

### Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, and perhaps surprisingly, the theatres in Yorkshire and the Ruhr region at the turn of the nineteenth century show many similarities. German cities were still far away from subsidising the performing arts. To commit themselves to municipal playhouses was out of the question. Although many became increasingly prepared to offer limited financial help if yet another season had ended in financial loss, this change of attitude does not mean that cities came to pursue an active cultural policy; it rather meant agreeing to waive the cost of the lease in one-off decisions. That Münster, for example, was not interested in any long-term commitments is illustrated by the neglect of the old theatre building, the *Comödienhaus*, and its subsequent demolition. In Hagen, Bochum, Dortmund and Bielefeld the city authorities were only vaguely interested in the theatre and could only with some difficulty and after substantial capital investment from its citizens be persuaded to contribute to building costs. Like Wilson Barrett or Percy Hutchinson German impresarios resembled business managers rather than the artistic directors they would later become. It was only after the First World War that German regional theatres were literally taken over by the local authorities – only from the early 1920s did a theatre system develop which differed more clearly from Britain.

Regarding architectural solutions, too, parallel developments between the two regions are obvious. In Britain the topography of entertainment changed substantially towards the end of the nineteenth century with theatres moving from back streets to occupying prime locations in city centres. Put into context Yorkshire's glorious Victorian theatres in size, splendour and stature resembled Continental state theatres more than what might commonly be expected of a playhouse in England's industrial north. In effect, the new municipal theatres in Dortmund, Hagen, Bochum and Bielefeld were very similar to their British counterparts – not only in their outward appearance as proud civic statements (and equally copying the famous state theatres in Berlin, Vienna and Munich) but also regarding the way they were organised. In fact none of them received any regular subsidies around 1900, most of them were built following the initiatives of bourgeois pressure groups, they were run as business enterprises bound to make a profit, and presented a repertoire dominated not by Schiller and Goethe but by operettas, farces and comedies.

## Between Club and Commerce: Comparing the Organisation of Sports in Britain and Germany from the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

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### Introduction

Commercialisation is a process whereby things and actions that have been provided for by the voluntary sector or the state become the object of markets and are in some way employed to generate profits. Sport is among the numerous phenomena that are affected by commercialisation, allegedly with negative consequences. According to the common view, commercialisation opens the floodgates for powerful interests that are alien to sport and change its character for the worse: it provides an incentive for athletes either to try to win at all costs or to lose deliberately. It shifts the balance of power from the governing bodies of sport to the corporate sponsors, who urge the regulators to adapt the rules of games to the requirements of advertising and their sale as television content. It channels resources to the top teams and athletes, rendering the competition boring. The buying and selling of clubs and players regardless of traditions creates teams of 'mercenaries' and alienates supporters. So the accusations go.

Whereas commerce seems to be at the heart of many evils in sports and elsewhere, voluntary associations are commonly seen in a much more favourable light, both in a more general sense as parts of civil society and more particularly in the context of sport. Clubs are said to embody traditions and loyalties which make up the social value of sport but have become fragile under the impact of the market. As each member has one vote, clubs organise sport according to the interests of the members, not shareholders. The conflict between commercialisation and the club principle is a recurrent issue in sport and is at the moment much discussed in professional football, where after a series of insolvencies of British clubs there are initiatives for reform, trying to change the character of clubs that have essentially become private companies in order to revive their participatory, not-for-profit elements.<sup>1</sup>

In the following paper, I am going to explore the relationship between commerce and clubs in sport in historical perspective, comparing British and German developments from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century. My aim is to add nuances to the black-and-white picture of 'harmful' commerce and 'good' clubs, pointing out that neither

<sup>1</sup> David Conn, "How can football clubs capture the social value of the beautiful game?," *The Guardian*, 18 August 2010.

is commercialisation necessarily 'bad' for sport, nor is the club *per se* the single most preferential form to organise competitive games.

In the first part of the paper, I am going to look at the British case where commercial influences can be detected in early modern sports, long before the organisational form of the club gained prominence. In the nineteenth century, clubs and associations were formed by middle-class reformers who sought to employ sport as a means for 'rational recreation' and whose attempts to improve other peoples' behaviour conflicted with sport in many respects. But the success of this reform movement remained limited due to the impact of another wave of commercialisation in the last third of the nineteenth century which fostered sport's independence from patronage and social control.

In the second part, I will analyse the German case. In Germany, sports were imported in the late nineteenth century, when clubs and associations were already established as the organisational form of leisure and sociability. Unlike in Britain, where sport had grown out of pre-modern contexts before it became organised in clubs, in Germany modern associativity preceded sports. As a consequence of this, the influence of commerce on the early development of sport in Germany was weaker than in Britain, and this meant that sports enthusiasts often depended on the goodwill of patrons like politicians, members of the economic elite and other honories who supported clubs primarily in order to preserve local hierarchies, not to sponsor entertainment for the common people. There were cases of commercial sponsorship of 'English sports' in Germany, particularly in the big cities of the Empire and in relation to sports which were favoured by members of the middle class, such as horse racing, cycling, tennis or motor sports.<sup>2</sup> If one looks at provincial towns, at smaller clubs and at sports in which the working class had a bigger share of participants, the patrons of the associations saw the meritocratic elements and unpredictability of competitive sport with considerable scepticism, as these features conflicted with the established way that clubs organised the local society. Gymnastics, a pastime supported by the movement to establish a German nation state, is a case in point. As will be argued, the persistence of 'traditional' club life that was still dominated by local honories and often unchallenged by commercial impulses slowed down the expansion of sports that were affordable for and favoured by working people. Both cases try to make the point that commercialisation in the form of sponsoring competitions in the hope of attracting attention benefited sport, because it worked against the dependency on patrons who either opposed sport or tried to employ it as a means to improve the conduct of other social groups. The comparison should also show that clubs have not simply been formed to administer and allocate resources for sporting

