

Social integration of immigrant adolescents and young adults in Swiss sports clubs

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There are a high proportion of young immigrants in Switzerland as a consequence of past and present migratory movements in Europe. Switzerland is subsequently faced with the task of integrating immigrants into society. Sports clubs foster social integration in a more effective way than other voluntary organizations, and are considered important institutions in this context (Østerlund & Seippel, 2013). However, young immigrants are under represented in sports clubs in comparison with their Swiss counterparts (Lamprecht et al., 2014). The question then arises: What is the extent of social integration by young immigrants participating in sports clubs and what are the club structures that effectively work towards integration? Our study focuses on relevant aspects of social integration in sports clubs at an individual and organizational level.

Based on a multi-level research design that includes Esser's (2004) concepts of social action and integration, data was collected via written questionnaire in 20 sports clubs. 346 members (♀ 27 %; aged 16-30, $M = 20.3$, $SD = 3.9$) and chair (wo)men were surveyed. Findings reveal a similar quality of integration among immigrant and non-immigrant members in terms of identity, participation in general meetings and existing knowledge within the club; but members differ in their depth of friendships. The clubs - with a high respectively low immigrant member share - have similar assimilative or pluralistic attitudes (aside from the expectation of speaking German) and goals such as support of integration, openness for all.

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