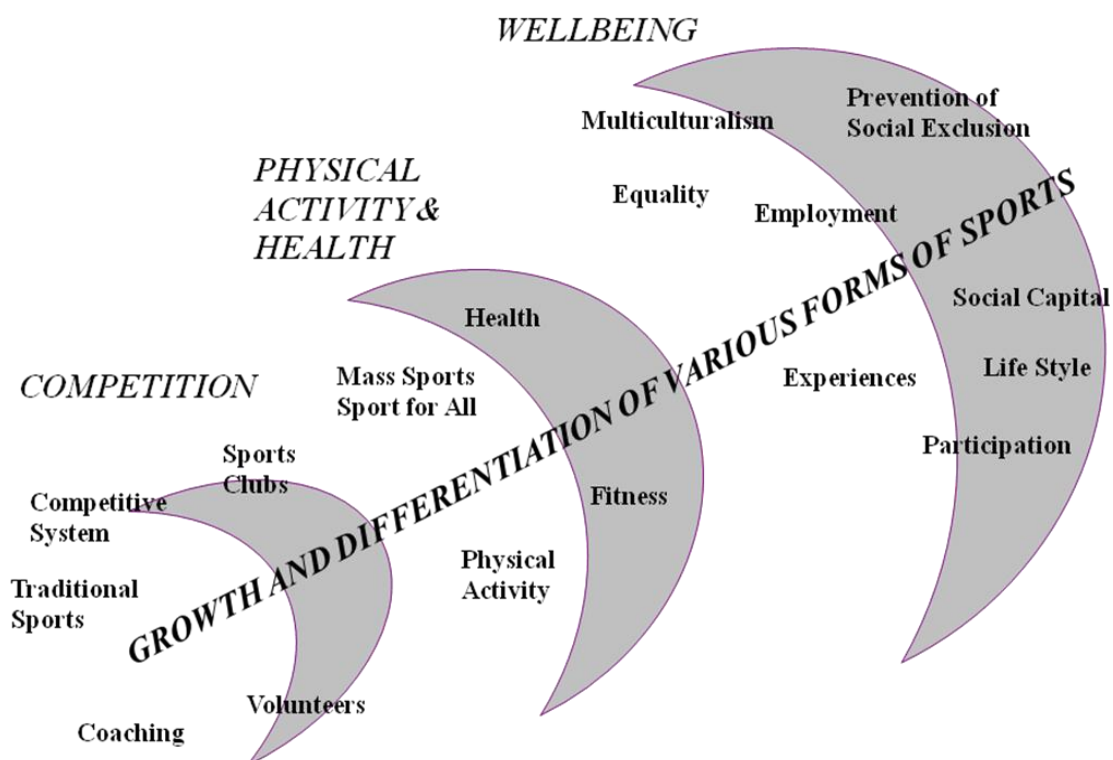


Figure 1. Differentiation of Finnish physical culture.

3. Participation in sports and physical activities

Finland is the leading country in Europe for physical activity according to studies by the EU Commission. On the average girls and boys, women and men participate in physical activities alike. Participating extends to all age groups. Adapted physical activities are organised for people with disabilities. There are, of course, major individual differences as well as differences in relation to the sports event and geographical location.

As much as 90% of Finnish children and youth (aged 3 to 18) participate in sports and physical activities according to information obtained from themselves or their parents (table 1). In total this means 900 000 children. However, the intensity of these activities varies, only half of these children and youth exercise enough to sustain an enough good health. More than two thirds of children and youth exercise by themselves and / or with peers, about half of them in sports clubs. The figures overlap because they can do both. The number of children participating in sports clubs' activities is in its peak of 42% at the age of 12 (altogether 417 000 children and youth) and in declines to 25-30% by the age of 18. There are also about 250 000 children and youth who are not participating in sports clubs' activities, but who would like to participate. The reasons for non-participation are somewhat unclear, but it is assumed that there is not enough recreational, non-competitive activities available in sports clubs.