competitions, but as instruments for social control and exclusion. These insights require us to distinguish different forms of commercialisation as well as associativity and see these two not as exclusive ways of organising sport, but in some cases as mutually benefiting each other.

### Strong Commercial Influences, Weak Clubs and Associations: the British Case

In Britain, early modern sports were to a considerable degree organised along commercial lines. This means, firstly, that horse racing, cricket and wrestling matches, animal sports and contests between runners and pugilists were held for the purpose of betting. Rich men, but also ordinary people used betting as a form of 'conspicuous consumption' to raise their social standing among their peers. Putting money on the outcome of a competition signalled that a person had the necessary funds, and well-informed betting showed the punter's rationality and expertise. Both forms of behaviour indicated that a person was worthy of credit and trust.<sup>3</sup>

The second commercial trait was the interest of the organisers of sporting contests. They often worked in the catering business, and by staging exciting events, they hoped to boost their trade. So the alehouse or pub became the most important sporting centre of the time and the publican the principal organiser of sports. Apart from selling refreshments, he provided animals for blood sports, acted as bookmaker and sometimes collected entrance fees.<sup>4</sup> The third commercial trait of early modern sports was the fact that the men who ran, rode or fought were often paid for it. Many of the sportsmen were employees of those gentlemen who placed the bets, but there were also professional sportspeople who achieved fame by newspaper reports. As 'sports stars', they commanded tuition fees (pugilists giving boxing lessons, for instance) and earned an income from stakes or a share of the gate money.<sup>5</sup>

Early modern sport was commercial in many respects. Contests were staged as events to advertise, sell tickets and provide the opportunity to gamble; athletes provided a service for which they were paid. The club principle at this stage played a marginal role. Only in cricket and horse racing had regulatory bodies emerged, to put uniform rules to paper and supervise contests. In other sports the rules remained subject to negotiation, and conflicts arising from contests were to be solved by patrons.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century members of the rising middle class began to campaign against traditional sports. Focussing on

<sup>3</sup> Eisenberg, 'English sports', 29f.

<sup>4</sup> Tony Collins, Wray Vamplew, *Mud, sweat and beers. A cultural history of sport and alcohol* (Oxford: Berg, 2002), 5-38; Dennis Brailsford, *A Taste for Diversions. Sport in Georgian England* (Cambridge: Lutterworth, 1999), 108-113.

<sup>5</sup> Adrian Harvey, *The Beginnings of a Commercial Sporting Culture in Britain, 1793-1850* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), ch. 8.

<sup>2</sup> Christiane Eisenberg, 'English sports' und deutsche Bürger. *Eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte 1800-1939* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1999), 227-229.

fraud, drunken crowds and violence among spectators and athletes, the reformers made out the profit interest as the root of sport's evils. The 'professional' became a figure that had to be distrusted and excluded from sporting contests, while the 'amateur' embodied the disinterestedness and fairness of the true sportsman who adhered to the 'spirit of the game'. Middle-class reformers propagated sport as a part of 'rational recreation' with the aim to civilise crowds and contestants, contribute to the physical health of the nation and promote mutual understanding between the classes. Therefore the organisation of sports had to be taken out of the hands of publicans and other 'profiteers' and made the responsibility of the reformers who increasingly founded clubs and associations to this end.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the growing number of golf, tennis, cycling or rowing clubs in which members of the middle class socialised with each other,<sup>7</sup> the club principle manifested itself in two forms. Firstly, from the 1860s middle class reformers founded new governing bodies such as the Football Association (1863), the Rugby Football Union (1871) and the Amateur Rowing Association (1882). These claimed responsibility for the regulation of their respective games and laid down amateur clauses in their constitutions which were intended to exclude all economic interest from sports. Secondly, the middle class sponsored or initiated the formation of clubs for working people, for instance in connection with factories and churches. This way they wanted to motivate workers to actively participate in sports and to lure them away from the pub, the old sporting centre.

While the works' sport movement was still in its infancy and awaited its massive expansion after the First World War, the number of sports clubs with religious affiliations was quite substantial in the last third of the nineteenth century. In Birmingham between 1871 and 1884, at least 21% of the cricket and 25% of the football clubs were connected to a church.<sup>8</sup> In Bolton in 1900, 97 of a total of 111 local cricket teams and 26 out of 65 football teams had a religious affiliation.<sup>9</sup> Overall, there was a trend that the pub lost its position as the hub of sports organisation to clubs that often relied on middle-class support. However, a closer look at these clubs shows that the efforts to bring about the idea of sport as a 'rational recreation' had only very limited success. The promoters of church clubs found out that they had to conceal their educational agenda if they wanted

<sup>6</sup> Richard Holt, *Sport and the British. A Modern History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), 98-100 ("spirit of the game"), 136ff. ("rational recreation"). See also Richard Holt, "Amateurism and its Interpretation: The Social Origins of British Sport," *Innovation* 5, 4 (1992), 19-31.

