

Fostering Integration through Sports? Analyzing the Long-Term Effect of Youth Sports Activities on Subsequent Labor Market Success of Migrants

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Sports has been proven to be beneficial for various different life course outcomes: It not only enhances well-being and health, engaging in sports also fosters educational success and labor market participation as it improves individuals' skills such as self-confidence and provides access to social networks. For these reasons, both researchers and social policymakers consider sports activities to be an effective tool for the integration of migrants and refugees in particular. There is, however, no sufficient research on the integrative effect of sports activities so far. Above all, it is still an open question whether the positive effects of sports endure over the life course and can therefore contribute to a long-term integration of migrants.

Adopting a life-course approach, this study investigates the long-term effects of youth sports activities on subsequent labor market success of migrants in Germany. It uses data from the Socio-Economic Panel. This representative household panel contains detailed information on youth sports activities along with information on respondents' further life course development. Thereby, this study focuses on the effect of sports on labor market success later on in life, as this is a main indicator of successful integration. The results confirm the beneficial effects of sports. Migrants who were involved in sports at the age of 17 are for example more likely to be employed at the end of their 20s compared to migrants who did no sports. However, this effect is only visible under certain conditions of youth sport participation.