Children and youth (aged 3 to 18) participating in sports and physical activities	
Altogether	900 000 (90%)
In sports clubs	417 000 (42%, at the age of 12)
Potential participants in sports clubs	250 000
Adult (aged 19 to 65) participation in sports and physical activities	
Exercise at least twice a week	60-65%
Exercise at least three times a week	50%
Exercise alone and on their own	2 500 000
Exercise on their own in a group	1 900 000
In sports clubs	440 000
In other voluntary associations	140 000
Potential participants in sports clubs	400 000
Services provided by private companies	280 000
Occupational settings (i.e. workplaces)	280 000
Various educational institutions for adults	100 000

Table 1. Estimate of participation in sports and physical activities (2008) (The data gives a rough outline of participation, there is overlap in the data).

Most children participate just for fun or to meet friends. The main goal of children's sport is to support their healthy physical and mental development and well-being, not professional sports. Most of the youngsters in Finnish sports clubs compete in one way or another. Yearly, about 15 000 youngsters between 14-18 years of age compete at national championships

About two thirds of adults exercise at least twice a week. About half of adults exercise three times a week in an intensity which causes at least moderate respiration and perspiration. However, less than half of these adults exercise sufficiently in terms of health. Most adults engage in self-sufficient physical activities, i.e. they exercise alone and on their own (2.5 million) and / or on their own in a group (1.9 million). Again, these is overlap in the numbers because they can do both. About 440 000 adults participate in physical activities organised by sports clubs and about 140 000 in physical activities organised by other voluntary associations. Men participate more often than women in the physical activities organised by sports clubs. There are also about 400 000 adults who are not participating in the physical activities provided by sports clubs, but who would like to participate.

About 10% of adults (total of 280 000) consume the services provided by private companies. Women consume these services more than men. The alleged reason is that sports clubs' activities are more competitive and the services of private companies such as health clubs and gyms are more recreational and welfare oriented. About 280 000 adults exercise in occupational settings (i.e. workplaces) and some 100 000 participate in various educational institutions for adults. Some 220 000 children, youth and adult participate in adapted physical activities. Of these 80 000 participate in the municipalities' organised groups and the rest in various associations and federations.

4. Human and monetary resources

The strength of Finnish physical culture lies in the volunteers. The population of Finland is 5.2 million, of which about 1.1 million are members in sports clubs and federations. Of these 58 % are male and 42 % female. At the local level there are about 9 000 active sports clubs, which is one club per every 600 Finns. The sports clubs are non-profit making, their ownership is cooperatively based on membership. Over 15% of the population take part in voluntary activities in sports in their spare time, which means about 600 000 individuals. Sports is by far the most popular form of voluntary activity.

Volunteers receive no financial payment for their work. On the average they spend 10 hour a month on these activities. They organise training sessions and competitions, they collect various resources and manage the clubs administration. It can be estimated that of the half a million volunteers about 10% are very actively involved. For most clubs this would mean 3-15 active volunteers.

Less than 3 per cent of the sports clubs (about 200) have professional athletes. There are about 1 000 professional athletes in Finland, that is, athletes who earn their principal income from sports. There are 1 200 coaches who earn at least half of their income from coaching. Thus the major part of those 50 000 coaches and supervisors engaged in sports clubs are parents who work without remuneration. 10 000 certified coaches are associated with national sports federations.

There is insufficient data on the employment (full-time, paid staff) in Finnish physical culture. From various sources it can be estimated that there is about 20 - 25 000 full-time employees in this field (table 2). The estimates vary according to categorisation: if only those are included that have their training and degrees in the field of sports, than the figure is lower; the figure is higher if various sports related fields are included (such as staff in private sports facilities, in physiotherapy and physical conditioning, in spas and other recreational facilities and in corporate human resources dealing with physical wellbeing).

Sports clubs	2 700 full-time employees (part-time 14 800)
Federations	1 100
Municipalities, of which	8 000
- Maintenance of facilities 6000	
- P.E. teachers 2000	
Private companies	12 000
Others	1 300
- Sports institutes 300	
- Media (press, radio, TV) 400	
- Research, development, consulting 600	

Table 2. Estimate of paid staff in Finnish physical culture (2008).

The households are the crucial factor in the economy of Finnish physical culture. Households spend about 1.8 billion euros on sports equipment and services. The other major resource is the voluntary activities done in sports clubs, which is estimated to be worth about 2 billion euros (table 3).

The municipalities spend about 600 million euros on sports and physical activities, including investments on sports facilities, subsidies to sports clubs (direct grants or low rent of facilities) and organising adapted physical activities. The main source is municipal taxes. The states yearly budget is about 100 million euros. The main source is lottery funds, not taxes. The budget consists of subsidies to e.g. sports federations, sports institutes, sports facilities and sports related research.