<sup>7</sup> John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), ch. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915* (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), 26.

<sup>9</sup> Jack Williams, "Churches, Sport and Identities in the North, 1900-1939," in: Jack Hill, Jack Williams (eds.), *Sport and identity in the North of England* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1996), 115.

to attract a working-class clientele, and in the course of events the clubs focussed on sport as an end in itself like any secular association. Footballers playing for church teams ignored appeals to attend Mass or bible class, they did not commit fewer fouls than secular teams<sup>10</sup> and sometimes migrated between clubs from different denominations. In Sheffield's Bible Class League in 1908, for instance, the club of the Primitive Methodists at Roundel Street fielded players that had formerly started for the nearby Emmanuel church, an Anglican community.<sup>11</sup> The example of sports organisations of the church illustrate the verdict that on the whole, middle-class reformers were sponsors rather than missionaries of working-class sport.<sup>12</sup>

A similar conclusion has to be drawn for the governing bodies that had started out to exclude the commercial element but had to face the fact that professional sports would not disappear. The Football Association made concessions in order to incorporate the professional game, while the Rugby Union insisted on amateur clauses and provoked the formation of a separate body for the organisation of professional leagues.<sup>13</sup> Either way, the provision and consumption of sport as a spectacle resembled in many respects the games of early modern times. The promoters of 'rational recreation' did not succeed in teaching the crowds a new understanding of sport and in excluding financial interests. Arguably, the codification of rules might even have achieved the opposite and facilitated commercialisation, as the homogenisation of sporting cultures was a precondition for the development of leagues and competitions with a national scope which in turn contributed to the popularity of certain sports and attracted sponsorship.

One explanation for the failure of 'rational recreation' is that parallel to the initiatives of the middle class in the last third of the nineteenth century a new wave of commercialisation affected sport and preserved some of its older commercial traits against the attacks of the reformers. The basis for the rise of commercial leisure was the ability of a growing number of people to spend time and money on it. Urbanisation, improved transport facilities, rising wages, reduced working hours and synchronised leisure time brought commercial entertainment into the reach of working people towards the end of the century. On the other side, there were entrepreneurs who interpreted spare time and disposable income as demand and who were ready to cater for it. They offered new amusements like music halls and railway excursions to working people and gave them a choice, which in turn put pressure on the promoters of 'rational recreation'

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

<sup>11</sup> "Bible Class League," in: *Sheffield Telegraph. Football and Sports Special*, 5 September 1908.

<sup>12</sup> Neil Tranter, *Sport, economy, and society in Britain, 1750-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 49f.

<sup>13</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, 104-107.

to adapt to the expectations of a clientele that could turn towards commercial entertainment.

Within this general trend of commercialisation, the case of sport is somewhat particular. Unlike the music halls, which attracted a lot of capital from small investors who expected large dividends,<sup>14</sup> sport itself had generally not been transformed into a branch of the entertainment business during the late nineteenth century. Sport at the turn of the century did not primarily serve as a vehicle for 'profit maximisation'. In football, the most popular spectator sport, limited liability companies that had been formed by clubs only paid out small dividends, if they made any profit at all. Money was not taken out of the game and given to shareholders, but was reinvested to enhance a team's performance. Another indicator is that in contrast to music halls, football clubs did not try to attract a more affluent audience, for instance by providing more comfortable facilities or raising ticket prices. Sport was not a profitable investment, and it was not perceived as one either.<sup>15</sup>

Commercialisation in the last third of the nineteenth century did not turn sport into a business, but affected it in an indirect way. It was not the new football companies themselves (of which there were at least 150 founded before 1914) that hoped for financial returns, but firms from other economic sectors like the brewing industry and the press that sponsored sporting events to boost the sales of newspapers and beer. The role of the press appears to have been of prime importance. Many local newspapers initiated competitions from football, cricket and bowling to gardening and dog breeding, awarding cups and offering practical help, for instance by printing score sheets for free.<sup>16</sup> Sports competitions generated news which filled the pages of new supplements, the 'Pink' and 'Green 'Uns', sport specials printed on coloured paper that appeared in the 1880s and became 'ubiquitous' after 1900. These periodicals reported on all kinds of sports from cricket to bowling, covering the professional tier as well as the lowest amateur leagues.<sup>17</sup> Supplements were closely connected to the local sporting scenes so that the boundary between the press and the sports community was blurred. In the Sheffield Telegraph's 'Green 'Un', reports and 'jottings' on the latest sporting events contain many references that could have only been written and understood by insiders. The paper provided a forum for sport 'fans' and must have contributed immensely to fuelling their enthusiasm.

