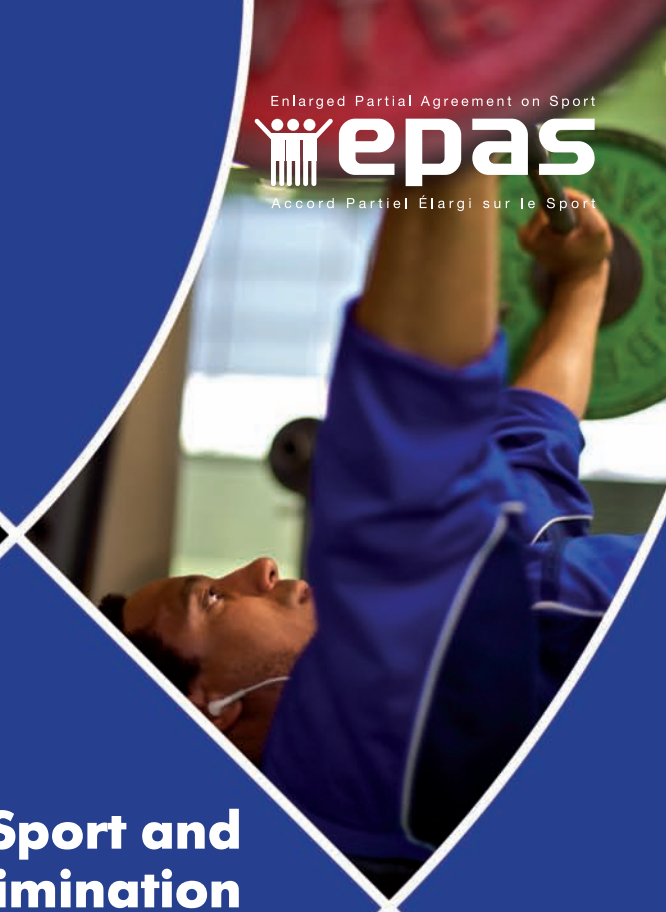


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# Sport and discrimination in Europe

*William Gasparini and Clotilde Talleu*



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# **Sport and discrimination in Europe**

**The perspectives of young European  
research workers and journalists**

Edited by

William Gasparini and Clotilde Talleu

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## **Preface**

### **Education to prevent racism – Interview with Lilian Thuram**

An interview with Lilian Thuram (37), a former professional footballer who played for France, including the World Cup-winning team of 1998, and is now a member of that country's High Council for Integration and President of the Lilian Thuram Foundation – Education against Racism.

**William Gasparini: People from a variety of cultures play football in France. Is it not paradoxical that, although football is a “mixed-race sport”, racism also occurs in the context of football?**

**Lilian Thuram:** It is vital to realise that racism and discrimination in sport reflect the racism that exists in society. The more racism there is in society, the more will occur at football grounds. The racism that occurs is not therefore specific either to sport or to football, and it is not sport which gives rise to racism. On the contrary, it is through sport that people come into contact with one another and get to know each other, with the result that prejudice becomes less marked. Thus, football is a fantastic means of integration. Clearly the situation is not the same in society, where people do not always meet others, and therefore retain their prejudices. Football does not solve all of society's problems, but does bring people together and get positive messages across to combat racism and encourage people to accept others. In fact, I am surprised that people feel that sport contributes to racism. While sport does involve rivalry, that rivalry is friendly. I think that there is less discrimination in sport than in society as a whole. Performance is what counts most, not skin colour.

**You played in several European countries (in Parma and Turin in Italy, and Barcelona in Spain, as well as in France). How did racism seem to you to affect sport (especially football) in these three countries? Are there differences, and, if so, what causes these?**

**Lilian Thuram:** It is no easier for a foreigner in one country than in the others, for racism exists in all three. There are some differences, however, for societies have developed differently in each. The approach to others, such as the approach to black-skinned people in France, Italy and Spain, is different. Not all of these societies recognise others in the same way, because each has its own history. France, unlike Italy and Spain, came into contact with foreigners and black populations on its own soil at an early stage, as a

result of colonialism. In spite of such differences, however, racism exists in all three countries, for the history of Europe is based on a hierarchy of "races". Thus history helped to shape Europe's collective unconscious. A European mindset emerged according to which whites were superior and blacks inferior, a matter on which European scientists agreed in the 19th century and for part of the 20th.

We live in a society where people believe that some qualities are intrinsically linked to skin colour. In every European country, for instance, if you ask whether blacks are physically stronger, the reply is usually that they are. The implication of physical strength, however, is intellectual weakness. Such prejudice is even stronger in certain countries where there has been no mixing of races, such as those of eastern Europe. This is evident from the reception given in some European stadia to black footballers, with some supporters throwing bananas at them and making monkey noises.

**Did you ever suffer discrimination during your footballing career? Can you recall any instances of racism whilst playing, after your arrival in metropolitan France at the age of nine?**

**Lilian Thuram:** I was nine when I first arrived in Avon, near Fontainebleau, and I gradually came to realise that my skin colour counted against me, with people making comments and behaving differently. Within football, however, everything went fairly well. I played in the local Portuguese club in Fontainebleau first, then moved on to Racing club de Fontainebleau, and subsequently Melun.

Later on, I was indeed subjected to racial abuse and to monkey noises while playing, but, as I have already said, this is understandable when you look at the history of peoples and the education received by the spectators and fans concerned.

**Did your perception of racism change in the course of your playing career? Did your own social success and fame alter your perception of racism in sport (and in general)?**

**Lilian Thuram:** My view of racism has not changed. I always try to understand the society in which I am living in order to get a clearer idea of how racism works.

Racism stems from the fact that the great majority of people still believe today that there are several different human races. How many people are aware that we all share the same origin? As Professor Yves Coppens has pointed out, we are all of African origin dating back 3 million years, a fact which should foster a feeling of kinship. People view me differently today, but this is not because of my football career, but because I am known and recognised. There is less racism for anyone well known and recognised.

Anyone who does not know any blacks thinks that they are all identical. People who live in a neighbourhood where there is a foreign family may feel prejudiced if they do not know that family. But prejudice vanishes once they have talked to and recognised each other. If someone is recognised, prejudice changes, whereas it will endure in the absence of any approach to the other person.

### **Do you make any distinction between discrimination and racism in sport?**

**Lilian Thuram:** Racism reflects a belief in “races” and a prejudice based on skin colour. Thus people are defined according to their race on the basis of a hierarchy of races. A similar hierarchical system is also applied to women, and some people also regard women as inferior. All such views come under the heading of discrimination.

People may suffer discrimination for being short, tall, Italian, black, female, etc., and not just for their skin colour. Discrimination is more general, but, like racism, it applies a hierarchy and separates out certain population groups regarded as inferior.

**There is fairly widespread agreement that racism and discrimination in sport should be condemned. On the other hand, there are disagreements, both in France and in Europe as a whole, about solutions. The response in certain European states of “multiculturalist” tradition has been to develop positive discrimination machinery or to encourage community-based sport. France, in contrast, shows a greater inclination towards mixed sport, acting as a vehicle for integration. What is your position on this?**

**Lilian Thuram:** The differences noted stem from cultural differences. France has been built up denying differences and recognising only French citizens (whether they are from the Basque country, Alsace, or elsewhere), rather than communities. In Great Britain a different view is taken, with the community to the fore. There is no problem about coming together. Provided that nobody is excluded, activities based on the community are not in themselves problematic. I myself played in a Portuguese club, without any problems arising. I keep a completely open mind. Everything depends on the club’s own message. There is no problem if people want to come together, enjoy themselves and experience some part of their own culture. The real question is whether the community concerned is open or closed. Sharing without excluding others does not pose a problem.

**Competitive sport traditionally keeps women and men apart. There are some countries, however, where gender-based discrimination goes much further, for the sake of cultural and religious “traditions”. In Norway, for instance, women’s basketball competitions are held specifically for young Muslims, and no males may be present during matches, where only female officials and spectators are allowed. And in Germany some swimming**



**pools open at certain times just for Muslim women. What do you think about such single-sex sport?**

**Lilian Thuram:** This separation has nothing to do with sport, as it is done for religious reasons. Not all sports can be mixed, for there is a biological difference between women and men. The sexes are kept apart for reasons of physical capacity.

Separation for religious reasons is unconnected with sport. It is a complex issue. It is an odd idea to exclude men from women's matches, and for one sex not to accept the other. Competitive sport should be open, whatever participants' religious beliefs may be.

Whether we are talking about cultural identities or religions, it is important to know other people and other religions, thus avoiding negative judgements and prejudice. Hence the importance of education. I personally respect every religion, provided that it is open and accepts other people both in sport and in society. But this acceptance must go both ways, between different religions and between civil society and religions.

**In 2008, you set up the Lilian Thuram Foundation – Education against Racism. Tell us how it enables discrimination in sport to be effectively combated.**

**Lilian Thuram:** My foundation will not be active specifically in the world of sport, but in society as a whole, for racism is an ill which afflicts our society. No one is born a racist. It is society which produces racism. I am therefore trying to work out why a society becomes racist. It is necessary to understand before the fight against prejudice can begin. It is also my firm belief that it is through education that racism can be effectively combated. Thus my foundation is intended to combat racism in all its forms, relying on education as the main means of dealing with the problem. The foundation is based on the axiom that there is only one race, the human race. It works in three fields: educational activities with children, awareness-raising in society as a whole, and research into racism. I believe that this programme will enable us to campaign effectively against the idea that some "races" are better than others. Racism has been part of some European peoples' education, and it is in the same way – through education – that this conception, this collective unconscious must be corrected.

Until such time as we change our conception, racism will continue. What is your conception of other people? Are you prejudiced?

# **General introduction**



# What do we mean when we speak of discrimination in sport?

*William Gasparini,<sup>1</sup> University of Strasbourg (France)*

Etymologically, discrimination means making a distinction. But it is not just any form of differentiation between one individual and another, or between one group and another, which constitutes discrimination. Differentiation becomes “discriminatory” where it is based on illegitimate or illegal criteria. In practice, discrimination involves different treatment of persons who are in comparable situations, on the basis of at least one criterion which is against the law. Sociologists also show us that discrimination may be subjective and felt internally. Eurostat surveys reveal that the feeling of discrimination is more widespread than actual discrimination. Whether it occurs at work or during leisure activities, discrimination needs to be studied from both the objectivist and subjectivist angle, with the vigilance of the research scientist.

## The world of sport: between inclusion and exclusion

Sport involves a paradox. Popular, and practised on a voluntary basis, it accepts anyone, irrespective of cultural origin or gender. It can therefore be regarded as an area free from discrimination. Conversely, competitive sport can also be viewed as a form of differentiation, dividing and ranking practitioners according to level of ability. Yet this exclusion of those who are “less good” at their sport, which may look like discrimination, is not in fact based on social criteria, birth, religion or “race”. It is even clearer that discrimination is not involved when you consider that the rules require equal treatment: age groups, weight categories and rankings are created precisely so that “the best person wins”, skin colour not being a factor. Differences are recognised and differentiation allowed only between the sexes, since it is “natural” for separate competitions to be held for women and men.

In accordance with sporting ideology, performance is a fair yardstick to apply in democratic societies which posit fundamental equality between individuals. Thus sport provides a playing field which is “in essence” level (fair), and the best possible opportunity for integration for participants, whatever their culture or national origin. The humanist sporting tradition adopted by the founder of the modern Olympics, Pierre de Coubertin, involves the bringing together of athletes from different (geographical, cultural, religious

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1. University professor, and head of the sports sciences research team (EA 1342), University of Strasbourg (France).

and social) backgrounds, who compete against one another, obeying the same rules, and in the same institutional and ethical framework, all coming together in a single "sporting community". Thus all participants leave their affiliations and individuality in the dressing room, appearing on the sports field or in the gymnasium in a neutral capacity.

A reality check, however, shows that these ethical principles are flouted. In practice, some groups of participants and supporters, either because they do belong to a particular group or because they are assumed to, suffer injustice, racism and discrimination which highlight the paradox of sport. What is more, being based on physical performance, competitive sport not only keeps women apart from men, but also separates athletes with disabilities from the others. At the very highest level, for instance, the Paralympics are organised by the International Paralympic Committee (and not the International Olympic Committee), bringing together athletes with disabilities from all countries to participate in special events. The athletes concerned have physical disabilities, visual impairments, and so forth (amputees, people without sight, cerebral palsy sufferers, wheelchair athletes and athletes with other disabilities).

This shows that society does not always keep up with its principles and intentions. In the face of a certain political concept of the universality of sport, day-to-day practice and the conduct of sports institutions surely indicate that sport continues to be affected by a number of identity-related affirmations and specific instances of discrimination (sexual, ethnic and/or based on physical appearance or sexual orientation).

## **Discrimination: a legal concept, a growing European awareness**

Anti-discrimination policies were first adopted in relation to access to employment. In accordance with the French Labour Code, discrimination is a difference in treatment on grounds or origin, gender, morals, sexual orientation, age, family situation, actual or supposed affiliation to an ethnic group, nation or race, political opinion, involvement in trade union or mutual benefit society activities, religious beliefs, physical appearance, name, state of health or disability.<sup>2</sup> Discrimination is thus against the law in France, as it is in most European countries.

The building of Europe played a decisive part in the inclusion in public policies of all kinds of discrimination, in combination or individually, and particularly discrimination on ethnic grounds. By introducing a European responsibility for discrimination, Article 13 of the Treaty of Amsterdam, of

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2. Law against Discrimination of 16 November 2001.

20 November 1997, was the first step in a broadening of the concept of discrimination on grounds of gender to include all kinds of discrimination, particularly those based on actual or supposed ethnic origin. Hence equality, non-discrimination and diversity are principles which are often laid down in law in EU countries. Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2000) states that: "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, [...] membership of a national minority, [...] shall be prohibited". Similarly, Article 22 states that "The Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity".

On the basis of this definition, does discrimination exist in sport? National communities being scattered in many European countries, sport is often said to be a way of integrating a number of population groups which suffer from negative discrimination. This widely held idea of sport as a unifying and integrating factor was recently confirmed by the findings of a European survey conducted at the request of the European Commission in 2004. Sixty-four per cent of European Union citizens said that they regarded sport as a way of combating discrimination.<sup>3</sup> The Council of the European Union similarly described sport (in December 2000) as "a factor making for integration, involvement in social life, tolerance, [and] acceptance of differences", echoing some of the articles of the European Sports Charter (1992), which not only gives a reminder of the right of access to sport for all (included in 1975 in the first European Charter of Sport for All), but also emphasises the need to keep sport free of any kind of discrimination based on religion, race, sex or political opinion. In 2007, the main intentions of this universalism in European sport were again endorsed by the European Commission in its "White Paper on Sport", which proposes the development of activities with a view to achieving social inclusion by and through sport.

## **Sport, discrimination and racism**

Evidently, the reality of sport is contradictory, with various legal texts on sport officially affirming the need for equality, while in practice equality is far from having been achieved, precisely because of discrimination.

If discrimination is considered to be the separation of one group of human beings from another (or from others), and the denial to that group of the same rights, it is clear that there are various forms of discrimination which affect physical and sports activities, based on physical appearance, sex, age, race or national origin, social background, religion and geographical location. Although there are variations, discrimination in sport very frequently

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3. Special Eurobarometer 213 (2004), "Citizens of the European Union and sport", opinion poll conducted at the request of the Directorate-General of Education and Culture and co-ordinated by the Directorate-General of Press and Communication, European Commission, November 2004.

involves stigmatisation<sup>4</sup> (Erving Goffman referred, in 1975, to “stigmata”) on the basis of external signs or characteristics of foreignness or difference (skin colour, language, body shape, gender, etc.). As already stated, it also seems important to distinguish between deliberate discrimination (in sports clubs, at venues, etc.), which is not very widespread in sport, and the feeling of being discriminated against, which some individuals and communities may experience more strongly than others (foreigners, homosexuals, etc.). Furthermore, discrimination is very often cumulative, particularly for economic migrants, despite the commonly shared view about immigrants succeeding through sport.

Confusion between racism and discrimination often arises during discussions of discrimination issues. Discrimination is not necessarily the act of a racist. Racism is based on two dimensions: the inferiority of persons belonging to what are claimed to be different races, and the specific intellectual, physical and emotional characteristics of persons of different “races”. People often say that “blacks are good at sport”, which is a racist opinion, but does not prevent “blacks” from being invited to join sports clubs.

In France (unlike English-speaking countries, and particularly the United States), racial or ethnic discrimination in sport has been very little studied. In English-speaking countries, the situation of black minorities and the sociological tradition of “racial studies” have led to greater attention being given to these issues for a long time now. As long ago as the late 1960s, early American studies clearly described black people’s exclusion from, and exploitation by, sport and challenged the view that sport was free from racism, made social mobility possible and, in more general terms, promoted black people’s social integration. At the same time, belief in their athletic superiority developed in both the black and the white communities.<sup>5</sup> All these studies ultimately gave social issues a racial dimension, but also tended to influence European researchers.

In France, unlike the US, we have little information about discrimination in sport according to ethnic origin and skin colour, because of our republican tradition of integration, and because “ethnic” statistics are not allowed to be included in censuses. Not until the second half of the 1990s did the ethnicity

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4. As described by Goffman E., *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, Englewoods Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, 1963. According to Goffman’s definition, individuals are “stigmatised” if they display some attribute that disqualifies them in their interactions with others. This attribute differs from what others would expect of them in terms of their identity.

5. See Coakley, J., “Sport, questions raciales et ethnicité”, in Ohl F. (ed.), *Sociologie du sport. Perspectives internationales et mondialisation, Pratiques physiques et société*, Paris, PUF, 2006, pp. 89-103.

paradigm begin to feature in empirical studies in France,<sup>6</sup> at first in relation to schools, and subsequently in public action, following official recognition of discrimination by the government in October 1998. Yet if we take a close look at not just elite sport, but also ordinary and amateur sport in France, we find people originally from sub-Saharan Africa or the Maghreb participating in certain areas of sport (sports requiring stamina, speed and strength, as well as football), but not in others (technical sports requiring equipment, such as skiing, sailing, motor sport, and those sports historically considered “middle class”, such as tennis, dancing, climbing and equestrianism). Their visible successes often trap people with black skin or from the Maghreb in jobs requiring natural gifts and talents (sport and music), and not intellectual qualities. The view that black people’s athletic abilities are “innate” is also tinged with racism, for black athletes do not have specific physiological features or greater intrinsic qualities.

## **The fight against ethnic discrimination in the context of European pluralism**

Policies to combat discrimination were gradually introduced from the 1990s onwards, mainly at the instigation of the European authorities which wished to regard certain groups of immigrant origin as “visible minorities”. The concept of “visible minority” as used in France, however, is a euphemism which refers to the highly institutionalised English-language concept of “race relations”. Not because races in the biological sense exist, but because the attachment of a “race” label to certain individuals and minority groups gives rise to, and sometimes shapes, interaction between persons and organised practice. It is with a view to designating this social relationship and measuring its expressions that the concept of “race”, in English-speaking countries, is one aspect of a set of representation policies, both in the social sphere (and especially for the purposes of censuses) and in the sphere of media portrayals, thus fuelling public discussion of discrimination and its measurement.

The question then arises, in these countries as in France, of the relations between those “racial” categories, as shaped and established in the social sphere, and as made visible by media portrayals, especially on television. What link is there between efforts to achieve recognition and the struggle to achieve visibility? Where “racial” discrimination is concerned, what is to be measured and which indicators are to be used? Are the various policies to prevent discrimination in social practice and in television portrayals effective? Does higher visibility necessarily lead to better recognition?

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6. Lorcerie F., *L'école et le défi ethnique. Education et intégration* (School and the ethnic challenge. Education and integration), Paris, INRP-ESF, 2003.



By gradually legitimising a “differentiated citizenship” and “group demands”, are European policies not contributing to the fragmentation of states by assigning a specific place in the social sphere to certain groups regarded as “minorities”? In the world of sport, it is often anti-racism associations and movements representing people who identify with each other (gays and lesbians, for instance) which persuade European states to take action against discrimination and homophobia. The anti-racist measures adopted at UK football grounds, however, can be understood only in the context of a society divided into ethnic groups, within which inter-ethnic relations have as much substance as (or more than) relations between social classes. This view also leads governments to pursue community management policies involving, for example, multicultural education through sport or intercultural competitions.

In the context of the fight against discrimination, immigrant population groups are gradually coming to be regarded as ethnic minorities. Is there not a risk, if identities are based on cultural and ethnic origin (particularly for second and third generation immigrants), of ultimately, unwittingly, giving social relationships an ethnic dimension? France, on the other hand, has a tradition of sociological analysis of social exclusion, and of dealing with discrimination through urban policy and through action against exclusion, without specifically targeting ethnic groups. These public policies, to which various labels are applied (priority education zone, work integration system, plan for integration through sport, and so on), are implicitly designed to combat the effects of ethnic discrimination, but without making this an object in itself, as is done in the United Kingdom and in Germany. But the fact that they target areas, rather than population groups, brings a risk that policies for preventing and combating discrimination might fail to deal directly with ethnic discrimination. As is clear from these examples, the fight against discrimination in sport is a subject of debate in Europe, for it refers to integration models which differ from one country to another. Far removed from any ideological prejudice, this book is intended to tackle a question of fundamental importance to anyone wishing to understand what is at stake in European sport, as viewed from the various perspectives of young research scientists and of European sports journalists.

## **The structure of this book**

Chapter 1 looks at the way in which the media and those who work for them cover anti-discrimination initiatives in their sports reports. How can sports reporters contribute to more balanced and fairer coverage of the international rivalry very frequently involved in sports events? How can sports journalism play a part in intercultural dialogue? These questions were put by the Council of Europe to those who spoke in the seminar on “Sport and discrimination: the media perspective”, which took place on 20 November 2008

at the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg. Following an introduction by Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni,<sup>7</sup> Chapter 1 looks at the discussions which took place at the seminar and the ideas put forward.

The chapters which follow contain the thoughts of some young Europeans who are conducting research into sports sciences and have studied three kinds of discrimination (sexual, ethnic and physical). These young scientists (most of them studying for doctorates at European universities), who all got together on 20 November 2008 to discuss "Sport and Diversity",<sup>8</sup> are thus, through their research, contributing new ideas to the European "sport for all" debate. With an introduction by European research scientists with an established reputation in these fields, discrimination in sport is considered from three different angles.

- **Women's and girls' access to sport:** While there do seem to be some sports which are more "masculine", and others which are more "feminine", what relationship between the sexes should be the aim in the world of sport? Are variations determined by social affiliation, cultural influences or geographical distribution? How can women gain access to a male-dominated sports world?
- **Access to sport for persons in situations of difficulty:** Under this theme texts will appear relating to the implications – ideological (inclusion, participation, discrimination, stigmatisation, etc.) and educational (adaptation, accessibility, educational relationship, etc.) – of physical activities intended for persons with disabilities and those excluded from society. Should specific treatment be suggested for physical activities for persons with disabilities, or should such persons be integrated into the ordinary world of sport? Can sport help to restore to their place in society those excluded from it?
- **The access to sport and conditions of participation of "ethnic minorities":** While the "French-style integration model" is often contrasted with the multiculturalism of the English-speaking world, both these major models of management in a multinational context rely on sport as a vector of cohesion. That said, what about the actual situations experienced across Europe's many and varied sports facilities?

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7. Director General of Education, Culture and Cultural Heritage, Youth and Sport, and Council of Europe Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue.

8. European Encounters, organised jointly by the Education through Sport Agency (APELS), the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (APES) and the Sports Sciences Research Team of the University of Strasbourg.



# **Chapter 1**

## **Sport and discrimination: the media perspective**



## **Introduction**

*by Ms Gabriella Battaini-Dragnoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Cultural Heritage, Youth and Sport, Co-ordinator for Intercultural Dialogue of the Council of Europe*

### **The Council of Europe, intercultural dialogue and the anti-discrimination campaign**

Intercultural dialogue is of critical political importance. It provides a bridge which allows us to live peacefully together, and to deal with our differences constructively and democratically.

Since its creation in 1949 the Council of Europe has been working systematically to promote and manage cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue, always in line with its core values of human rights, respect for the rule of law, and democracy.

Some fundamentally new developments in recent years pushed intercultural dialogue higher up on the political agenda, including mass migration, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the redrawing of the European political map during the 1990s. All of this created a situation where we can no longer avoid talking about our identities, about our long-term visions of societal development, our interpretation of values, our attitudes towards other cultures, our readiness to engage in dialogue.

In 2005, the heads of state and government in Europe made intercultural dialogue one of the priorities of our organisation. It was then that we started to prepare the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue", which was adopted and finally launched on 7 May 2008 by the foreign ministers of our 47 member states.

The White Paper is a reference document, which describes the legal norms, the political guidelines, the practical experience, the analytical and methodological tools for the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and it constitutes a roadmap for living together as equals in dignity.

### **Strategic relevance of the anti-discrimination campaign**

The anti-discrimination campaign, "Speak out against discrimination", is one of the new activities that we are using as a means of implementing Council

of Europe policy on intercultural dialogue and was a practical suggestion from the White Paper itself.

The campaign is working with and through the media to raise awareness amongst victims of discrimination of their rights and the mechanisms available at European level to protect them.

The campaign itself has three operational objectives:

1. To encourage the media to communicate information on discrimination and on anti-discrimination mechanisms to the general public and (potential) victims of discrimination;
2. To better prepare media professionals for working in a multicultural Europe;
3. To facilitate the access of professionals from a minority background to all sectors of the media industry.

## **Collaboration with the media in the campaign and in this seminar**

The campaign, and indeed this sports seminar, takes as a starting principle the fundamental belief that collaboration with the media and with media professionals, whether it be sports media or other media, is an important means of reaching out to the general public and putting anti-discrimination and intercultural initiatives in the spotlight.

As was underlined throughout the White Paper the media play a crucial role in the shaping of our world view. They have an impact on our values and our ability and motivation to converse. Through the campaign the Council of Europe wants to provide material that you, the media, may wish to use in the different contexts to raise awareness and promote anti-discrimination initiatives.

We are extremely encouraged by the fact that, in the few meetings we have had recently with media professionals in the context of the anti-discrimination campaign, we have always heard about a heightened awareness, about new ongoing diversity projects in the media industry itself. This is a very good starting point, and I would like to acknowledge here the enormous commitment shown by so many journalists, media managers, and NGO activists for the issue of cultural diversity and the media. We know that we are in this together.

# Sport and discrimination: the media perspective

Virginie Sassoon,<sup>9</sup> *Media programmes, migrations, diversities*, Panos Institute, Paris

## Introduction

While rock dominated the culture of the 1960s and 1970s, our societies have, since the 1990s, moved into the “age of sport”.<sup>10</sup> Sport, a worldwide phenomenon which is the subject of media hype (football in particular), is watched by millions. While it arouses exceptional collective enthusiasm and strengthens national cohesion, it is at the same time the scene of racist acts and unprecedented violence.

How can sports reporters contribute to fairer and more balanced coverage of the rivalry between nations which sports events often represent? How can sports journalism participate in intercultural dialogue? How can the media and those who work for them publicise anti-discrimination initiatives in their sports reports? What role can sponsors and their communication strategies play in this sphere?

These questions were raised by the Council of Europe for discussion at the “Sport and discrimination: the media perspective” seminar, held on 20 November 2008 at the Strasbourg European Youth Centre. The event was part of the Council of Europe’s “Speak out against discrimination” campaign.<sup>11</sup> It brought together European sports journalists, professional organisations, and representatives of NGOs (International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism, Football Against Racism in Europe, etc.) and pressure groups (Sport and Citizenship, etc.).

This seminar, organised with and for the sports media, was divided into two parts. The afternoon began with “Intercultural awareness, racism and sports journalism”, while the second part of the afternoon was devoted to “The media and combating discrimination: An approach through sport”. Lilian

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9. Doctoral student at the French Press Institute, University of Paris II.

10. Martin Jacques used this term, as quoted by Kurt Wachter, co-ordinator of the “Fairplay” project and of the Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) network.

11. It should be noted that the seminar took place at the same time as a European discussion on “Sport and Diversity” organised by the Education through Sport Agency (APELS) and the sports sciences research team from the University of Strasbourg, in partnership with the Enlarged Partial Agreement on Sport (EPAS).



Thuram was the seminar's special guest, giving an official presentation of his Education against Racism foundation.

Thoughts were shared and various initiatives described. This report covers all the main themes dealt with and is based on not only the accounts given by speakers, but also the supporting documents which they had brought with them.

## **The Council of Europe, a player in intercultural dialogue**

*The seminar took place in the context of the "Speak out against discrimination" campaign being conducted by the Council of Europe in the framework of its policy to promote intercultural dialogue. What are the main lines along which the organisation is working in this field?*

In her opening speech, Gabriella Battaini-Dragoni, Director General of Education, Culture and Cultural Heritage, Youth and Sport, reminded participants why intercultural dialogue was on the Council of Europe's agenda, describing it as a "bridge" which made it possible for us to move forward together and recognise our different identities constructively and democratically.

While the Council of Europe has been working since its foundation in 1949 to promote cultural diversity, upholding values such as human rights, the rule of law and democracy, it was in 2005 that intercultural dialogue actually achieved the status of one of the organisation's priorities. It was in that year that work began in preparation for the "White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue".

