

Physical Education Teachers with a Turkish Migration Background in Germany

An Interview Study Exploring Their Choice of Profession

Christa Kleindienst-
Cachay
Esther Mylius

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Christa Kleindienst-Cachay

Universität Bielefeld
Fakultät für Psychologie und
Sportwissenschaft
Universitätsstr. 25
D-33615 Bielefeld

Tel.: +49 (0) 521/106-2019

E-Mail: christa.cachay@uni-bielefeld.de

www.uni-bielefeld.de/psychologie-sport/



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Christa Kleindienst-Cachay & Esther Mylius

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1 Introduction – issue and background

Teachers with a migration background still represent a small minority in German schools.¹ It is estimated that their share amounts to a mere 3-6% compared with an overall migrant percentage of almost 20% of the total German population (cf. Georgi, Ackermann & Karakas, 2011, p. 11; Die Bundesregierung [the Federal Government], 2012, p. 659).² Although there is great cultural heterogeneity in German classrooms, with a considerable share of pupils having a migration background (29.2%, cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2012, p. 163), this heterogeneity has not yet been reflected in staffrooms.³ PE teachers are no exception here, even if one could imagine that this school subject – on account of its specific structure and its, especially non-verbal, possibilities of communication – might be particularly

¹ While in English-speaking countries one speaks of “minority teachers” or teachers from “black and minority ethnic communities” (BME teachers), the term “migration background” has established itself in Germany. According to the definition given by the Federal Office for Statistics (Statistisches Bundesamt) “persons with a migration background” are those belonging to the following groups: all persons who migrated after 1949 to the territory of the Federal Republic of Germany in its present borders as well as all foreigners born in Germany and all those born in Germany as German citizens with at least one parent who migrated to Germany after 1949 or was born as a foreigner in Germany (cf. Statistisches Bundesamt [Federal Office for Statistics] 2009, 6). This group includes resettlers from former Eastern bloc countries, the descendants of the ‘guest worker’ generation from the 1960s and 1970s, refugees and asylum seekers, as well as all other people with a foreign passport. The largest group of non-German origin comprises migrants from Turkey.

² Figures are taken from the 9th report of the Federal Government’s Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration on the situation of foreigners in Germany (June 2012).

³ This is true of many countries. See, for Great Britain: Carrington (2001); Benn (2002); Turner (2007); Flintoff (2015, pp. 190-191); for Norway: Dowling (2011, 207); for the USA: Kirby, Berends & Naftel (1999); Cochran-Smith (2004, p.5; Georgi, Ackermann & Karakas (2011, p. 24); for New Zealand: Fitzpatrick (2013, p.146); for Canada: Douglas & Halas (2013, p.462).

attractive for migrants.⁴ The lack of PE teachers with a migration background from the largest non-German ethnic group, i.e. migrants of Turkish origin (25 % of all foreign population)⁵, is especially acute – and this applies to female teachers even more than to male teachers. However, exact figures on all these issues are not available in Germany since because of its federalist structure, there is no regular comprehensive monitoring of education at the national level.

The lack of teaching staff with a migration background can, on the one hand, be regarded as a feature of social inequality that expresses itself in the fact that a conspicuously small percentage of people from migrant families find work in the German civil service or in a so-called ‘profession of trust’, to which belongs the teaching profession (Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung [Berlin Institute for Population and Development], 2009, p. 32).⁶

On the other, this lack constitutes an utter waste of human resources when one considers the special educational potentials which teachers with a migration background bring with them. In view of the high – and ever growing – numbers of children and adolescents with a migration background attending schools,⁷ can one really do without their proficiency in the languages spoken by the pupils, their intercultural competence and their individual experience as migrants – or without the great asset of trust which is shown to them not only by pupils with a migrant background but also by the pupils’ families?⁸

⁴ Using student data from Great Britain, Flintoff (2015, p. 191) shows that black and minority ethnic students choose PE as a teacher training course to an even lesser extent than other subjects. Cf. Benn (2002, p. 76), who comes to similar conclusions.

⁵ Almost 25% of the foreign population in Germany is of Turkish origin (cf. Die Bundesregierung 2012, p. 675).

⁶ ‘Professions of trust’ include, for example, the medical profession, lawyers, judges, police officers, and teachers (Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung, 2009, p. 32).

⁷ In many large cities of western Germany the percentage of children under the age of six with a migration background already exceeds 50%. Here the proportion of migrants at some primary and secondary schools can be up to 90% (cf. Stadt Bielefeld, Kommunalen Lernreport, 2014, pp. 24-25, p. 59).