<sup>14</sup> Andrew Crowhurst, 'The 'portly grabbers of the 75 per cent.' Capital Investment in the British Entertainment Industry, 1885-1914,' *Leisure Studies* 20, 2 (2001), 107-123.

<sup>15</sup> Pamela Dixon et al., 'Shareholders and Shareholding: The Case of the Football Company in Late Victorian England,' *Business History* 46 (2004), 503-524. See also Holt, *Sport and the British*, 282.

<sup>16</sup> 'Score Sheets for the game of Bowls may be obtained gratis on application to Sporting Editor,' *Sheffield Independent*, 22 July 1907, 8.

<sup>17</sup> Holt, *Sport and the British*, 307f.

Media coverage boosted the popularity of certain sports, which in turn made them attractive for sponsors who tried to associate their products with them. Brewers had traditionally supported sports because they felt obliged as 'good Tories' to do so, but from the 1880s, when a growing number of breweries went to the stock market to raise capital and were then forced to grow, they sponsored clubs and competitions increasingly with an eye to the potential marketing effects. Brandy was advertised as an aid to the sportsman, breweries produced football fixture cards and supported clubs by buying shares, providing grounds and erecting stands.<sup>18</sup> Publishing houses also used sporting competitions as a vehicle for advertising, for instance the Daily Mail sponsoring the first national angling competition in 1906.<sup>19</sup> In other cases, commercial sponsors had a closer and more specific connection to the events they supported, for example in the case of the brass band contest movement that found a central figure in the publisher John Henry Iles, who initiated the first annual National Brass Band Championship in 1900.<sup>20</sup> Later, the music publishing firm of Boosey & Hawkes took over the organisation of the national brass band contest.

Commercial sponsors hoped to benefit from the popularity of sports, and by supporting competitions they contributed to their further popularisation. This happened on both the national and the local level and in athletic games like football as well as pastimes from brass band music to gardening, many of which flourished because contests attracted the interest of the general public and motivated enthusiasts to remain engaged. Hence, commercialisation was an important factor to generate human attention as one important resource for sport. Money from sponsors also helped to finance competitions and meant less interference than the support from the voluntary sector that came with the strings of 'rational recreation' and social control attached.

Moreover, commercialisation did not simply oppose the club principle. Rather than discouraging self-organisation, commercial sponsorship fostered the formation of voluntary organisations among sports enthusiasts. Local newspapers, by awarding trophies and initiating competitions, provided the basis for and sometimes instigated the formation of associations which administered the matches. In some

<sup>18</sup> Collins, Vamplew, *Mud, Sweat, and Beers*, 44-47.

<sup>19</sup> John Lowerson, 'Brothers of the Angle. Coarse Fishing and English Working-Class Culture, 1850-1914,' in: Jonathan Anthony Mangan (ed.), *Pleasure, Profit, Proletarianism. British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad* (London: Cass, 1988), 121-123.

<sup>20</sup> Clifford Bevan, 'Brass Band Contests: Art or sport,' in: Trevor Herbert (ed.), *The Brass Band Movement in the 19th and 20th Century* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991), 105-109; Duncan Bythell, 'Provinces versus Metropolis in the British Brass Band Movement in the Early Twentieth Century. The Case of William Rimmer and his Music,' *Popular Music* 16, 2 (1997), 154.

instances, newspaper employees undertook the necessary steps for the foundation of organising bodies for sport.<sup>21</sup>

The associations that were founded with the support of commercial sponsors differed from both the middle-class clubs and – as will be shown below – the associations in Germany in that their function was very much restricted to organising sports. As infrastructures for enthusiasms they lacked the paraphernalia of badges and uniforms that were an important part of middle-class club life. Whereas cycling, tennis and rowing clubs with a middle-class membership organised processions and held meetings that were well-publicised social events,<sup>22</sup> associations that owed their existence to a commercial sponsor as well as clubs that were formed in pubs concerned themselves first and foremost with sports, and kept a low profile in other matters. In contrast to clubs of the middle-class, holding an office or being a long-term member in a working-class club or association was apparently not rewarded with social capital. This suggests that these clubs and associations remained an organisational infrastructure, a tool to raise funds and to administer competitions, enabling enthusiasts to pursue their sporting interest.

### Sports in Conflict with Local Clubs and National Associations: the German Case

The account of the German case, which stands for a very different relationship between clubs and commerce in regards to sport, has to begin with the growth of veterans', shooters', singers' and gymnasts' clubs from the 1860s, when the restrictions on forming associations were relaxed. Two aspects were characteristic for these clubs. Firstly, they recruited members from a broad social spectrum, bringing together people from the working as well as the middle class together under the leadership of representatives of the local elite. While there were also small clubs with a membership of between one and two dozen men, which recruited their members among neighbours, family and colleagues and are similar to British leisure clubs, the clubs that were particularly prominent in German towns and set the tone for the way clubs were run and the role they played in their social environment were those that had several dozen, sometimes hundreds of members, distinguished along class lines into 'active', supporting (or 'passive', as they were called) and 'honorary' members. Under the pressure of economic migration as a consequence of industrialisation, clubs opened their ranks to a broader clientele, such as the male voice choir 'Sanssouci' in Essen, founded in 1860 among others by a tradesman,

a carpenter and a typographer, that took on miners, metalworkers, factory workers and day labourers as members in the following years.<sup>23</sup>

The second characteristic of German clubs in the second half of the nineteenth century was their firm connection to the local community. Clubs adopted the name of their home town or borough, some chose – like the 'Essener Turnverein' from 1859 – the colours of their town as club colours. The clubs' anniversaries, the highlight of the annual calendar, were celebrated as a demonstration of the club's respectability to the local community. The festivities began with parades and bugle calls, imitating military routines, included a religious service and speeches by prominent supporters and led on to a procession through the locality, symbolically linking the streets of the vicinity whose inhabitants were requested to put out flags.<sup>24</sup> In their social inclusiveness as well as their conspicuous connection to their place, the clubs aspired to represent the local community.