Published in 2008, which was the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, the White Paper describes in detail how intercultural dialogue can help to enhance diversity while maintaining social cohesion. It is intended to provide policy makers and practitioners with a conceptual framework and guidelines. The "Speak out against discrimination" campaign to which the White Paper specifically refers was started in support of the efforts already begun by the media to make their role constructive in an increasingly multicultural environment. It pursues three interdependent objectives, of which Ms Battaini-Dragoni gave a reminder: firstly, "to encourage the media to disseminate to the general public and to potential victims information about discrimination and the anti-discrimination machinery". The second objective is "to prepare media professionals better for their work in a multicultural Europe", and the third and last is "to facilitate access for professionals of minority origin to all sectors of the media industry".

The media play a decisive role in our perception of the world. The aim of the campaign is to involve them in getting the message across to the public and placing the fight against discrimination on the agenda. By organising the seminar on this aspect of sport, the Council of Europe provided a setting for a group discussion among political players and representatives of associations and the media, whose interests sometimes differ.

## **Football in the media spotlight**

*Football is one of the most popular sports in the world. From Brazil's favelas to the shanty towns of Africa, via Europe's major stadiums, there are no cultural or social boundaries to football as it is played, dreamt and ritualised. Some players rank as superstars and are idolised. No football leagues, however, are immune to racism. It is in football that the majority of racist acts are committed.*

The fight against racism is a priority for the European Union of Football Associations (UEFA). Jonathan Hill described this as a sad fact. The head of UEFA's Brussels office nevertheless expressed his belief that a positive change had come about over the past 10 years. Football had long been in denial, describing racism as a social problem of which the sport was a victim. He said that things had now changed, and that there was a growing awareness of football's responsibility, its duty to combat racism and discrimination.

The sport's overexposure in the media made racist acts all the more visible, with the Football Against Racism in Europe (FARE) website<sup>12</sup> reporting such incidents across Europe on an almost daily basis. A recent example dating from 6 January 2009 was that of Oxford United's midfielder, Sam Deering, a 21-year-old who, after breaking his leg, stated on Facebook that the nurses looking after him were "f\*\*\*ing Pakis" (Pakistanis). The club fined him, and he was also ordered to take part in the club's programme promoting minority involvement in football.

So although Mr Hill believes that progress is being made, there remains a long way to go before everyone feels concerned. A huge amount of awareness-raising needs to be done, particularly among people with a professional involvement, whose influence on public opinion is significant. Priority should also be given to achieving better representation of ethnic minorities in football crowds, in professional leagues and in the media.

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12. [www.farenet.org](http://www.farenet.org)

## **From ordinary racism to unbridled spectator racism. The identity issue**

*Groups of fans are behind most racist and anti-Semitic demonstrations and attacks. Do football grounds reflect a magnified image of the ills of our societies? What can be done about this scourge?*

“The reception given to black footballers at certain European grounds (where fans throw bananas at them and mimic the ape’s cry to imply that they are not human beings) reminds us that it is not so long ago that ‘exotic’ people were exhibited in human zoos”. The words are those of historian and researcher Pap Ndiaye, writing in his latest book on the “black condition” of one French minority.<sup>13</sup> And as pointed out by Carine Bloch, Vice-President of the International League against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICRA), while the universal dimension of football in France is taken for granted, this does not stop extremists, fascists and neo-Nazis from making a nuisance of themselves. In order to get the message across to them, a major media stage with an international dimension needs to be found. The League, the FARE network and the Council of Europe are all currently active on this front.

Rejection of difference, fear of others, looking inwards... Racist acts show up the contradictions of sport, which has a universal language promoting respect and an open attitude to others. According to Fabien Wille, a lecturer at the University of Lille, however, sport cannot be expected to be more virtuous than society itself, despite the fact that it is an exaggerated expression of a number of things. He also drew attention to the instrumentalisation by political players of manifestations of racism, as in the recent case of the banner which insulted the people of northern France during a final involving their team, thus indirectly initiating a legitimisation of racist speech. The responsibility borne by politicians when such acts are committed is therefore crucial.

Winners are also used as political instruments. Jacques Chirac benefited greatly from the euphoria associated with the French football team’s win in the 1998 World Cup. But the myth of a country of blacks, whites and second-generation North African immigrants comfortable and happy with its mixed status soon evaporated.

According to Pap Ndiaye’s book, “sport reflects the nation and what it means to be French (or British, German, etc.). In this context, sports stars take on a particular importance, their individual bodies representing the national body”. Racist acts thus reveal tensions between an imagined nation and the diversity of the team which represents it. Sports seem to reflect an image of our societies’ internal conflicts and identity issues.

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13. Pap Ndiaye, *La condition noire. Essai sur une minorité française*, Editions Calmann-Lévy, 2008.

Is it possible to describe football, the most popular sport in Europe, as a mirror image of our society? Christian Bromberger, in his book about football as "the most serious little game in the world",<sup>14</sup> wrote: "If we get so excited about all these players kicking, heading and chesting the ball, and scoring all these goals, it is not just because it is so pretty to watch and so moving, but because it is a kind of caricature revealing our societies' symbolic horizon."

## **Regionalism, nationalism... and Europe?**

*How can Europe, as a supranational entity, have any meaning when regional and national pride is exacerbated by sporting rivalry? Is football playing its part in the emergence of a European public space?*

Sport offers a wide range of identifications. A person of immigrant origin may, for instance, be a fan of not only a local team and the national team, but also the national team of his or her country of origin, and perhaps some players at clubs elsewhere. Sport is a vehicle for the expression of several different identities and affiliations.

While the feeling of national pride aroused by sport is frequently criticised, Jérôme Le Fauconnier, a journalist on the sports daily *L'Equipe*, takes the view that it is important to bear in mind the fact that regional affiliations are also very highly developed, with a form of racism existing between football clubs. Thus, in 1990, when Italy hosted the World Cup and the semi-final between Italy and Argentina took place in Naples, Argentine national Diego Maradona, who at the time was on the books of local club SSC Naples, was cheered on during the match by the Naples fans, who supported him rather than their own national team!

Is football a microcosm of European integration? How does European football reflect, or perhaps even shape, the development of our European identity? What does the Champions League, the main European competition for professional football clubs, show us? These were the questions raised by Jonathan Hill, who heads UEFA's Brussels office. He felt that he had observed some particularly significant trends. Firstly, players' exceptional job mobility. The opening up of the transfer market (Bosman judgement, European Court of Justice, 1995) has encouraged them to move from club to club and from country to country to get the best contract. Consequently, the wealthiest clubs always have the best players! In any case, this growing internationalisation of clubs' playing staffs affects people's perception of national territory, and of Europe as well. Mr Hill also takes the view that a

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14. Christian Bromberger, *Football, la bagatelle la plus sérieuse du monde*, Essai, Editions Bayard, 1998.

European public space is gradually emerging. He said that, while it would be absurd to suggest that the Champions League is succeeding where the European Parliament has often failed, the fact that millions of Europeans were watching the same match at the same time inevitably had its own significance. And Anthony King, author of *The European Ritual: Football in the New Europe*, described the Champions League logo as one of Europe's foremost symbols.

If the emergence of a European public space through football is arguable, there is no doubt that it is at European level that racism and discrimination need to be combated. As Jérôme le Fauconnier emphasised, it is interesting to note that, whenever a disciplinary panel does not come down hard enough on an offender, it is to UEFA that an approach is made. This shows a real need for these issues to be dealt with at European level.

### **Sport as a business – Media coverage in an environment subject to strong influences**

*Football is now a flourishing business, thanks to its receipts from television, and makes incredible profits. How can sports reporters evoke the intercultural dimension of sport when they are expected to focus primarily on results? How can they concern themselves with cultural diversity in a context in which the main aim of the press is to sell newspapers?*

Jonathan Hill, from UEFA, explained that football so dominated European sports policies because of its popularity. A similar domination occurred at the seminar, where most of the talk was of football! The main reasons for the sport's success are the simplicity of its rules and the low cost of participating. And its success stories inspire dreams, as players of humble social origins achieve fame and fortune. Kurt Wachter, however, co-ordinator of the Fairplay project and the FARE network, considers that football is no longer the sport of the working classes. Thanks to television income, it is now a global entertainment business, its workforce recruited worldwide.

Football has changed from being a sport watched "in the flesh" to being primarily a form of entertainment televised to record-breaking audiences. The cost of broadcasting rights has risen exponentially since the late 1970s, generating huge profits. Players' and officials' wages have rocketed, and the major football clubs are now limited companies with stock market listings.

In such a context, how can sports journalists become intermediaries passing on the values of respect for other people? According to Jérôme Le Fauconnier, the editorial policy of the daily sports paper *L'Equipe* does not include any specific instructions to condemn racism, a position implicitly shared by all the members of the editorial team. He himself, a member of the football writing team for the past eight years, produces articles about sport's

aberrations, mainly relating to discrimination, racism and dirty money. He campaigns on a daily basis to be allotted column inches, but cannot always win through in the face of other current topics. In order to give some idea of the difficulties he faces, he had brought with him a few of his articles, all of them published in the bottom corner of a page! He also told the story of one experience which had left its mark on him: a few years ago he had, over a six-month period, infiltrated the extreme right-wingers of Nice and the city club's radical fans. He had been surprised to hear how many people said that racism and extremism did not exist in France. He had produced a special file on the subject, published over two days and causing a scandal. It had all been too much for the newspaper, which wanted to hear no more about the subject. There was a balance which needed to be struck, and that was the problem. It was part of journalists' duty to show how complex the fight against racism was, and to make it accessible to large numbers of people. On the other hand, the easiest thing to do was just cover each event and caricature it.

Margot Dunne, a freelance journalist who works for the BBC, said that the broadcaster gives its journalists certain clear instructions, and the multicultural diversity of the United Kingdom has to be reflected in both content and production teams. Human resources are a crucial question, for it is not enough to focus on diversity issues: the spotlight also needed to be turned onto the whole range of talents.

Luis Nieto, editor of AS.COM, an on-line sports newspaper based in Madrid, said that its editorial staff are increasingly giving their attention to these issues, although not required to do so by any formal instructions.

Fabio Monti, a journalist on *Corriere della Sera*, described what he considered a rather disturbing situation: "Racism is very powerful in Italy, with pressure being brought to bear by fans and club officials. Society is very racist, and this is reflected at sports grounds. The problem lies not in the media, but in society". It remains to be seen what professional players, officials, shareholders and leading members of the clubs concerned will do to put an end to the law of silence.

Carine Bloch, Vice-President of LICRA, said that it is also important to deal with racist acts "on an equal footing". She felt that incidents targeting white populations, such as the unfurling of the cup final banner (c.f. above) and occasions when spectators have whistled during the French national anthem, hit the headlines, but media treatment is not the same when the targets are visible minorities. She described this difference as "problematic".

With commercial logic predominant in the media, it is difficult to cover anti-discrimination and anti-racism initiatives. In the opinion of Christophe Gaignebet, a journalist who is an active member of the Sport and Citizenship

network, this presents a genuine challenge in terms of communication to the institutions, NGOs, federations and politicians with a commitment in this sphere. It is necessary to find simple, effective, original and easy-to-adopt means of getting messages across, with the backing of celebrities, well-known sportspersons and retired footballers.

Europe's diversity also extends to its media landscape. Its varied range of local, regional, national and now, thanks to the Internet, international media reflects the differences between Europeans. When international sports fixtures take place, the media exploit these differences to sell more copies, taking the opportunity to tell some juicy stories, in the view of UEFA representative Jonathan Hill.

Mr Hill grew up in England, where he recalled international matches in the 1990s between England and Germany after which the English tabloids produced photomontages using military symbolism dating from the Second World War. Similar montages were recently published in a Polish newspaper. These clearly indicated that matches between national teams still involved extremely strong feelings of identity and nationalism. He therefore wondered what space could be found for intercultural dialogue, although he went on to say that not all UK newspapers were tabloids, and articles on cultural identity in sport did appear in such newspapers as the *Financial Times*. This, however, brings us back to the question of access to this kind of writing, aimed at a relatively elite readership.

The solution therefore requires a different approach, reaching fans and sports lovers more directly, with all media getting involved. But in order to persuade them to convey a message of citizenship, communication tools appropriate to the constant flow of information and images need to be developed by stakeholders from the worlds of politics, institutions and associations. One example is the 30-second TV message entitled "Different Languages, One Goal: No To Racism" produced by the FARE network.

## **Lilian Thuram's new Education against Racism foundation**

*Since his sudden decision to retire from the game following the discovery of a cardiac malformation, Lilian Thuram, the Guadeloupe-born member of France's 1998 World Cup-winning team, has done a lot of work in support of the campaign against racism, even setting up his own foundation, which he officially presented at the seminar.*

During media interviews, Lilian Thuram often asks how many people have ever heard of Joseph-Arthur Gobineau,<sup>15</sup> because it is his view that such

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15. Gobineau (1816-82), writer of the *Essay on the Inequality of the Human Races*.

ignorance is at the root of many evils. He made a special trip to the Council of Europe to present his foundation, which is based on the idea that there is only one race, namely the human race. He described its three lines of action: educating children, raising public awareness and carrying out research into racism. A committee of experts would be advising his foundation about all of these activities.

A highly committed citizen and a member of the High Council for Integration, Thuram takes the view that condemning racism is not enough. It is necessary to understand where it comes from. "Let us take as an example racism directed against black people. It is easy to understand if you know that black people, during 400 years of slavery, were regarded as subhuman, or even as animals. The worst thing is that even the philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Montesquieu and Voltaire, backed this racism. And even later, that outstanding writer Victor Hugo claimed that the white man had made men of the blacks".<sup>16</sup> Knowledge of history, for Thuram, is the only way of making progress, and putting a stop to the racist prejudice implicitly inherited by many people. Education should expose the ideas which have legitimised inequalities between whites and blacks, namely economic considerations rather than an ethnic problem.

"There are still some people who find it difficult to accept the fact that a black-skinned person is French. During the World Cup, a public debate took place on whether French people felt that the French team represented them. This is a real problem. Sport is an amazing thing, bringing about significant progress in the acceptance of minorities. On the other hand, only education will ensure that this lasts. While people can accept blacks in the sporting context, this is not yet the case in society".<sup>17</sup> Thus the media have a vital role to play in changing people's mindsets, backing up the preventive work done. In order to strengthen social cohesion, priority needs to be given to avoiding assigning ethnic minorities to the same roles, and to properly reflecting the diversity of our societies. The readiness of such personalities as Lilian Thuram to pass on this message certainly helps to speed up progress.

## **Sexist sport**

*Women's prowess in the sporting sphere is gaining increasing recognition. They aspire to the same responsibilities as men at every level. Yet inequalities and problems of access to sport continue, and all too little media coverage is given to women's events.*

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16. Jérôme Le Fauconnier, writing about "Citoyen Thuram" (Citizen Thuram), in the sports daily *L'Equipe*, 7 October 2006.

17. Jérôme Le Fauconnier's special file on Lilian Thuram's new life, *D'une vie à l'autre*, in the sports daily *L'Equipe*, 6 December 2008.



“Sport and Citizenship” (Sport et Citoyenneté) is the first European think tank of its kind.<sup>18</sup> Like other bodies such as the Education through Sport Agency, it focuses on relevant issues and publicises the various, sometimes complex, European policies in this sphere. In October 2008 it produced a report on “Women and sport”. This includes an interview with Emine Bozkurt, a Dutch politician and Member of the European Parliament (the interview with her can be read on the Sport et Citoyenneté website). She takes the view that some differences are acceptable, such as the holding of separate competitions for women and men, while others, such as the lower prize money on offer to women, are less so. She also complained during the interview about the under-representation of women in posts of responsibility in the major sports federations.

Also in the “Women and sport” report was an interview with Nawal El Moutawakel (also available on the website). Nawal El Moutawakel, Morocco’s Minister for Youth and Sport, and a former athlete, was the first female Olympic gold medallist from a Muslim country. She said that, since the 1990s, international bodies have been paying greater attention to the question of women in sport, and that “The proportion of women in sport has gone from 10% in the 1990s to 20% now, only a few years later”. She also pointed out that “By eliminating marginalisation, poverty, misery and other scourges, by encouraging insertion and self-confidence, sport participates in the emancipation of women”.

For her part, Carine Bloch, Vice-President of LICRA, who attended the seminar, focused on the obstacles preventing participation. Only 7 of the 40 medals won by French participants at the Beijing Olympics went to women. This was largely because the country had too few female athletes. The annual LICRA survey of racist phenomena in French towns and cities showed that women’s access to sport was one of the main causes of concern. Twenty-five per cent of towns and cities reported this problem. In Ms Bloch’s view, this was due to family, cultural or even religious pressures. While sport did promote emancipation, fraternity, equality and self-esteem, and women no longer had any need to show how successful they could be, women’s sport continued to be less popular and receive less media coverage.

What action do the European institutions take in this field? Various political and legal instruments have been introduced, among them the article in the Treaty of Lisbon on sport and the “White Paper on Sport”, which states that “the Commission will encourage the mainstreaming of gender issues into all its sports-related activities, with a specific focus on access to sport for immigrant women and women from ethnic minorities, women’s access to decision-making positions in sport...”. The media also play a decisive role

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18. [www.sportetcitoyennete.org](http://www.sportetcitoyennete.org)

in changing mentalities, by broadcasting more women's competitions and through their support for campaigns.

## **Action against racism in football. The experience of the FARE network**

*FARE (Football Against Racism in Europe) was set up in Vienna in February 1999, at the initiative of activist anti-racist groups of European supporters. It now has active partners in over 40 European states and engages in co-operation with over 300 organisations at every level of the sport.*

Members of the network are active inside and around football grounds, but they also condemn the institutional racism that is less visible, as well as the exclusion of minorities at various levels of the sport. They issue public warnings about what is going on and call for offenders to be punished. In 2004, for instance, Otto Baric, the Croatian manager of the Albanian national team, stated in an interview that he wanted no homosexuals in his team. FARE made an official complaint, and he was fined 3 000 Swiss francs by UEFA. This was the first time that an official had been punished for homophobia.

FARE is well aware of the crucial role played by the media. It works closely with football's governing bodies and star players, to get them both interested and involved. Kurt Wachter, co-ordinator of the Fairplay project and the FARE network, quoted the examples of several significant milestones. In 2001, UEFA awarded the Monaco prize and a cheque for a million Swiss francs to FARE, which has also become a member of UEFA's partnership portfolio for football and social responsibility. In 2002, FARE received the "Free Your Mind" prize at the MTV Europe Music Awards in Barcelona. And the latest significant event occurred in 2006, when FIFA and FARE concluded a strategic anti-discrimination alliance.

Every year, FARE organises an action week during which local problems are tackled at club level, while a united front against racism in football is shown at the same time. During Action Week 2008, held in October, almost 1 000 events took place across Europe. One of the main tools of FARE's 2008 "Unite against Racism" campaign was a film clip entitled "Different Languages, One Goal: No To Racism", a 30-second message directed by American John Buché, made by Munich production company Embassy of Dreams, and involving actors from all parts of Europe. This film, which had the support of UEFA and the European Commission, was shown before, during and after every match at Euro 2008. "Everything in the film is symbolic. Romanian actors represented eastern Europe, we used Dutch actors as a reference to colonial times, and Turkish actors were involved to signify their omnipresence throughout many parts of Europe at this point in time",

according to the director (interviewed on the FARE website).<sup>19</sup> The film shows the emotions of fans, whether at home watching on television, attending the match or watching in bars, during the build-up to, and scoring of, a goal. The aim being to show that such emotions are universal in nature.

FARE also uses other means of getting its message across: fanzines, websites, DVDs, posters, and so forth. Its tools can be used by anyone wishing to support the network.

## **More prevention, punishment, media coverage... and introspection**

*"The fight against racism cannot be waged using good intentions and gimmicks (anti-racism songs, T-shirts), but requires education and the application of existing texts, which are more than adequate (Penal Code, Sport Code, rules, charters, etc.)."*<sup>20</sup> *Improvement of education against racism for the youngest members of society, systematic application of legislation, media involvement and an invitation to all to accept responsibility, these are the main lines of action which emerged from the discussions.*

The two thrusts of UEFA's strategy were described by Jonathan Hill, head of the organisation's Brussels office. In the short term, clubs and players guilty of discrimination or racism will be more severely punished (fines, five-match suspensions, etc.). In the longer term, priority will be given to education; hence the partnership with FARE, which provided a large field network.

For her part, Margot Dunne, a freelance journalist who works for the BBC, said that prominent media coverage of these issues is important. They need to be the main story of the day. That is the only way to root out the problem. There had been a fantastic improvement in the United Kingdom over the past 10 years, as racism had been constantly in the headlines, and the media had been vigilant and issued warnings. Every incident had been front page news. This should always be the case, so that the public felt more concerned.

Jérôme Le Fauconnier drew attention to the French situation and the print media crisis. He described the fierce rivalry to achieve sales, and the fight against discrimination did not sell copies. From time to time, he said, something was done as a means of salving conscience, but rarely did an editor give journalists time to seek out information or engage in discussions. This made extreme vigilance necessary, in a battle that needed to be fought every

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19. [www.farenet.org/](http://www.farenet.org/) Detailed information in English, German, French and Italian. Visitors to the site can also watch the "Different Languages, One Goal: No to Racism" clip.

20. Marc Chevrier, *Des annonces et peu d'actes*, in the sports daily *L'Equipe*, 22 February 2008.

day. He felt that the European institutions had a vital role to play in facilitating the journalists' task, by providing them with easily "communicable" information. His words echoed those of Margot Dunne, who had said that it was only thanks to close co-operation between institutions, NGOs and the media that progress has been possible in the United Kingdom. Another important point was the under-representation of ethnic minorities in the sporting media. In order to move forward, there needed to be a wide range of faces and voices speaking to fans. Carine Bloch, Vice-President of LICRA, agreed.

The key words were thus prevention, punishment and media coverage. But as UEFA's Jonathan Hill suggested, all of us need to look beyond the numerous declarations and commitments and ask ourselves why so many acts of racism are still occurring.



## **Chapter 2**

### **Sports activities and sexual discrimination**



## Introduction

Catherine Louveau,<sup>21</sup> University of Paris-Sud 11 (France)

Although many people speak of the “virtues” of sport, such as the power to bring people together and encourage them to play a role in society and to integrate, as well as its “universality”, sport is a social and cultural practice and therefore brings with it differences, distinctions and inequalities. This has a degree of influence on accessibility and on choice of sport, which as we know depends on a combination of social characteristics and living conditions, all of which either accentuate or mitigate these inequalities.

Thus practice in the world of sport can be regarded as a major social factor when we analyse the differences and inequalities of interest to us here, namely those between the sexes, which we shall consider conceptually in terms of social relations between the sexes, as these relations (equality, subordination, hierarchy, etc.) play a part in social relationships as a whole. They cut across all social practices, education, work, the home, leisure activities; sport, however, provides the basis for a particularly effective analysis, for it is primarily the body that participates, a body of one sex or the other, in respect of which differences cannot be “neutralised”, as emphasised by Geneviève Fraisse.<sup>22</sup>

Many people claim that physical and sports activities have opened up to everyone and been democratised in recent decades. Every possible comparison of study findings, however, show that, while practice in the world of sport, as in the world of culture, has spread to the masses (being widespread in our so-called western societies), and has diversified, differentiation and inequalities of access remain. While increasing numbers of women have started to practise physical or sports activities in recent decades, there is not an equal probability of access for all women: the differences between women in the executive and intellectual work category and those who do manual work remain significant, and still greater than the equivalent differences between men. The most decisive factor is their level of education, as is the case for all cultural practices.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, although all (or almost all) physical and sports activities are de facto accessible to women today,

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21. Professor, University of Paris-Sud 11 (France).

22. Preface to *Sports, Ecole, Société: la différence des sexes*, by Davaise Annick and Louveau Catherine, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1998.

23. Louveau, Catherine, “Pratiquer une activité physique ou sportive: la persistance des inégalités parmi les femmes, *Recherches féministes*”, University of Laval (Quebec), *Sport et femmes* special edition, Vol. 17, 1, 2004, pp. 39-76.



there remains a lasting differential between the two sexes in this sphere. There continue to be “female” and “male” sports (where one sex or the other is in the majority, not only statistically, but also in terms of representation and assigned roles). Thus physical and sports activities, like every form of human work, are divided on the basis of gender, a division similarly related to “masculine” and “feminine” categories (as social constructs).<sup>24</sup> In practical terms and symbolically, sports (many sports, especially the competitive variety) have been and remain in many respects opportunities to acquire manhood and virility.

Although we must keep a sense of proportion, all these findings also apply to the younger generations.<sup>25</sup> The teenage years are certainly a crucial period for the manifestation and shaping of differences and inequalities in sport, based on previous primary – and secondary – socialisation, namely within the family, at school (physical education and sport lessons in particular – unwritten curriculum), by the media and within the peer group. All these family, social and cultural conditions, by order or through negative judgement, or even prohibition, determine each sex’s sporting practice, and this from the youngest age.

Some children, young or not so young, conform to the role of their sex through taste or choice, while others, such as girls who opt for football or ice hockey, and boys who go in for dancing or rhythmic gymnastics, break away from their “assigned” role. This transgression of the social gender code always comes at a high cost, for both sexes. For true discrimination occurs, sometimes stigmatised or stigmatising, when anyone who fails to comply with the social norms suffers unequal treatment or consideration.

It is the task of the school to rectify social inequalities. But when schools deny differences or, for the sake of egalitarian treatment, try “not to make any distinctions between pupils”, several studies have shown their efforts to be often counterproductive, in that they reproduce inequalities both in physical education and sport lessons and in other school subjects.

The work done by C. Guérandel, J. Frohn and K. Gilenstam leads us to observe and understand the mechanisms in play in various situations of inequality and discrimination. It also bears witness to the fact that the policies and activities pursued (in a neighbourhood, a city, a school, a sports move-

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24. Louveau, Catherine, *Sexuation du travail sportif et construction sociale de la féminité*, *Cahiers du Genre*, 36, 2004, pp. 163-183. Mennesson, Christine, “Etre une femme dans le monde des hommes. Socialisation sportive et construction du genre”, Paris, L’Harmattan, 2005, *Sports en société* collection.

25. Louveau, Catherine and Davisse, Annick, “Hommes/femmes, garçons/filles dans les pratiques sportives, différences et inégalités”, in *Femmes, genre, société, L’État des savoirs*, Margaret Maruani (ed.), La Découverte, 2005.

ment), while they may “ignore” these situations, may also have mitigating or even compensating effects.

The development of study of these problems relating to differences and inequalities between the sexes has to be applauded, but even more welcome is the fact that it is now being done by some young research workers. This is an important movement, for the societal implications go well beyond what goes on in the world of sport. The effort to highlight mechanisms which divide, share and prioritise brings a start to the process of doing away with the dominant standards. Knowledge of the conditions which give rise to inequality is therefore the necessary first stage, bringing visibility; this knowledge can and must then be used for (political, educational...) action with a view to at least reducing the discrimination often masked by the positive values of difference and diversity.



## Local sport policies and young residents of suburban neighbourhoods: a marked lack of interest among women and girls

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The socialisation of young people from suburban neighbourhoods seems to be a matter of constant concern to those responsible for public policies, who have, since the early 1980s, come up with new forms of state support<sup>27</sup> for such young people, thereby taking over from more traditional, but declining, forms of political, trade union, religious or cultural organisation (Mauger, 2001). The main aim is to avoid any excesses which might disturb public order, like those which occurred in the autumn of 2005, continuing the series of urban riots<sup>28</sup> which were illegitimate and unlawful reflections of the anger of young people from social housing about perceived injustices. Viewed from this angle, sports activities take on the appearance of an idealised micro-society, a setting for the socialisation, or even integration, of young people described as being "in difficulty". Regarded as socially and politically neutral, combined from the outset with educational objectives, and integrated into any civilisation process, sports activities are often referred to in politicians' speeches and when educational arrangements are made for what are described as "difficult" groups (Arnaud, 2001). Integration through sport seems to be a new way of helping urban, working-class, young people in a way which renews belief in the "natural" socialising and peace-building virtues of sport. The aim is therefore to use sport as a means of filling the free time of boys who are "unemployable" or "urban trouble-makers", and of reintegrating and socialising them by deconstructing their "anti-school culture" or their "manhood and street culture" (Mauger, 2001). This vision of deviant behaviour by urban, working-class, young people nevertheless refers primarily to boys and young men. Research is now, therefore, striving to assess the effects of this categorised thinking – which is helping to shape sport policies relating to integration – on the sports activities available to girls at neighbourhood level.

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27. Particularly "integration policies" and "urban policies", as well as a strengthening of "security policies".

28. The first urban violence occurred in Vénissieux and Vaulx-en-Velin during the late 1970s, and the stealing and burning of cars during the *Rodeos des Minguettes* was categorised as rioting in the summer of 1981; explicitly political expression followed in the form of a "march for equality" and the foundation of anti-racist association, *SOS racism*.

My study of the social distribution of young people on the local sports scene shows how little is available to girls in the neighbourhood concerned. In practice, most of the facilities available are specifically for boys. And when provision is made for both sexes, nothing is done to promote mixed sport, which does not seem to be one of the objectives. It thus seems that, by neglecting females from suburban neighbourhoods who have no need for specific support of supervision, integration policies have unwittingly given rise to discrimination against girls and their sporting activities.