⁸ On the self-evaluation of students with a migration background with regard to their intercultural competence, see Lengyel & Rosen (2012, pp. 78ff.). On the problems

What is more, especially PE teachers with a migration background might make a considerable contribution to furthering the sports socialisation of children and adolescents with a migration background by acting as role models. In view of the low degree of this group's participation in recreational sport as well as its highly selective choice of sports, this would seem urgently needed – and applies especially to girls with a migration background (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, 2007, pp. 19ff.; Mutz, 2009, pp. 108ff.; Kleindienst-Cachay, 2011, pp. 94-95).

What are the reasons, then, for their conspicuous absence from the teaching profession, and in particular from that of PE teacher? In which ways might it be possible to remove existing barriers to their access to the profession? Or the other way round: which conditions induce young people to choose the profession and would facilitate this choice among young people with a migration background? From the results of sports-related socialisation research among female migrants (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, 2007; 2011), it may be inferred that long-term active membership of a sports club has a favourable effect on bringing about those conditions which are crucial for choosing Sport as a university course for aspiring teachers.

In a study carried out by the University of Bielefeld using qualitative interviews these questions were explored for the first time. To prepare the interviews, a frame of reference was drawn up using the relevant research literature, with the help of which those factors were examined which deterred young migrants from studying to become teachers and which, on the other hand, perhaps might encourage them to study Sport and Physical Education at university.

of stress caused by being ascribed the role „intercultural mediator“ see Knappik & Dirim (2012) and Rotter (2014), who in this connection speaks of an “erosion of the borders of teachers’ roles” and the “essentialisation of a migrant background” (see pp. 284-285). Flintoff (2015, p. 198) also points to the dangers of stereotyping teachers with a migration background in such a way.

2 The Study's Theoretical Frame of Reference

2.1 Motives for choosing a career as a Physical Education teacher

Students studying to become teachers⁹ who choose Physical Education as a university subject are as rule drawn from groups who have already been very active in sport in their childhood and adolescence, have been successful in school PE and have, for the most part, been members of a sports club (Baur, 1981; Weiss & Kiel, 2010, p. 310; Dowling, 2011, p. 211; Flintoff, 2015, p. 198). In addition, a considerable number of them have belonged to a team taking part in competitions, and this applies to 85% of male students and 68% of female students (Baur, 1981, p. 112). Furthermore, most of them refer to PE as having been their favourite school subject (Baur, 1981, p. 129). Thus, almost all interviewees from various studies name their own involvement in sport, which they have always experienced as something positive, as their most important motive in choosing to study PE (Blumenthal, 1974; Gerbig, Calcagni & Baillod, 1994; Baillod & Moor, 1997, p. 45; Dowling, 2011, pp. 211-212). However, as is the case with prospective teachers studying other school subjects, educational motives also play a role (cf. Baur, 1981, p. 128; Weiss & Kiel, 2010, p. 310); Flintoff, 2015, p. 198). The reasons given for this are often their positive experience gathered as instructors or coaches in the area of children's and youth sport (cf. Baur, 1981, p. 128; Baillod & Moor, 1997, p. 47).

Playing sport in a club has further consequences with regard to the choice of PE teaching as a career. In sports clubs, for example, certain qualifications are gained which are essential for studying Physical Education at university successfully, and these include sports motor abilities and skills (cf. Baur, 1981, p. 116). Moreover, sports clubs impart a mutual, sports-related canon of perceptions and values, in which, for example, doing sport is regarded as "healthy" and

⁹ In contrast to teachers in many English-speaking countries, teachers at all types of school in Germany teach at least two subjects. These two school subjects are the subjects they have studied at university.

“educationally valuable” (cf. Baur, 1981, pp. 114-115). In this way, finally, socialisation in a sports club leads to the development of the specific “habitus” of a sportsman or sportswoman, which can be identified in most sports students (cf. Klinge, 2000, pp. 448-449). Because of the imprint it leaves on them through competitive sport and contest, together with the long years of training and accustomisation to being strict with oneself, this habitus is a great advantage for successfully completing one’s studies, at least in the practical courses. All these factors indicate that sustained sporting activity in childhood and adolescence – preferably in the competitive environment of a sports club – furthers young people’s wish to study physical education. One might assume that this also applies to young migrants.

However, it must be borne in mind that young people with a migration background, especially girls, are still significantly underrepresented in German sports clubs. They have a membership rate of 28% (or even as low as 20.5% in the case of girls of Turkish origin) compared with 42% for German girls (cf. Mutz, 2009, p. 110). In view of these figures, it is important to discover how migrant men and women who have chosen a career as PE teachers found their way into sport (or into a sports club) in order to be able to draw conclusions about the factors which either encourage young migrants, whether men or women, to embark on a career as a PE teacher or deter them from doing so.

Finally, one must also consider the part played by role models in the family or the social environment in choosing a career as a physical education teacher. This is the case, for example, in a quarter of the PE teachers interviewed in a Swiss study (cf. Baillod & Moor, 1997, p. 48).

