

# The overlooked power imbalance of sport

Play the Game

Addressing imbalances. Reinventing systems

Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Henrik H. Brandt

Journalist, sports writer, Jyllands-Posten, 1993-2005

Director, Danish Institute for Sports Studies (idan.dk) and Play the Game, 2005-2018

Independent consultant sports and leisure 2018- (Idkon.dk)

Co-founder and manager IdrætsPlatformen Danmark 2020- (sportshubdenmark.dk)

Part time administrative manager, IF Lyseng Football, 2021-

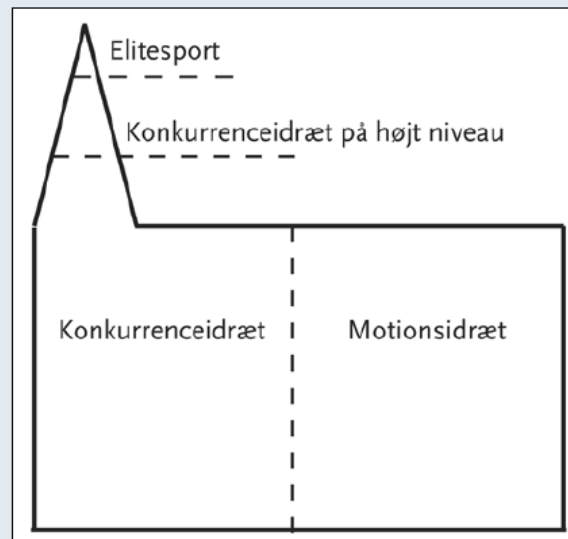
[henrik.brandt@idkon.dk](mailto:henrik.brandt@idkon.dk), +4529210972



**Figur 2: Trekantmodellen**



**Figur 3: Kirkemodellen**



## Revisiting old truths - some things never change

Föreningsfostran och tävlingsfostran  
*En utvärdering av statens stöd till idrotten*

Betänkande av Idrottstidsutredningen  
Stockholm 2008



## Tävlingsfostran ('sports logic')

Sporting achievement as the intrinsic purpose, which leads to good (and bad) effects for society and individuals

## Föreningsfostran ('community logic')

Participation and involvement as the fundamental purpose of sport (a 'democratic school' through sports clubs/organisations)

1.1 Every human being **has a fundamental right to physical education, physical activity and sport** without discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or any other basis.

Faster, higher, stronger  
A healthy mind in a healthy body  
Winners and losers  
You don't win silver – you lose gold (Nike)  
Relegation and promotion  
Transforming lives/trickle down effect /legacy through events, elite results...

1.3 Inclusive, adapted and safe opportunities to participate in physical education, physical activity and sport **must be available to all human beings**, notably children of preschool age, women and girls, the aged, persons with disabilities and indigenous people.

Fair play  
Rules and legislations  
Governing bodies  
The European Sports Model...