From the methodological viewpoint, this study looks specifically at a working-class neighbourhood of Toulouse, focusing on sports activities. The ethnographic research took place over a three-year period, during which all the places where young people from a working-class neighbourhood engaged in sporting activity were identified. The main body of facts is drawn from each facility's educational projects, from observation of several sessions and from conversations with political and institutional leaders, support staff and participants.

Following a description of those of the city's policies which relate to sport and of the processes of sexual discrimination at work, this article briefly sets out the findings of the survey, highlighting the male domination of sports activities in the neighbourhood concerned.

## **Sports policy as a means of providing support for, and integrating, boys**

### **The stigmatised face of boys descended from post-colonial immigration**

As early as the 1980s, politicians and the media systematically equated boys from social housing neighbourhoods with "urban violence", placed them in the ethnic category of young people "of immigrant origin" (meaning from the Maghreb or sub-Saharan Africa), and associated them with violence against girls. This definition of youngsters, most of whom had been born and socialised in France, led to them being regarded as a homogeneous group, and aggravated the negative representation of these young working-class men as members of a new and dangerous category. Similarly, regarding the delinquent contingent amongst them as representative of all who live in poor neighbourhoods made it more likely that boys from "disadvantaged neighbourhoods" would be blacklisted.

This male-centred view of delinquency in working-class neighbourhoods brings us back to Sylvia Faure's study (2005) of the gender division in public areas. Neighbourhoods contain places where males gather together even before they reach adolescence. Thus a contrast is drawn between the

visible presence of men in public areas and the invisibility of women who are required to stay at home. There are nevertheless some highly mobile girls who get away from the neighbourhood and its single-sex areas. Women's discretion in public areas is in such cases the reason for politicians' and scientists' indifference to them. There are, however, some women who complain about the violent conduct of the men alongside whom they are obliged to live. By masking the structural causes of machismo in discredited neighbourhoods, they unknowingly strengthen the stereotypical view of working-class boys, whose macho behaviour towards women stems from their poor social and occupational reputation and their stigmatisation (Faure, 2005), virility being one of the few resources which even the most disadvantaged of them have. Working-class boys are therefore regarded as a specific and problematic "population group" responsible for "the suburban neighbourhood disease" and sharing a culture of violence and anonymity. The social issue therefore arises of the need to protect residents and "good" young people from contamination by the "yobs". This Manichaean vision is used to justify the setting up of various institutional systems involving alternation between "punishment and education".

### **Sports activities as a means of providing ordinary young people with support**

In the face of the whole gamut of local difficulties, authorities introduced sports policies with a view to integration or with a "social/sporting" objective (Arnaud, 2001), spurred on by urban development policy.<sup>29</sup> Municipal sports facilities were asked to provide for young suburban academic failures in the process of disaffiliation. Sport departments and sociocultural activity departments are therefore offering free activities and courses to the young people concerned during the school holidays and outside school hours, in accordance with the interministerial arrangements set up in 1982.<sup>30</sup>

Furthermore, under what are known as *contrats de ville* (city contracts), municipal authorities make grants to associations based in suburban neighbourhoods which exist to socialise and integrate young local residents. The availability of new local sports activities is necessary in the context of the integration of young people.

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29. "A range of measures relating to prevention, social and occupational integration, the combating of exclusion and the enhancement of urban areas, introduced to deal with the problems of 'sensitive' neighbourhoods" (Van Zanten, 2001, p. 56).

30. "Calm summer" projects (*Opérations Anti-Été-Chaud*) set up as a matter of urgency at the joint instigation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Ministry of the Interior use sport as an instrument of crime prevention. Subsequently renamed *Opération Prévention Été* and now known as *Ville-Vie-Vacances*, this project now includes sports and cultural activities during every school holiday, all the year round.

Thus the public authorities, making use of sport for political ends and praising its socialising and peace-building qualities, as well as its ability to promote the integration of young people with problems, are hoping to strengthen and/or rebuild representations shared by neighbourhood players, such as the positive values of sport and the bleak view taken by suburban young people.

### **Women's and girls' lack of interest**

The political will to provide teenagers with support and help them to integrate through sport in order to prevent public disorder at the same time entails the "exclusion of girls and an increasingly male-dominated area of urban sport, whether independent or organised" (Gasparini, 2005, p. 258). The authorities' lack of interest in women's sport in priority suburban neighbourhoods is partly due to girls' less visible presence in their neighbourhoods. They are also regarded as less likely than boys to offend, as confirmed by official crime figures.<sup>31</sup> Studies of self-confessed offences, however, and sociologists' findings mean that official data need weighting: girls commit as many offences, although they are less often detected by the law enforcement agencies. Some writers even hypothesise that street culture has an increasing influence on the socialisation process of some girls in working-class environments.

The fact remains that the sports activities available in neighbourhoods are specifically aimed at boys. The words of one sport department official reveal his thought processes, with sport regarded as a male area: "More boys than girls are involved, that's for certain... In any case, sport is always more of a male than a female activity. We can't force women to like and get involved in sport, can we?" (B, sport department official, 2006).

When sports activities are made available, they are implicitly and preferentially for boys.

## **Suburban neighbourhoods: a place for male sport**

### **Overview of the sports activities on offer to girls**

If we take stock of the opportunities for sport for teenagers within their neighbourhood, we see that sports clubs emphasise competitive action and high-level sport. These clubs do not fall in line with city management policy and cater mainly for teenagers from elsewhere. This study therefore focuses on those facilities mainly used by young working-class city dwellers.

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31. Since the 1970s, only 6 to 10% of all juvenile delinquents have been girls.

## Summary of the contexts surveyed

	Participating teenagers	Activity leaders	Officials	Educational project and relationship to female or mixed participation
<b>Football club</b>	Boys (56 aged between 13 and 15)	Men	Men	"To promote mixed sport by developing the category for young beginners", <sup>32</sup> thanks to "female leadership by four girls from the neighbourhood concerned".
<b>Futsal</b>	Boys (numbers vary between 30 and 100)	Men	Men	Not applicable <sup>33</sup>
<b>Football at leisure centre</b>	Boys (20 of lower secondary age)	Men	Men	Not applicable
<b>Dancing at leisure centre<sup>34</sup></b>	Girls (20 of lower secondary age)	Women	Men	
<b>Dancing club</b>	Girls (14 aged between 13 and 15)	Women	Women	"Offering dancing is a way of getting girls to attend." Boys may also attend, for "highlighting the mixed nature of this activity shows strong cohesion between the sexes".
<b>Tennis club</b>	Mixed (15 youngsters aged between 13 and 17, including three girls)	Men	Men	"Encouraging social cohesion", "enabling children to blossom and show solidarity and social awareness during their mixed activity".
<b>Lower secondary school sports club</b>	Mixed (36 pupils, including 17 girls)	Men	Men	"Developing sports activity for all."
<b>Municipal facility</b>	Mixed (110 young people per day, 54% boys and 46% girls)	Mixed	Men	Not applicable

32. "Young beginners" are children aged four or five not registered with the national football federation, who can move on to the beginners' category when they reach the age of six.

33. This means that there is no mixed or female sport objective or method.

34. This facility offers sports and cultural activities for children outside school hours.



Generally speaking, sports provision is mainly for local boys, with a view to socialising them and integrating them in this context. Similarly, most of the support staff are men. Women tend to be more involved in clubs open only to girls, and offer such activities as dancing, which are regarded as feminine. In the educational projects brought to our attention, it does not seem to be regarded as essential to give any consideration to girls' activities or to the management of the simultaneous presence of groups of each sex. And the authorities merely gauge the mixed nature of clubs on the basis of the number of boys and girls registered with national federations.<sup>35</sup>

The young members of the football club are all from the neighbourhood. Their enthusiasm and pride in their club make it a very popular one. The only girls in the club at the time of the survey were four 14- to 16-year-old volunteers (two football players, one boxer and one former handball player) who helped with the mini-football section.

*An extract from an interview with Amina*

How do you get on with the boys in the club? I mean your fellow trainers.

*Relations with the others are good, especially the young men, who pay us compliments. And we are showing that the world of football can be mixed and that we are playing a part, whatever anyone else thinks, even those who get a bit upset...*

Some people get upset?

*Not exactly upset, but a few of the lads of our own age find it strange that we are here, that's all. It doesn't get rough, and they have never told us to clear off!*

So the girls who find their way into this male world are perceived and treated as what Simmel might have referred to as "outsiders" and have to face hostility from men who express either indifference or scorn.

Municipal efforts to provide socio-cultural activities cater only for the boys who frequent public areas, idle and excluded – or excluding themselves – from traditional sports clubs. They are offered the chance to play football, a sport valued highly by boys.

There were a few cold youngsters who wanted to force their way into the sports hall. I let them in, asking them to show respect for the ball.

Then I started to get them interested in football, and there they were playing futsal [explanation given by the futsal trainer].

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35. The evaluation grids supplied by the municipality relate to the characteristics of clubs in the neighbourhood concerned, revealing the emphasis placed on quantitative data (numbers of girls and boys registered with national federations, numbers of participants, numbers of sports sections, etc.).

And when an association, like the dancing club, targets its activities solely at girls, it occupies a lowly position in the local sports hierarchy (low profile and limited influence within the neighbourhood, small number of members and relatively low level of subsidy).

We use dance as a means of integrating and educating girls, because we have noted over the past few years that girls from suburban neighbourhoods had unwittingly started to exclude themselves involuntarily. We thought that, by offering dancing as an activity, we would not attract boys, who are rather macho. It is one way of bringing girls together and preventing their exclusion [explanation given by the club leader].

The lower secondary school sports club attracts girls and boys who are doing particularly well at school. The all-girl dancing and boys-only football, however, follow an educational logic, without casting any light on the variable factor of sex. The aim is "to combat social and cultural segregation by offering free access to all the school's pupils, on the basis of the principles of secular schooling and openness to all without discrimination".

Finally, in facilities catering for both girls and boys, no consideration is given to girls' or to mixed activities in educational projects and in the majority of practical cases observed, and these do not seem to be regarded as objectives to be achieved. While these facilities enable male and female groups to meet and to start friendships, and possibly even to flirt, and sometimes to play their sport together, the presence of girls and boys in a single sporting context has contrasting effects, depending on environment, trainer and the youngsters' own social qualities. In practice, mixed facilities, where no consideration is given to the organisational conditions which would make possible, or promote, girls' involvement, thus tend to confirm the divide according to sex which exists in working-class neighbourhoods.

## **Conclusion**

Thus the aim of providing structure through sporting activity is to reduce opportunities for crime by keeping young people occupied and under supervision, at the same time as carrying out educational activities to "re-socialise" them. The authorities strive in particular to prevent what Gasparini, in 2005, described as "the most visible rebellion", that by boys who take over public areas. By focusing on the integration and socialisation of potentially dangerous youngsters, the public players have thus implicitly encouraged local sports clubs to provide activities for boys, in order to satisfy elected councillors and thus obtain funding under city management policy. Consequently, priority is not given to the objectives of, and resources needed for, girls' or mixed sport. Girls tend to go in for "feminine" activities such as dancing, where the activity leaders are female, while boys prefer "masculine" sports

such as football, led by male trainers. Thus sports facilities tend to reinforce the sexual divide in working-class neighbourhoods.<sup>36</sup> This situation at local level, however, should not make us lose sight of all the initiatives to promote girls' involvement taken by a number of active players encouraged by national and local policies showing increasing awareness of the issue of women's access to sport.<sup>37</sup>

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36. In this context, as in the conclusions of the 2004 report on "Women and sport", it is stated in Toulouse's "city contract" that the activities on offer remain traditional, with a limited range of disciplines, mainly directed at boys.

37. Also of interest in this context are the discussions (*Pôles ressources nationaux*) and activities ("Women and Sport" competition, subsidies) encouraged by the French Ministry for Health, Youth, Sport and Volunteering, those of the Agency for Education through Sport and its "*Fais-nous rêver*" competition, the various departmental and regional committees working on gender equality and the activities funded by "city contracts" where a deficit has been noted in terms of activities for girls.

## **Gender in ice hockey: women in male territory**

*Kajsa Gilenstam,<sup>38</sup> Staffan Karp,<sup>39</sup> Karin Henriksson-Larsén,<sup>40</sup> University of Umeå (Sweden)*

Urbanisation and industrialisation changed society in ways that enabled the development of sport. The shift from agricultural work to industrial work meant that the 24-hour day was divided into work and rest and spare time was created, at least for men. The shift from the extended family to the nuclear family increased the burden of child care, at least for women. The view of the woman changed from a capable farmer to a pale, frail and feminine person that became the ideal of the middle class. Of course the reality for the working-class woman involved both industrial work and domestic work as well. As the men were working outside the home, the children were raised by their mothers to a large extent. The fact that boys were raised by their soft and frail mothers was considered problematic, but spending time with other boys and men in sport could be a means to help transform boys into men. Seen in this perspective, women in sport must have been a contradiction in terms.

The entrance of women into sport has not been without resistance. Over time, women have managed to increase the number of sports “allowed” for women, where sports traditionally associated with masculinity (such as sports involving physical contact, aggressiveness and explosive power) have proved to be the most difficult to gain admission to (Hargreaves, 1994).

The structure of sports in society is considered to be a bearer of a male norm, where “male” sports are prioritised before “female” sports and male athletes are prioritised before female athletes, and where the performance of men is considered to be better than women’s.

In Sweden, as well as in other countries, the decision-making bodies in sports mainly consists of men, and this means that men have control over both women’s and men’s sports. Even though Sweden is a country that is usually considered to have a rather well developed sense for gender equality, the sports arena is still unequal.

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Women's ice hockey is still considered to be a "new" sport in Sweden, even though the first national championship for women was played in 1987. At the time of the interviews only 6% of the players were women, and there was a vast difference in financial and structural conditions in the sport, where men's ice hockey had become a professionalised sport whereas women's ice hockey still was a sport for amateurs.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how women ice hockey players describe and explain their situation within their sport as well as outside sport (Gilenstam et al., 2008).

## **Material and methods**

Semi-structured interviews were performed on players from a women's ice hockey team in the highest division. The team was one of the best in the region and the players selected for interviews represented different aspects of the team in terms of playing experience, age, type of work and social situation. Semi-structured interviews were performed where the following themes were discussed: "ice hockey history", "social networks", "life plans and priorities" and "me and my sport". A general theme was to know more about their expectations and whether they thought the situation could or should be otherwise and if they thought the situation would be different if they had been men.

The interview was transcribed verbatim, and words with specific meaning to the text (key words) were noted (coded) in the margin. A summary of each interview was structured around the key themes and interesting quotes were noted. After this, a compilation of similarities and differences was performed on a higher level of abstraction and then analysed from a symbolic, a structural and an individual perspective of gender. The study was approved by the Ethical Committee of the Medical Faculty, Umeå University, Sweden.

## **Results**

### **Symbolic perspective**

The symbolic perspective deals with what we consider the natural way for men and women to be, and because of this we are rarely aware of its existence (Kolnes, 1994). In the interviews the players' descriptions follow the traditional views of women and men and of femininity and masculinity. Men are considered to be more ambitious and focused on performance whereas women are described as being more sensitive to criticism and more focused on their own appearance than on sport performance.

It is possible to push boys harder, you know. Girls give up if things get too tough...

At the beginning of the conversation women and men are usually described as different from one another, but later in the conversation these differences usually decrease or disappear. Here is an example from one interview, where two different contexts in the conversation produce different descriptions:

Girls are not as eager to practise as boys. A boy always performs his best at practice...

The men's team back home played in the premier league before and then they practised much, much more. Now that they play in division one, they don't practise as much. They are less motivated and they don't show up at the summer practice.

In general descriptions women and men are each other's opposites, but in real life they describe variations. In real life all women and all men are not the same; there are variations within each gender and sometimes the previously described gender differences disappear when other factors are considered as well.

### **Structural perspective**

The structural level describes the social structures where activities, sports and type of work are divided as suited for men or women (Kolnes, 1994). Both people and organisations are affected by gender and gender often affects the distribution of power, resources and privileges. Usually these facts are so obvious that we are unaware of them (Messner, 2002). Ice hockey is a sport that was developed by men for men, and women's ice hockey is a "new" and less developed sport. There are big differences in the way the sport is organised and the differences may affect the possibilities available for male and female players. Structural differences such as the fact that women are not allowed to body check, differences in ice hockey history (when they started to play, the quality and quantity of practice, for example) are not considered in the comparison, it is only the performance on ice that is compared.

I don't really know what one can expect. I mean, anyone who watches a game and who has seen men's hockey before can see that there is not the same speed, toughness or action. It is not as fun to watch.

Men's ice hockey as we can see is used as the norm and when women's ice hockey differs from the norm it is considered as not as good. Differences in performance are usually used as a reason why women cannot expect to have the same conditions as men. The players understand why they are the last team on the list when ice time is distributed to the different teams.

When we were playing in the Bears, they distributed the practice hours among their teams... first to the men's team, the junior teams and so on.... They [the men's senior and junior teams] practise around six or seven o'clock every day, so there were only the late hours left

for us, because the younger teams couldn't practise then. So we were left with just the late hours, you know.

It seems that another possible reason for not questioning the inequalities in conditions is the fear of negative reactions. As one player puts it, it might even be counterproductive to make demands. If women's ice hockey were to receive more media attention, it would intrude on the attention toward men's sports.

Actually I think it is on a fairly good level [the media coverage in the local paper]. Because... I think it could get too much also. If we were mentioned more often, I think some people could get a little... "anti"... That we would take up too much space, compared to the number of spectators at the games and so on...

So, if women take up too much space or make demands on a more gender equal organisation they might be threatening the current gender structure. Perhaps women will not be welcome in the ice hockey arenas if they demand too much? The players described positive reactions and acceptance by the other teams in the arena, when they were given the latest ice times at night, and the conditions for the other teams were not affected. The question is if the positive reactions would have changed if the women's team had been prioritised as a senior men's team, as they would have "taken" times from other teams.

### **Individual perspective**

The individual level is where femininity and masculinity are internalised, when the individual and personal identities are formed (Kolnes, 1994). As individuals we are well aware of the characteristics, privileges and responsibilities that we are associated with in relation to gender, age, class, ethnicity, etc.

The players feel that they do not fit the general descriptions. They are women in a men's sport, deviating from what is expected, and because of that their sexual orientation might be questioned as well.

Girls are supposed to be preoccupied with horses or something cute or you are supposed to do aerobics, have long nails and be good looking...

I suppose that the image of a female ice hockey player is a girl with her cap the wrong way around, spitting snuff.

A lot of people think that girls that play hockey are lesbians who use snuff.

The players describe the astonishment on people's faces when they say that they play ice hockey. It seems as though they find it amusing, as well as it making them proud – it is evident in their expressions and tone of voice.

People react when you say that you play hockey and they think it's cool, no matter who you tell.

It is quite fun to see how people react when he [her boyfriend] has told them that I play hockey, and when they see me they just say, "But you can't play hockey!"

Most players describe positive reactions from people. It is "cool" that they play hockey, it is unexpected, but in a positive way. The players seem to experience the positive reactions as compliments; they are performing an unexpected sport and they feel that they gain in esteem. Another way of seeing it is that as they do not look like the view of the ice hockey player (with their cap the wrong way around, spitting snuff), they look like a woman is supposed to, and their femininity is reinforced.

It appears that being a woman in a male territory is like walking a tightrope. It is important to distance oneself from other women, but at the same time they want to distance themselves from the general view of the butch female ice hockey player previously described.

Even though the players are well aware of the fact that both the sport and the arena belong to men, it did not stop them from starting to play. It indicates that the possibilities are bigger at the individual level than what is described at the symbolic level. The players describe women as second-class athletes with a lower physical capacity compared to the norm, the men. This represents a dilemma for the players; as they devalue women, they also devalue themselves. The solution for this dilemma seems to be to consider oneself to be an exception to the rule. This phenomenon has been described previously when women enter into other male sports (Scruton et al., 1999).

## **Conclusion**

The players describe gender-influenced structural obstacles for their development as players and yet they are quite content with their situation. Men's ice hockey is used as the norm and when women's ice hockey performance differs from the norm it is considered as not as good. Even though differences or unfairness in conditions are described, they are usually not used in order to explain part of the differences in performance between men and women. Instead the difference in performance is used to explain the difference in conditions. They understand why women's ice hockey is considered less important than the male version of the game and they have adjusted their expectations accordingly.

The players describe themselves to be different from other women as the traditional view of femininity and women. It is possible that this is a strategy in order to handle the gender structure and at the same time maintain their



self-esteem. By depreciating traits traditionally associated with femininity and by applying them on women in general, the challenge to the male hegemony is avoided. By this, two things are achieved.

- The gender structure remains unquestioned as the symbolic level is still correct and this means that there is no reason to alter the conditions on the structural level.
- Women's ice hockey is not a threat to men's ice hockey; and women may be treated more kindly.

This strategy might lead to an advantage from a short perspective, but in the long run it might repress the development of women's ice hockey. In order to improve the conditions for women in ice hockey as well as in other sports, the traits associated with women and sports in general will have to change. Even though the players are not actively trying to change what "a woman" represents, their presence in a male sport may have an effect, and the view of women as frail and weak might change. The results of this study of the gender power relations in this women's ice hockey team implicate that performing a male sport as a woman does not necessarily change the views of women and men on the symbolic level, on the contrary, the players in this study appeared to share the traditional views.

## **Perspective**

In order to know how to change the inequalities in sports, it is important to gain a deeper understanding of the effect of symbolic and structural differences on power relations and strategies in sports for women and men today.

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# Accessing PE and sports for girls with low educational achievement

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The world of sports is traditionally a male-dominated domain, but one into which women and girls have in recent decades made increasing inroads. Sport and motion are nowadays among the most popular leisure time activities of girls and boys in equal measure.

However, if one looks at the group of girls more closely, some distinctions become evident. Not all girls take part in sports to the same extent. In Germany it is above all girls with a better level of education that stand in this respect on an equal footing with boys. Less well educated, or poorly educated, girls have less access to sports activities than any other group of young people. This state of affairs gives rise to two very obvious questions: what are the reasons for it and what can be done about it?

Accordingly, this paper has three sections. First it is briefly indicated who the girls in question are and to what extent they are under-represented in sports activities. Then, with the help of a theoretical model, suggestions are made concerning some reasons for their lack of participation in sports activities. Finally, a scenario is sketched out in which this group of girls may after all be integrated into the sports and motion provision of the community.

## Girls in the *Hauptschule* – participation in PE and sports

In Germany, girls with a low level of educational achievement are generally associated with the *Hauptschule* or lower secondary school. Judged by school-leaving certificate, this ranks as the lowest in the hierarchy of German school types, and is attended by children who would be overstretched by the demands of either the *Realschule* (vocational secondary school) or *Gymnasium* (grammar or high school). Of these three types of school, common throughout Germany, only the *Gymnasium* qualifies for university entrance. A further fact, clearly demonstrated by the PISA surveys (Programme for International Student Assessment), is that the correlation between school type and social status is closer in Germany than in many other countries. In this educational landscape *Hauptschule* students carry a definite stigma, with a negative public image and correspondingly limited

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career prospects. Many of them will not find a job or an apprenticeship when they leave school, and will consequently be threatened with immediate long-term unemployment. Children from migrant families form a large sub-group within this class.

Whilst with boys neither school type nor social class plays a significant role in sports participation, with girls this rises in line with educational level. Less than one in five *Hauptschule* girls (18%) belongs to a sports club, and almost half (46%) do no sports outside obligatory school classes. These are, therefore, their only points of contact with sports activities. Yet the complaint is often heard from PE teachers at *Hauptschulen* that many girls are hard to motivate and non- (or only reluctant) participation in sports classes is comparatively frequent.

## **Reasons for low participation levels**

How are these facts to be explained? The sports participation of adolescents depends largely on social factors. Socially underprivileged young people tend to engage less in sports and motion than their more privileged peers, girls less than boys, and children from migrant families less than those from a non-migrant background. No wonder, then, that girls from the German *Hauptschule*, who often fulfil all of these criteria, are under-represented in sports activities.

The concept of "life situation" developed by Glatzer and Hübinger in the early 1990s, and refined by Enders-Drägässer and Sellach with the addition of gender-related aspects some ten years later, allows a more differentiated analysis of the issue. Life situation is understood multidimensionally in this model and includes not only earnings-related but also non-earnings-related aspects such as health and home. Nevertheless, financial factors still play a major role in the concept, because they are crucial in facilitating (or hindering) access to other areas, specifically to many leisure activities. The model sees the individual as an active subject forming and structuring his or her own life situation, not merely as the victim of circumstances. However, circumstances may well impact and confine the space available for individual freedom of decision and action.

Glatzer and Hübinger (1990) see the determining factors in this context as goods and income, contact and co-operation, learning ability and experience, scope for leisure and recreation, and, finally, disposition and participation. Enders-Drägässer and Sellach (1999, 2002) expand the list with the addition of three gender-related dimensions applying specifically to women: gender role, social bonding, and protection versus self-determination. Applying these categories to girls' sports activities, data from the authors' recent research on girls in the *Hauptschule* (see Frohn, 2007) are used, and

examples will be given of the restrictions that typically affect this group. A general assumption of my argument is that restrictions to individual freedom of decision and action may well lead to reduced participation in sports.

Goods and income includes access to goods, services and resources and depends on disposable family income. *Hauptschule* students are immediately affected here, as they generally come from socially underprivileged life situations in which few or no resources are available for leisure activities and the equipment they require (sports apparatus, clothing, etc.).

The younger a girl is, the more she also depends on her parents to organise any participation in sports outside school, from finding out about facilities to registration and payment, as well as transport to sports meetings and tournaments. *Hauptschule* girls, especially from migrant families, receive less support in these respects than girls from a *Realschule* or *Gymnasium* (see Frohn, 2007, p. 112).

Contact and co-operation covers communicative and social competence as well as social networks. Many girls from the *Hauptschule* come from families in which sport is purely passive and there is a corresponding lack not only of models, but also of contact with active sports and even of partners for games and other joint pursuits. Girls from Muslim families may be further restricted in their range of contacts for sports, games and movement, inasmuch as their contacts are often confined to the family, and they may well also have to overcome additional barriers of language and cultural alienation.

In order to engage in sports at all, a girl must have a certain scope for leisure and recreation, as well as disposable free time. Studies have shown that, in comparison with boys, girls are disadvantaged in both respects (see, for example, Cornelissen et al. 2002, p. 143). *Hauptschule* girls – especially those from migrant families – often report that they have to perform household duties and look after younger siblings, and that they have no scope at all for leisure activities outside the family circle. Even within it there may be no space to which they can withdraw in order to relax physically and mentally, nor may they even be aware that this might be necessary or understand how it might be achieved (e.g. through relaxation techniques).

So far as gender-related factors are concerned, gender role in sports contexts can be both restricting and (to some extent) liberating. Gender stereotypes applied to sports tend to be restrictive on both sexes, but the scope for girls to take part in boys' sports is greater than the other way round. Social disadvantage tends, however, to narrow the interpretation of gender role, and this is intensified in many migrant groups, where cultural and religious constructs may contrast and conflict with western models of womanhood, and whose ideal of how a girl should present herself in public may exclude certain types of sports apparel and therefore the sport itself.

Social bonding includes the “underlying right to communication and mobility” (Enders-Dragässer and Sellach 1999, p. 60). Like gender roles, it can be both burdensome and supportive. The family and household duties of young girls have already been mentioned, and Muslim girls in particular often experience restrictions in building up relations of their own with peers of either sex outside the family circle. They may also be restricted in their mobility especially in the public sphere. Participation in sports outside school may be thought to endanger a girl’s honour – and therefore that of her whole family – because of the probability of contact with the other sex.

All of these count as possible restrictions typical for girls of low educational achievement. To what extent they are actually present, and how girls cope with them, varies from case to case.

The third part of this paper now focuses on the question: what can be done about this state of affairs?

## **Improving access to PE and sports**

School PE or sports classes are, for various reasons, the most appropriate channel for improving the access of the group of girls in question to sport. In the first place it is only there that all girls can be reached; secondly the school context, in contrast to the home context, is open to direct intervention by public educational interests; and thirdly it offers scope for activities that would be difficult to realise outside school.

In order to determine what conditions might promote sports participation, the results of theoretical and empirical analyses will be complemented with conclusions from so-called good practice, in the form of interviews with seven teachers from *Hauptschulen* and *Sonderschulen* (special needs schools) who have had particular success – both in their teaching concept and its realisation – in integrating girls into sports activities. Although the setting in these cases was always a school class, the results may be largely extended to activities outside school, and only factors significant for both areas will be taken into consideration here.

Most important of all is the development of a positive attitude to one’s own body and to oneself as a whole person. However obvious this may seem, it can by no means be taken for granted among the girls from the *Hauptschule*, whose experience specifically in the school PE class may well have made them less, not more, sure of themselves. Both in and out of school, appropriate means must be taken to encourage the development of positive attitudes – not just among motivated sportspeople – to the physical side of the self.