2.2 Language requirements and academic qualifications for taking up a teaching career

The most important prerequisite for university study is a successful school career and passing the final school-leaving exam, the *Abitur*.¹⁰ Since, however, the proportion of migrant children who qualify to attend a *Gymnasium* [grammar school], i.e. the type of school leading to the *Abitur* exam, is considerably lower than that of German children (26 % compared with 52 %), many young migrants have no direct access to university study and thus to a teaching career.¹¹ To a large extent this is due to the fact that when leaving primary school, children from migrant families have at their disposal a weaker command of written German, which only gradually improves in the course of their school careers. But selection in Germany's three-tier school system – and thus access to the *Gymnasium* – takes place as early as ages 10 or 11 (cf. Klieme et. al., 2010, pp. 223ff.).¹² The (frequently) weaker language skills of young migrants may be attributed to the fact that the language spoken at home is mostly not German but the language of the family's country of origin as well as even a further foreign language in many cases. Thus, for them, German is a second language – with all the disadvantages for their education that this brings with it (cf. Chlosta & Ostermann, 2008, pp. 20ff).

Thus, at the end of primary school (i.e. the time when children are allocated to the different branches of the three-tier secondary school

¹⁰ The *Abitur* exam is the German equivalent of British A-levels, i.e. the school-leaving exam at the end of the sixth form, which qualifies pupils for university study.

¹¹ 52% of German but only 26% of all migrant pupils (and as little as 18% of those of Turkish origin) attended a *Gymnasium* in the school year 2010/11 (cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2012, p. 164). A university place was achieved directly (i.e. with the *Abitur*) by students with a migration background less frequently than those with no migration background (77% v.83%), (cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2012, p. 239).

¹² Germany has a three-tier secondary school system: the *Hauptschule* with the lowest level of academic achievement, the *Gymnasium* with the highest level and the *Realschule* in between. In some federal states a fourth type of school exists called the *Gesamtschule* (which is comparable with the comprehensive school). Like the *Gymnasium*, the *Gesamtschule* has a sixth form, leading to the *Abitur* exam.

system according to their academic performance) many quite gifted children from migrant families are sent to the type of school with the lowest level of academic achievement, the *Hauptschule*, on account of their written language deficits in German as a school subject. This makes their way to the *Abitur* exam considerably more difficult, if not impossible.¹³ In several federal states it is also possible to pass the *Abitur* by attending a *Realschule* and subsequently the sixth form at a *Gymnasium* or a *Gesamtschule* (or by attending a *Gesamtschule* from the start), but this takes longer and is tied to certain criteria with regard to the grades achieved in the exams at the end of *Klasse 10* (equivalent to Year 11 in England). In these exams written language skills again play a major role (cf. Verordnung über die Ausbildung und die Abschlussprüfungen in der Sekundarstufe I [Legal Provisions Relating to Education and School-leaving Examinations at Level One of Secondary Education], 2014, pp. 7-8). Although at present more young migrants obtain the special, subject-related *Abitur* exam (*Fachhochschulreife*, which allows them to study a certain, usually technical, subject at university) than in former years, a distinctly smaller number of them obtain the general *Abitur* exam (*Allgemeine Hochschulreife*, allowing them to choose the subject they wish to study, as well as to study to become a teacher) compared with German school leavers (cf. Die Bundesregierung 2012, p. 239).

All in all, then, it is not surprising that in Germany the proportion of university students with a migration background is still very low: in the summer semester of 2009 (the academic year at German universities is divided into two semesters) the percentage amounted to scarcely 11% whereas the percentage of immigrants in the overall population of young people (between 15 and 24 years) amounts to 25% (cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2012, p. 659). Further, student statistics show that many migrants do not successfully complete their studies: the success rate among students with a migration background amounted to only 49% in 2009, compared with a figure of 70% among those with no migration background (Konferenz der für Integration

¹³ In 2010/11 the proportion of pupils attending a *Hauptschule* among the non-German population amounted to 33% – far larger than the corresponding proportion (12%) of *Hauptschule* pupils among the German population (cf. Die Bundesregierung, 2012, pp. 164-165).

zuständigen Ministerinnen und Minister / Senatorinnen und Senatoren der Länder [Conference of the ministers/ senators of the German federal states responsible for integration], 2011, p.47).

