

The potential of female immigrants' integration into sport by intercultural clubs in Switzerland

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Sport participation means a privileged access to participate in the sport system and the opportunities of actual integration into sport (Seiberth et al., 2013). The access to sport activities is often restricted for female immigrants. The function of sport participation concerning exercise offers of social associations is not a common theme in research on migration or on sports-related integration. Research on boundaries (Lamont & Molnár, 2002) suggest that gender-related and ethnic boundaries are stable behavioural and cognitive patterns leading to unequal social opportunities. The present study examined the potential of a Swiss intercultural club regarding female immigrants' integration into sport by focussing on gender-related and ethnic boundaries.

Ten interviews with female immigrants and conductress of an intercultural club plus a group discussion were held. Using qualitative content analysis and documentary method, findings reveal multifaceted, interwoven boundaries, e.g. maternal devotion, exclusive exercise offers for woman, language learning devotion, religious need of headscarf. Otherwise resources to overcome boundaries are provided: Deploying competent employees; offering childcare, exercise offers suited to mothers' time schedule and language lessons; equitable, on integration focussed club-life. Thus, intercultural clubs might help to overcome boundaries and facilitate access to exercise for female immigrants and integrate them more successfully into sport than many sport clubs. A boundary focus and present data may open new perspectives for sport organisation and integration research. Further investigations of social associations offering exercise are advised.

Lamont, M. & Molnár, V. (2002). The Study of Boundaries in the Social Sciences. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 28 (1), 167-195.

Seiberth, K., Weigelt-Schlesinger, Y. & Schlesinger, T. (2013). Wie integrationsfähig sind Sportvereine? – Eine Analyse organisationaler Integrationsbarrieren am Beispiel von Mädchen und Frauen mit Migrationshintergrund. *Sport und Gesellschaft*, 10, 174 – 198.