Closely related with this is the use of PE and sports instruction as an opportunity for the creation of positive gender constructs. Girls in particular should

be encouraged to seek identity and enrichment in the sports context of their sense of being young women. In order to avoid gender stereotyping, the PE class (and extra-curricular sports) should also promote gender untypical activities, without being dogmatic about it. Teachers and trainers must be aware of their own role as models in this process. If girls can find help within this framework for their attempts to construct a viable gender model for themselves, it will be a good deal easier for them to come to terms with their own developing physicality.

The incorporation of these two mental or attitudinal elements into PE and sports instruction is largely a question of creating and structuring appropriate concepts; but it also depends on the existence of a framework in which these can be implemented and on the person of the instructor or trainer.

Confidence in one's own abilities is an essential part of any sports-related sense of self. So girls in the *Hauptschule* must be given tasks and exercises they can master, even with little prior experience and limited physical gifts: only in this way will they be able to feel the scope and power of their own bodies. That means extending the concept of sports well beyond that of traditional games and exercises, and qualifying success in other terms than quantifiable competitive achievement.

It is especially important to introduce the target group of poorly educated girls to the range and variety of PE and sports culture, much of which will probably be unfamiliar to them. Here the openness of young people to new forms and structures can be used positively. Their experience of school sports will generally be restricted to mainstream games like football, volleyball and basketball and traditional PE exercises like gymnastics and athletics. Modern dance forms like hiphop, streetdance and video clip dancing, fitness exercises like aerobics, rope skipping, etc., perception and relaxation-oriented forms of movement like yoga and t'ai chi, and circus as well as martial arts (acrobatics, juggling, judo, etc.) will probably be new to them – at least as exercises they can do themselves.

Because girls in this situation often lack confidence in the performance of physical exercises – above all in front of their peers – the reinforcement of social bonds is very important. Trust in the peer group can help enormously when it comes to performing new tasks. This presumes readiness to articulate group problems and openly seek solutions to damaging or hurtful behaviour.

Closely connected with this is a positive, supportive atmosphere that cultivates respect as well as friendly forms of interaction and mutual trust. If this is present among the girls, and between them and their teacher or trainer, they will be less likely to reject the sports or exercise material offered. Interviews with PE teachers have shown that social bonding and a good group

atmosphere are, for many girls otherwise indifferent to sports activities, essential prerequisites for participation.

Another factor that frequently improves participation is the opportunity to choose and determine for oneself what exercises or sports are done. Experience both in school PE classes and individually structured projects shows that girls are more willing to co-operate and participate in activities if they feel their own wishes and interests have been taken into account. Room must therefore be made for group input. It cannot, however, be presumed that the girls already possess the necessary communicative and negotiating abilities to put forward their own point of view. Here, too, they will often need support, especially if they have been brought up in a culture of hierarchical gender roles where women are not encouraged to voice their wishes directly.

Personal openness and involvement of the teacher or trainer towards the girls in the PE class or sports group is also of inestimable value. It is very important to communicate continually, especially with the quiet and withdrawn girls in the group, so that they realise that their needs and wishes are taken seriously, and that they have something to contribute to the common activities. In the absence of a positive approach by the person in charge, it will be easier for such girls to withdraw completely. Women teachers have the advantage of the same-sex role model and are at the same time the girls' natural addressees for girl-specific topics and questions. The experience of the teachers interviewed also shows that the motivation of Muslim girls is heightened by having a teacher or trainer from their own cultural or ethnic background. This can, however, lead to problems later on, if that particular person (for whatever reason) is separated from the group: the girls' motivation may then break down altogether.

As well as the person of the teacher, the institution providing sports and PE activities plays a significant role. Where there is a positive, proactive attitude towards girls' sports, this will inevitably foster increased participation. Here too, therefore, efforts must be redoubled to convince both the institutions and the girls concerned that sports activities for them are both possible and worthwhile.

## **Conclusion**

The analysis of the individual freedom of decision and action as well as the restrictions for girls of low educational achievement provide an indication of why these girls are so clearly under-represented in sports activities. Besides, it serves as a basis for reflection on how conditions inside and outside school can compensate for some of the restrictions of socialisation. The given factors clarify that isolated arrangements are ineffective and therefore

concepts at various levels can enable a better access of girls to sports activities. The success in the good practice projects shows that *Hauptschülerinnen* do not generally express less interest concerning physical activities than other groups of young people, but special efforts and concepts are needed to reach those girls and to support their involvement in sports.

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## Reasons why girls refuse to take part in sport

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Various studies (Eichler, 1983; Köppe and Warsitz, 1989; Rost, 1994; Wydra and Förster, 2000; Wehner, 2005; Wolters & Gebken, 2005; Frohn, 2007) have focused on the phenomenon of the sport refusal, seeking to identify why some people reject sport, an activity in principle open to everyone and inherently attractive to all. The factors put forward to explain the refusal to take part in sport include age, socio-economic situation, sex, immigration and, in addition, a negative (parental) attitude towards sports and a low level of education. The focus of this contribution is on the sport behaviour of people who are exposed to those factors conducive to fostering a rejection of sport. It highlights the various influences – from parents and the girls' immediate environment – which come into play in their rejection of sport, and looks in particular at their "sport identity". A number of interviews focusing on specific problems were carried out in an attempt to understand the negative attitude these girls had towards sport. The prime objective of this paper is to identify the factors inherent in the sport system prompting girls to reject sport; these include not only a lack of encouragement from family members and the way the education system can influence girls' attitudes to sport, but also the perception of the female body in sport situations. Taking these factors on board could help in developing a form of physical education which is "subject-centred", i.e. tailored to the particular needs of the target audience.

From the perspective of developmental psychology, at age 15 many pupils are going through puberty, accompanied by changes in their perception of their body. Girls in the 15 to 16 age bracket have been identified as an at-risk group (Sack, 1980) for sport refusal; it is at this age that a person can become actively pro-sport or turned off by it. The challenges of growing up call for a new definition of the "subject-environment-relationship" (Baur, 1989). Biogenetic parameters, such as sexual maturation, have a major impact on the development of (body) behaviour. Physical growth also leads to sensorimotor adjustments. Earlier expectations of the body are no longer compatible with one's new perception of the body. The body takes on a new appearance and gives rise to a feeling of "having this body" ("Körperhaben", cf. Plessner, 1975) rather than "being this body". The insecurity of this new situation leads to emotional delays and shyness (Baur, 1994). As shown by the studies on body biographies conducted by Baur (1994)

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and the observation of sport activities by Sack (1980) the level of sport refusal among 15- to 16-year-old girls is much higher than at any other age. Theoretical studies have demonstrated that sport refusal is a result of sport experiences which have left those concerned with the feeling that nothing positive has been gained. Miethling (2004) talks of the inherent competitiveness in a PE class and describes physical education classes as harmful to and violating pupils' body concept. This determines the way they react to future social sport situations (cf. Reichel, 2007). The results of the questionnaire carried out by Wehner (2005) show the existence of negative conceptions of their bodies in situations where they were observed by a male teacher (48%) or by male classmates in a variety of sport situations such as football (93%), athletics (89%) and gymnastics/dance (81%). These results should prompt reconsideration of mixed sports classes and the development of a teaching approach designed to strengthen girls' self-confidence in sports situations.

## **Theoretical background**

The transformation and redefinition of parental relations and the new importance of the peer group give rise to new social rules and norms in the context of a new group style (Hurrelmann, 1985). Pupils of this age are seeking to cope with questions of where they are heading in life and are extremely interested in developing the "ego identity" (Erikson, 1968). On the one hand, Bourdieu (1993) states: "in the absence of any other defining criterion, the body is the sole asset young people have", but on the other, the body undergoes significant changes at a young age. Baur (1994) describes the body as an important means of constructing identity and refers to age 13 to 19 as a real time of crisis. The questions frequently asked by children and teenagers at this age are: "Who am I?" and "Who will I be?" and such questions are primarily prompted by physical changes. This phase is regarded as one which is highly sensitive to environmental influences on the formation of gender identity. Epidemiological studies in female anorexia show the development of the disorder from age 13, which is closely linked to pubescence and coming to terms with the role associated with being female in society. Simone de Beauvoir proclaimed "on ne naît pas femme: on le devient" (one is not born a woman: one becomes one) (1949), and it is therefore still highly relevant to focus attention on the role of women in sport. Women tend to position themselves in society in response to the biological and physical changes they undergo.

Austrian surveys on the sport behaviour of the Austrian people show that 31.6% of men regularly take part in sport, as opposed to only 23.3% of women (Statistik Austria). This might be accounted for by circumstances such as babysitting, the lack of training partners and the lack of any positive self-esteem in sport situations. In the demographic questionnaire carried out by

Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu (2004) for the German Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, the authors point to the link between participation in sport and immigration. The results show that half of the girls (N=950) never partake in sports and only 28% participate in sport frequently or very frequently. These results are comparable with the German median of sport participation, but 45% of girls and young women would like to participate more in sport. This raises the crucial question of what keeps them away. The survey results also show that there are no significant differences linked to the national background of immigrants. The impact of gender, age, social status of the family and level of education on sport participation is more significant than national origin and religion (Boos-Nünning and Karakaşoğlu, 2004). Among the main factors identified by the authors as having a high impact on sport participation were having success-oriented parents and a high level of social support. Negative experiences linked to difficult family situations considerably reduce the level of sport participation. The finding that a positive perception of the body leads to greater sport participation is of considerable interest for the following qualitative interviews with girls who do not take part in sport. The research will examine if the body is viewed negatively and will seek to identify the reasons for this negative perception. The main questions are what environmental restrictions stop girls from taking part in sport and what factors promote sport participation.

Accordingly, the relevance of this contribution can be seen in the following question: Do sport situations in which the body is experienced in different ways have an effect on the construction of identity and to what extent are these experiences, which may also be discriminatory, responsible for body repression? Do earlier experiences with body and sport, which can be examined as a sports biography or body biography, have an impact on building a "sport identity" by the person (of either sex) concerned?

Bette (2005) identifies the body as a carrier of information which can be used to indicate membership of a particular group. The group style of sportspeople embodies strength, body awareness, a "healthy lifestyle", specific brands of sport clothes, coolness or at least an optimistic outlook. The "hypothesis of socialisation" in contrast to the "hypothesis of selection" gives an insight into the complexity of belonging to the world of sport (Conzelmann, 2008). It is not easy to identify the factors which influence an individual to become a sports person and it might therefore be worthwhile looking at those factors which have the opposite influence, in other words the factors discouraging people from partaking in sport.

## **Method**

The research is based on a holistic conception of development and personality, where the system (environment) and personality are understood in

an integrated way from a dynamic-interactive perspective (Conzelmann, 2001). To integrate the "concept of human being" in the systemic theory of development, Magnusson (1990, p. 196) states that "an individual develops and functions in a dynamic, continuous and reciprocal process of interaction with his or her environment" (Conzelmann, 2008, p. 52).

In order to reconstruct the body and sport biography, qualitative research methods such as the "problem-centred interview" are used in connection with the "Struktur-lege-Technik" analysis method of Groeben and Scheele (1988). The focus is placed on not only the description of experiences in sport situations and the negative effect of the environment on body perception, but also a retrospective look on the creation of a life-structuring "dogma" which precludes, in advance, participation in sport.

In support of this specific analysis method and interpretative procedures, the plurality of the sport biographies of girls in different socio-economic situations were examined in retrospect. Individual case studies allow a deeper insight into the girls' (non)-sport behaviour. The possibilities for formulating educational approaches are presented and will be discussed, following the theoretical model of Prange (2008) which focuses on the body/sport biography as a given factor that can be reconstructed and made available for didactic-methodological processes. The main objective is to examine the major influences of the environment on the reconstruction of body identity as pro- or anti-sport.

## **Results**

Summarising the data from the qualitative interviews of four girls who do not take part in sport, the biographies are as follows.

They all show a decrease of interest in sport at the age of 15 to 17 years. Low interest is the basis for refusal to take part in sports in later years. The determining environmental factors influencing attitude to sport are:

1. Parental variables: the following influences from parents (and teachers) on a negative body perception were cited: the mother was seen as an identification model for use of the body. In one family, the mother was rather overwhelming and anxious, the girl was discouraged by the comments made by her mother and grandmother. As she was a somewhat skinny girl, they wanted her to rest and avoid physical activity. The conditions of the second family were similar in terms of the restrictions conveyed. The mother and the school teacher drew attention to the girl's clumsiness. In the third interview the mother was very keen to encourage her daughter to do sport, but with the aim of losing weight; consequently, it was impossible to transfer a positive image of the body. In the last interview, the girl in question had previously been a keen and

successful swimmer until she had an injury, after which she lost the motivation to swim. Her original enthusiasm had been kindled by a male lifeguard, but she had little support from her parents and her mother, in particular, would tease her because of her muscular body.

2. Lack of enthusiasm from the father: as shown in surveys by Kleiner (1989) the father is an important figure in influencing girls' sport participation. None of the girls' fathers did anything to encourage them to take part in sport.
3. Lack of identification with the sport system: they did not feel that women had a place in sport. The girls could not identify with their PE teacher and found it hard to succeed in traditional games in PE classes such as volleyball or athletics, and also in dance and yoga classes, because of their lack of skills. The school system was unable to provide extra training and sport situations were not experienced in a positive way. Rather than finding sport an activity which made them feel involved, the girls' experience of sport was that it excluded them.

## **Conclusion**

By developing an appropriate teaching approach in PE classes the phenomenon of sport refusal can be reduced. To this end, specific teaching aims need to be formulated and incorporated in the training of PE teachers. Such teachers have a decisive impact on the body perception of their pupils and it is their duty to nurture a positive body perception among girls. In a group discussion carried out by Reichel (2008) with PE teachers, the perception of female bodybuilders was discussed and evaluated as non-feminine and rather unacceptable in comparison to muscled male bodies. If this replication of stereotypes remains firmly embedded in our students' minds, bringing about a change in the attitude to sport participation will be like Don Quixote's fight against windmills. As taking part in sport is still very much a male domain, the challenge facing PE teachers is how to convey bodily experiences in such a way that girls will be attracted to sport and see that they have a role to play. The most important thing to keep in mind is that PE teachers are an identification model for girls in their attitude to sport and that the relationship within the group and with the teacher has a decisive influence. A well-formulated teaching approach can influence body awareness in a very positive way. Studying these factors is of high interest and should lead to further research in this area.

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## Conclusion

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The articles above all looked at issues which are important in research on the subject of gender in sport. There follows a summary in more abstract terms of the ideas expressed therein.

An analysis of participation statistics shows that the assumption that women and girls do less sport than men and boys is not universally correct. In the European Union overall, according to a European Commission survey, there is indeed a significant difference between the sexes: 56% of women and girls practise a sport at least once a month, whereas the figure for men and boys is 65%. Taking the countries individually, however, this assumption is confirmed in only 17 out of 25. In the Scandinavian countries (Finland, Sweden and Denmark), the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Estonia, Malta and Lithuania, there is no significant difference between the sexes. "Gender-neutral inclusion" is referred to in those countries. In the other 17 countries, the degree to which women and girls are excluded varies. In southern Europe, in particular (Italy, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Cyprus), the difference between the sexes is very marked. Differentiated analysis of the figures, however, gives the impression that their exclusion is based on several factors, not just on gender. The inclusion of women and girls in sport is very much influenced by their social category, membership of an ethnic minority, age and education. In order to understand women's and girls' under-representation in sport, we need to take the same perspective as Judith Frohn in her explanation of the under-representation of secondary school girls in out-of-school sport.

An explanation is also needed for women's under-representation in posts of responsibility in sport, both at national and international level. A survey led by Ilse Hartmann-Tews showed that only 20% of posts of responsibility on national and international committees are held by women. And the posts concerned are mainly in socially lower status areas, such as non-competitive, girls' and women's, family, youth and disabled sport. "Important" positions of power, such as those in finance or public relations, are held by men. Carine Guérandel also showed that it was men who were in charge of the sports activities on offer in suburban neighbourhoods. Her study showed that women offered feminine activities (dancing) for girls and for "non-macho" boys or looked after the very youngest children. Their male counterparts

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considered them "outsiders", invaders of a male bastion. They had to face the hostility of men who viewed them with indifference or even scorn.

The female ice hockey players (interviewed by Kajsa Gilenstam and her research team) were in a situation of conflicting identity: on the one hand, they considered themselves to be inferior to male players, while on the other, they were distancing themselves from the stereotype of "feminine" women, regarding themselves as exceptions. They accepted conditions less favourable than those enjoyed by male ice hockey players, because they feared negative reactions. Thus structural and individual discrimination against women and girls was confirmed.

Women's exclusion from sport and sports administration is in fact incorrectly attributed to biological reasons and/or the lack of interest among women and girls. Thus one sport department official attempted to justify the fact that most sports facilities were specifically for boys (cf. Carine Guérandel). It should be borne in mind that it is social structures which shape and determine difference, and consequently sexual discrimination. In other words, differences are social constructs. And anything that can be constructed can be deconstructed. If there are "male and female territories" in sports administration (decision-taking, training, etc.), this perpetuates gender inequality. References to female and male activities restrict the options open to every individual. Differentiation according to gender leads to a particular view being taken of women's sport, and women themselves have already interiorised this (cf. Gilenstam et al). Social structures like this are conducive to activities which differentiate and reproduce stereotypes.

There are several areas of sport where gender-based discrimination occurs. Equality between the sexes is a long way away. But it is not only gender which gives rise to inequality. If people's perception is to be changed, it is important for a part to be played by educators (teachers, trainers) sensitive to the issue of the social construct of gender differences, as also shown by Isolde Reichel. Everyone with educational responsibility needs to be capable of recognising sexual stereotypes and deconstructing the differences. A change in social structures is necessary, together with a change in the mindset of a society which all too often restricts individual expression and the mixed nature of activities.

## **Chapter 3**

### **Social deficiencies and difficulties: what sports facilities are needed?**



## Introduction

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The definition of sport put forward by the Council of Europe in the 1992 European Sports Charter and its revised version of 2001, emphasises the diversity of sport, spanning the whole range of physical activities designed to achieve mental well-being and physical fitness, to socialise participants and to provide competition: "Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels".<sup>45</sup> Thus defined, sport encompasses a wide range of disciplines, practical arrangements (for leisure, fitness or competition), purposes and practitioners. In this context, sport has a kind of universality, bringing together people of every possible skin colour, age and shape. It is this diversity which makes us think that sport remains capable of embracing and easily integrating all individuals, irrespective of their individual features and dissimilarities. Viewed from this angle, sport is an instrument which has the backing of numerous institutions (clubs, federations, authorities) and many facilities appropriate to the needs and characteristics of specific groups. This instrumentalisation, in the same way as in the case of ordinary sport for persons with no disabilities, was long restricted to therapeutic aims, but is now intended to serve various objectives and values, such as health, leisure, competition, mutual assistance and socialisation. Beware, however, of the predominance of an idealistic, and almost systematic and automatic, association of sport with integration. Many politicians and people in positions of authority sing the praises of sport, and especially its capacity to integrate persons who are marginalised. Associating itself with such thoughts, the European Commission's "White Paper on Sport" calls for the use of "the potential of sport for social inclusion, integration and equal opportunities"<sup>46</sup> and extols the virtues of sport on the basis of ideas claimed to be those of Pierre de Coubertin: "Sport... makes an important contribution to the European Union's strategic objectives of solidarity and prosperity. [...] It generates important values such as team spirit, solidarity, tolerance and fair play, contributing to personal development and fulfilment".<sup>47</sup> Pierre de Coubertin, however, had hit a more sceptical note, writing in October 1894 in a description of "The character of

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45. Council of Europe, *European Sports Charter*, revised edition, Article 2 (1.a), 2001.

46. European Commission, "White Paper on Sport", Brussels, 2007, p. 8.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

our enterprise" that the action of athletics "is beneficial or harmful according to the way in which it is handled and the direction it is given. Athletics can arouse the noblest passions as well as the vilest; it can develop disinterest and the feeling of honour as well as the love of gain; it can be chivalrous or corrupt, virile or bestial; it can be used to consolidate peace as well as to prepare war".<sup>48</sup> In this sense, he showed a more detached, and probably more realistic, attitude to the virtues of sport. From this viewpoint, sport constitutes an instrument capable of being used as much for good as for evil. Depending on the use to which it is put, it can become a means of inclusion or exclusion.

By illustrating and analysing sport's role in policies and arrangements devised to help marginalised groups, the articles below make a helpful contribution to our understanding of the factors and contexts which make sport an instrument truly serving the desired purposes, which include social integration and inclusion.

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48. Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympic Games, writing in the *Bulletin du Comité international des Jeux olympiques*, No. 2, p. 1 (not published in English at the time).

## **Sport in the welfare system. Sport courses for persons in receipt of the minimum income benefit: between supervision of compliance and support for negotiation relating to identity**

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### **How can someone involved in sport be on welfare? A contradictory discrimination**

Publicly-financed sport courses are offered in France, for integration purposes, to persons in receipt of the minimum income benefit (*revenu minimum d'insertion* – RMI).<sup>50</sup> This field of research might be regarded as one where positive discrimination is practised in respect of access to sport, if the approach taken were heuristic. But the media spotlight placed on certain terms sometimes entails a risk for scientific endeavour, so great is the media capacity for semantic inflation. Hence a minimum degree of axiological neutrality is required in respect of the word “discrimination”. An etymological investigation is illuminating in this respect: the Latin term *discriminatio* means separation. Whether it is positive or negative, discrimination may thus be viewed firstly in terms of social categorisation. In the first meaning of the term, the principle of discrimination is itself applied in a society which classifies and categorises its members. In practical terms, what is involved is the inclusion or exclusion of an individual in or from a category on the basis of criteria which vary, depending on which of the many systems of categorisation is applied. Thus it is already an act of discrimination to describe an individual as an

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50. Introduced in 1988, the RMI is a benefit providing a minimum income to the poorest people. It is paid at a rate of approximately €400 per month and is accompanied by individual support measures with a view to employment. The two aspects are covered in an “integration contract” between the beneficiary and the state. The former enjoys the right to a minimum income, on condition that he or she takes the requisite action with a view to integration into the world of work. In 2009, a benefit known as the RSA (*revenu de solidarité active* – active solidarity income) is to replace the RMI and all the minimum income provisions specific to certain groups (single parents, persons with disabilities, etc.). It is a measure intended to provide an incentive to work, allowing in particular the supplementing of low income from work under uncertain employment contracts, whereas receipt of the RMI and the exercise of an occupational activity (however limited) were incompatible.



athlete, for the way in which we perceive that person and for how his or her acts fit in with our concept of sport and with what we expect of an athlete. Like sport, the RMI may be regarded as the basis for a social category necessitating discrimination. Certain conditions must be met in order to be placed in such a category, which brings with it rights, duties and a role which must be maintained in order to remain within the category. We can understand, if we view the matter from this angle, that discrimination, whether positive or negative, gives rise to certain behaviours and ultimately has an impact on social reality. In other words, subjecting the category of placement to discriminatory criteria helps to forge the reality of individual conduct. To be placed in the "athlete" or "beneficiary" category, a person needs to adapt his or her behaviour to that expected in those categories.

If we apply this approach to our field of research (sport courses for RMI beneficiaries), a major contradiction is revealed. How can discrimination in accordance with the principle of classification as a beneficiary be compatible with discrimination based on the principle of classification as an athlete? To put this differently, what concept of sport underlies its role in the welfare assistance relationship? How does this concept make sport a category for developing the individual in a manner convergent with the RMI category? More clearly, what political philosophy is hidden behind the apparent positive discrimination in respect of access to sport? We would like to put to the test the hypothesis that the sport on offer to RMI beneficiaries is designed and presented as a contractual activity during which a commitment is required both to oneself and to others, for the position of the beneficiary is characterised precisely by an imbalance between rights and duties. Physical involvement in a sport practised on a contractual basis plays a compensatory role, a kind of reminder of the rules for individuals implicitly suspected of complacently benefiting from the welfare system. We shall see that recent developments in social policy, particularly a return to the principle of conditionality and contractualisation, confirm this requirement for the beneficiary to make a commitment. Furthermore, observations made on the ground by a participant have confirmed this form of instrumentalisation of the individual's body and private life in a context reminiscent of Foucault's discipline-based approach.

## **Sport in the welfare system: a paradox!**

At first, the inclusion of sport in the welfare relationship between the state and the recipient of welfare seems paradoxical in the light of the initial purposes of welfare, which is historically intended to meet the needs of those acknowledged to be unfit to earn a living by physical means. The body is indeed central to what Castel describes as welfare for those who cannot help themselves. He makes a distinction between assistance for those in need of succour and assistance for those with employment problems (Castel, 1995,

p. 30). The former is subject to recognition of a physical disability preventing an individual from achieving self-sufficiency. Although such recognition is never complete, and constant suspicion prevails, this group throws up only "technical" problems, not issues of principle, insofar as it does not call social organisation into question. In contrast, the population of able-bodied poor not in work raises the "social question" in an acute manner. Castel says that "the 'social question' may be characterised as a concern about a society's ability to maintain its own cohesion" (Castel, 1995, p. 29). This concern is centred on the able-bodied poor person who personifies the "social question", and who cannot benefit from the arrangements made to help those exempted from the requirement to work. "Unable to work as is required of him, he also tends to be excluded from the group qualifying for assistance" (Castel, 1995, p. 30). The inclusion of able-bodied persons in the group qualifying for welfare intended for those who cannot help themselves would thus seem to pose a challenge to social organisation, and ultimately to represent a departure from the consensus on which social cohesion is based.

Thus welfare is historically based on this condition of physical fitness. How then, taking this historical matrix further, can we explain the inclusion of sport in this welfare relationship? In other words, how are we to untangle the paradox of the involvement of individuals' bodies, through sporting activities, in the welfare relationship, when that relationship seems to be conditional on, and even defined by, physical unfitness? Should we quite simply regard this as an attempt to rectify physical problems and turn unfitness into fitness?

This theory does not hold water, if we consider the new departure from the traditional approach represented by the introduction of the RMI in 1988. The socialist government, facing an urgent situation, decided to leave behind this logic of requiring something to be provided in return (Burgi, 2006), so as to ensure that every person, physically fit or unfit, has what he or she needs to live on. Long-term unemployment on a huge scale, combined with a blurring of the boundaries dividing those with work from those without, encouraged policy makers to reverse the burden of proof. The individual who is out of work is no longer asked to demonstrate a willingness to work, for it is now the community which has to guarantee the right to a subsistence income. But while a recognition of overall determinants underlies this reform, the result will be greater suspicion about beneficiaries' complacency. This suspicion drew strength from the fact that the RMI, designed as a temporary safety net, has turned into a permanent instrument for combating poverty. Consequently, the logic of something having to be provided in return has been revived, with increasingly stringent rules being applied to the RMI. This is a broadbrush conclusion, the situation varying in the departments, to which social policy matters have been devolved. But on a national scale, Burgi unhesitatingly asserts that the RMI is no longer strictly speaking an

entitlement, because the Constitutional Council has defined it as a welfare benefit paid to ensure the necessary national solidarity. Thus he describes it as being based on "a simple safety clause, i.e. providing the minimum amount needed to live on, a favour granted to the most disadvantaged by a society no longer collectively acknowledging any real obligation to them" (Burgi, 2006, p. 67).

It was necessary to examine this context and this dynamic in order to understand that the sport on offer to RMI beneficiaries has to be interpreted, irrespective of the impressions commonly shared, as a space made available to them to carry out their duties as assisted persons, rather than to receive their entitlements. It is designed as a step towards integration, part of an integration contract, acting as a counterweight to the income received and thereby enabling the balance between rights and duties to be restored.

### **Sport as a contractual activity**

The contract is directly linked to this counterweight logic. The reciprocal agreement that it entails is between two parties (the state and the beneficiary), both of which have a set of rights and duties. The state has a duty to ensure the beneficiary's right to the minimum income, in return for which he or she has to take on the duty of moving towards reintegration. However, when the RMI system was introduced, the payment of the benefit was detached from the obligation to move towards reintegration in order to avoid paying for lifelong exclusion. The contract thus has a participatory purpose. Subsequently, economic pragmatism severely undermined the humanist foundations of the reform. "Responsibility for unemployment is something now held against the jobless people suspected of a complacent role in the welfare system; the moral code of rights and duties has gained the upper hand, and the counterweight has returned to prominence since 1 January 2004, the date on which responsibility for the RMI was devolved" (Burgi, 2006, p. 69). The law of 2004 opened the way for interpretation at local level of the reform, with some interpretations giving rise to suspect applications of the system. In such cases, the contract again becomes a protector of the logic of the counterweight, bolstering the impression that the beneficiary is taking advantage.

Again, we need to look at this context before we define sport's place in the RMI system, looking beyond the benevolent thoughts of sport course designers and staff. This is not really enough, however, and empirical observation is needed as well. Does this contractual (or counterweight) logic extend to such sport courses?

The contractual relationship seems to underlie such courses, with every participant being asked, from the outset, to agree to obey the rules of the asso-

ciation which is organising their course. What is more, each participant undertakes to attend daily and to justify any absences by producing medical certificates. This contractual logic indicates that sport is more of an area for the fulfilment of the beneficiary's duties than an entitlement to leisure activities.