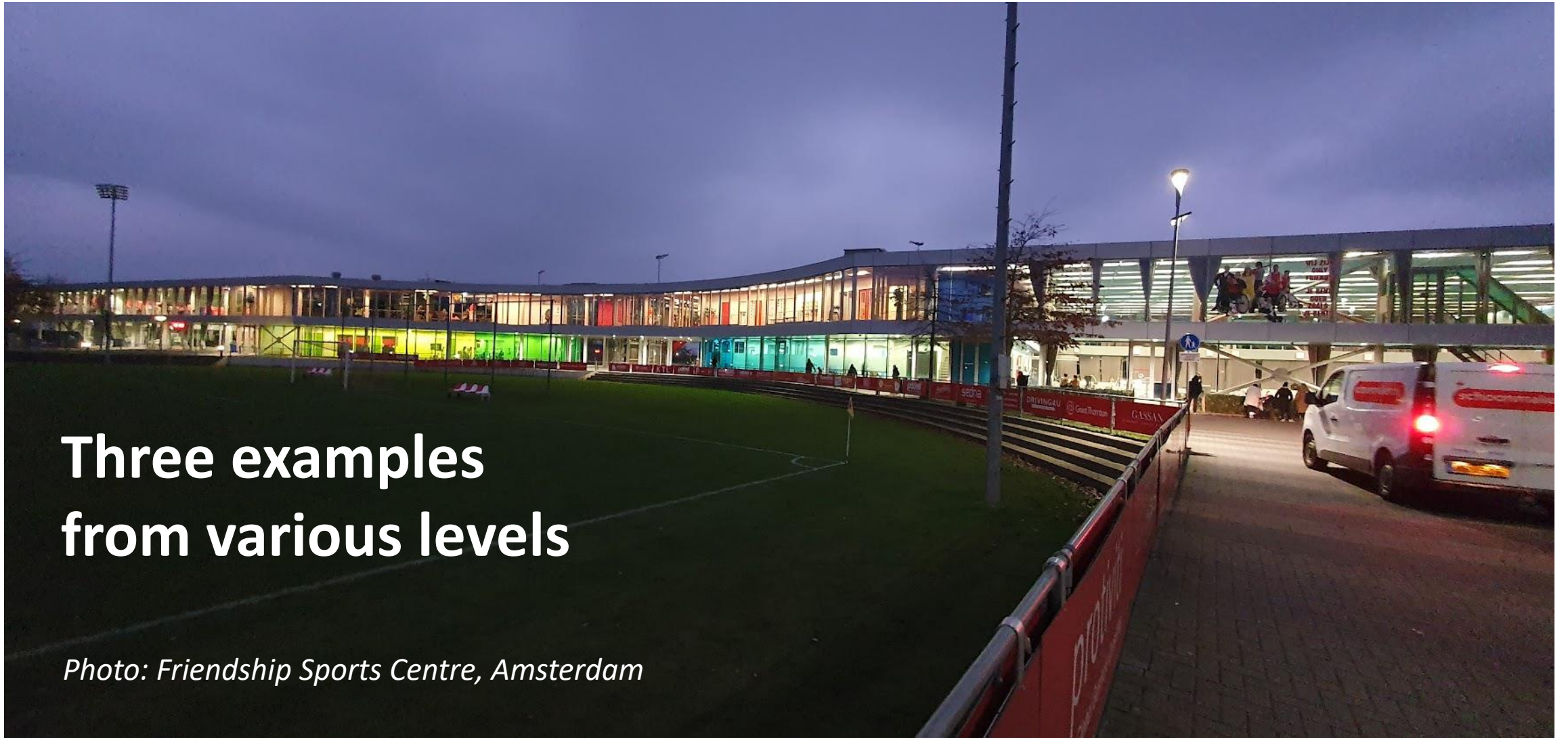
1.4 **Equal opportunity to participate and be involved at all supervision and decision-making levels in physical education, physical activity and sport**, whether for the purpose of recreation, health promotion or high performance, is the right of every girl and every woman that must be actively enforced.

10.1 All forms of physical education, physical activity and sport must be protected from abuse. Phenomena such as violence, doping, political exploitation, corruption and manipulation of sports competitions endanger the credibility and integrity of physical education, physical activity and sport and undermine their educational, developmental, and health promoting functions. Participants including referees, public authorities, law enforcement, sports organizations, betting operators, owners of sports-related rights, the media, non-governmental organizations, administrators, educators, families, the medical profession and other stakeholders **must collaborate to ensure a coordinated response to integrity threats**.

3.2 **All stakeholders**, especially national and local authorities responsible for sport, education, youth, health, active recreation, development, urban planning, environment, transport, gender and disability matters, and intergovernmental organizations, the Olympic and Paralympic movements, sports organizations, non-governmental entities, the business community, the media, educators, researchers, sport professionals and volunteers, participants and their support personnel, referees, families, as well as spectators share the responsibility for developing and supporting physical education, physical activity and sport policy; and all mentioned stakeholders should be given opportunities to exercise this responsibility.