At first sight, these clubs may seem to embody the participatory and communal elements whose loss is bemoaned today as a consequence of increasing commercialisation. However, a closer look reveals that these clubs' potential to socially integrate was in fact very limited. Intended as an instrument to preserve the social, they offered few opportunities for integration that crossed the lines between social classes and – equally important in times of economic mass migration – between those who called themselves natives and the more recently arrived. Membership of the bigger clubs was differentiated along differences in income and status into 'active' members, who were mostly workers, 'passive' members – mainly lower middle-class supporters who often ran a small business – and 'honorary' members like local politicians, entrepreneurs and academics (physicians or head teachers). These groups only came together on special occasions, with status differences carefully marked. On the basis of this division, it was not unusual to further segment big clubs into smaller units by forming sub-clubs like choirs and drama groups. In gymnastic clubs squads were founded whose members were connected by personal liking rather than a similar ability to perform.<sup>25</sup> This departmentalisation provided opportunities for members of the same club, but from different social backgrounds to avoid having to actually deal with each other. For club members from lower classes this meant that there were no real chances to rise above their ranks. The recognition of long-term and loyal membership as an indicator for 'respectability' was what workers could expect. As membership was important in itself, it required men to commit to a club on a long-term basis. This conflicted with the situation of the many workers who changed their homes and workplaces

<sup>23</sup> Minute book of the "Männerchor Sanssouci" (162-1870), Sta Essen, Best. 421/B 8a.

<sup>24</sup> See the appeal of the "Essener Turnverein" in the *Essener Zeitung*, 2 July 1865. The usual procedure of anniversary festivals can be reconstructed from printed programmes in the "Festschriften" and from newspaper reports.

<sup>25</sup> Eisenberg, 'English sports', 140f.

<sup>21</sup> "The 'Sheffield Telegraph' Cup. Important Meeting of Bowling Clubs. Probable South Yorkshire Association", *Sheffield Telegraph*, 15 November 1907, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes*, 140ff.

quickly due to economic fluctuations, and it favoured the people who saw themselves as the original inhabitants of a place over those who came later and were likely to move on.

Against this backdrop, sport was introduced as a new element for club life. Competitive activities like choir contests, gymnastics tournaments and later the English sports such as football and boxing became popular with those active members who were bored by the clubs' routines and realised that they could earn social recognition by sporting merit. As a consequence, a plethora of new clubs sprang up, dedicated to organising competitions from football matches to pigeon races. Historians have counted the foundation of at least 175 sports and gymnastic clubs in the town of Essen between 1901 and 1914, when the city had roughly 300,000 inhabitants.<sup>26</sup> Apart from that, an increasing number of the older choral and gymnastics clubs, who without a collective aim had had difficulties in motivating their members to attend rehearsals and lessons,<sup>27</sup> changed their character to some extent by engaging in singing contests and gymnastic competitions. In cases that are better documented, it is possible to trace the roots of competitive gymnastic clubs, football clubs and contesting choirs back to non-competitive church choirs, veterans' and gymnastics clubs which testifies that leisure pursuits gained importance.<sup>28</sup> While gymnastics and choral singing had formerly been subjected to the public display of discipline, towards the end of the century leisure and sport began to emancipate themselves from the limiting rituals of the traditional club.

New sports and pastimes seem to have had a levelling effect, cutting across lines of class and religious affiliation. Choirs that had been founded within religious communities started recruiting singers from other denominations.<sup>29</sup> Sports and hobbies found followers in a wide social spectrum. Football and pigeon-racing, becoming more popular and affordable, appealed to members of the working as well as the middle classes. Male voice choirs which competed in contests had factory labourers and self-employed craftsmen among their active members; the football club 'Rot-

Weiß Essen' brought together metalworkers and miners with white-collar employees. It also had a Polish player, which suggests that sports had the potential to encourage sociability between members of social groups that were separated from each other.<sup>30</sup>

The shift from the traditional club life to a growing concern with competitive leisure activities was promoted by supporting members, especially the publicans, who saw that exciting events attracted audiences and raised attention. Choir contests and gymnastic competitions sometimes drew dozens of clubs with hundreds of members and paying spectators. In a four-day contest of the male voice choir 'Teutonia' in Essen in 1894, 48 clubs participated with about 1,500 singers.<sup>31</sup> Besides publicans, other small businessmen supported contests by paying for an advertisement in the programme and selling tickets for the event. Apart from that, they paid their contributions as 'passive members', enabling the club to aspire to host big events.