A more eloquent indication is the continuation of this contractual logic in the type of activities covered by the courses offered to beneficiaries. The disciplines concerned are almost all ones which require stamina, such as running, swimming and bodybuilding. These sports require a commitment by the person concerned to him or herself and to others. Those attending courses in the three disciplines are asked to set themselves specific, quantified targets in terms of time and/or distance. Their commitment is a formal one, of which they are regularly reminded by the persons running the courses. When such a commitment is fulfilled, the congratulations and clear recognition that follow are indications that a responsible individual has proven his or her value. The pride in their own achievements felt by those receiving "assistance through sport" also seems to show their support for this logic.

### **Sport as a paradigmatic tool of activation policies**

Activation policies, to which the active social state (as opposed to the welfare state) gives impetus, are intended to encourage individuals to take responsibility for themselves. The aim is to substitute for the unconditional rights typical of the traditional state – and which generated dependency, passivity and a lack of responsibility – a balance between rights and duties prompting more responsible behaviour. "Autonomy/responsibility could be the motto in this context" (Franssen, 2006). And that motto is reflected in the integration contract to which the minimum income is subject. The "active solidarity income" (RSA) currently at the test stage also encompasses this logic, being based on a financial incentive designed to encourage individuals to take responsibility for themselves. Thus individuals' decisions or calculations play a part in the collective interest and turn into responsible behaviour. Rights and duties are also the focus of Martin Hirsch's Green Paper on the planned reform of the RSA: "This support backs up a logic of rights and duties which culminates in jobless persons being expected to follow a logic of integration" (2008).

This activation logic is not exempt from an underlying suspicion that some beneficiaries are willing to accept their entitlements without taking on any duties, and many observers refer to a slide towards policies promoting the view that unemployment is natural and the unemployed need to be given a feeling of responsibility, overlooking the general factors determining unemployment (Pierru, 2005). Such activation policies clearly indicate a society's decision to reject passivity and inactivity, while idealising dynamism and initiative.

Thus when sport is introduced to the welfare relationship, the aim is to reactivate the individual and involve him or her in a social relationship based on reciprocity, in which the obligation to others again drives activity, even effort. We refer to effort because sport, apart from its influence on the individual's values, enables the body itself to be reactivated. In this respect, sport as an instrument of activation policies is paradigmatic of this tendency. Our society's difficulty in accepting inactivity and passivity is also manifested in a rejection of passive bodies. It is interesting to note in this context that courses intended to create new dynamism through sport are offered to RMI beneficiaries who have physical problems. Almost all those whom we met were affected by "contemporary pathologies" such as obesity, alcoholism or drug addiction. Sport as a means of social intervention is used both to treat divergence from the norm and to treat that physical divergence which reveals it, or at least makes it more visible. The ultimate aim is to instil responsibility into individuals by making them responsible for their own bodies.

## **Colonisation of the private by the functional**

This requirement for physical involvement in the welfare relationship denotes a meeting between two worlds previously kept apart. Relations between the beneficiary and the state, taking material form in the social assistance system, belong to the functional world (Nicolas-Le Strat, 1998), a world of systems giving rise to a conforming identity, sometimes entailing devaluation. For its part, the body is the final refuge of individual autonomy, and belongs to the private world.

When an integration contract activates the individual through new physical dynamism, the functional world uses as an instrument the body, that last refuge of all things modern. In the days of Taylorism, the sphere of autonomy and privacy tended to be eroded by that of work, as the subjectivity of workers was regarded more as being counterproductive than as offering scope for beneficial involvement. The aim of offering sports activities to RMI beneficiaries certainly is to activate them through involvement, or even the autonomous acceptance of responsibility. Thus autonomy becomes a lever now used by the functional world to bring people into conformity, whether in the welfare relationship or in the world of work more generally. Private life, through the body and through encouragement to autonomy, is in a way colonised by the functional, blurring the difference between the functional and the private. "Indeed, how can such a duality (functional world/world of autonomy) be maintained when individual or collective initiative and a specific commitment become the new criteria for managing post-Fordist organisation? The question of autonomy now arises even within functional systems, where it is of central importance" (Nicolas-Le Strat, 1998, p. 16).

Described as a contractual activity, whereas commitment and responsibility for one's own doings are a necessary cross-cutting norm, sport both helps to bring into conformity welfare recipients (suspected of taking a complacent attitude to the assistance received) and plays a part in the process by which this norm is legitimised. The body is in practice brought into play in (by) a normative framework, thus tending to be brought into the movement. By offering the chance to take part in sport, the welfare system fulfils a socialising role through the body. Consequently, the autonomy within that body is no longer that private autonomy which sometimes bolsters the identity-based assignation of the functional world, but becomes an autonomy serving an activity in which the individual is asked to get involved.

## **Conclusion**

This logic of what Foucault called "disciplinarianisation" contains within it the paradox of a forced relationship which imposes autonomy, a central paradox for Foucault, for whom there can be no disciplinarianisation or constraint unless autonomy is achieved. This "biopower [...] is exercised by stimulating living beings, not by threatening them with repression" (Dostie, 1988, p. 221). This apparent paradox therefore leads us towards a qualification of this analysis. In the face of this strategy of establishment through sport seemingly applied to them, individuals obviously work out tactics for redefining the concept of sport put before them. They seek to reconcile themselves to this opportunity for sport offered to them, in other words to get along with this activity which has been made available, and to comply, but while making use of it to less obvious ends. Some participants, for instance, during interviews with us, said that they had agreed to participate in stamina-building sports in order to obtain access to golf, the only recreational activity on offer. Such use of sport as an instrument for integration is not very visible or audible, for it can only occur when those concerned appear to be obeying their instructions. It can be compared to a whisper redefining the prescribed ways of engaging in sport as a welfare beneficiary and, in more general terms, a user of the welfare system. For if, from the institutional viewpoint, only practice in accordance with the contract makes a good beneficiary, such conformity is sometimes simulated in order to cover up the beneficiaries' own more hedonistic reasoning. Thus there are alternative vernacular concepts of welfare assistance, on which light may be thrown by listening to what beneficiaries say about their sports activities.

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## **Italian sports policies and disability: a synoptic analysis**

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In the Italian context there is a large consensus about the role that sports activities might have in dealing with disabilities and a growing number of public and private organisations serve disabled people with goal-oriented sports-based projects. Active participation in sport is mechanically associated with positive outcomes for individuals with a disability with a specific emphasis posed on the non-medical function that sports participation might have in reducing the side effects of an infirmity. Moreover, sport is required to respond to a wide array of "tasks" encompassing the integration of disabled people within mainstream society, the education of young people with disabilities, the implementation of the Paralympic movement, and so on. Regardless of this large use, few investigations have been undertaken in order to have a better understanding of the main features concerning the sphere of sport and disability in Italy. Particularly, an analytical description of the field is a long way from being achieved, and a lack of academic and scientific scrutiny can be reported with particular regard to the social effects that direct involvement in a sport-based project can determine for a disabled person. Indeed, analysis of sport and disability have failed to address in sufficient depth the various social aspects emerging through the participation of disabled people in a variety of sport activities; analysts demonstrate little interest in examining the main qualities of disabled people's involvement and have failed to go into the main features of this fascinating issue.

In light of the previous arguments, a group of specific researches have been undertaken in order to:

- draw a synoptic analysis of the sphere of disability by re-using a certain number of studies among those carried out by the Italian National Institute of Statistics (ISTAT); this secondary analysis will offer the ground for a global understanding of disability in Italy;
- define a sociological framework aimed at going into the theme of disability; this sociological perspective will facilitate a deeper comprehension of this complex phenomenon and it is useful for understanding sports participation of people with a disability;

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- delineate a functional analysis of types of sports opportunities available to people with a disability and the main social issues related to this opportunity structure.

Before turning to the main parts of the paper, a few words are needed to provide a better specification of the research method adopted. Data collected come from a multi-methodological and multi-sources approach: particularly, secondary analysis research has been carried out in order to portray a global picture of disability in Italy. Statistics collected through well-designed national research have been re-used and adapted to the specific domain of this paper. Finally, in order to illustrate the main uses of sport in responding to disabled people's requests the paradigm of the functional analysis has been applied.

### **Disability at a glance: the Italian context**

According to the Italian National Institute of Statics (ISTAT) in Italy there are 1 641 000 disabled people aged between 4 and 64. In the view of the perspective adopted, a person with a permanent illness or injury causing a reduction of the use of the body (term used extensively) is considered as disabled. Particularly, individuals have to be considered as disabled when reporting:

- a high rate of difficulty in terms of mobility, and/or communication, and/or management of daily life;
- a disablement such as blindness or others;
- a reduction in terms of personal autonomy.

Generally speaking, it can be maintained that disabled people have an average level of social integration. Indeed, the analysis of data coming from national research (ISTAT, 2004a) informs us that 26.5% of individuals with a disability are employed, mainly in the private sector (56.1%), with a high rate of permanent and full-time jobs (82.3%). Furthermore, 57.3% declare that they hold a secondary school diploma as a minimum and 114 000 are enrolled in a school/university course with 18% of whom maintaining that they experience barriers (mainly physical such as risky stairs, small classrooms, etc.) that make it difficult to correctly and directly participate in all activities offered. From the opposite viewpoint, 43% have no educational/academic qualifications, or they have only an elementary diploma. Moreover lack of adequate economic sources, insufficient rates of social interactions, and difficulties in gaining access to social services (such as school) are also reported.

As concerns leisure time, it is worth noting that the main occupation is "watching/listening to television" with 96.9% of disabled people declaring

they do it more than one day per week. It is followed by "listening to music" (82%) and "reading books" (38.9%). Compared with the average rate of the Italian population, a low use of personal computers is reported (27.4% next to the 46.9% of the national mean) as well as high levels of sedentary behaviour, with 74.8% that declare they do not take part in physical and sports activities next to 30% of the national mean.

Over recent decades, the wide-ranging exclusion of disabled people from mainstream society has attracted growing attention in Italy. Many organisations have been established to respond to the needs emerging and a wide range of social programmes have been developed and implemented (ISTAT, 2004b). Regardless of the numerous differences characterising these organisations, they can be grouped as follows:

- *public organisations*: in this category local governments are particularly active with a large array of services supplied (such as residential care) and an important financial support (more than 5 billion invested);
- *social co-operatives*: the total number can be estimated at 7 363; 4 345 are categorised as type "A", offering social, educational and health-care services supplied to disadvantaged people (3.7% of whom are disabled); 2 419 belong to the type known as "B" (employment and training) and 46.3% of people served are disabled;
- *voluntary organisations*: they represent a consistent part with 21 021 units; however, the services distributed to disabled people are limited with 2.8% of the total amount of people served;
- *associations and foundations*: the first group counts 202 059 units, operating in many sectors; conversely, the second represents a small (3 003 units) but significant group of organisations that operate in fields such as fund raising and social promotion.

One of the primary aims of these organisations is to equalise opportunities and achieve full societal integration in mainstream society. Following these goals a broad array of programmes contributes to achieve an appropriate integration with actions aimed at inserting disabled people into the national labour market, reducing societal barriers, and including individuals in all spheres of society. In addition, diverse organisations work in terms of "functional ability" dealing with physical mobility, mental functions, biomedical conditions, and limits in the use of certain personal skills.

## **Sport and disability in Italy**

According to ISTAT (2004a), 74.8% of disabled people do not take part in any kind of sports activities. Taking into account the national trend, informing us that "only" 30% of the Italian population is sedentary, this

situation appears in all its negativity. This lack of systematic participation can be partly explained with the existence of diverse hindrances preventing correct access to the sports system. Indeed, a lack of adequate facilities and equipment along with shortages of sources (funds, human resources, etc.) and the high costs associated with direct participation are, *inter alia*, barriers experienced by disabled people interested in sport. Moreover, this limited participation can be further explained in terms of attitudes assumed by disabled people toward leisure activities. In fact, according to Mannell and Kleiber (1997) attitudes developed by people toward leisure activities are in a large part the results of social learning. More specifically they noted that beside a process of learning through leisure activities, there is a process by which people acquire values, norms, and attitudes effecting leisure choices. In a similar vein, this process influences choices made by a disabled person in the domain of leisure. Thus, it is arguable that within the Italian context, agents involved in the process of socialisation to leisure activities do not encourage disabled people to take an active part in sports occasions, driving them toward different choices. For instance, disabled children are not often invited to take part in physical activities in school where teachers do not set, by nature, the right condition to match their needs and invite them to take an active part in programmes proposed. As a consequence, disabled children are not introduced into sport, affecting negatively their future attitude and choices.

Recently, a set of "mini-policies" have been emerging engaged in reducing the abovementioned hindrances and promoting sports participation as a crucial part of disabled people's lives. In these terms, there are three main actors in the definitions of the sports policies for disabled people in Italy: the Italian National Paralympic Committee (CIP), the Minister of Solidarity, and local governments.

According to Law No. 189/2003, the CIP promotes, organises and coordinates sports activities for disabled people. It serves 3 626 athletes and 696 organisations; intellectual disabilities have a wider representation with 198 societies and 1 188 athletes. It is worth noting that there are high differences in terms of gender balance with female athletes that represent only 19% of the total amount. Specifically, the CIP makes efforts toward: the promotion of a positive image of disabled people; the enhancement of a deeper awareness about the role of sport in enhancing well-being; a process of emancipation; a more systematic participation of disabled people in sports occasions. The Italian National Paralympic Committee is funded both by public (with annual funds made by the government) and private (mainly sponsorship) funds.

Concerning the activities of the minister of solidarity and local governments, many difficulties can be found in trying to define a quantitative analysis.

Indeed, there is a lack of systematic collection of data concerning the public policies of intervention for disabled people, especially regarding the sports sector. Notwithstanding, by using a more qualitative approach, some considerations are available: sports participation is especially seen in terms of inclusion and medical efficacy. Thus, the minister along with local governments tries to foster participation by launching campaigns to enhance awareness about the importance of an active lifestyle. However, there is no direct involvement in providing sports opportunities: these services are entrusted to private and non-profit organisations that are mainly funded by public funds.

Regardless of activities carried out and the good outcomes achieved by certain programmes, there is no indication of an attempt to build a coherent approach. Rather, each interest group works independently with few points of contact with the others. This results in a reduction of the effects of programmes implemented due to the execution of disharmonic actions. However, effects of programmes implemented are further expanded by numerous sports associations engaged in operating with disabled people through a sport-based approach.

## **Understanding sport and disability: a sociological perspective**

By analysing the term “disability” in more detail, it can be maintained that it encompasses a variety of social and cultural meanings closely tied with the different dimensions that this social phenomenon intercepts. According to the perspective adopted in this paper, the concept disability includes three main dimensions: a personal dimension, regarding the behaviours adopted by a disabled person in reacting to an infirmity and the psychological consequences connected with this personal situation; a medical dimension, strictly connected with the illness and closely tied with a scientific approach defining disability as an infirmity; a social dimension, referring to the disability’s social construction originating from the social image that disabled people have in a given social setting. From a sociological point of view, the latter point has a crucial meaning. Indeed, disability and all its social significances are a social construction encompassing values, opinions and possibilities recognised to pertain to a disabled person as a member of a society. Thus, the interactions among disabled people, the members of a social community, and the social institutions, determine the social, economical and cultural status of a disabled person by influencing opportunities, advantages/disadvantages, and levels of equality/inequality. In a similar vein, by analysing the disability’s social significance with a socio-diachronic perspective, it can be argued that, in the past, disability was judged as a sort of stigmatisation (Goffmann, 1963). Disabled people were the subject of discrimination with a high level of oppression and a lack of integration in society.

Over the last decades, this dramatic situation has been progressively overcome: the public's increasing awareness of the condition of disabled people – in combination with other circumstances such as the change of social policies, the equalisation of opportunities, the pursuit of a more integrated society – has positively influenced disabled people's social dimension. This results in a better integration in mainstream society and an improvement of disabled people's conditions. Furthermore, disability issues have acquired a political and policy importance with efforts made to minimise negative social effects of an infirmity. The pre-eminent response has been to develop a mixture of care and social welfare programmes. Thus, today a large number of organisations, both public and private, are engaged in programmes for disabled people spanning aspects like education, employment, leisure and social relationships. While many good practices can be reported along with significant outcomes, effects of these programmes are still limited. Indeed, organisations involved encounter high costs associated with the execution of effective action and, as a consequence, their results are insufficient and restricted with integration in main society only partially achieved.

In attempts to overcome these constraints governments and interest groups are forced to find innovative and, above all, cost-effective solutions, and sport has been pinpointed as a good alternative. Therefore sport for and with people with disabilities has gained considerable importance in recent years. This results in an evolution of the kind of sports activities available and an increase in the number of organisations that try to use sport to give an opportunity to deal with the negative consequences of an impairment. Nowadays public opinion is widespread, partially supported by a scientific platform, that by providing sport opportunity, disabled people gain in terms of positive image, social integration, and well-being. As a consequence, governments promote campaigns about the importance of an active lifestyle and provide many organisations with consistent financial support to be invested in the implementation of the participation of disabled people in sports occasions.

From a very theoretical standpoint, with particular regard to the Italian scenario, the involvement of disabled people in sports activities can be categorised in four main paradigms: professional paradigm, social paradigm, therapeutic paradigm, and leisure paradigm (Digennaro, 2008). The organising principle adopted for constructing these paradigms is the "rationale" nested in sports activities provided. This principle implies that a particular kind of activity is implemented on the basis of a specific aim (or more than one). Thus, the first paradigm encompasses any form of organised physical competition specifically intended for people with disabilities. Sport is adapted and accommodations are introduced to reduce hindrances due to an impairment. Under such a perspective a clear distinction between "disability sport" and "able-bodied sport" appears obvious, with the first closely related with

activities that the CIP implements in Italy and the second more tied with a sports model based on performance and basic functional ability.

Conversely, in the view of the social paradigm, the integration of people with disabilities is sought without distinction and limitations with disabled people involved and accepted at any level. Organisations working towards this perspective set diverse sports opportunities where demand for certain types of activities matches the motivation, needs, and abilities of disabled people and responds to the logic of the social engineering. Thus sport is seen as a means to positively influence diverse social aspects (values, rules, etc.) and work toward a more integrated society. In Italy non-Olympic federations known as "Entities for the promotion of sport" are the most active organisations in the field.

The third paradigm sees the use of sport as a non-medical tool to cope with disability. Sports participation is thought to be a part of the rehabilitative process. The main aim is to make it possible for a person with an impairment to carry out the routine tasks of everyday life or to be able to use certain skills. Furthermore, the treatment is expected to reduce medical complications, avoid rehospitalisation and decrease hours of required attendant care.

Finally, the leisure paradigm is characterised by a low level of institutionalisation and a focus on the recreational dimension of participation. People seek gratification and good times through participating. Regardless of the large variety of sports activities available, according to ISTAT's data already mentioned, generally speaking participation is quite low. Indeed, interests and participation seem to be attracted by other leisure activities such as "listening to music" and "watching television". These type of interests can be categorised as "indoor leisure interests" and it is arguable that they attract disabled people's attention for the effortlessness of their availability and, as discussed above, the type of socialisation they have received.

To sum up, these paradigms represent models of practice characterising the involvement of people with disabilities in sports occasions. They have to be considered as ideal types: they do not mirror exactly all the different dimensions available, rather they highlight the prominent aim sought in the definition of a sports activity. The intention of this proposal is to contribute the ongoing debates about participation of people with disabilities in sport and partially describe the operative models belonging to organisations engaged in the field. Finally, following our prior discussion regarding the negligence in addressing in sufficient depth the various social aspects emerging about the participation of disabled people in sport we want this to represent a first effort to fill the claimed gap concerning this matter.

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# **Integration through sport of people with intellectual disabilities in Germany: impact and prospects for improvement**

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The definition of intellectual disability varies widely. Disability is not a purely objective concept. It depends on each person's viewpoint. As a result, each individual focuses on one aspect, and when a definition is attempted, this personal point of view influences interaction with those who have intellectual disabilities. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the terms used for this group of people and the definition of intellectual disability have changed several times in Germany.<sup>53</sup>

Within the special education system for pupils with serious learning difficulties, there has been a discussion lasting many years as to whether it makes sense to label and categorise children and teenagers as mentally disabled or as people suffering from severe multiple disabilities. Disability is not an inherent characteristic of the individual. It is society that defines the norm and its expectations of each of us, and this determines which of us are regarded and categorised as disabled. It is thus in terms of prevailing standards that people may be considered to have intellectual disabilities (and suffer from the accompanying stigmatisation and exclusion).

Various (individual and social) factors interact to provide a full picture of what is interpreted as intellectual disability (Speck, 2005). Whatever discussions may take place, people with mental disabilities are always guided by others, and always suffer discrimination in Germany. As children and teenagers, most of them are sent to special schools. Under 3% of children with intellectual disabilities receive an education which enables them to alternate work and study. Then, when they enter the labour market, they work in sheltered workshops because they find it difficult to integrate.

Similarly, people with intellectual disabilities are rarely seen to be active in public life, and their social involvement is very much restricted. Drawing a comparison with the rest of the German population, where over half of all children are members of a sports club, we find that the estimated number of people with intellectual disabilities who are club members is far lower, the

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53. Speck et al. (2005) made a detailed examination of the problems inherent in any attempt to define intellectual disability.



reported figure varying from 2.5% to less than 10% (Kapustin and Kapustin-Laufer, 2009).

The families questioned during my survey (Reuter, 2009) confirmed the low level of integration into sporting groups, the reluctance of associations to accept children with intellectual disabilities and the lack of appropriate facilities for this population group.

## **The historical background**

The social integration of people with intellectual disabilities through sport has long been called for. Many obstacles stand in the way of those who wish to take part in organised sports activities. Among the reasons put forward for this situation by the people concerned in the context of several surveys (such as that conducted by Messent et al., 1999) are poor time management, incomprehensible presentation by institutions of the facilities offered, lack of information, financial problems, reduced mobility and, especially in rural regions, lack of opportunities to engage in sport.

Over the past 10 years, the German National Paralympic Committee has undergone structural changes, and efforts have been made to improve the organisation of sport for people with intellectual disabilities. But the activities of such people are still marginal to that body's main work. The continuing lack of specialised coaches and the difficulty encountered in setting up new sports groups and obtaining the co-operation of clubs are matters of great concern. The sporting provision recently made in the context of sheltered workshops is not in line with the level of workers' interest in sport. Successful integration into ordinary sports clubs is rare, and seems to depend mainly on the commitment of the individuals advocating participation by the target group.

Academic studies on the subject of sport reveal a whole range of prejudices about the motor capacities, abilities and intellectual and social skills of people with intellectual disabilities in the context of organised sport. Such people rarely have a complete basis in terms of physical education. A deficit in terms of sporting skills and inadequate basic education during their childhood (as described by Anneken and Schüle (2004) in relation to special schools) may explain the lack of desire and motivation for active participation in organised sport of some people with intellectual disabilities. Most of the support that they enjoy is intellectual, intended to compensate for their deficits.

A lack of physical experience and movement explains the absence of emotion and positive feelings about sport and physical activity. Lack of interest in physical exercise and sport could prove a fundamental obstacle to group

participation. Personal experience and the associated negative or positive emotions are crucial to people's subjective assessment of such obstacles as the journey to the club, lack of time, fear of being unable to take part independently and apprehension about integration into a new group.

## **Pilot project**

Some people wonder whether this situation might change if people with intellectual disabilities and their families felt that they had sufficient support and received assistance when seeking opportunities for integration in an association close to their homes. Another way of getting the individuals concerned and their families participating is based on the concept of "networked health education at primary school age".

Under this approach, a central role is played by the promotion of group physical exercise. This fosters self-efficacy in social situations and shows sport and physical education as a happy, useful and liberating way of occupying leisure time. Consequently, 36 lessons were scheduled to provide pupils with experience likely to increase their self-efficacy and to encourage them to accept their own bodies more readily and take control of their own lives. Growing capacity to take action and social skills are thought to contribute to a healthy lifestyle and to be conducive to future participation in organised sport.

It is possible in the school or day-care context for the family and school environments to be drawn together and interlinked during project meetings. This shared space can be used for active learning, exchanging experiences, looking for solutions to the problems of everyday life and socialising. The concept of "networked health education at primary school age" is one which was devised by the Gmünder ErsatzKasse (GEK). It was put into practice and evaluated between September 2007 and July 2008 during a pilot project involving two early-years classes at an ordinary primary school and 12 pupils from a special school.

Once a week, the children attending day care had an extra physical education session involving games, physical and practical experience and independent creative activities within the group. At the five project meetings held during the school year, the group games were explained to the parents and to the children and their brothers and sisters, as were matters relating to the health of the children concerned. The final meeting took place in the presence of the ordinary school pupils and their parents.

The aim of this research was to ascertain:

- whether this concept was practicable and could be successful in a group of children with intellectual disabilities;

- whether any changes in social, emotional, motivational and motor terms had been observed;
- whether an exchange of experiences had taken place between the families about leisure time management; and
- whether some of the children and their parents might consider joining a sports club.

The aims pursued through the empowerment approach, such as changes in attitudes and the drawing-up of basic rules for a healthier lifestyle, are vague and difficult to specify in a social structure shaped by conditions. Evaluation of this kind of activity is problematic, especially because the objectives set tend to be for the long term (see, for instance, Hager, Patry and Brezing, 2000). Positive results achieved and statements made about the actual influence of the intervention, to the exclusion of all other factors, can only be provisional. In the sphere of childhood research, some writers have discussed the benefits and drawbacks of interpreting what the children said. Data acquisition could prove difficult, if not impossible, particularly in respect of the children with intellectual disabilities, whose statements have to be viewed critically.

It is possible to use process-oriented observation. Action research allows a mixture of qualitative and quantitative methods.

Data were collected in accordance with protocols for the observation of children's social conduct during classes at which physical movement was taught, as well as through short questionnaires relating to project meetings and other questionnaires (or discussions with the children using non-literary language) completed at the beginning and end of the pilot project. Questions were put about eating habits and leisure activities, as well as the children's well-being from the health point of view. Physiometric data were deliberately omitted.

## **Findings of the study**

Only 12 children from the 60 families invited to participate in the pilot project expressed an interest in doing so. This meant that the majority of families did not answer the questionnaire. The project organisers received support from one school, one children's day centre and one educational psychologist. The children in the project group were very dissimilar in terms not only of age, but also of levels of development in the motor, intellectual, social and communication spheres. Some of the children were very self-centred. Attendance at project meetings and lessons alike was assiduous. The average attendance rate was 3.58 out of 5 at project meetings and 32.46 out of 36 at lessons. All the lessons ran smoothly.

The children showed great interest and cheerfully performed the physical movements which were part of the lessons. The oldest among them sometimes felt that they lacked a challenge appropriate to their own level. The weakest children in the group were more frequently in need of personal attention and short breaks during the lessons. The free physical exercises enabled all the children to make creative use of the materials and equipment supplied. During these exercises, the weakest and strongest children alike were able to show their inventiveness and devise similar exercises on the same theme. A good many tasks required classmates to work together, a condition which was problematic for them initially.

As the school year went on, it became apparent in all project groups that the children were increasingly attempting to resolve conflicts themselves during lessons. At the start of the project, some of them found it extremely difficult to comply with the rules and agreements and to accept defeat. Gradually, the majority managed to overcome these difficulties. The problems of the early stages, when the group was being built up, were increasingly infrequent. The less popular children gradually became better integrated into their groups. The very nervous children from the special school group became braver and more confident as the school year went by.

Stories used to encourage relaxation and exercises designed to make children more aware of their bodies were eventually understood by the children with intellectual disabilities as well, and were increasingly accepted. As the school year went by, the children felt increasingly at ease with the relaxation exercises and had greater success in sharing their feelings and needs in exercises involving partners.

Discussions at project meetings were improved and geared to the target group's wishes as expressed by participants. Beforehand, none of the children had showed much imagination about what they wanted to experience.

The group exercise sessions organised at the beginning of each project meeting provided an opportunity for the children and their parents to get together and have fun. Parents and children learned some new games, using new equipment. Parents ventured to talk about their everyday problems at project meetings.

This information, some of it previously unknown, was regarded by parents and children as relevant to the future. They had known less at the start of the project, and parents from the special school attended project meetings more assiduously than those from the ordinary school. Parents said that they both wished and intended to make use of their new knowledge in their day-to-day family lives.

Group games organised at their own initiative by the children, those with disabilities and those without, during the final project meeting clearly reflected the integrating spirit of this initiative. The enthusiasm of the families which had taken part in the project was noteworthy, and many participants gave voice to this.

A uniformly positive effect on the children's social behaviour and capacity for action was noted over the school year. The children said that they had enjoyed themselves and learned something new about their bodies, as well as new games and new movements, and this was confirmed by their parents.

There does not seem to have been much effect on the children's leisure-time habits. The only positive change is that the children and their parents started to engage in sport together. But at the end of the project, the children were not spending any more of their leisure time on physical exercise than previously.

All the children with intellectual disabilities and 77.8% of their parents said that they had a number of new ideas for things to do in their spare time. But there had been no change in their desire to participate in group sport. The information collected before and after the project on the subject of health-related well-being, taken from replies to a standardised questionnaire (the KINDL questionnaire), revealed no major change. Following the project, the children were more aware of what was good for their health, and acted accordingly.