# Three examples from various levels

*Photo: Friendship Sports Centre, Amsterdam*



**Idrætspolitikens historiske udgangspunkt: Idræt som folkeoplysning og kultur**

**Lovforankret i idrættens struktur**

- Foreningsidrætten (DIF, DGI, Firmaidrætten, andre?)
- Eliteidrætten (Team Danmark, DIF)
- Antidoping/match-fixing (Anti Doping Danmark)
- Idrætsarkitektur (Lokale og Anlægsfonden)
- Events (Sport Event Denmark)
- Statistik, forskning og analyse (delvist Idrættens Analyseinstitut og KUMs forskningsudvalg)

**Andet:**

- Øvrig folkeoplysning (bl.a. aftenskoler (bevægelsesfag), idrætsafterskoler/-højskoler)
- Professionel idræt/events (Sport Event Denmark, DIF m.fl.)
- Skoleidræt (til dels Dansk Skoleidræt)

**De 'nye' aktører: Nye aktører og idræt som middel til andre mål. Større synlighed og mere inddragelse**

**Eksempler på (nye) aktører, som bidrager til at udvikle idrætssektoren uden at være en formel del af 'idrætten'**

- Idrætsfaciliteter/natur som infrastruktur/bygherrer/driftsorganisationer
- Foreninger/organisationer/virksomheder for fremme af sociale formål gennem idræt
- Foreninger/organisationer/virksomheder for fremme af sundhedsorienterede formål gennem idræt
- Kommercielle fitnesscentre, danse/yogastudier, crossfit osv.
- Personlige trænere/selvstændige
- Ansatte i foreningslivet m.m.
- Øvrige kommercielle idrætsudbydere (eks. Padel, trampolin, akademier, camps)
- Innovation/start ups
- Forskning/udvikling/uddannelse, herunder nyuddannede
- Diverse idrætsrelaterede brancheorganisationer, fagforeninger, idrætssamvirker
- Uddannelsesidræt (bortset fra gymnasier og folkeskolen)
- E-Sport og gaming med fysisk komponent
- Fonde, kommercielle partnere, medier
- Leverandører/producenter
- Nye idrætsgrene, gadeidræt, trail, Esport, parkour,
- Andre brancher: sundhed og forebyggelse, oplevelsesøkonomi, kultur, medier, turisme, detailhandel osv.

**The challenge is that 'sports logics' has a tendency to always overrule 'community logics' ....**

Even when we address the blatant imbalances and integrity threats of sport such as :

- Doping and cheating
- Harassment and unhealthy sports environments
- Match-fixing
- Gender inequality
- Political and financial abuse or crime etc.
- White elephants and poor legacy from events

Etc. etc.

... we have a tendency of overlooking the imbalances that happen right outside our front door...

### 3.2 Involve all stakeholders? Is that really happening?

**No matter what ...**

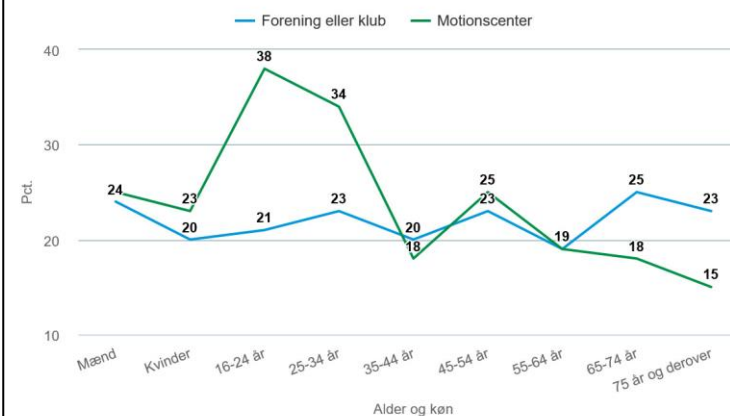
the figures, the science, the charter, or all the people voting with their feet say...

...We keep funding sport the same way, understanding sport the same way, involving the same stakeholders...

...hoping that we can fix the flaws through a bit of good governance and maybe some critical media coverage...

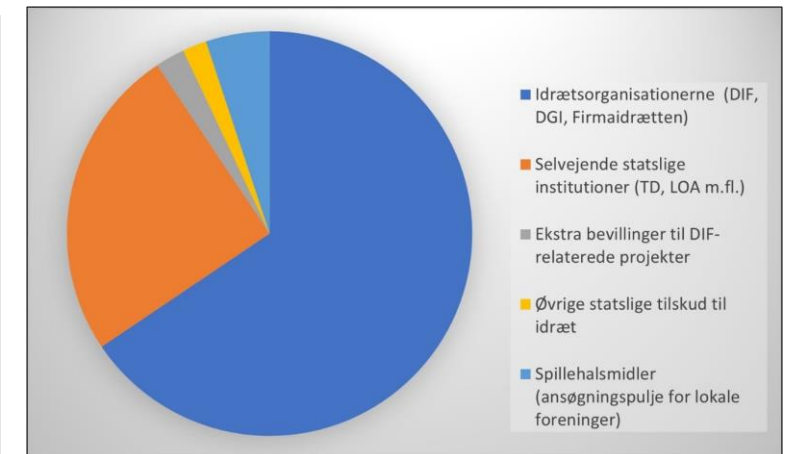
#### Forbrug af motion (kvarstal)