However, regardless of the popular demand and the support from local businesses sport remained tied to patronage, a dependency that was cast in the clubs' organisation. Gymnastic competitions and choir contests, the most popular forms of sport among working people before English sports were fully established, were bound to a club's anniversary, limited to this yearly occasion and jammed into a schedule of speeches, processions and flag waving. A further indication for the ongoing dependency on patronage is that the organisers of competitions usually asked the local authorities for an endorsement, stressing that support of the club's activities would be in the interest of the local community and asking for a speech by the mayor and the donation of a prize.<sup>32</sup> This way, clubs did not just make sure that they were permitted to host their event and try to acquire additional funding. They also wanted the local figureheads to back contests because as there were no universally accepted rules and referees for this kind of competitions, the support of reputable personalities was the only way to assure participating clubs that the contest would be fair.

Dependency on 'honorary' members also manifested itself in the competitions' rules and regulations which required participating clubs to not only turn up for the contest, but take part in the 'official' ceremonies, fitted out with uniforms and flags. Some rules named 'clean suits' as a requirement for contestants, making sure that the competition would be an orderly event. To further motivate gymnasts who might be too focussed on winning to show their best side in the public display of respectability, prizes were awarded for a disciplined appearance in parades.<sup>33</sup> Such rules

<sup>30</sup> Georg Schreyer, Uwe Wick, "... immer wieder RWE!": Die Geschichte von Rot-Weiß Essen' (Göttingen: Die Werkstatt, 2004), 17.

<sup>31</sup> See article in *Essener Volkszeitung*, 4 and 8 August 1894.

<sup>32</sup> Applications for support of club events are collected in local archives. For Essen see: Sta E, Best. 102, Nr. 2232, 2233 and 2235.

<sup>33</sup> Anon., *Fest-Buch zum 50jährigen Jubelfest mit nationalem Gesangwettbewerb*. MGy Cäcilia

<sup>26</sup> Stefan Nielsen, *Sport und Großstadt 1870 bis 1930. Komparative Studien zur Entstehung bürgerlicher Freizeitkultur* (Frankfurt: Lang, 2002), 358.

<sup>27</sup> The "Essener Turnverein" introduced surcharges for absence from exercises. See J. Kaupert, "Geschichte des Essener Turnvereins, 1859-1890", in: *Deutsche Turnerschaft, Turnkreis Rheinland, Westfalen, Lippe-Detmold* (ed.), *Festschrift für das 1890 in Essen stattfindende 5. Kreisfest des 8. deutschen Turnkreises* (Essen: Bäcker, 1890), 66-78.

<sup>28</sup> For examples of clubs shifting their purpose from the representation of the local community to leisure and entertainment see Siegfried Gehrman, *Fußball, Vereine, Politik. Zur Sportgeschichte des Reviers 1900-1940* (Essen: Hobbings, 1988), 83-86; Klaus Nathaus, "Vereinsgesellschaft und soziale Integration von Arbeitern in Deutschland, 1860-1914. Mit einem vergleichenden Blick auf den britischen Fall," *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 36 (2010), 57.

<sup>29</sup> For the town of Münster see Annegret Heemann, *Männergesangvereine im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert. Ein Beitrag zur städtischen Musikgeschichte Münsters* (Frankfurt: Lang, 1992), 166-168, for Essen see Klaus Nathaus, *Organisierte Gesellschaft. Deutsche und britische Vereine im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2009), 128.

are not simply a reflection of traditions, but the result of a growing tension between the orderly, highly formalised and hierarchical conduct of traditional clubs and sport, whose unpredictability made it a potentially disruptive element in the eyes of those who wanted to preserve the status quo.

Those who favoured sport had to make compromises, as they depended on the goodwill of influential patrons with whom they were connected in the club. One important reason for the continuous dominance of the local elites on the activities of sports and leisure clubs is the fact that in contrast to Britain, the commercial influence on sports was weak, and so hardly any alternative resources were available at the turn of the century. The press and the breweries, which in Britain were important for the independence of sport from middle-class missionaries, did not play this role in the German case. Local newspapers featured club events with large excerpts of the speeches given by influential patrons, while contests and competitions hosted in connection with it were hardly mentioned. In comparison to the press coverage in Britain at the same time, it is striking how little German newspapers convey the passions and excitement that sporting matches aroused, if they found these pursuits newsworthy at all. In the 1920s, German breweries spent far less money on advertising than their British counterparts, and unlike British brewers they did not employ sports as a vehicle for marketing their beer.<sup>34</sup>

The confinement of commercial sponsoring to publicans and local businessmen like shopkeepers and craftsmen has to be explained in reference to several factors, including the self-understanding of journalists who saw their task in educating rather than entertaining their readership,<sup>35</sup> and the state of advertising that at the turn of the century was still seen by many as somehow illegitimate.<sup>36</sup> A further and very important factor to be mentioned were national associations for gymnasts', singers' and shooters' that were founded in the early 1860s as part of the national movement, about the same time that the English Football Association came into existence. Apart from this coincidence, the difference between the 'Deutscher Schützenbund' (1860), 'Deutsche Turnerschaft' (1861) and