Of the parents, 83.3% recommended that the project be transferred to other schools, while 16.7% were in favour of a limited transfer. This pilot project provided real proof that health education at school or in the day centre can be successful with this target group. The desire to receive advice about everyday life, to make suggestions and to exchange experience was particularly prominent in this group.

The findings of the study are not a sufficient basis for general statements, because of the modest size of the sample and the heterogeneous nature of the participating group. What is more, as some of the children with intellectual disabilities had not understood the questions, they were unable to give accurate answers.

The fairly low level of interest among the families at the beginning of the project rose when more publicity was given to the project. The continuation of the project over a period of time meant that, through parents or children, other parents took an interest in the initiative and joined in.

A handbook could provide ideas and guidance to teachers and leaders less qualified in the sphere of sport and help them to run a similar project. After

this is published, it would be a good idea to conduct research into the effectiveness of the concept, this time using a much larger sample.

## **Conclusion**

Physical education and the teaching of physical movements enable the foundations to be laid for a lasting attachment to sport, provided that account is taken of individual capacities (Sowa, 2000). Local opportunities should be found enabling people to participate in group sport according to the skills acquired. It is the individual who should be the starting point for the planning of sports activities tailored to his or her strength, wishes, needs and capacities. Support may be necessary in certain cases, in the form of motivation, transport, funding, personal assistance or supervision during sport lessons. Such support, provided that it is based on dialogue, would not prevent a person with intellectual disabilities from making his or her own decisions. The person providing assistance, as a mediator and as the person in contact with coaches and other members of the sporting group, could also help to eliminate some of the reservations felt about people with intellectual disabilities. This approach could give the target group the opportunity to obtain permanent access to organised sports activities, it being borne in mind that individual sports such as swimming offer greater potential for integration than team sports. In many cases, it is impossible to integrate people suffering from intellectual disabilities with people who do not have such disabilities. It should also be remembered, however, that there are sports practised only by people with intellectual disabilities, an option which should be regarded as equally useful. Sowa mentions the right of people with intellectual disabilities to independence and self-determination in terms of their decision to engage in sport in an integrated group or in a group comprising only people with the same disability. Organised sports may help to provide psychological support for people with disabilities pursuing the way of life that they themselves have chosen, thus giving them a role in society.

Attempts to integrate a child from the Würzburg project group into a local sports club proved successful.

Assisted by a tutor, the boy has regularly attended a track and field club since September 2008. Since Christmas he has been attending the group without his tutor.

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# **The inclusion of children with a disability in out-of-school sports activities – An assessment of the Finnish programme<sup>54</sup>**

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The question of participation has brought the concepts of (social) integration, inclusion and exclusion into policy in the voluntary and public sectors. Sport projects that are heading towards wider participation of all citizens are legitimised by national government in terms of integrative potential of sport. This theme is also included in various memorandums and policy documents published by the Finnish Ministry of Education and its national adapted physical activity (APA) committee.

This paper focuses on inclusion in the youth sport context. Firstly, the adapted physical activity providers, both in the public and voluntary sectors are introduced. Next, the basic concepts of integration and inclusion, as well as the Finnish after-school sport programmes and their evaluation methods are explained. Results and conclusions focus on the traditional concept of APA service delivery and its role in inclusionary processes. Research goes hand in hand with my daily work as a development officer in disability sport. The primary purpose of this action research is to produce practical strategies and knowledge that is useful to people in their everyday lives.

## **APA and disability-specific services**

In Finland there are approximately 90 municipal adapted physical activity instructors whose basic duties are within the field of the traditional disability groups in terms of health and welfare. Also the disability sport organisations (DSOs) organise events and clubs for children with a disability. Each disability group has their own organisation. The philosophy of inclusion reached schools in the late 1990s. This was followed by parents' criticism of existing disability sports – and the diagnosis-based APA service delivery. DSOs started close co-operation to develop youth sport and an inclusion project started in 2002. As the philosophy of inclusion developed, a

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54. The after-school sport programmes evaluation report was published by the Likes research centre in 2007.

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unification process started within Finnish disability sports in 2007 and aimed at establishing a new umbrella organisation in 2009.

The Sports for All Children project was launched by the Finnish DSOs in 2002. The purpose was to offer families with a child with special needs new opportunities to be actively involved in physical activity. Inclusive ideas were adopted from the Australian Sports Commission and the Youth Sport Trust, in the United Kingdom. The project focused on training, education and events, where people of all abilities can meet. Local, rural and national sport providers were assisted to open their doors to persons with different abilities and offer consultation and information. The project, its learning process and outcomes, were evaluated during 2007-08. The evaluation revealed that there had been many concrete outcomes, such as events, education models and published resources. The evaluation also revealed ongoing inclusion processes at all levels of sports services. For example, the powerful youth sport provider, Young Finland Association, has shifted focus toward passive children or those otherwise out of reach of traditional sport services. Its "Discover Sports" club model assists local providers to open their doors to newcomers of sport by emphasising multi-skill activities and fun.

The project also brought the human rights perspective of people with disabilities to the sports agenda and enriched discussion of diversity issues in sports. Its wide network of enthusiastic trainers has served as a source for reflection and theory testing during the research process.

## **Main concepts: integration and inclusion**

Under a social model of disability the paradigm of disadvantage faced by people with disabilities is seen as a consequence of poor attitudes of regular or mainstream sport providers, or inappropriate structures and systems within sport, or environmental difficulties that cause access problems.

The traditional medical model, on the contrary, sees disability as a limitation or a problem of the individual. In the medical model, thinking programmes and services are provided to diagnose, prescribe, and (re)habilitate the individual rather than alter the environment (Kasser and Lytle, 2005). It emphasises the role of a medically trained expert. As a heritage of medicine and rehabilitation, the medical model is often dominant in APA practices and services.

The concept of integration is connected to the medical model (Oliver, 1996). The main criticism for integration comes from the disability movement, which claims that integration takes existing programmes for people without a disability and adds a new piece – the participation of people with a disability. Thus, integration may easily turn into assimilation. From a social model of disability point of view the traditional concept of integration fails to provide

adequate support for people with a disability in a regular setting. This is a result of a lack of acknowledgement that many settings are exclusive in the first instance. Medical paradigm policies and practices may lead to exclusion and/or separate services for the stigmatised (Downs, 2003). An inclusion paradigm, on the other hand, sees a contradiction between separate programmes for people with disabilities and social justice. Inclusive programmes are designed so that participation of people with a disability is one component of the whole programme and that disability-specific programmes are one of a number of options. Crucially, it should be viewed that no one option is more or less important than the other – since their importance is always context specific.

Seeing inclusion as an unending process of increasing participation and supporting diversity might be more productive than simply a discussion on organisation. For administrative purposes the process can also be described as a continuum of zero (non-existent services), through special and separate services, to integration and inclusion (Schleien et al., 1997). The target is to provide a service whereby each person is given an equal opportunity and the right to choose where, when and with whom they practise a sport of their choice. Whether it is providing separate services, such as disability sport with other people of similar functional ability, or open-for-all services with able-bodied peers, it should be up to the individual to choose. For educational purposes this philosophy has been named the “inclusion spectrum”, originally invented in the late 1990s by Ken Black and Pam Stevenson at the Youth Sport Trust, in the United Kingdom.

In this study inclusion is viewed from the social (or environmental) model of disability point of view that focuses on economic, social and physical barriers to participation. This has led me to investigate not only physical factors like accessibility, but also social, economic, psychological, functional and administrative factors. Admitting the fact that even the concept of inclusion is questionable and disputable, and often mixed up with the concept of integration, the “open-for-all” (sports) concept is used most often in Finnish sports.

## **The case: after-school sport – programme evaluation**

Local after-school sports programmes (2004-07) were part of the wider national youth sport programme run by the ministry and provinces along with the voluntary sector, namely the Young Finland Association and regional sport organisations. Their purpose was to find new and innovative ways to organise after-school sports and physical activity for young people. Financial allocations were addressed each year to local projects that developed physical activities for children 10-16 years of age. Programmes were organised locally by municipalities, sports clubs and voluntary organisations. The main target group was children who were physically inactive, who did little sport

and physical activity and children who were not yet actively involved in sports clubs. For example, young people with special needs were mentioned in this context. Prevention of exclusion was emphasised in the guidelines.

An overall evaluation of local after-school sport programmes was carried out by the Likes research centre from the outset of the project. Since the evaluation revealed an increase in local projects targeting children with special needs, I was recruited to evaluate the programmes from two viewpoints:

- to estimate and assess participation of children with special needs and local practices targeted for them; and
- to evaluate inclusive development.

Empowerment and stakeholder-based evaluation were chosen since there were multiple and unclear goals in local projects and an urgent need for an evaluation to find new and unforeseen views and questions. To ensure systematic gathering of data an evaluation framework was created about contexts, contents, activities, processes and impacts.

Field work started in 2005 by identifying and interviewing youth sport stakeholders. There were representatives from administration, national governing bodies of sports, practitioners of youth sport and families with a child with disabilities. Triangulation in data gathering was used because of fragmented truth, which varies in different contexts. Rich and multiple explanations were made possible by using participatory observations, interviews, official documents and discussions.

The data were gathered in four phases. Each phase followed undertakings of cycles of action and reflection. First, the key stakeholders in youth sport (17) were interviewed via e-mail to create the “value statements”. An index for inclusion for youth sports was created with ideas from Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow (2002). This index served both as a stimulus during interviews and a checklist for observations. It contains 67 statements describing inclusive youth sport and is divided into three parts: values and attitudes, practices and environment.

Written project documents from a total of 270 local projects which have taken place since 2004 were analysed to find out signs of inclusive and/or adapted physical activities. Three local projects were then chosen for closer inspection.

During the field study I stayed one week in each of three cities collecting data, observing activities and interviewing people. Families (6), leaders (6), partners (6) and administrative personnel (5) in regions, provinces and national organisations were interviewed, and 10 club activities were observed. The sampling was purposive, following the snowball effect. After the field

study, 19 extra telephone interviews were conducted with local project coordinators to confirm the findings and enrich understanding. Theme interviews were documented as narratives and then sent back to interviewees for double-checking. The main methods were analysis of narratives and content analysis.

## **Results**

More APA groups: During the year (2006-07), there were 15 separate APA groups organised by a special needs school or APA providers out of the total 87 projects. More than half of the projects (49) planned activities for children with special needs, and 39 reported success.

The APA activities varied from disability sports to multi-skill activities and play for those that required extra motor activities. One of the observed projects was a disability sports soccer group with approximately 30 participants from 10 to 26 years. Approximately two out of three of the participants had some kind of intellectual disability, whilst others had either a learning disorder or other form of handicap. One or two able-bodied sisters trained with the group. Despite the age differences and the large group size the activity was appraised by the interviewed family as safe and secure: "... it is so wonderful to be able to take part at one's own level".

Authentic sport symbols made families feel that they were part of famous sports: "We have a soccer shirt, shorts and socks from the real [soccer club] college, the same as the others [able-bodied athletes] also use."

The most significant increase in APA service delivery was in targeted groups of children, such as ones who were overweight or had other health problems, and migrant children and youths. Keys to success are co-operation of teachers, healthcare personnel and parents. Children were chosen by the professionals and individually invited to join the group. These groups were often described as the first step into the sports world.

Despite the general growing number of APA services, the project coordinators suspect that APA may have negative connotations: "It can be a shock for mum and dad if their child is taken into a separate APA group."

"There were plenty of clumsy or overweight children. Parents didn't seem enthusiastic. Were they afraid of the stigma?"

The low threshold principle comes near to inclusion. The low threshold principle in participation emphasises basic motor skills and play. It has spread widely among service providers to include passive children or those who might previously have been excluded from sports. Families see the non-competitive aspect of after-school sports clubs as important: "sport is fun

and it keeps you healthy. You can make nice friends, it lifts your mood and makes you feel good.”

Inclusive service delivery in after-school sports is about collaboration and co-operation, minimised competition, and fun. Activities are based on basic skills or games and play, offered equally for both sexes taking into consideration the children’s own opinions, and freedom to choose among a variety of activities. The price is low, access is easy and information openly spread. In some cases snacks or meals are served (at extra cost). Parents value the safe atmosphere and adult leader, who treats everybody as equal. There is a feeling of open collaboration and sharing. There are strategies and concrete tools to avoid bullying like the contract of club rules from the Young Finland Association, which is developed and signed together with the children.

Children with disabilities do not belong in the mainstream. The Discover Sports model has opened new routes to the newcomers, but still there are only few opportunities for children with disabilities to participate with their able-bodied age peers. Either they are considered too different for the organisers or the service providers have not even noticed their existence. “I don’t know if we can cope with these resources, for example, with blind people, although we can cope with people with lesser disabilities.”

Usually the children with disabilities are perceived to be in need of disability-specific activities in their separate group run by an APA specialist. “They have some activities at special needs schools, we are not needed.”

Families in the disability sport soccer group have earlier experiences of exclusion. These are reflected in defensive reactions and even self-exclusion: “I don’t understand how we can go to a sports club. If they are not willing to take [us], they can’t simply be forced to take on that responsibility...”

Inclusive “support for diversity” or special needs rhetoric flourishes in official documentation, but the reality is different. Planned activities for children with disabilities are quietly forgotten for many reasons such as financial problems, lack of leaders and assistants, bureaucracy and lack of co-operation between school personnel and the club leaders, non-existing APA networks and even not finding children with disabilities. “We don’t have them.”

### **Invisible inclusion**

In some cases inclusion just happens. I went to observe a local afternoon club in a small village, 36 kilometres from the city centre. The school had only two teachers and children between 7 and 13 years were taught in the unified classes. In the sports club I noticed a child with a learning and physical disability playing among her able-bodied friends. Careful not to

draw too much attention to this, I later asked the leader about her. The male leader found it natural to have the child with other local children since the activity was only to have fun with sports. In the telephone interview the female teacher suspected the long distance to the city centre to be the reason for this child not to have been put into a special needs school. Despite some challenges she had a clear vision of inclusion, and how it is beneficial for the whole school: "This season has taught us a lot, and I feel that we have learned from this child a lot."

In another city, a mother of a 12-year-old boy with a physical disability tells how the child, against specialist instruction, had been put in a local school. She is satisfied with the decision. The boy is included in local activities with schoolmates: "Friends are relevant since they know each other from early childhood."

## **Conclusion**

Despite inclusion philosophy there are still many special needs schools and classes in Finland. The special needs school separates children with disabilities from their age peers. Pupils from other schools are more likely not to be welcomed to the after-school activity. Bureaucracy dictates, for example, that the use of school cabs for after-school hobbies is usually not allowed. Children with greater support needs often use social services and daycare institutions, where sport is seen as therapy.

Invisible inclusion is a challenge to sport policy, politics and advocacy. One of the difficulties of inclusion "that just happens" is that it is invisible and, hence, very difficult to measure. Instead of counting "integrated" individuals, inclusion indexes and checklists for different contexts may appear useful not only for evaluation purposes, but also for improving understanding. During one interview with a local co-ordinator, using the index as a stimulus helped to articulate inclusion as an issue of participation for all: "We don't have racist cases. Maybe when we have a game against the [mentions the team with many players from diverse ethnic backgrounds] team as they have more ethnic players. Luckily we have rules which we can use... to tackle the question."

The concept of "having special needs" appeared ambiguous in the sports context. When transferred from the academic world of school to hobbies, it loses its (well) meaning of support and turns into a stigma and the idea of not belonging.

From the human rights point of view, access to sports is an equality issue. Can an APA serve as a stepping stone to sports? This becomes true only if there is willingness to change on both the participant and the club level.

The providers of adapted physical activity should become agents of change instead of gatekeepers of change (Downs, 2003) by acting as facilitators and consultants, or critical friends as in British schools (Booth and Ainscow, 2002), or case managers as in Australian sports. Local and rural consultants can assist both in networking and making the provision of services accessible and inclusive for all.

Inclusion presents a challenge for the entire community. Removing the barriers for participation requires being aware of the exclusive structures and taking conscious action. The first step is understanding and awareness. A rural officer, responsible for education, admitted that "until this we've been thinking that taking care of adapted physical education belongs to someone else, now we think that it belongs to us too."

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## Conclusion

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This chapter on social deficiencies and difficulties has offered a perfect illustration of the way in which sports activities are used as instruments. More specifically, it highlights the use of sports activities as an instrument of local and national policies intended to bring about a process of integration for persons facing various kinds of difficulty, whether social, economic or “organic”, meaning linked to functional deficiencies or impairments. In fact, sport seems to be a means, perhaps idealised to a greater or lesser extent, of meeting several clearly identified and predefined targets. A lot of work is done and arrangements are made to get individuals to make use of their physical capital, for therapeutic, educational, health or medical reasons, on the formal basis of care, assistance or reintegration projects. Simone Digennaro drew attention to Italy’s institutional organisation making access to sports activities easier for persons with disabilities. These activities have not only medical and rehabilitation functions, but also a social function. For his part, François Le Yondre, who is studying for a doctorate at the University of Rennes 2, looked at the importance of allowing for the physical dimension through physical and sporting activity in order to facilitate the socio-professional integration of persons in France in receipt of minimum income benefit (RMI). Such individuals’ integration is supported and monitored via courses in sports activities designed to recharge their batteries, emphasising their value and helping them to build themselves up psychologically and in terms of identity. These examples show us the use made of sport and the central role given to it in the policies pursued and the facilities provided to the target group.

Sport does indeed occupy a central position in many projects with social or humanitarian purposes and in activity and education projects: the involvement of individuals, the account taken of their physical potential, the use made of their physical capacity, all remain crucial to such projects. The underlying ideology is that sport is the ideal means by which beneficiaries can surpass themselves, get to know themselves better and improve their self-esteem, and build, or sometimes rebuild, their own character. In general terms, the purpose of all such projects remains the same: moving towards socialisation, personal emancipation, the shaping of personality, social cohesion, and integration; the aim is to confirm individuals’ autonomy and

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to build or strengthen the social network so that the person concerned can find a place in society and live alongside others.

These almost magic properties attributed to sport deserve to be called into question. As William Gasparini said, sport does not of itself have any values, but is a conduit for those values attributed to it. It does not possess an inherent "power to integrate". This does not mean that it cannot integrate, but that it can only do so if it is used and directed to this end. In practice, sport is a vehicle, a receptacle, the embodiment of individuals' values, expectations and representations. This is why the values attributed to sport may diverge from one practitioner to another, from one member of the support staff to another. Let us take as our example a trainer who organises and supervises watersports sessions for children with mental disabilities. For him or her, this organisational and supervisory task is part of a legitimate activity serving educational and socialising purposes: overcoming fear of water, developing the children's relationship with their own bodies, placing them in a situation of interrelationship, developing co-ordination, and so on. Meanwhile, the children regard this same activity as a trip to the pool, an opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves, a chance to play with friends and a period of time spent outside the classroom. Alongside the educational view of their purpose taken by supervisors, the participants' view is that they have found a new way to occupy their time. This situation shows the neutrality of the sports scene, which absorbs and gives off the benefits of individuals' specific commitment.

Finally, there is a need to demystify the socialising, integrating and educating nature of sports activities, which should be regarded as a neutral embodiment of a great variety of values and ideologies. Very much idealised and lauded by sporting and political stakeholders, sport seems to offer a guarantee of the relevance and success of facilities and activities for groups experiencing difficulties. Sport does have virtues in terms of integration and can help to build character, as well as consolidating and diversifying socialisation, provided that it has been designed and organised to fulfil these purposes.

## **Chapter 4**

### **The “ethnic minorities” test for sport policies**



## Introduction

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Sports practice as a resource which is possible to spend in favour of ethnic minorities deals with the wide topics of both globalisation and culture phenomenon in the widest sense. Sport can be found in all globalisation scapes (Appadurai, 1990): the “ethnoscape”, describing the migrations of top level athletes as well as of football spectators; the “technoscape”, dealing with the more and more improved technologies of performance; the “finanscape” involving the astonishing business budget of spectator sport; the “mediascape”, regarding planetary communication and global television entertainment; the system of meanings (“ideoscape”) coupled, on the one hand, with the ideology of “winning at all costs” and, on the other, with the emerging philosophy of sport for all. To sum up, contemporary sport can be represented as a pluralistic and racially mixed world in which one can observe the gradual development of public policies likely to involve body practices as a virtual social strategy for inclusion, communication and socialisation. As a non-verbal body language, sport does not discriminate on the basis of linguistic abilities. It deals, however, with cultural constructs which need to be decodified and elaborated in order to produce effective educational practices and experiences of co-operation, as well as to build social and institutional networks for the inclusion of minorities. Some concrete experiences can already be registered and analysed according to R. Putnam (2000), who underlines the double and seemingly contradictory function of contemporary sport. It can be seen as an instrument to reinforce social cohesion in groups and to emphasise identity and belonging (bonding) and, at the same time, as a way to experience co-operation and solidarity with an ability to connect differences and diversities (bridging).

The research illustrated in the session is all dedicated to the relationship between the policies of minority inclusion and sports practice. It all implies a perspective aiming at bridging the representation of sport as an instrument for social inclusion and cultural communication. This representation does not undervalue the widespread impact of top-level sport. According to a plural figuration of the sports system, however, the young researchers try to explore some aspects which have been neglected by sociologists and seldom received in the welfare policies agenda. At the same time, the proposed approaches do not indulge in an abstract and rhetoric representation of sport and do not evade the hard evidence of an empirical analysis. On the contrary, by

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including sport in the welfare agenda and undertaking a bridging perspective, researchers emphasise the need to take notice of the cultural value of problems and contradictions. They belong to a complex experience of social communication and institutional regulation that refers to anthropological latencies, organisational histories and sometimes biases and taboos. Sport, as well as all body experiences, is located at the crossroads between nature and culture. It feeds on emotions and requires rules, emphasises competition and encourages co-operation. In this way sport produces networks of relations in which each of these constructs is sharply marked by ideas, traditions, frames of mind. As a sensor of social change, the sport of inclusion represents a sensor of the broad-mindedness of the societies involved as well as an indicator of efficaciousness and efficiency of public policies.

Sabrina Granata, who analyses the phenomenon of the *deporte* immigrant in her research led in the urban context of Madrid and oriented to a further comparison with the case of Rome, underlines the role exerted by the networks of sports associations. She shows how sports practices are concretely capable of producing a real process of social integration. At the same time, this process can succeed if (i) it promotes the autonomy of the involved social movements of the immigrants themselves, and (ii) it is supported by all institutional bodies.

Pierre Weiss develops a stimulating comparison between two experiences of “communitarian football” concerning the Turkish minorities in France and Germany. His research gives the background to the claim for identity implied in this kind of competitive practice. Such a claim seems to be more successful if the receiving society is likely to politically and institutionally recognise the identical needs as a resource for the whole community. It is important to underline that, through this point of view, community and society are not represented as opposite and virtually clashing social constructs.

Tlili Haïfa analyses the relationship of different groups of arabo-muslim girls with the courses of physical education in France and Tunisia through a comparative point of view. The focus of the research is more precisely located in a representation of the body and physical activities that seems to be strongly conditioned, as is the case of more “integrated” people, by cultural and religious legacies. This means that physical practice can help to update and better define the very concept of integration of ethnic minorities. At the same time, the proposed results raise some crucial questions regarding the professional and educational role of teachers and sports operators acting in a social environment characterised by different cultural patterns and variegated relationships to the reference community.

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# **Single-community football clubs and Turkish immigration into France and Germany**

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Football clubs catering for a certain nationality or persons of a certain ethnic origin are increasingly thought of as “single-community clubs”, on the basis of a logic of cultural influence according to which those who come together in such a context identify with the “community” concerned, invariably as reflected by the club. As well as being rather ambiguous, cultural identity and community are sometimes far more telling about users’ ways of thinking and social perceptions than about immigrant populations and sport as such. In France, for instance, where citizenship is regarded as contrasting with the concept of community (Donzelot, 2003), our “cultural subconscious” strongly encourages us to consider the grouping within certain football clubs of players and officials from a single country of origin to indicate that they wish to cut themselves off, following separatist, or even “communitarian” logic. If this wish to cut themselves off exists, is it solely the immigrants’ fault, or is it partly due to the way in which the host society considers them, and to a form of “ethnic discrimination” against a population group of foreign origin? For the purposes of this paper, we shall define “ethnic discrimination” as being objectively unfavourable treatment of individuals on the basis of their supposed origin (Lorcerie, 2008).

We shall therefore, on the basis of a survey of sports club participation by Turks in France and Germany, start by offering evidence of their withdrawal into their own identity group in the sporting sphere, and then compare official French and German policies on integration through sport. Our third step will be to show how the way in which Turkish footballers stick together represents, for many Turkish immigrants, a response to the “ethnic discrimination” encountered locally.

## **Community-based socialising, groups created to engage in sport**

On both sides of the Rhine, Turkish immigrants give an impression of sticking together in a particularly hermetic “community” having very little contact

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with their host society.<sup>59</sup> Immigration surveys carried out in France by the Institut national des études démographiques (INED) have shown that Turkish immigrants lead busy social lives very much within their own community (Tribalat, 1995). In Germany, references are often made to the problem of the Turkish *Parallelgesellschaft*, so true is it that these immigrants maintain a relative distance from non-Turks, preferring for instance to set up and attend their own organisations (Sen, 2006).

Forming the largest foreign population group in Alsace (France) and in Baden-Württemberg (Germany), Turkish immigrants are heavily involved in voluntary-sector activities, particularly single-community football clubs. As M. Weber (1971) wrote, the concept of “ethnic group” or “single-community group” has nothing to do with biology; indeed, it is defined by a subjective belief in a community of origin. Weber also wrote that it mattered little whether this community of origin was a real or an imaginary one (Weber, 1971, pp. 124-144). It is on this basis that we shall refer to “single-community” football clubs. In the two regions under study, there are relatively large numbers of Turkish-backed football clubs, most of the members of which are immigrants of Turkish origin (Weiss, 2007-08).

While official data are available in France and Germany about Turkish immigrants in the economic and educational fields, no statistics are available relating to their sports and leisure activities.<sup>60</sup> During our survey, we therefore opted for a qualitative approach. We studied two clubs, one in Alsace, the Union Sportive Turque de Bischwiller (USTB), the other in Baden-Württemberg, namely Türk Gençler Birliği Lahr (TGBL). We based our selection on three criteria: a reference to Turkey in the clubs’ founding acts, location in towns where a large proportion of the population originates in Turkey, and Turkish origin of large numbers of the clubs’ members.

## **Multiculti or fitting in: the weight of national political traditions**

Before analysing Turkish immigrants’ sports activities, we first need to study public sport policies, although immigrants do not remain passive and have their own strategies which we need to take into account. Public sport policies relating to “ethnic minorities” or “population groups of immigrant origin” are not exactly the same in both countries. And individuals are influenced by national “integration models”.

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59. It should not be forgotten, incidentally, that Germany and France are the main host countries for Turkish immigrants.

60. In one contribution, however, S. de Tapia (2007) notes that, just about everywhere in Europe, leisure activities for Turks continue to be mainly group events, based on sometimes wide-ranging social networks.

Germany is not a country of immigration: this statement provides a fairly good reflection of German society's inward-looking view. The Federal Republic for many years based itself on a "discriminatory" model, treating immigrants as guest workers (*Gastarbeiter*), with a role to play in the work sphere, but none in the cultural, social and civic fields, since they were destined to go back home eventually (Wieviorka, 2008). German national identity is thus characterised more by the exclusion than by the integration of migrant groups. Although this "model" dates from the 1960s, since when Germany has developed considerably, it is an idea that remains firmly based in the collective mindset.

Policies which provide support for ethnic minorities' collective activities are developing in Germany. In respect of sport, for example, the authorities are introducing policies to help "ethnic" sports clubs, anti-racism measures at football grounds and community and intercultural management programmes. Until the mid-1990s, there were also Italian, Yugoslavian and Turkish football leagues which were allowed to organise, supervise and run competitions restricted to "ethnic" sports clubs. The institutionalisation of intra-community sport is comparable to the situation in the United States, where "single-community" organisations cater for migrants according to their national or religious origin, forming integrated structures guided and managed on the basis of solidarity between their members (Kastoryano, 1996). Ethnically-based clubs and associations are now commonplace, especially football clubs, because they are – in the context of the "multiculturalist" concept of integration – regarded as the first way of getting "immigrants" to participate in organised sports in Germany, and thus the first step towards integration into the country. This seems to have been confirmed at local level by the chairman of Offenburg's district football league, when he expressed his view that it was rather a good thing to have Turkish teams, which were not treated any differently from any other teams. No problems arose, and they all participated in the district championship.

France, for its part, has adopted the "republican" model whereby the cultural diversity arising from immigration is not expected to last, as immigrants adapt to French culture. The existence of communities on French territory is not acknowledged, and no references are made to "ethnic minorities", for individuals are not regarded primarily as "black, white, North African or Turkish", but identify themselves first and foremost as members of the nation. Thus national identity is not a biological fact, but more of a political one. Integration is associated either with the social dimension, through the welfare state, or with the political dimension, through the nation state (Rea, 2003).