Tid: 3. kv. 2023 | Sted:



Membership based sport is increasingly growing in domains that are outside the 'public policy radar'.

Danmarks Statistik, 2023-3Q

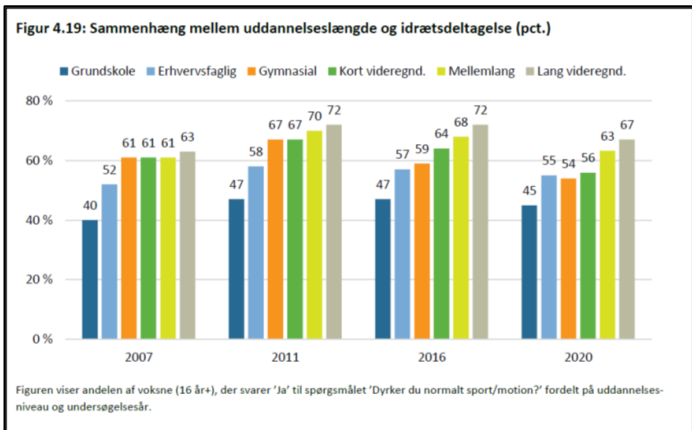
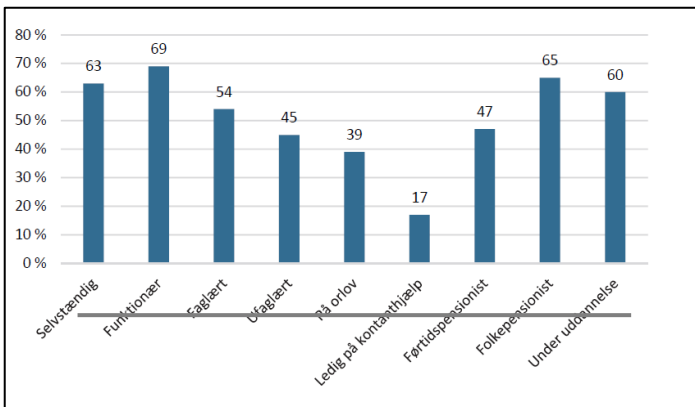


The state funding of sport in Denmark 8and many other countries) are mainly going to member organisations (that are not funding by their members).