Corporations spend about 300 million euros yearly on sports and physical activities taking place in the workplaces. The current level of sports sponsoring is about 100 million Euros.

There are, however, major yearly differences here depending on the national economy's overall state.

Households	1 800 M € / year
Municipalities	600 M €
States sport budget (lottery funds)	100 M €
Sports and phys.activities in corporations	300 M €
Sport sponsoring	100 M €
Voluntary activities (estimate)	2 000 M €

Table 3. Estimate of monetary resources in Finnish physical culture (2008).

Since voluntarism is the backbone of Finnish physical culture, it is not a surprise that 97% of the clubs are not profit-making. More than 90% of the funding of sports clubs is collected by the members and the parents (which are almost the same thing). The main sources of financial resources are the income from membership fees, basic activities (such as organising competitions or educational courses), other private income (such as sales of work or bingo-lottery) and public subsidies (municipal support). More than half of the income is spent on organising training sessions and competitions and thus is mainly directed to children and youth in these clubs. Direct municipal subsidies are on the average quite low (7%), but on the other hand the low-rent municipal facilities are a major contribution the sport clubs' economy.

5. Organisations and institutions

Sport and physical activity are important human fields of life. Every civilised nation has its own system of physical culture to produce or support these fields of life. Physical cultures are based on different starting points in different countries. Most often sport is provided by some of the following institutions: families, schools, universities, businesses, defensive forces, the state, municipalities, or voluntary associations. To give a rough outline of sports related services in Finland, it is estimated that sports clubs provide about 65% of these services, municipalities about 25% and private businesses 10%. The following describes the basic organisations and institutions in Finnish physical culture, namely sports clubs and federations, Ministry of Education and the municipalities (table 4).

Most important organisers of sports activities are local level voluntary associations, namely sports clubs. The basic elements of the sports clubs besides sports and physical activities are also coaching and administration. Administration comprises management, economy, marketing etc. In most cases these are carried out by volunteers, elected officials and other active members. Volunteers are naturally the most important resource in voluntary associations. The leading idea for many sports clubs has changed, and instead of

concentrating mainly on competitive sport and success, sports clubs promote also recreational physical activities more often than before. Equality has done some progress in the sports clubs. The number of women members has grown. Women are getting more representatives in different administrative bodies in the sports clubs and there are increasingly more female chairpersons as well.

Families, peers	Socialisation into and via sport, role models
Schools	Possibilities to engage in sports, experiences in sports and physical activity
Sports clubs	Organising sports and physical activity
Sport federations	
- National Sports Orgs.	Promoting a particular sports event, international cooperation
- Domain Orgs.	Promoting children's physical activities, top sports, adults health enhancing physical activities, adapted physical activities, school and student sport
- Regional Orgs.	Promoting sport and physical activities regionally, services to sport clubs
- Finnish Sports Fed.	Political lobbying, coordinating cooperation, various services
- Other Feds.	Promoting a particular form of sport (e.g. language minorities)
Municipalities	Sports facilities, subsidising sports clubs, adapted physical activities
Regional adm.	Promoting sport and physical activities regionally (public sector)
State	Leading and coordinating sports policy in the public sector, providing subsidies to sports federations, sports institutes, facilities, sports science
Universities, sports institutes, research institutes	Scientific and vocational education, research and development
Corporations	Promoting vocational wellbeing through sport and physical activities
Private businesses	Various sports and physical activities related services

Table 4. Organisations and institutions in Finnish physical culture.

One typical feature of the development and differentiation of sports clubs' activity is the steady increase in concentration on one sports event. As for the clubs founded in the 1940's and before, only about one fourth of them were one-event sports clubs. In the 1980's two thirds concentrated on one sports event only. As a consequence of specialisation, during the last twenty years the average size of a sports club has decreased and the average number of members has decreased. At the same time the activities inside the clubs have concentrated more and more on smaller groups and especially on individual teams.