'Deutscher Sängerbund' (1862) and the governing bodies of sport in Britain could hardly be bigger. Whereas the latter were essentially exclusive gentlemen's clubs that saw their responsibility in regulating sports, the German associations organised a political movement, for which the actual shooting, gymnastics and singing fulfilled a mobilising function or were meant as military training, but certainly not as a form of entertainment. In fact, the leaders of the national associations condemned any sign of competitive shooting, gymnastics and singing becoming something that was enjoyed for its own sake as a distraction from the more serious aims of the 'movement'. The 'Sängerbund', for instance, dismissed choral contests wholeheartedly as a cause of conflict between singers and a profanation of the political cause, even though Wilhelm II endorsed choir competitions and initiated a national contest for leading German male voice choirs, the 'Kaiserpreissingen'.<sup>37</sup> A similar focus on political unity and an aversion to 'mere' entertainment characterises the national associations for singing, gymnastics, cycling and other leisure and athletic purposes that were founded within the social democratic movement from the 1890s on.<sup>38</sup>

Regardless of their political persuasion, these associations would not provide any organisational help for sporting competitions, so that the costly tasks of establishing communication and trust between clubs, providing referees or judges and defining rules were left to the enthusiasts themselves. Moreover, the associations, especially the well-connected nationalist-conservative organisations founded in the 1860s, absorbed resources that were then lost to bodies that would have dedicated themselves to the organisation of competitions. The market for leisure journals, for instance, was in many areas dominated by the publications of associations that were paid for by membership contributions and because of their big and reliable readership attracted advertisers. This was a strong incentive for publishers to collaborate with an association rather than taking the risk and launching a purely commercial journal that had to appeal to customers who often had already spent money on a periodical. Besides their privileged position on markets, the nationalist associations were well connected to the political elite, which meant that affiliated clubs were favoured when they needed playing fields or gymnastic halls. Bigger events were sometimes supported financially by the authorities. In Essen, the town council backed the 1890 meeting of the regional branch of the 'Deutsche Turnerschaft' by guaranteeing 3,000 marks against financial loss. The fact that a local brewery also sponsored this event with free drinks, a

<sup>34</sup> *Altessen* (Essen: no publisher, 1911), 46f.; report on the anniversary gymnastic festival of the "Turnklub Kupferdreh von 1885," *Rheinisch-Westfälischer Anzeiger*, 2 May 1905, 5.

<sup>35</sup> Theobald Simon, *Die Werbung der Brauereien* (Nürnberg-Zirndorf: Bollmann, 1931), passim. Business historian Christian Schäder found out that Munich's "Löwenbrauerei" spent only 0.1% of its overall budget on advertising around the turn of the century. (Christian Schäder, *Münchner Brauindustrie 1871-1945. Die wirtschaftsgeschichtliche Entwicklung eines Industriezweiges* (Marburg: Tectum, 1999), 128.)

<sup>36</sup> Jörg Requate, *Journalismus als Beruf. Entstehung und Entwicklung des Journalistenberufs im 19. Jahrhundert. Deutschland im internationalen Vergleich* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1995), passim.

<sup>37</sup> Kevin Repp, "Marketing, Modernity, and 'The German People's Soul'. Advertising and its Enemies in Late Imperial Germany," in: Pamela E. Swett et al. (eds.), *Selling modernity. Advertising in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 25-51.

<sup>37</sup> "Kaiserpreissingen (Aus zeitgenössischen Berichten)," in: Franz Josef Ewens (ed.), *Das deutsche Sängerbuch. Wesen und Wirken des Deutschen Sängerbundes in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Karlsruhe: Schülle, 1930), 371-378.

<sup>38</sup> Vernon L. Lidtke, *The Alternative Culture. Socialist Labor in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 67-74.

rare incident of commercial involvement, shows that the associations attracted such investments.<sup>39</sup>

The central position of associations like the *'Deutsche Turnerschaft'* between individual clubs, state authorities and commercial sponsors proved to be an obstacle to the formation of governing bodies for competitions. In singing, there was never a functioning association for the organisation of contests, even though the number of male voice choirs that took part in such competitions regardless of the organisational difficulties was impressive. In football, the *'Westdeutscher Spielverband'*, a regional association which organised matches in the north-west of Germany, faced the opposition of the *'Turnerschaft'* before it came into existence in 1899.<sup>40</sup> In competitive gymnastics, campaigns by the *'Deutsche Turnerschaft'* delayed the foundation of the *'Freie Deutsche Turnerschaft'* as an association for clubs that were actually interested in gymnastics until 1920, after a number of attempts to form such an association had failed.<sup>41</sup>

### Conclusion

The comparison between the very different ways in which sport was organised in Britain and Germany in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries should have demonstrated two things: On the one hand, clubs are not an organisational form that benefited sport *per se*. They were employed as tools for social exclusion and as a means to make people with fewer resources dependent on the support of those with more power and wealth. Both these characteristics conflicted with sport's inherent quality as an end in itself, which requires that categories that count in the 'real' world – namely money and power – are faded out. In Britain as well as in Germany, clubs brought 'serious', non-sporting concerns such as the preservation of social hierarchies, the difference between natives and migrants and the promotion of morals and values into sport. This in turn meant that sport was less likely to have its integrative, levelling effect that can only evolve if sport remains a trivial pursuit.