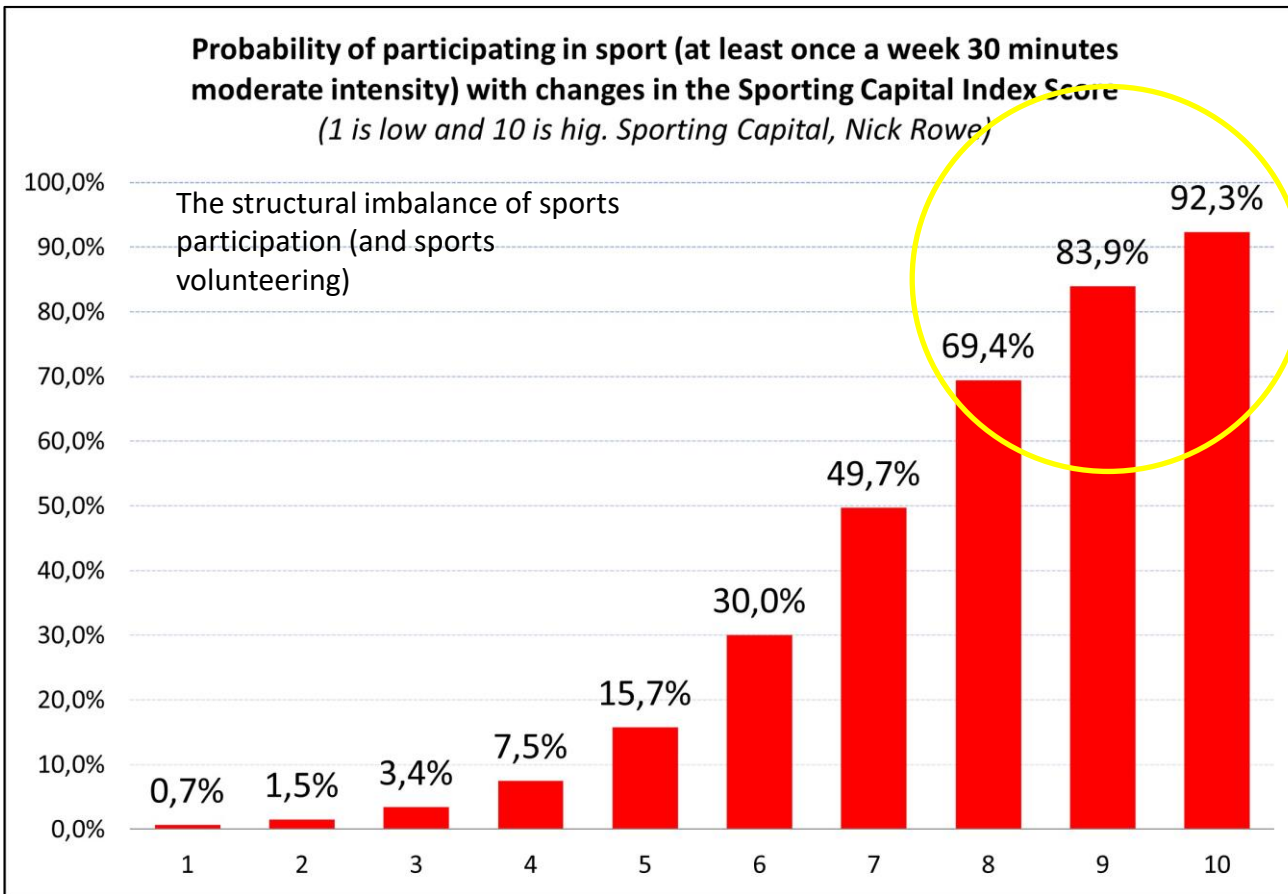
Statistikbanken/Finance act Denmark – 2023-2024



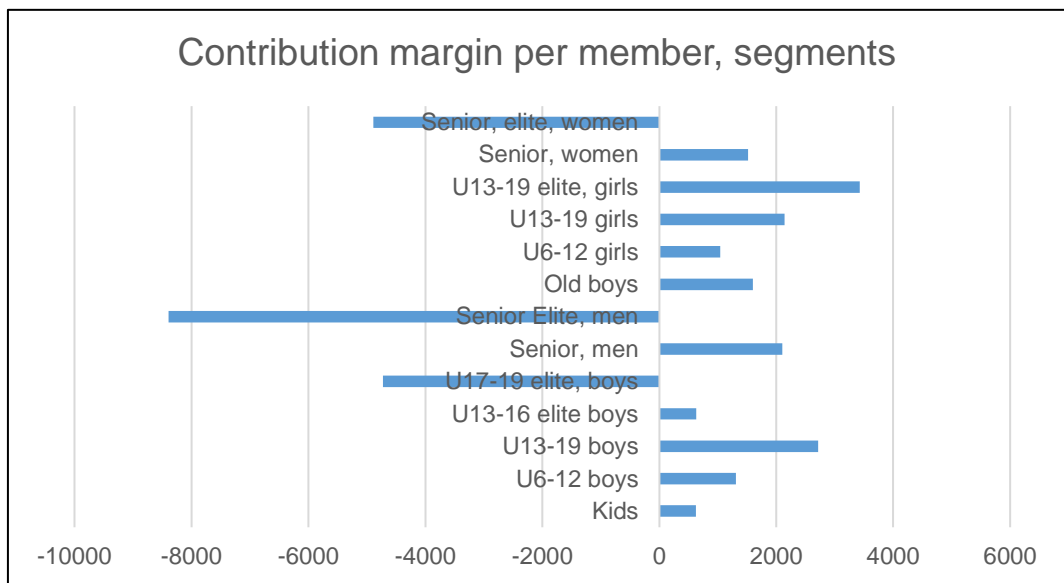
**1.3 All human beings?  
1.4 Equal opportunity?**



Even in the most 'equal' societies, access to sport and physical activity is not equal.  
We know it. And we don't really address it.