Sports clubs also need other organisations to support their functions. There are 125 national or regional sports federations on Finland. The National Sports Organisations (NSOs) form the largest group of federations (altogether 74). They concentrate on one particular sports event such as skiing, judo or ice hockey and they maintain respective systems of education, coaching and recruitment. As for competitive sports and top-sport especially, the most important organisations are the NSOs. Regional organisations deliver various services such as education to the sports clubs. As their name implies, they function mainly at regional level. Typically the highest forms of organisation have been national-level central federations. The most essential tasks of the NSOs, regional organisations and the central federations have been to participate in sports politics, coordinate organisational activity, provide various services and carry out overall developmental activities.

The domain organisations are a new and modern phenomenon in the Finnish physical culture. As the National Sports Organisations were organised for particular sports events such as ice-hockey and orienteering, there was clearly a need for a co-operative form of organisation across particular sports events. The domain organisations concentrate on (a) children's and youth sport and physical activities, (b) competitive and top-sport, (c) recreational and health-related physical activities, (d) sport for special groups and (e) school and student sport. These domains are run by their own independent organisations.

Young Finland is responsible for youth sport. Sport for All Association and National Association for Recreational Sport and Outdoor Activities are responsible for recreational and health-related physical activities. Altogether four school and student sports organisations and eight special group sports organisations are members of the FSF. Top-sport has so far remained without a specific domain organisation, unless we regard Finnish Olympic Committee to fill that place. Finnish Olympic Committee is responsible most of all for promoting Olympic sports.

Domain organisations were created to avoid overlapping activities and to promote co-operation and sharing of experiences and other synergetic advantages. Because an organisation along sports-specific lines is deeply rooted in the Finnish sport system, domain organisations have been far from a self-evident matter. It has been unclear whether the domain organisations function primarily as co-operative forums or whether they are independent organisations responsible for the developmental activities of the domain in question.

Until the turn of the 1990's, the Finnish physical culture and particularly its organisational forms were dominated by four central organisations: Finnish National Sports Federation (FNSF), Workers' Sports Federation (WSF), Finnish Soccer Federation (FSof) and, representing the physical culture of the Swedish speaking part of the population, Swedish Central Sports Federation (SCSF). The structural reform carried out in the mid-90's dissolved this structure. In 1993 Finnish Sports Federation (FSF) was founded to replace the model of four central federations.

The basic idea behind the FSF was to form a new and less hierarchical and formal organisation of sports and physical activities. Instead of formal hierarchies, the key idea is to create and support co-operation through reciprocal recognition of the needs of individual associations and federations. The central role of the FSF is to be a co-operative forum for its member organisations, to deliver services to its member organisations and to represent the interests of its member organisations as well as the whole Finnish physical culture. A co-operative forum is especially important in a reformed and polycentric physical culture.

In the central government sport comes under the Ministry of Education and its Sports Division. Sports Division leads, develops and coordinates Finnish sport policy in the central government. It allocates state subsidies, sports federations, sports institutes, sports facilities and sports science. The Sports Division also supports youth sports as well as competitive sports, it promotes adapted physical activity and health-enhancing physical activity. It also supports and regulates anti-doping work and it participates in EU cooperation, Nordic cooperation and intergovernmental cooperation. Ministry of Education is assisted by the National Sports Council and its subcommittees. The Council monitors developments in sport, takes initiative for the development of sport, puts forward proposals and issue opinions concerning the allocation of sport appropriations and assess the impact of government measures on sport.

The Ministry of Education is a major instance in the Finnish physical culture. It coordinates and represents physical culture from the governmental point of view. It represents the interests of physical culture in the political system, other governmental offices and Finnish society in general. The Ministry's role is to secure for all citizens an equal access to public services, especially when these services are publicly subsidised. Also, it is part of the Ministry's responsibility to look after the interests of the Finnish population at large. Such issues are, for example, population's health, employment and social well-being.

At the regional level matters of sport are administered by the provincial state offices. The provincial offices have concentrated on evaluation, coordination, construction subsidies, and advice also monitoring the implementation of sport services in their regions under the Ministry's guidance. However, as this article is being written, the regional sports administration is undergoing significant changes. It is unclear how sports will be organised at this level of administration in the future. Nevertheless it can be assumed that regional administration will gain importance as the ministries concentrate more on strategic than operative matter. It is likely that more of operative decisions formerly made at the governmental level will be delegated to the regional administration.