This secular and "open" concept upheld by the sport movement in France leads to the view that the "sports community" is an institution endeavouring

to turn everyone into an athlete subscribing to the beliefs, values and aims of a broader "sports community" (Gasparini, 2007). The practical effect of this has been a gradual disappearance of clubs based on ethnic or national (Portuguese, Algerian, Polish, Armenian, etc.) origin, resulting in a process of cultural "intermingling" (Gastaut, 2008). And whereas, on the German side of the Rhine, the main focus of official efforts to promote sports activities and integration or prevention through sport is on groups or minorities of immigrant origin, their equivalents in France are addressed to areas or population groups "in difficulty". As shown by other surveys, it is the geographical area, and not the community of origin, which has come to be the accepted principle for categorisation and for action (Maurin, 2004). That said, French society remains paradoxical. The proclaimed "republican" principles notwithstanding, a gradual process of ethnicisation of social relations and territory is under way, stemming from the application of ethnic – rather than social or economic – categories when dealing with problems associated with harmonious living together (Felouzis, Liot, Perroton, 2005). The "ZEP", "ZUP" and "ZUS" zoning policy given new impetus in 1990 in the context of a new urban policy, uses the number of foreigners and immigrants as a criterion for judging the objective situation of any area of social action through sport. The risk of withdrawal into their own community by the persons concerned is the one of all the risks of a threat to national cohesion most firmly anchored in people's imagination. According to the chairman of the Alsace amateur football league, his sport offers an opportunity for the Turkish community, like any other, to express itself. He voiced official opposition to the setting up of single-community clubs, which he described as following a ghetto logic, and as diametrically opposed to the values conveyed by sport in general.

These few examples show very clearly the specific nature of national referents. These "models" are not, however, a really pronounced empirical social reality. The two regions under consideration, Alsace and Baden-Württemberg, are not so different from each other in terms of the development of sports groupings for many Turkish immigrants.

### **An arm's length relationship and the discrimination suffered: the example of two towns**

"When German teams play against us, they treat it as a kind of international match, like Turkey versus Germany, and problems occur among the spectators attending". The words are those of a Turkish footballer from the TGBL club, and they remind us that football offers an ideal opportunity to affirm a community's "us" as opposed to "them" (Bromberger, 1998). It represents a small-scale model of what N. Elias calls a "configuration", meaning a system of social relations structured like a game, within which a hierarchy exists of

various "us and them" relationships (Elias, 1991). It therefore seems necessary, in order to understand why football clubs are set up for players and officials of Turkish origin, to study the structure of relations between "settled" locals and "fringe" Turkish immigrants (Elias, 1997).

When they were first set up, in 1975 and 1981 respectively, the USTB and TGBL clubs were intended for Turks who were keen on football, had left school and spoke no French or German. Woven into the fabric of the voluntary sector, football (together with the factory and the immigrant workers' hostel) was one of the main vehicles for identity, but also a means of creating a place to "be together", offering what Noiriel called "an island of security and relative tranquillity" (Noiriel, 1988). But if these population groups were attracted to a "single-community" club, this was also because they were kept at arm's length by the other local clubs and teams. It is noteworthy that very few Turkish immigrants played in the long-established clubs of Bischwiller or Lahr. According to the chairman of the USTB, very few players of Turkish origin had played for FC Bischwiller in 30 years of Turkish immigration to the town: a total of four, because they were good players. He felt that integration through sport was possible for those who excelled in their sport. A 27-year-old French-born player, currently employed as a manual labourer in a metalworking plant, told us that origin was extremely important, with a Turk being more likely to play for the USTB club; the other club was for players from Alsace, and he would not get a very good reception there. A 32-year-old Turkish national in Lahr said that he had spent some time with another club in the town, but had not been so well accepted. If he made a mistake, the others would not look at him. The atmosphere was not the same in German clubs. Similarly, Turkish immigrants in general were excluded from most posts of responsibility in local sports clubs. Apart from the football club which catered mainly for players from the Turkish community, only one of Bischwiller's sports clubs (martial arts) currently had a Turkish chair. Thus joining the "single-community" club might seem to be the only way of acquiring symbolic benefits and political power (Koebel, 2000).

This arm's length relationship was even more significant in respect of the two clubs' sources of funding. In Bischwiller, an unpaid official said that the club had had a hard time in the early days. It had not been entitled to any grants from the municipal council, and help had come from craftsmen and businessmen within the Turkish community. There had been no clubhouse, and the players had got changed in their cars. In Lahr, the chairman of the TGBL club told us that it received €400 a year from the municipality, to which it paid €1 100 rent for its ground and clubhouse. In order to "survive", both clubs regularly appealed to small businessmen (frequently club members), traders and individuals from the town's "Turkish community". The club's two main sponsors were a shop called Istanbul Market and a fast-food outlet called Lahrer Kebab. Club officials thus regularly called on the feelings of

Turkishness of the club's volunteer supporters in order to obtain money. This also had the advantage of increasing the intensity of the feeling of being part of the group.

In France, as in Germany, players and officials also complain of a form of "ethnic discrimination", particularly when they play teams from small villages. Football as both an active and a spectator sport may give rise to greater stigmatisation. One USTB player told us that, while politicians had declared discrimination to be at an end, this did not apply to anyone with a Turkish forename, and he had often been the victim of racist insults during matches against small clubs in northern Alsace. On the German side, Bekir described his team as a victim of a certain amount of discrimination, saying that there were problems among the spectators during matches against German teams, usually involving insults, and that the worst problems occurred during matches against small villages, villagers being different kinds of people. During football matches, the French and German players of Turkish immigrant origin could suddenly find themselves being treated as "foreigners". Insofar as the feelings of rejection and exclusion experienced on the sports field boosted the "collective charisma" of the group, a "club spirit" making strong references to Turkey was generated. It was as if the "ethnic identity" of the club, because it was defined in negative terms by the group with symbolic dominance, became an emblem for the stigmatised group and provided very strong reasons to feel an affiliation to it. A good many Turkish symbols were on view in the TGBL clubhouse, including the national flag, a poster showing the Turkish national team, the colours of teams in Turkey, a pennant from the Turkish Football Federation, a portrait of Kemal Atatürk, Turkish newspapers, Turkish television, and so on. The display of such symbols of affiliation seems to make possible a reversal of the hierarchy of values stigmatising the identity-reflecting characteristics of Turkish immigrants (Bourdieu, 1980, pp. 63-67). Thus it is not so much the substance of "culture" that determines who joins and who does not join a "single-community" club as the objective towards which club members are working together. According to Iskender, chairman of the TGBL club, the members' plan is a fairly clear one:

We all want to be together so as to give the Germans a different image of Turks, a positive image. We want everyone to see that this is a good club. This is also why we all bring our friends along. We want everyone to be able to see that Turks are well-behaved, pleasant and calm people, because everyone describes them as bad people who get excited for no reason. This is how we will improve our reputation.

Lastly, discrimination against "fringe" Turkish immigrants is prompted by malicious gossip. Particularly revealing in this respect is the example of the town of Bischwiller, which is regularly given the nickname of Turcwiller or Bischtanbul because so many Turkish nationals live there. Some native resi-

dents inspired by loyalty to their region do feel that "their town" has been stolen from them, and find it difficult to accept the presence of large numbers of Turkish immigrants even in local sports clubs. The conflicts affecting social relations are, for instance, reflected in the relationships between the town's three football clubs. Ismail, chairman of the USTB, told us that there are certain rivalries and tensions between the three clubs, but his club is a kind of scapegoat because it was the last of the three to be set up. Everything gets out of proportion as soon as a club is considered to belong to a certain community. Whenever the slightest thing happens, if his club is involved, the spotlight is turned on it for a week or two.

## Conclusion

A comparative sociological study shows that France and Germany take different political lines to cultural diversity in sport and have adopted different solutions to the problems raised by the otherness of immigrants. While France prefers to rely on ordinary law, Germany bases its approach more on the "community", with nationality, in principle (but religion, in practice), determining the institutions for participation in society as a whole. The many different local situations thus partly stem from national traditions (French centralism, German federalism). But this does not mean that France and Germany place Turkish immigrants in completely different objective situations. A study focusing on this aspect shows not only that, in the world of sport, processes of marginalisation, distancing and discrimination can be observed everywhere, but also that Turks' withdrawal into their own football clubs is the cumulative result of previous social relations, reflected in both the functioning of the clubs and the social and mental attitudes of their members.

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## **Multiculturalism and sport in Madrid – A means of integration**

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In recent years, sociologists and social workers in close contact with multicultural environments have shown an increasing interest in the analysis of the conceptual relationship between sport and multiculturalism (how sport activities foster social integration of ethnic minorities).

It has to be added that any definition we want to assign to the word “multiculture” and to its relation to sport cannot be absolute, because it is not easy to find the right orientation among the many propositions, paradigms and theorisations existing, as well as the patterns and models, which can satisfactorily outline the current situation. However, we will try to provide all those elements necessary to define the migration process in the current social background, and to show the patterns and the proposals to be followed to foster the integration of different cultures through sport activities.

We must observe that the relationship between sport and migratory flows is characterised by the problems immigrants experience when integrating in a new country and the way they get through them.

Sport and migratory flows are only apparently unrelated to each other. We say “only apparently” because common elements have been found between them, which can explain the development of the sociological thinking in the last decade. To really grasp the meaning of this correlation, it is necessary – to put it in sport language – “to take a run-up so long, that can knock the acute observer down at the right point” (Aledda, 2005, p. 13).

Sport has thus become a powerful factor of dialogue and integration.<sup>62</sup> Sport is a universal language and can fully play an important role in strengthening and giving colour to ties among people, nations and races. As a social phenomenon, sport presents many-sided dimensions; it has always been a strong dynamic fostering socialisation and integration.

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62. We can legitimately accept the power of sport as a cultural interpenetration. Sport is a kind of language, its universal character makes it understandable to everyone, it is a language for communication and aggregation of people, it is probably the most impressive phenomenon of the 20th century. A crucial event was the revival of the Olympic Games with Baron Pierre de Coubertin in 1896, but even more the contemporary trend across 19th and 20th centuries, when the main sport disciplines joined international federations and expanded into a vertical dimension (Aledda 2006, p. 21).



Millions of migrants take part with their own culture in the evolution of the sport phenomenon, and the conceptual relationship between sport and multiculturalism.

A study on the subject is still lacking,<sup>63</sup> and leads us to further develop this matter. The question is, how can an integration process be developed among immigrants in a thick social fabric made of new and different working conditions, different costumes and traditions, and ruled by different rhythms of life. We have noticed that this process is at the moment quite strong in the Spanish city of Madrid, where there is a heavy presence of immigrants. We will better examine the immigration data in Madrid and the association process later on in this study.<sup>64</sup>

In order to give a comprehensive definition of the problem, we are going to deal with different matters, such as cultural diversity, migration terminology and sport dynamics and it will also be useful to start from the concept of "difference".

The terms used to describe the factors determining cultural promiscuity differ from each other, but each of them can or should help in finding its clear definition. In our study we are going to list and explain the following terms: multiculturalism, multicultural, multi-ethnic and intercultural, and their derivatives. These are in particular compound words referring to the "culture" concept.

The use of the word multiculturalism shows the presence of a tension, a conflict or a dilemma, which needs to be further defined. We are referring to the deep changes in the structure and in the social relations of the modern age, as well as to the new definition of the conceptual categories, that have narrated and interpreted it. Colombo (2006, p. 11) specifies that "on this term, and thus on this concept, has been pronounced a stratification of perspectives and points of view, which let us misunderstand to what we refer when using the word multiculturalism". Multi-ethnicity may be defined as a situation of coexistence and relation in a specific area between different ethnic groups with different cultural heritages. These groups are based on the subjective belief of sharing a unique community of origin which excludes blood ties.

The assimilationist interpretation of ethnicity is particularly significant because cultural identities of groups lessen and disappear with the generation passage. The pluralist interpretation, assumes the persistence of cultural

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63. In the last decade the interest in the relationship between sport and immigration has risen proportionally with the increasing migratory flows, in particular from the Maghreb regions and Latin American countries to Europe.

64. Since our research is a work in progress, we are showing here only the data gathered in Madrid.

heritage as an ascriptive fundament of the existence of the same groups. As specified by Cesareo (2000, p. 13) multi-ethnicity implies multiculturalism, because the different ethnic groups inside a same territory have by definition an own culture with features differing from the ones of other cultures.<sup>65</sup>

The sociological dimension is purely empiric, and multiculturalism is thus not a model, but rather a matter of life in common, which people can choose to experience or not; it is typical of everyday situations of interaction, and is more a character of movements than a normative orientation. But this does not mean that we want to leave out the significance of the normative dimension, on the contrary we put our attention on the daily thinking about the contemporary conditions of common living. Colombo, thus, refers to everyday life and to the co-existence of the differences in contemporary society.<sup>66</sup>

The concept of multiculturalism can be more properly expressed by the word "multiculturalism", and explains that multiculturalism emphasises the legitimacy of various ethnic groups and other ascribed groups of having values and orientations completely different from each other, if not even conflicting.

So the term multiculturalism seems to be the "culture of difference" and "in many cases is used to describe a specific social reality, characterized by the presence of different values and rules of reference" (Colombo, 2006, p. 7). In this case another aspect comes out and "a trend expressing the need for social recomposition, in such contexts where multiculturalism makes things more complex and produces destabilizing effects on social balances".<sup>67</sup>

This article develops an integration process through sport activities with immigrants in two big cities. We explain better in the next part.

## **Sport as a factor for social integration**

In the contemporary world the number of differences increases proportionally with the demand for needs that the same diversity claims. Multiculturalism is clamoured in social, cultural and political practices everywhere in the world. The global nature that characterises the contemporary world does not allow us to ignore the hard problems emerging from this process.

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65. A close and effective examination has been developed by Cesareo, who makes a distinction between "multi-ethnicity" and "multiculturalism". These two words are nowadays very common, "and they are used to designate a state of affairs, a political project, a hope, a slogan, and often even a worrying scenario", Cesareo, 2000.

66. Colombo speaks of a multiculturalism as a polysemous concept, which contains different meanings depending on the players who are using it, and on the context where it is being used. This concept is applied even if in the end it refers to the presence of different cultural customs, to preferences and values of groups living in the same social space (Colombo, 2006, p. 14).

67. Cesareo (2000, pp. 91-136) outlines the consequences of multiculturalism and offers a wide view on the interethnic interaction and on the regulation of interethnic common living.

It has to be noticed that a strong factor of differentiation is due to the heavy presence of foreigners, in particular in big cities. It is thus particularly interesting to point out how these physical, religious and cultural diversities are managed. The cities are now diversified and, together with heterogeneity, there is an increase also of those factors, which make stronger the perception of differences and cause a series of attitudes, expectations and demands.

We are used to saying that somebody is integrated when he starts using those elements of the prevailing culture: language, religion, clothing, habits, and so on. This is more a process of assimilation rather than of integration. Xavier Medina, thus, notes that we have to consider that culture and society (the different cultures and the different societies), are not absolutely static and fixed, but on the contrary they are flexible and dynamic. We have to consider integration as a factor giving to single people and to groups the necessary elements to find a solution to a shared everyday life and, as far as possible, to put on the same level all the single persons who are part of a society. A remarkable result<sup>68</sup> shows that the socialising component seems to be one of the main reasons that drives immigrants to play sport.<sup>69</sup>

From all this, it comes out that the processing of an effective operational model could be suggested by the principles of a non-assimilationist integration process and through a policy that makes the positive values of sport a preferred tool for the integration of immigrants.

In a more general perspective, we must consider the migratory phenomenon as an ever-changing process, and its connection to sport policies should be systematically analysed. Furthermore, the connection between migratory phenomena and sport can also be found by studying the sport reality experienced by immigrants in sport clubs, local sporting services and through the persons responsible for the reception and integration centres of foreigners.

## **Multiculturalism and sport. The example of an integration process through the sport in Madrid**

The field study consisted of two stages, during which data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with social workers and presidents of sport

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68. We will refer to the results of Panathlon's research, which are the main reference points for our research, if not even the only one, as there is a lack of sociological studies with an empiric background on this matter.

69. The positive value of sport was emphasised at the conference, "Actividad física, deporte e inmigración. El reto de la interculturalidad", held in Madrid on 24 and 25 October 2007. Upon that occasion, researchers stressed the importance of building a common operative model in those countries, where the migratory phenomenon and cultural diversity are quite strong. This model should realise an integration process, capable of developing individual and social potentialities from heterogeneity and cultural diversity. Some activities have been analysed which are in progress and which regard the immigrants living in Madrid and their sport activity.

clubs, dealing with immigration issues in the cities of Rome and Madrid, two similar cities concerning the presence of foreigners and the migration process.

At the moment Madrid represents a privileged observation point because here the presence of human association, and in particular of immigrants, is quite significant. We intend therefore to understand how sport can be an integration tool for immigrants in the two examined metropolises. In this phase of our research we conducted some interviews referring in particular to the associative reality in Madrid.

Our main purpose is to give a hermeneutical interpretation of sport, which is a symbolic system and, as such, it represents a shareable system through which we can integrate with each other in a context different from our own. The interviews were conducted with 13 out of 23 people, amongst which were presidents and people responsible for those sport clubs where the presence of immigrants was heavy.<sup>70</sup> They represent the most important and significant sport associations in the territory.

Furthermore, we want to explain in advance that the main questions of our interviews regard in particular: the motivational aspect of sport and the possible problems arising with reference to the ethnic group and the family; the socialising component of sport, the opinions on the integrating and social potentialities of sport, the influences that the sport language can have in customs and traditions.<sup>71</sup>

### **The associative sport reality in Madrid**

The above summary underlines that the persons in charge of the sport clubs interviewed in Madrid have mainly Latin-American origins, while only one of them belongs to the autochthonous community.

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70. People were interviewed in Madrid in April and May 2008. We had two unofficial information channels for the study of the associations: we examined 13 of the existing 23 associations, although we must specify that the real number of all the associations in the territory is uncertain, since some of them have not yet been legalised: *Federaliga*, which is the federation to which a large number of associations belong; the publishing director of *Pasión deportiva*, who is also a journalist for a monthly magazine which informs about sport activities of the associations on *El Latino*. The interviews took place in different parts of the city but chiefly at the place of work of the interviewees. Only sporadically on the streets or somewhere else; they were recorded and written down in the original language spoken by the people interviewed, that means in Spanish, and the translation of this essay has been made by the same author. We want to give a brief picture of the associations involved in this study and instead of the full names we used only the initials of the interviewees in order to guarantee privacy.

71. Sport is a factor of integration and can help in fighting discrimination arising against race, origin, sex or any other personal situation (XXI Sport European Forum, 21-22 November 2003).

Statistics from the National Statistic Institute show that in 2007 in Spain the local community amounted to 44 474 631 inhabitants, with 2 753 619 foreigners and 446 623 of them living in Madrid predominantly being Latin Americans, with a large proportion of Ecuadorians (140 036). Then follow Colombians (62 538) and Bolivians (47 716). A significant presence is also represented by the Moroccan community (68 819).

As reported by Duran Gonzalez (2002, pp. 179-200), there has always been an iniquity condition that has marginalised these ethnic groups in ghettos. There are here in particular a series of concepts closely interlinked with each other: immigration, social class, urban marginalisation.

Maza's experience here is exemplary. He has been working since 1986 in a football programme with a group of young immigrants in the ancient Chinatown Raval in Barcelona, a city area which gathers many foreign immigrants. Maza applies an integration model through sport activities in a city area where the emergency of multicultural cohabitation interweaves with the mechanisms of social reproduction.

We chose for our research the methodological tool of the semi-structured interview for different reasons: first of all, we have considered some of the social realities present on the territory, closely related to a construction path of knowledge and meanings, and an expression path of motivations and attitudes that can influence the actions, and in particular the process, that led to the constitution of immigrants' associations in the area of Madrid; secondly, this kind of interview, which examines the reality directly experienced by the interviewees, allows us to build a path of knowledge of this long-range phenomenon in this territory. The main purpose is to understand which kind of configuration the social integration assumes through sport activities of immigrants in Madrid, a multicultural city open to dialogue.

The interviews were conducted following a scheme with different topics, and the questions were not put in an orderly fashion, but the scheme of the interview followed a flexible and non-standardised test procedure, trying to leave the interviewees free to structure their own speech, and in case of interruptions during the narration, new questions were put to them.

Three key elements emerged from this survey: first of all, the associative presence in Madrid is increasingly predominant and at the same time globated in a close organisation; secondly, a high level of integration has been found within the communities of immigrants in the territory, although an exception has to be made with regard to the immigrants of Maghreb origin; finally, it is quite interesting to see the assistance and mutual aid that sport associations offer to immigrants not only through sport activities, but also by fostering their integration in terms of language and of work.

The presence of Federaliga, to which most associations belong, attests that the organisation is structured through different persons and different management and control institutions both for a single football match as for more important events. Federaliga's chairman emphasises his significant commitment and responsibility not only for all the immigrant members of the league and for their families, but also towards the whole autochthonous community towards which he has, in most cases, a sense of gratefulness. This gratitude is shown at various levels and refers to small but practical actions of aid and support to overcome the condition of foreigners. We have also considered and not underestimated those cases of mistrust and hostility towards immigrants, especially in those cases of shortage of the necessary residence permits.

The territorial reality of sport varies depending on the type of immigration. The reasons for immigration depend on the common employment problems in the home countries, but no hostility has been shown towards the country of origin. The condition of foreigners in Madrid is not marginalised because of linguistic facilitations, in particular for Latin Americans.

People who joined the associations are mostly Latin Americans, but there are also people from other nations. The main question concerns the personal experience connected with sport of the presidents of the associations, who were also foreign residents and therefore immigrants in Madrid. The issues relating to this main question concern the creation of the association and its establishment on the territory through welcome strategies for other immigrants, namely immigrants coming from the same country of origin and living there for many years, and not only that, but also the relationships with all the surrounding reality, including the ties with the athletes' families.

### **Reasons for association and social integration through "deporte inmigrante"**

A first important question concerns the personal experience of the presidents of the associations and the reasons for the establishment of their sport associations.<sup>72</sup> We have to take into account the conditions immigrants were

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72. A clarification should be made regarding the terminology used in our study. We prefer to make also a terminological distinction, therefore the term *Liga* refers to the not legalised associations, while the word *Asociaciòn* to all associations legalised through a statute registered at the competent local authorities. There are eight *Asociaciòn*. The total amount of associations (legalised and not) is 23, and at the moment of our research we know only 20 of them. We examined 13 associations, which were the most important mostly because of the number of participants. According to the information given by the interviewees, in all cases they are "cultural, social and sport associations non-profit", and further information can be found on the website – of the associations who have one – and in the football regulations, which are the same for all associations belonging to Federaliga, i.e. the association which comprehends all *ligas* and *asociaciòn*.

experiencing before a real association phenomenon arose, a phenomenon which has almost become a real need. The chairmen who immigrated in Madrid seven to ten years ago affirm that there were free aggregation groups playing outdoors in public places; a solution to continue to practice sport was joining an association.

But there are not only utilitarian reasons. In this respect, the observation of J. C. seems to be quite interesting, because he clarifies that the association is called this name because here more nationalities are playing. Immigrants live away from their parents and at the weekend they can integrate with each other through sport and meet people from other countries.

A recurring topic in the answers of the interviews is the homesickness caused by the long distance from home. They talk about a distance from their home country that leads them to somehow fill free time, even though in the beginning when the associative movement was starting to move, about a decade ago, there was a kind of discrimination among the same immigrants.

Recalling the connection between the nationality of immigrants and the associations where the various ethnic unities are registered, the interviewee J. G. affirms that we should study what happens in the same nationality and the relationships created in the association. For him, they are labeled because they are immigrants, but he believes that we shouldn't label any association, on the contrary we should try to be only one association, this is the issue we should focus on.

Sport has always been a significant tool for social integration. The advantages of sport are underlined by everyone, but they are also left out for the natural characteristics of sport. According to Heinemann (2002, p. 25),<sup>73</sup> sport "speaks all languages, it is said to be a global phenomenon, super-cultural, on the basis of some of its characteristics" such as the common comprehension of the rules. Sport is for everyone and has no social, cultural or religious frontiers, it has a socialising character through which rules and values are conveyed.

L. P. and W. H. say that sport actually is the cohesive force that has brought together many immigrants and allowed integration in all teams. Sport is for everyone a very positive element because, unfortunately, as immigrants they do not have much fun and sport can be enjoyed by everyone.<sup>74</sup>

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73. Heinemann (2002, pp. 24-35) is a sociologist at the University of Hamburg. At the conference in Barcelona on sport and immigration he compared Spanish and German immigration and talked about the possibilities of integration projects through sport.

74. The correlation between immigration and sport in Madrid is underlined in particular by St. L. T., who assigns an important role to sport in the social life of immigrants in Madrid.

The question of immigrant integration through sport – mainly football – in Madrid had unexpected results, since most of the people interviewed are Ecuadorians and joined the association both because they were driven by the wish to escape from their condition of foreigner and from the sense of homesickness caused by the distance from home, and because the reception community is not always ready and do not agree to playing on the streets.

In many cases, however, the result is that all immigrants in sport associations are marginalised. But if, on one hand, there are cases of marginality, on the other hand, many admitted the willingness of the autochthonous to accept the diversity.

As previously mentioned, the results of the interviews show another key issue relating to support and confrontation: support is offered to all immigrants through activities which do not comprehend only sport (bureaucratic matters relating to residence permits, to obtain the legal documents they need, as well as practical activities for finding a job, etc.).

Most of those interviewed showed a lot of enthusiasm for the friendships they can establish in the association and that arise from social aggregation. Friendship is seen as a result and a benefit that arises from taking part in sport.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion of our Spanish research we can assert that the phenomenon of sport association can be legitimately seen as quite extensive: the "deporte inmigrante" is a real process for social integration, and the extension of the association movement involves the whole autochthonous social fabric and even reaches the whole of institutional bodies. Even at a political level, a dialogue form has been established, with the participation of the local immigration department in the events organised by sport associations. The immigrants become then the leading actors of urban transformation: the global city defines a new structure of social inequities and it also represents the most practical space for political action.

Regarding the integration processes of immigrants, it is very interesting to notice how these processes become part of a wide political programme. This process has been taking place in the city of Madrid, where the participation and dialogue with the local administration, in particular with the local authority for immigration, has also been noticed.

Sport is not seen here as the sole activity promoting social integration, but rather as a supporting component to all those activities aiming at breaking down all sorts of barriers among different cultures, barriers which hinder our awareness of social ties and human equality.



In conclusion, we want to emphasise how in this stage of our research the analysis of the interviews has only been hermeneutical, and that later on the qualitative analysis programmes (TAL-Tac and T-Lab) will follow.

We underline that our research is a work in progress and that all the shown data will be revised in the next months, and compared with the results gathered in similar club associations and structures in Rome.

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## **The involvement of young women of Arab-Muslim culture in university courses in physical education (PE) and sport. A comparative study of female students' exercise habits in France and Tunisia**

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I shall be looking at some of the findings made during work on my thesis on "Exercise, women and cultures. The example of female students of Arab-Muslim culture in university courses in PE/sport in France and Tunisia" (Paris Descartes University, 2008). This article, based on the acculturation problems experienced by children of Maghrebi immigrants, will look closely at the findings of research covering female students of immigrant origin, born of Maghrebi parents resident in France, enrolled on French university courses in PE/sport sciences and techniques (STAPS, Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives).

This population group is not very familiar to immigration sociologists, and more specifically to sports sociologists. French sociologists focus on groups experiencing difficulties and subject to conflicting forms of socialisation. The clash between these young second-generation immigrants' society of origin and host society has been described as an "inextricable entanglement" making it difficult to grasp the standards and attitudes adopted by adults (Noiriel, 1988). When a closer look is taken at the female population, the numerous terms used reflect the paradoxical need to remain faithful to custom as reinvented in the migratory situation while showing themselves, by the distance placed between themselves and that same custom, to be well integrated (Guénif Souilamas, 2006). The young women of this generation thus feel torn between two conflicting and contradictory positions (Lacoste Dujardin, 1995), while behaving in a contradictory fashion towards things and people (Cesari, 1997). But although they are trapped by a three-way sexual, social and cultural domination, young women descended from North African immigrants are said to manifest a wish to be "crafters of temperate freedoms" (Guénif Souilamas, 2000, 2006). The few sports sociology studies carried out look at case studies in difficult contexts, such as female athletes of Maghrebi origin in difficult neighbourhoods, or young women participating in male-dominated sports.

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We have deliberately approached our subject from a different angle, by questioning young women enrolled on university PE/sport courses, in order to produce data complementing the information that already exists. In principle, this group is integrated (Sayad, 1994), and we are endeavouring to gain a better understanding of the effect their progress has had on their traditional values, through their physical activities.

Notwithstanding the ambiguity of the concept of integration, this group can be said to have participated in society as a whole through its schooling. The further a person takes his or her school studies, the greater his or her chance of improved levels of social interaction and of adopting society's standards and values. By enrolling on university PE/sport courses, these young French women have opted to train for work such as PE/sport teaching, with a view to crossing the line from student to teacher. These future servants of the Republic provide us with twofold evidence of their integration, both playing an active part in community life and personally becoming guarantors of institutional rules, thereby positioning themselves within a regulatory system geared towards the future (Schnapper, 2007). Their involvement will have a significant effect, for they will to some extent become models for future pupils of foreign origin or from ethnic minorities, making them a cornerstone of the integration process for that population group.