On the other hand, commercial sponsorship hardly had the detrimental effect on sport that it is often accused of. In many respects, it actually benefited sport, as it made it less dependent on patronage, contributed to the popularisation of certain sports which in turn fuelled the enthusiasm for it, and encouraged the social exchange between fans, cutting across

<sup>39</sup> Fr. Schloer, "Jahresbericht des Kreisvertreters für den Kreisturntag in Essen, 5. Juli 1890," in: Deutsche Turnerschaft (ed.), *Festbuch für das Kreisturnfest*, 57-63; report of the meeting mentioning free drinks in *Rheinisch-Westfälische Zeitung*, 8 July 1890.

<sup>40</sup> Westdeutscher Spielverband (ed.), *Jubiläumsschrift des Westdeutschen Spielverbandes e.V. 1899-1924* (Elberfeld: Selbstverlag des WSV, n.d.), 22. Unfortunately, the publication offers no details of this conflict.

<sup>41</sup> Armin Voß, Willi Wachholz, *Die unpolitischen Turner. Beiträge zur Geschichte ihrer Verbände* (Iserlohn: no publisher, 1988), 1-9.

class lines. Rather than paralysing the sense of self-organisation, it fostered the formation of clubs and associations that were first and foremost dedicated to the organisation of sport as an end in itself.

However, these observations should not be understood as an attempt to reverse the usual black-and-white picture of 'good' clubs and 'harmful' commerce. Firstly, the fact that many of the competitive activities mentioned in this text, for instance choir contests, pigeon racing and old-time gymnastic competitions with human pyramids and the like, nowadays play a marginal role in popular culture while sports like football and tennis are huge, indicates that codification and effective regulation was an important prerequisite for the rise of certain sports. To fulfil this pivotal regulatory function, voluntary associations seem to be the organisational form of choice; their absence had apparently not been compensated by commercial actors. As governing bodies, organisations from the 'third sector' are needed. Secondly, the commercialisation of the late nineteenth century, which tried to associate itself with sport to attract favourable attention, is different from current forms of market interference that buys and sells clubs in order to speculate and which has stronger repercussions on the games themselves. Neither the total absence of clubs nor commerce in all forms is desirable. To organise sport as an activity that is an end in itself and therefore generates positive social effects, historical evidence suggests a mixed economy of clubs and commerce, a balance between the voluntary sector and the market as the state to aspire to.



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from the Eighteenth to the Twentieth Century

Christiane Eisenberg and Andreas Gestrich (eds.)

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# Cultural Industries as a Field of Historical Research: Approaches, Analytical Dimensions, Long-term Perspectives

Christiane Eisenberg and Andreas Gestrich

This volume deals with entertainment offered by theatre, opera and concert organisers, record and film companies and sports organisations as commercial activities. Over time traditionally dominant suppliers of such entertainments such as courts, churches, the nobility, political parties and urban authorities lost their influence and in the longer term had to content themselves with exerting only a marginal influence on what was on offer in the field of culture. Today, professional bodies arrange cultural events on a profit-making basis. The suppliers of such events work in close co-operation with the media and the advertising and consumer-goods industries. As a concomitant of the commercialisation of modern societies, these 'cultural industries' serve a growing proportion of the demand for cultural events, which they, in turn, actively seek to increase.

The social and economic impact of the cultural industries on the service economy is obvious, and without exaggeration we might say that because of their ubiquitous presence in everyday life they present a central theme for historians of modern societies. However, up until recently historians have left this broad field of study almost entirely to neighbouring disciplines such as economics, the social sciences and geography.<sup>1</sup> Apart from some pioneer studies by musicologists<sup>2</sup> cultural industries have at best been regarded from an outside perspective by historical scholarship – say in relation to studies on political propaganda as an aspect of media history, or to gain a general insight into urban culture and city marketing.<sup>3</sup> By contrast, the aim of this volume is to deal with the theme for its own sake.

<sup>1</sup> For a representative survey see the *Creative Industries Journal* (2008 ff.).

<sup>2</sup> See for example William J. Baumol, "On the Economics of the Theatre in Renaissance London," *Swedish Journal of Economics* 74 (1972), 136-160; Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985); Julia Moore, "Mozart in the Market Place," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 114, 1 (1989), 18-42; Simon McVeigh, "A Free Trade in Music: London during the Long 19th Century in a European Perspective," *Journal of Modern European History* 5 (2007), 67-94.

<sup>3</sup> See Clemens Zimmermann, "From Propaganda to Modernization: Media Policy and Media Audiences under National Socialism," *German History* 24, 3 (2006), 431-454; Corey Ross, *Media and the Making of Modern Germany. Mass Communications, Society, and Politics from the Empire to the Third Reich* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Ute Daniel, Axel Schüdt (eds), *Massmedien in Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Köln: Böhlau, 2010); Martina Heßler, Clemens Zimmermann (eds), *Creative Urban Milieus. Historical Perspectives on Culture, Economy and the City* (Frankfurt/M: Campus, 2008).

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