In the Nordic countries especially and also in many European countries physical culture relies more or less heavily on the public sector, that is, the state and the municipalities. The role of the public sector is notable also in Finland where the state and especially the municipalities are responsible for providing the preconditions for physical culture. There are 348 municipalities in Finland (2008). At the local municipalities provide the basic

services such as social and health care, education and culture, the environment and the technical infrastructure. Local authorities plan the overall infrastructure of the municipality, including sports facilities. About 75% of the 30,000 sports facilities in Finland have been constructed and are run by municipalities.

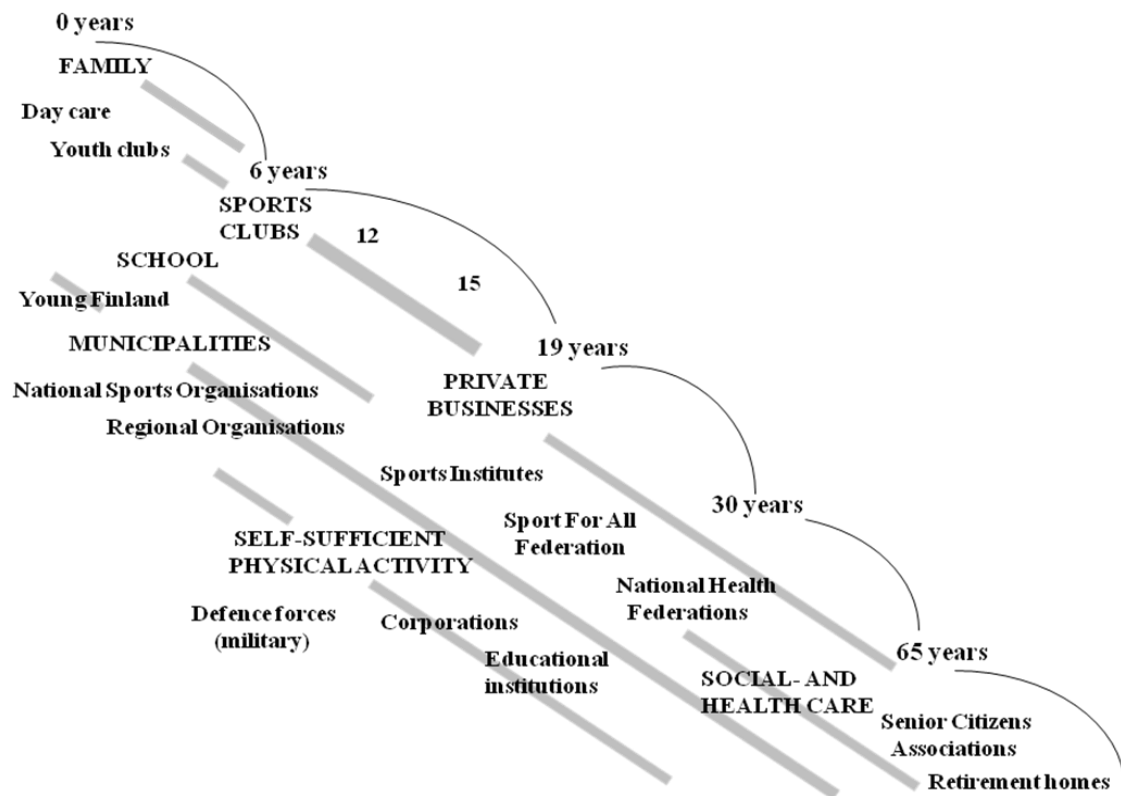


Figure 2. Various sports related organisations and institutions in different phases of individuals' life.

Figure 2. depicts the various sports related organisations and institutions in different phases of individuals' life. Families are in a central role in the early years, sports clubs mainly from the school age to adulthood. Children and youth especially participate in organised sports, adults engage in physical activities on their own or consume commercial services. At later age social and health organisations in the public sector become more important. Municipalities provide preconditions such as facilities for all age groups.

6. Cooperation and coordination

It is the goal of the various organisations and institutions of Finnish physical culture to enhance sports and physical activity among the whole population – each organisation, of course, having its own emphasis and focus. Each organisation has a role in the chain extending from the creation of preconditions to the individuals' physical activities. This is not to say that these roles are not without tensions and struggles, quite the contrary. The cooperation between and coordination of organisational activities is far from simple in a polycentric sports system. However, despite differences in values and modes of operation, as a whole the the Finnish physical culture does seem to function relatively well.