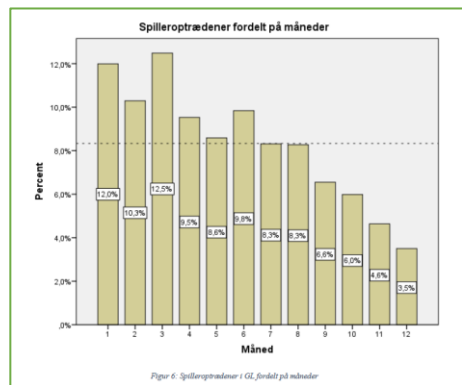


Even in 'democratic' community football, old paths and cultures are very difficult to change in practice



Above. Unconscious 'trickle up' effect in community football

Below. Walking football, very rare but supported in principle + Relative Age Effect 'boys U12' high level(Denmark)



Figur 6: Spilleroptrædener i OL, fordelt på måneder

**Democratic (grassroots) football?**

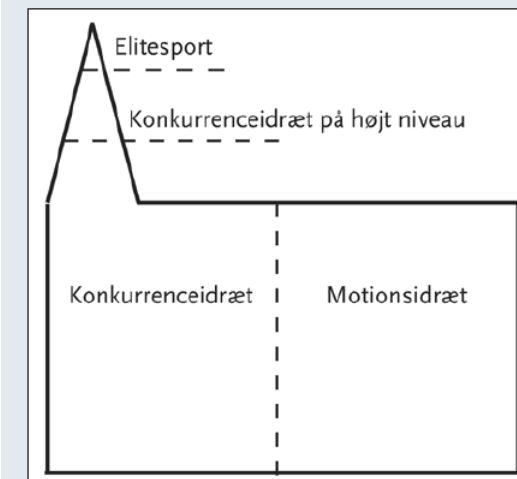
- Based on sporting merit...?
- Monopoly structures (education, salary, staff working conditions, sporting level, facilities etc.)
- Trickle down (or up ) effect?
- Equal opportunity (RAE, gender)?
- Access for all?
- Distribution of equipment, balls, time slots?
- Drop out, teenagers (predictable but unsolved)



**Figur 2: Trekantmodellen**



**Figur 3: Kirkemodellen**



**Food for thought**


When sports logic meets community logic – even in a community club near you....





**Das Sportgelände ist kein  
öffentlicher Spielplatz!**

**Eine Nutzung ist nur mit einem  
Vertrag und der bestätigten  
Nutzungszeit möglich!**

 Arena Erfurt GmbH / Erfurter Sportbetrieb

**Thank you!**



*Cycling culture in Copenhagen:  
Ordinary traffic 1937, cycling demo 1970'es, Jonas  
Vingegaard coming home from Tour de France 2022*



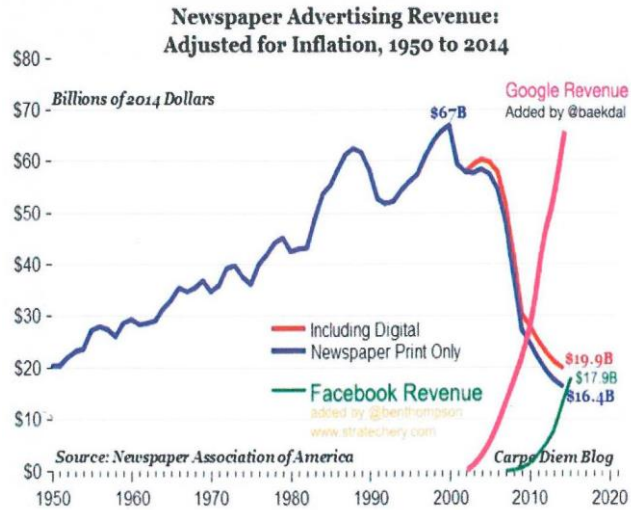




Look for power imbalances (and best practice) in your own neighborhood.  
It doesn't have to be a huge scandal to deserve a closer look...







Sport must  
rethink  
(as well)