We are starting from the premise that it is through the body that all cultural values crystallise. In this, we have based ourselves on the work of Marcel Mauss, Pierre Bourdieu and Pierre Parleras. The last-named author's writings on ethnic aspects of physical exercise have enabled us to categorise these activities, thus facilitating comparison between different cultures. Several questions arise in this respect: how do modern republican values relating to the body, as conveyed institutionally, mix with the traditional and (supposedly) religious values handed down by, for instance, parents? What does the new generation of women of Maghrebi immigrant origin who are following these courses make of this? We assume that we will find a difference between the students' exercise habits in France and Tunisia. We also think that there will be, in France, a difference in exercise habits according to area of immigration and type of social practice.

To this end, we studied the exercise habits of three groups of young women: 90 French students of Maghrebi origin attending 16 of the 40 PE/sport (STAPS) faculties in France, and 98 students in Tunisia attending the sport institutes of Kef or Sfax, and a control group of 116 non-Maghrebi students.

## **Methodology**

A varied and flexible methodology was used, capable of adaptation to the characteristics of the different groups. Our first aim was to assess the group in

historical and geographical terms, which we were able to do in respect of 14 of the PE/sport faculties. In order to represent the population in France on the basis of a method already used by Georges Felouzis et al. (2009), we had to "create an indirect indicator of individuals' cultural origin", for which purpose we used their forenames, names with significant symbolic importance socially and culturally, as well as their surnames. "The children of Muslim immigrants bear Muslim forenames, names which are not (or only in extremely few cases) used by the native middle classes".<sup>76</sup> It was observed that, among the students attending French universities, most of the individuals bearing Muslim forenames were descended from Maghrebi immigrants.

We also drew up a detailed list of these young women's characteristics in the social and exercise spheres based on their replies to a questionnaire. The two-part questionnaire was distributed to most members of the Maghrebi group and to a control group of non-Maghrebi students. The first part was semi-structured, while the second, known as a semantic differentiator, was used to evaluate the students' affective relationship with stimuli/subjects posing greater or lesser problems in this context of acculturation.<sup>77</sup> One section of the semi-structured part of the questionnaire related to the students' social practice. They were asked to estimate the number of Maghrebi and non-Maghrebi friends of both sexes that they had.<sup>78</sup> We felt that the semantic differentiator created by Osgood et al. (1957), an indirect and roundabout technique, needed to be used so as to highlight supposed ambivalences and situate each group in relation to the others. We were also able, thanks to the semi-structured and even non-structured interviews, to add to our quantitative information and to highlight a number of particular issues and specific problem areas.

## **Findings**

The results enabled us to highlight the proportions of Maghrebis in the French faculties on a geographical and historical basis. An analysis of their physical and sporting activities made possible a comparison of the different kinds of internal logic of their exercise habits, so we were able to spotlight some of the group's specific cultural traits.

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76. It was observed in the French universities that this group was largely of Maghrebi immigrant origin. This is why we have opted to refer to these young women as being "of Arab-Muslim culture" or "of Maghrebi (immigrant) origin".

77. They were asked, for instance, for their views on "the sensuality of women's sports", "dancing", "martial arts", "swimming", "virginity until marriage", "religious practice" and "parents' traditions", giving their replies on the basis of nine pairs of adjectives: beautiful/ugly, low/high, calm/excitable, clean/dirty, fast/slow, pointless/important, etc.

78. The Sphinx software made it possible to extract this variable. We shall refer to students who socialise within their community and spend all their time with other Maghrebis as the CS group, and students who socialise outside their community as the NCS group.

The first thing to say is that the results were weak and uneven. In areas where there had been little immigration, the percentages of Maghrebi women in the female population were lowest (Froment and Lerat, 1996).<sup>79</sup> In areas of heavy immigration, the proportions were more varied. In the Ile-de-France region, the percentages were highest in the areas of heavy immigration, whereas in the south-east of the country, where immigration has been heavy, they were lower. The historical perspective enabled us to highlight the proportion of Maghrebi women (in the total female population) since 1993 in 12 of the French faculties. In the majority of cases, the figure was below 4%, although at the Bobigny and Paris 5 faculties, the proportions (three to four times greater) are growing constantly, and even reached 19% in Bobigny and 14% at Paris 5 in 2004.<sup>80</sup>

Female students in France, whether or not they are of Arab-Muslim culture, practise the same physical and sporting activities, mainly collective and psychomotor sports (80% of Maghrebi women and 93% of non-Maghrebis). The latter category includes swimming, gymnastics and athletics, sports in which the action is individual, not involving "instrumental interaction" with a fellow participant (Parlebas, 1986). In such sports, as rightly noted by M. Bouet (1995), the aim is to use one's physical strength to achieve the greatest possible measurable effect, thus obtaining through use of the body the best possible result in events designed to show off competitors' power, strength, skill, resistance, speed, suppleness and co-ordination. At the same time, these sports affirm the value of sacrifice and personal effort. Fewer of the Tunisians pursue their sport in clubs (24%). They remain within a traditional physical pattern, preferring artistic women-only activities highlighting their femininity. The French students, whether of Maghrebi origin or not, also go for the same physical and sporting activities, mainly sports lacking a clear-cut outcome, while the Tunisians tend to have less desire to participate in sports lacking a clear-cut outcome.

Just over 72% (the NCS group) of the students of Arab-Muslim culture say that their social life centres on non-Maghrebis, while 27% of them (the CS group) socialise exclusively within their own community.<sup>81</sup> The exercise habits of the students in the CS group are different from those of the women

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79. The highest density of Algerians, Tunisians and Moroccans is found in the 11 departments on an imaginary line shaped like an inverted letter T stretching from south-eastern France to Paris and to the Rhône-Alpes region.

80. There is less investment in the areas of lower immigration rates, yet the results are more varied in the areas of heavy immigration. More work would have been needed to find out whether the low investment in PE/sport courses was to the benefit of other university courses.

81. In order to understand these figures, it should be remembered that most of the women said that, during their upper secondary studies, their school sport had taken place in an environment in which they had been in a minority. Most of them had received a general education at good upper secondary schools.

in the NCS group: they engage less in psychomotor sports and more in martial arts. In this respect, the NCS students come closer to the characteristics of the non-Maghrebi population of the French city of Clermont-Ferrand. Social, economic and religious characteristics could partly explain this distribution of exercise habits between the two groups. The attraction to NCS students of the sports which spotlight each woman's unique physical performance, with a lesser focus on the martial arts highly regarded within the Muslim community, may be due to a higher social level, to the mother's higher occupational and social status and to a lower degree of religious practice than among the CS group.

The semantic differentiator produced results showing very similar affective relations in the two sub-populations in France in respect of seven of the nine stimuli. The Tunisian group over-rated the artistic activities which call on their femininity (dancing, gymnastics, figure skating), but took a negative view of martial arts and of mixed-sex physical and sporting activities. The French group of Maghrebi origin differed from the non-Maghrebi group only in respect of the two stimuli which referred directly to tradition and religion. In both cases, the students in the NCS group gave a "middle of the road" reply. The CS group gave these two stimuli the highest affective values, while the French non-Maghrebi group indicated more neutral values, or even negative ones.

The interviews conducted in France showed that these women of Maghrebi origin practise a "syncretic" religion, adapting the standards and values of the PE/sport faculty culture to the culture of their parents. This is why some of them nevertheless continue to swim, without breaking their fast, during Ramadan. Most of these women, at a very young age, were shown by their replies to have been obliged to take on family responsibilities on a large scale. This had earned them their parents' respect, in return for which they had been allowed to take less notice of their parents' traditional instructions. These students, in France more so than in Tunisia, have great freedom to choose their activities. Success at school and university has earned them social recognition appreciated by their families. They have a right to – almost – anything they want, and all agree that university study of sport has enabled them "to live". They are, however, destabilised by the imposition by their parents of a "halal" wedding to a Maghrebi and/or Muslim, which causes some of them to question the path that they have followed, especially if they have been training unsuccessfully for a long time, failing the qualifying examination to become a PE/sport teacher on several occasions.

## **Conclusion**

Female students of Arab-Muslim culture are few and far between at STAPS faculties in France, and it would be worth investigating the reasons for the

variations noted, perhaps by looking at the female students following other higher education courses. Notwithstanding geographical and historical differences, the population descended from immigrants of Arab-Muslim culture is slowly getting involved in PE/sport education. This is encouraging and highly symbolic, since, as a result, they will be able to influence the younger generations and help to resolve misunderstandings between the different cultures.

Having studied these women's physical and sporting activities, we find that there is little difference between the exercise habits of the group of Arab-Muslim culture and those of the control group. Their status within their family enables young women of Arab-Muslim culture to change the traditional rules, while at the same time getting involved in, and benefiting from, this new social role. The ambivalence which seemed typical of these young women of immigrant origin is thereby reduced. Tacit ambiguity nevertheless persists in the private realm, where their parents' insistence on marriage to a Maghrebi and/or Muslim is problematic for most of them, especially when they have been mingling with non-Maghrebis since they first went to their upper secondary schools. Ultimately, it is this requirement which the parents impose, and it is here that ambivalence seems to have the greatest destabilising effect on the women concerned.

The differing findings within the sub-groups (between the Maghrebi population of France and Tunisia, and between the CS and NCS groups) show that it is impossible to speak of a single Arab-Muslim population. There is also a new problem area relating to the interpretation of the greater community and religious fervour being shown by some of these women students in both countries. The question is worth studying in more detail in Tunisia, where female students are increasingly wearing veils when attending their institutions, a matter which is beginning to cause concern to some teachers strongly supportive of the secular education system introduced by President Bourguiba in the mid-1950s. While the wearing of veils has always been prohibited, teachers now feel helpless in the face of the huge increase in the numbers of veiled students.

This fact is rather unusual, even embarrassing, if one applies the conventional integration theories used in France. The question arises of whether this development among the new generation of women teachers will not have a negative effect on their teaching and on their future pupils of the same origin. Should these findings be interpreted as a rejection, an anti-republican reaction? Or do they indicate the opposite, that this acculturation process has been a gentle one, making compatible values which had been in conflict for the previous generation? If we look only at France, we unfortunately find no answer to certain questions. International comparison of this interculturality is therefore necessary, if we wish to represent the different kinds of

acculturation and gain a better understanding of these young women's choices and adjustments. In order to find out more about this problem area, it is therefore important to carry out a similar study in other countries where such single-community development is possible (United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Canada, etc.).

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## **Conclusion – The sport test for “social integration”**

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Particularly attentive to the situation of migrants and descendants of migrants, the various writers of this chapter each put forward their own questions about the role of practices and sport policies in the process of “social integration” of minority groups. Their studies show that, if sociological comment is restricted to mere criticism of the early concepts associated with “sport as a means of integration”, researchers run the ideological risk of simply turning praise for common sense into an indictment, which will in turn fail to take into consideration the anthropological realities and educational scope of sporting activities. If we deal with these under the umbrella of the early concepts, we are bringing together what they separate, and making distinctions between what they mix together. And the main thing that they mix together is the whole range of sporting activities, for which they use a single term. Painted with such a broad brush, sport comes to encompass an infinite variety of realities, like a summary of all of its parts. But far from being passive neighbours, all members of the same “world of sport”, sports activities and cultures are more like social micro-worlds which exist only through the players concerned (Pociello, 1999). Not inward-looking, but constantly subjected to social influences from the outside, these micro-worlds reflect the wishes of their promoters. The same applies to the public aims of “sport as a means of integration”, when clubs and federations which represent the institutional tradition of sporting disciplines offer to provide the support previously lacking for street activities for young people, such as streetball, a form of basketball played in the street, and street football (Travert and L’Aoustet, 2003). Notwithstanding the findings of sociological surveys which show that the organisation by young people themselves of such activities gives rise to new forms of socialisation through sport (Duret and Augustini, 1993; Chantelat et al., 1996; Travert, 2003), this attempt to uphold the longest-established models of sporting practice is tantamount to imposing a definition of sport, basing its legitimacy on what the anthropologist Arjun Appadurai (2005) called a “hard cultural form”. Such organisation, weaving a web of strong links between value, meaning and practice, finds it easier to change those whom it socialises than to change itself on contact with them. Integration thus presupposes a successful acculturation phase, whereas failure would result in the exclusion of the would-be beneficiary of integration;

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such exclusion would primarily affect the young people most likely to lose their feeling of affiliation, and having the greatest difficulty in finding for themselves the discipline (arriving for training on time, showing respect for the trainer, demonstrating dedication and concentration) required to engage in sport on a regular basis in a club (Gasparini and Vieille-Marchiset, 2008). Introducing more flexible forms of commitment and creating social environments suitable for practices sometimes remote from sport's values and meanings according to the competitive model of federations and clubs is therefore a very frequent necessity for any social workers wishing to add physical exercise to their professional activities (Le Breton, 2003). When they are transposed to the controlled setting of an activity generating a desire to participate and a pleasure in participating, risk-taking, personal involvement and the need to co-operate and help one another in adversity will then be felt by participants as so many "mimetic symbols" of emotions experienced elsewhere in the course of social life (Elias and Dunning, 1986), and to which people sometimes react excessively by giving in to aggressive or destructive impulses. People "symbolically dice with death" (Le Breton, 2004), in the metaphorical shape of being knocked out in the boxing ring or falling (while secured by another person) during a climb, each of which, in its own way, may help people who have lost their bearings to regain a sense of how far they can go and a feeling of co-operation, albeit an antagonistic one between boxers and a remote one between the climber and the person ensuring his or her safety. While work of this kind on the frameworks of interaction, helping to increase the moral sense of responsibility, can therefore be done through physical exercise appropriate to the social aims, it should nevertheless be noted that it cannot apply only to "young people from suburban neighbourhoods", who are too readily regarded as emblems of the groups "needing to be integrated". Having drawn distinctions between all that was mixed up in the early concepts of "sport as a means of integration", the people whom they separate should be brought together, remembering that young people of every origin and from every social background may be concerned by such learning of an "interaction ethic" which, while it may sometimes be acquired by participants in sport, is nevertheless difficult to transpose to other areas of social life (Falcoz and Koebel, 2005). Unless a degree of stability in economic, school and occupational integration backs up the socialisation process achieved during participation in sport, any social skills acquired will indeed be extremely likely to be undone by the effects of rival influences undermining affiliation. The society of the slogans of "sport as a means of integration" thus contrasts with the society experienced by individuals, with their feelings of belonging or not belonging. It remains to be seen whether these feelings of not belonging should be interpreted as a failure of individuals' integration into society or as a reflection of society's inability to regard itself as inseparable from the huge variety of individuals who are its members.

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## **Overall conclusion**



## **The social dimension of sports clubs: building networks of sports partners against discrimination<sup>83</sup>**

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The young European research scientists' work presented in this book offers a detailed illustration of discrimination in sport and of the disagreements on the subject in Europe, but it also invites us to show vigilance. In practice, while sport is often described as a factor of inclusion for population groups which suffer from discrimination, if we examine what goes on every day in the world of sport and the way in which its institutions operate, we find a whole range of identity-based affirmations and specific discrimination (based on gender, ethnic group and/or physical appearance) persisting. As it studies the way in which individuals come together to form a group, the sociology of the social dimension of sports clubs<sup>85</sup> may cast further light on the fight against discrimination. Two questions deserve to be investigated: do sports clubs "naturally" foster social links? And should preference go to a closed and "exclusive" social circle or to an open social circle in "mixed" clubs? Both models have their advantages and disadvantages: "exclusive" or "single-community" sport offers an opportunity to express an identity which society may reject, but it also encloses individuals in their community or category of origin. "Mixed" sport brings persons with disabilities and the able-bodied together, but may also give rise to inequality in a competitive sport based on physical performance. Clearly, when we give thought to the legitimate form of voluntary groupings and their role in integration, or to sport in terms of individuals or communities, we fuel different, and conflicting, political visions in the countries of Europe. These questions are important to the building of Europe, and sport in this case has to be regarded as a good medium for analysing European debate.

### **Social integration through sports clubs**

France, unlike the English-speaking countries, has always had a fear of bodies which act as intermediaries. For a very long time, the "republican ideal" considered any form of grouping which came between citizens and

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83. This analysis is part of a thesis referring to 15 clubs in Strasbourg (France) and relating to the creation by society of a social dimension for sports clubs.

84. PhD in sports sciences research team (EA 1342), University of Strasbourg (France).

85. The social dimension of sports clubs may be defined as all the – spontaneous or organised, collective or interpersonal – forms of relationship between members.



the nation to be inimical. This republican concept of the nation also makes national links the preferred form of social links.<sup>86</sup> How then can we overcome the theoretical clash between a traditionally Franco-centric French integration sociology, steeped in "state thinking", and a sociology of communities and ethnic minorities in which English-speaking research has traditionally predominated?

A "reversal of the stigma" began in the 1970s.<sup>87</sup> The crisis of the wage-earning society<sup>88</sup> caused cracks to appear in the welfare state, the edifice on which social cohesion had been based, and brought into doubt French society's capacity to continue as a whole linked together by relationships of interdependence. Among the alternatives to such state solidarity, associations ("institutions acting as intermediaries"<sup>89</sup> between the state and civil society, between the individual and the collective, between the single community and society as a whole) are regarded as particularly efficient means of reorganising social solidarity and "recreating the nation".<sup>90</sup> At European level, it was in the early 1980s that sports clubs started to be regarded as one of the remedies to the crisis of the social fabric. Under the combined effects of changes in the world of sport<sup>91</sup> and new dynamic processes (liberalisation of the market and withdrawal of state funding, increasing inequality, economic crisis, unemployment, early city riots, etc.), sport is increasingly expected to combat new forms of social exclusion. In the various reaches of the sport movement (Europe, state, health and sport ministries, national olympic committees, sports federations and clubs, etc.), stakeholders are firmly restating clubs' social purposes in terms of integration and socialisation. There is a consensus in Europe which is reflected in a speech made by the chairman of Strasbourg's municipal sports department: "It is in sport that differences are erased, ethnic, religious and any other differences. Differences have become invisible on the football field and the basketball court, they are erased by a natural process which does not happen anywhere else. [...] I have my own dream that sports clubs, and particularly the most difficult ones

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86. On this point, see Schnapper D., *La relation à l'autre. Au cœur de la pensée sociologique*, Paris, Gallimard, 1998.

87. Ion, J., "Affranchissements identitaires et engagements personnels", in Ion, J. (ed), *L'engagement au pluriel*, Saint-Etienne, Publications de l'université de Saint-Etienne, 2001, pp. 23-45, p. 32.

88. Castel, R., *La métamorphose de la question sociale. Une chronique du salariat*, Paris, Fayard, 1995.

89. Sainsaulieu, R., *Des sociétés en mouvement. La ressource des institutions intermédiaires*. Paris, Desclée de Brouwer, 2001, p. 16.

90. Rosanvallon, P., *La nouvelle question sociale. Repenser l'Etat-providence*, Paris, Seuil, Coll. Points, Essais, 1995, p. 13.

91. *Inter alia*, the emergence of "new sports" played outside the context of any sporting institution, the calling into question of the legitimacy of amateur sport's competitive model, and the gradual process by which sport has been taken over by the media and treated as a commodity.

in Strasbourg, could move beyond just sport and do other things, become meeting places...<sup>92</sup> A sports club is effectively “a group which plays its sport together”,<sup>93</sup> bringing individuals together on the basis of codes, symbols and ways of thinking and acting which function like a system of mutual recognition. Whatever their origins, all the members recognise each other, mainly in the collective social context (practices, places and rules) which make clear their club membership and enable the sport club to become a living community. It should not be thought, however, that all members of a sport club share in the interpersonal relations within it, or that the social dimension of the club eliminates exclusion based on social environment.

## **Inclusion in a network of sporting partners**

Within each sport club, members engage in the physical and/or sporting activities available in extremely close and intense relationships with other members. They do not, however, regard every member of their network of sports partners in the same light, without any differentiation. They usually consider some of their partners as friends, identifying more closely with some and regarding others as just those with whom they play their sport. It is therefore appropriate to distinguish, as Bidart<sup>94</sup> does, between different methods of social interaction: moving in social circles and getting involved in activities and groups among relatively undifferentiated members, or “choosing” specific partners with whom individual relationships exist. A network of partners in the sporting world has a structure based on this model, comprising a series of concentric circles cutting across disparities in the form, content and intensity of social interaction and group size.

## **The group engaging in sport together**

Within the group, social ties are based on the sport practised in the club. Relationships remain rooted in the place where they first arose, with opportunities for contact and the substance of social interaction remaining the same. In addition to bar room-style chatter and platitudes about current events and everyday life, the favourite topic of conversation is very often their sport. They systematically avoid any subject relating to their private lives. Relations between them remain superficial in the great majority of cases, as indicated by Marion, a member of the Elsau handball club in Strasbourg:

During training sessions we tend to talk about handball; we talk a lot of rubbish, of course. We only really talk about ourselves if we get together afterwards; then we talk about our lives outside handball

92. Extract from an interview of November 2007.

93. Callède, J.-P., *L'esprit sportif. Essai sur le développement associatif de la culture sportive*, Bordeaux, PUB/MSHA, 1987, p. 105.

94. Bidart, C., *L'amitié. Un lien social*, Paris, La découverte, 1997.

(the only thing we have in common), so I might talk a bit about my studies and what I get up to. We all know what each other does, but it is mainly after matches that we talk about ourselves. Even then, we don't get very personal and talk about private matters, or very rarely. As I said, not all of us are friends, so we don't really talk a lot about ourselves. The information we give out about ourselves is fairly superficial in fact.

This focus on sport during conversations and avoidance of facts which are too private during verbal interaction are self-defence measures enabling those concerned to ward off events with symbolic implications endangering self-esteem.<sup>95</sup> Furthermore, the very great majority of contact opportunities occur during social interaction organised by the club. Members of the team meet mainly for training and matches, and sometimes when club events or parties are held: meals, general meetings, outings, and so forth. Social events organised by the members themselves, in other words, outside official club events, are virtually non-existent. Sandra, a member of the Touring Plongée Strasbourg diving club told us:

I only see them on diving days, so not very much; the atmosphere is not really friendly, more sport-oriented. We are just members of the same club.

This first configuration is thus characterised by a relative dependence of relations on the social context in which they occur. Relationships remain closely linked to the group's common focus – its sporting activity – and group logic dominates the social dimension.

Generally speaking, whether the sporting activity is organised by the club or by the members themselves independently,<sup>96</sup> the groups which engage in their sport together are made up of individuals with similar sporting characteristics: level of ability, sporting context (competitive or leisure) and significance attached to the activity. On the other hand, comparable sociodemographic features, such as age and sex, are not "prerequisites" for relationships in this case, and practitioners tend to engage in their activity with other members who may be quite different in social terms. Arnaud is 15 and a member of Strasbourg Tennis Club; he told us that his partners were more often adults, although the previous year he had played more with a young man called Nicolas, who was 20 but who held the same tennis ranking at

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95. Goffman considers that social interaction is subject to rules which are both prescriptive and prohibitive. This "interaction order" encouraging some activities and prohibiting others safeguards the continuation of the social relationship. On this point, see Goffman, E., *Interaction Ritual*, Anchor Books, 1967.

96. Sports activities may be organised, in that clubs arrange group training sessions, or managed by the practitioners themselves, who set up their own network of partners to play with. The latter situation arises mainly in sports involving pairs (such as tennis and badminton).

the time. He did not particularly feel that he got on better with them than with boys of his own age, but he wanted to play at his own level of ability. Nicolas always concentrated on his game, whereas some boys sometimes played any old how, although when they concentrated he enjoyed playing with them. Adults always took it seriously. He also occasionally played with women from the first team, and fairly frequently with two called Perrine and Olivia (aged 21), whose level was roughly the same as his own. In circumstances like these, the sports club could be regarded as a place for open social interaction, where an individual's group of partners is concerned. Mixed play of this kind nevertheless remains infrequent; the social structure of groupings actually depends on the type of person attracted to the club, and on how the club has set up its sporting groups.<sup>97</sup>

### Networks of friendships

Within sports clubs, groups of practitioners usually involve as well networks of "chosen" friendships. Affinities are discovered with some partners, leading to links which go beyond participation in the "sporting group". More than just their sport may eventually be shared. As relations deepen between two, or more than two, partners, their opportunities for contact multiply and diversify. As self-organised social interaction develops, so does a "multiplexity"<sup>98</sup> of the content of social interaction. The process of qualitative improvement of the relationship gradually leads those involved to move it into different and increasingly private spheres. Marie, a member of the Strasbourg GR<sup>99</sup> club, said:

All of us girls get on well together! We hold parties, and we meet outside the GR context. I have been with them for years... [...] We talk about our lives at every training session; there are sessions every other day, and we all tell each other about our day, our life. We talk about personal things, but also about other things. [...] That is the atmosphere in GR; we laugh a lot during training, we share everything and we tell each other everything.

It is particularly among young sports persons that such close social relationships occur. When people start to attend sports clubs as children, they strike up true friendships in most cases. They tell all to some of their sporting partners, revealing aspects of their private lives usually kept hidden or secret.

97. In certain social situations, relations between group members may be more even. In practice, when a club places members in age or sex groups, sporting affinity is backed up by social affinity. Depending on the sport on offer, level of sporting excellence, neighbourhood and cost, sports clubs tend to attract certain population categories. They seldom span the whole range, generally limiting the mixed nature of social interaction in the sporting context.

98. For Degenne and Forsé, the concept of multiplexity means that a social bond encompasses a varied content, and the individual explores several kinds of relationship simultaneously. On this point, cf Degenne A, Forsé M, *Les réseaux sociaux*, Paris, Armand Colin, Coll. U, 1994.

99. Rhythmic gymnastics.

Adrien a 22-year-old member of the Touring Plongée Strasbourg diving club, describing his friendships, said:

We even talk about private matters and our relationships, friends tell me what they think about my relationship with my girlfriend, about their girlfriends, their families... These are real friends, and we talk about everything.

This distancing of sport-related and club-related aspects from social interaction is a very important factor in bringing people closer together, enabling relationships to become more individual and less dependent on their context. Features of the social interaction with friends that occurs in a sporting context are therefore a gradual increase in the independence of such relationships from the initial environment (the sport club which generates and organises opportunities for social interaction) and increasingly personalised social contacts; these are interpersonal relationships.

It nevertheless has to be emphasised that the creation of such "chosen" networks of relationships is neither random nor based solely on preference for the personal qualities of others. The greater intimacy of the social bond goes hand in hand with a decrease in the size of the network and an increase in the selectiveness of interpersonal relations. Without falling for the mechanical formula that any resemblance leads to affinities,<sup>100</sup> we can say that it does seem that sporting friendships tend to be struck up where similarities exist. Within sports clubs, affinities and friendships in particular are not randomly distributed in the context of social divisions, but correspond to concordant class, gender and age factors transcending sporting criteria. Our findings show a propensity to prefer affinity-based socialising with sports partners of the same sex and age group, in a comparable or similar socio-professional category. Our findings very much confirm the proverbial view that "birds of a feather flock together", as is the case in general when social relationships are forged. Andrée, 44, who attends aqua-aerobics sessions run by the Sport Azur Assurances club, told us:

I would say that all of us are about the same age; there are a lot of mothers with family duties when they get home at night, making it impossible for them to do much in the evenings. They go straight from their working environment to their family tasks, picking up and looking after children, carrying out household tasks, and so on. I had never really thought about it, but it is true that it is colleagues who are in this category. They are a little younger than myself, because I have children who are slightly older, and the members of the group are between 30 and 45 years old.

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100. More personal qualities and characteristics and particular circumstances play a part in the creation of networks of relationships of affinity. On the friendship-forming process, see Bidart, C., *L'amitié. Un lien social*, op. cit.

Although there are some affinities or friendships which cut across dividing lines, the likelihood of these is significantly less than that of people associating with others similar to them in one or more ways. On the basis of this tendency to socialise with those who are similar, it seems that individuals' social shaping has a decisive influence on the building of relationships of affinity. Indeed, like the social group to which a person belongs, sex and age group are social factors which give rise to practices, attitudes, values and representations which resemble each other in individuals with similar characteristics. These socially structured similarities engender a particular feeling of having things in common with other people, and facilitate the establishment of relationships of affinity.

Thus these few words about the creation of groups of partners in the sporting context suggest that we should avoid the trap of taking an overly uniform view of the social life that exists within French sports clubs. In practice, while to a certain extent social interaction in the sporting context may be open, the forming of "chosen" networks of relationships fits in with sociological symmetry. Relationships of affinity are not a result of social and socialising influences being put on hold. It is thus neither natural nor automatic for a sports club to take action against discrimination and to forge a social bond between groups of individuals differentiated socially, culturally, sexually or physically. Looking beyond the influence of individual factors, however, we should not forget that sports clubs are also socialising bodies which organise and "institutionalise" social interaction. Social situations may thus affect the development of friendly relationships and offer greater or lesser numbers of opportunities to establish more varied social ties. Thus, although the mixed social composition of groups of partners very rarely leads to a significant sharing of personal life, the mixed nature of the membership of sports clubs and their various sub-groups should be encouraged. This is how sports clubs can make their contribution to the fight against discrimination.

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Foreword: interview with *Lilian Thuram*.

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