The bases of voluntary activities in sports clubs stems from the constitutional right of forming associations. Indeed, altogether some 120 000 association have been formed in Finland since 1919. Even if they are not all operative, Finland is still the promised land of voluntary associations! These associations are regulated by the Association Act and they are – at least in principle – independent of third parties and are democratically self-governed by their members.

In the public sector municipalities are also self-governing, they organise public services according to the decisions made by the local councils. This means also that it is at their deliberation how and to what extent they promote sports and physical activity in the municipality. In this respect municipalities differ greatly, they have become more and more differentiated in organising sports and physical activities. Some of them integrate sports and physical activities in their service strategies to enhance wellbeing in the whole population, some downsize the sports administration to the minimum.

The state governs the public sector of sports via governments program, yearly budget and various policy programs. The main forms of governance are monetary subsidies, legal norms and informal negotiations with sports federations. Even if the European union currently has no formal authority in sports issues, the informal cooperation between European countries has an impact on national sports policy.

To a large extent the Finnish physical culture is regulated by the Sports Act. According to this law, the organising of physical activities is mainly the responsibility of sports clubs and federations. The municipalities provide for the preconditions of sports and physical activities. However, as the previous description implies, all in all the various organisations and institution are relatively independent in their actions. The Sports Act forms a kind of cooperative framework giving the basic guidelines of roles and responsibilities. The coordination of the Finnish physical culture is a mixture of formal and informal governance and the result of a long history of political and social cooperation (figure 3). It is even more dependent on mutual negotiations now that the physical culture has differentiated into a polycentric system.

As an example, the relationship between the state (the Ministry of Education) and the sports organisations is reciprocal: for the activities sports organisations carry out the state provides public subsidies. It is an ongoing discussion to what extent the sports federations should emphasize sports and physical activities which benefit all citizens (instrumental values) and to what extent they should be allowed to organize sports as they wish (independent values). All in all, public funding raises the question about sport organisations' autonomy.

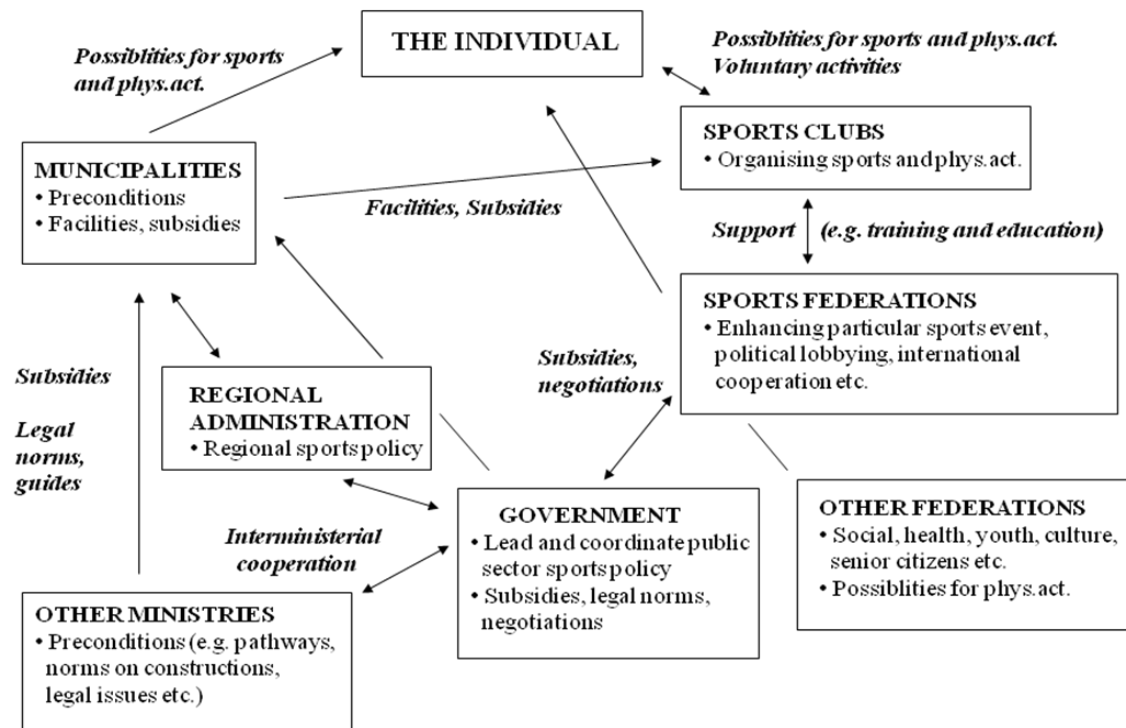


Figure 3. Cooperation and coordination in Finnish physical culture.

In this respect a major change took place in the 90's. As public subsidies were formerly distributed more or less according to political decisions and conditions, they are now distributed according to the results that especially the National Sports Organisations produce ('Management by Results'). Information is collected widely concerning the number of youth and adult members in the NSO's sports events, concerning top-sport success, training and educational courses and so forth. Based on these results, public subsidies are channelled as follows: 50% according to the NSOs results in children's and youth sport, 25% according to the results in recreational sport and health-related activities and 25% according to the results in top-sport. In practise there results give a rough outline of distributing the public funding, which is further elaborated both in the ministerial decision-making as well as in negotiations between the ministry and the federations.

7. Challenges

Many more or less conscious and purposeful strategic choices have been made in the Finnish physical culture, choices which have redirected the development of physical culture into new directions. Nevertheless, change in physical culture is not solely a consequence of these choices, but these choices are conditioned by large-scale societal changes. These preconditions refer especially to cultural and structural-administrative changes.

Cultural changes such as individualisation, mass and consumption society, various lifestyles and identities, new forms of collectivism etc. pose challenges especially to voluntarism. The quality of commitment to collectives is changing. Individuals do not necessarily want to commit themselves to the traditional formulae of organised activities with traditional procedures and administration structures. This applies particularly to young people. Instead of traditional organisational activities, individuals look for definite projects which have a clear beginning and a clear end, a given duration, and a direct personal significance.

A consequence of individualisation is that individuals become less faithful to one organisation, for example, to one sports club. A modern individual adopts different roles swiftly and consumes services various organisations deliver – that is, he or she “surfs” from one project or organisation to another without committing himself or herself, neither fully nor for life. Changes in the traditional commitment to one organisation also leads to the weakening of the foundation of associations, which is built on membership. This might suggest a change towards a clientele and consumerism, that is, towards members-clients commuting from one organisation and service to another. The second major question concerning cultural change is whether traditionally functioning sports club activities can offer interesting activities to modern individuals and in modern forms.

A welfare state will be the dominating feature of Finnish society also in the near future, even though the structural changes since the turn of the 90's have led to the downsizing of public services. However, if the basic welfare and social needs of people will remain the same or increase, the question will be, how these can be fulfilled. At least the needs in physical culture are not decreasing, on the contrary.

When public services are reduced, the focus is turning also to the private sector and voluntary associations termed as the third sector. The pressure on the private and the third sector has increased notably in the 90's. However, in principle, private businesses only supply services for those who can afford them. Thus there are high expectations that the third sector associations and federations also contribute to the national well-being and provide welfare services. Sports organisations are also expected to prevent unemployment, social displacement and to fight other threats to national well-being.

Organised sports and physical activities carried out in the sports clubs and the federations will be an important part of Finnish society also in the future. As the Finnish physical culture becomes more and more multidimensional and heterogeneous in its forms, new individual needs for physical activities, new sports, and new forms of organisation emerge alongside voluntarism in the sports clubs. As the whole Finnish population becomes a potential target for physical activities, it is doubtful whether the emerging needs can be satisfied only on the basis of voluntarism in the sports clubs. Those engaging in physical activities on their own initiative may look for supply of physical activities delivered by sports clubs, private businesses or loose networks.

Alternatively, in addition to organised and institutionalised physical activities, spontaneous communities are constantly founded. These communities resemble social movements as they are less organised, spontaneously formed networks of citizens, groups of friends and examples of local initiative. These more or less loose formations may become organised, but typically not in traditional associational forms and structures.

In Finland all of these new forms have existed already for one or two decades. The point is, firstly, that new combinations and extreme forms are founded in these dimensions. Examples are purely business-type top-sport clubs and loose networks functioning totally outside the realm of organised sport. Secondly, none of these three forms will reach a monopoly status in the Finnish physical culture. Competitive and top-sport already dominates the media publicity of physical culture, but that is only part of the whole picture. Modern Finnish physical culture is a mosaic, which does not include either-or answers but a large number of nuances in the wide spectrum of sports and physical activities.

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