Gomolla & Radtke have coined the phrase “institutional discrimination” (2002) for the phenomenon that children and adolescents with a migration background in Germany are overrepresented at the lowest level of the three-tier secondary school system. What they mean by this is that since the selection process at the end of primary school is based on academic achievement and at the same time is strongly language orientated, an ethnically structured categorisation of school pupils takes place quasi “institutionally” (and not based on selection procedures that are accounted for individually). Primary school teachers play a decisive role in this process since they rarely give pupils with a migration background a recommendation for a *Gymnasium* on account of their – in many cases – still poor written language skills at this point in their school career (i.e. at the age of ten), or on account of their (supposedly) educationally alienated family background (cf. Gomolla & Radtke, 2007, p. 229; Edelman, 2007, p. 33; Fereidooni, 2011).¹⁴ Georgi, Ackermann & Karakas (2011) have provided evidence that many teachers with a migration background were affected by this kind of selection. The teachers they interviewed called this recommendation by primary school teachers at the end of Year Four (the last year of primary school in Germany; the pupils are then eleven years old) a “key decision in setting the course for one’s later career” for young migrants, especially with regard to a teaching career (Georgi, Ackermann & Karakas, 2011, p. 229).

Experiencing such situations in their own educational careers and recognising the educational disadvantages that affect migrant children and adolescents seems to have had not only a deep and defining

¹⁴ Similar reasons for the lack of teachers from immigrant families are also to be found in the USA: greater difficulty in getting into university due to institutional discrimination, lack of support from schools, as well as the lack of appreciation and negative attitude of teaching staff towards pupils with a migration background (cf. Kirby, Berends & Naftel (1998); Quioco & Rios (2000); Cochran-Smith (2004).

influence but also an inspirational effect on migrant students who have chosen to study to become teachers. In her study of students with a Turkish background who were training to become teachers Sanjin Selimovic discovered that it was especially important for this group to act one day as a role model for pupils with a migration background, in particular with regard to successfully completing their education and gaining qualifications (cf. Selimovic, 2008, pp. 67ff.).¹⁵ Offering their own academic and career development as examples, they wish to show in schools that equality of opportunity does exist and that it is possible, even for a migrant, to become a teacher in Germany. Moreover, the interviewees reported that it was of particular importance to them to teach social and intercultural skills as well as to further pupils from socially disadvantaged families with a poor education as intensively as possible (cf. Selimovic, 2008, pp. 67ff.).¹⁶ With regard to Selimovic's last-named finding, Bandorski & Karakasoglu arrive at similar conclusions: students with a migration background studying to become teachers are to a greater extent "sensitive to inequality as well as pedagogically motivated" than students with no migration background (2013, p. 152).

2.3 Influence exerted by parents and the migrant community

Student statistics reveal that when migrants have managed to secure a place at university, they choose other subjects to study (such as Business Administration or Law) than those leading to a career in education (cf. Middendorff et al., 2012, p. 544).¹⁷ Thus, every fourth student in Germany with a migration background studies Economics-related subjects or Law. Among German students the corresponding ratio is only one in five (cf. Middendorff et al., 2012, p. 532). On the

¹⁵ See, similarly, Carrington (2011, p. 10); Bandorski & Karakasoglu, (2013, p. 142).

¹⁶ See also Flintoff (2015, p. 198).

¹⁷ See also Cochran-Smith (2004, p. 5), who found that black and ethnic minority students in the USA are mostly enrolled in business majors and not in teacher education programmes. See also Harrison & Belcher (2013, p.742) for the US: "Although the number of students of color are increasing in colleges and universities, there has been no corresponding increase in the number of teachers of color."

other hand, 12% of young Germans who go to university after passing the *Abitur* exam choose courses with the aim of becoming teachers; the corresponding figure among young migrants is a mere 6% (cf. Strasser & Steber, 2010, p. 106). One of the reasons for this is perhaps that many parents want their children to choose courses that will lead to a career considered by the migrant community to bring prestige. This does not seem to be the case with a teaching career.

A further factor which acts as a deterrent is that many migrants tend to have a negative attitude towards the teaching profession.¹⁸ Although in many of the migrants' countries of origin, especially in Turkey, teachers belong to a respected profession, it is still considered to be one that is poorly paid. That German teachers' salaries are quite adequate and that they can expect quite a generous pension does not seem to offer sufficient motivation.

Added to this is the fact that since 2002 it is forbidden for women teachers to wear a headscarf in many federal states, including North Rhine-Westphalia, the state in which the present study was carried out. This ban has deterred many Muslim women who wear a headscarf from studying to become teachers or even from seeking employment as teachers on completion of their studies since they have discovered that applications from such graduates have been rejected (cf. Adelt, 2014, pp. 335-336).¹⁹ This ban, it is true, applies exclusively to women graduates and teachers, but the high ratio of women in the teaching profession, particularly at primary schools, as well as the fact

¹⁸ This is confirmed by results arrived at by Carrington et al (2001, p. 10) for Great Britain: perceived low status and rewards as well as the negative image of teaching deter many minority students from choosing teaching as a career.

¹⁹ Until 2015 such bans were in force in eight of the 16 German federal states (cf. Wiese, 2008, p. 28). In the spring of 2015 the Federal Constitutional Court declared the headscarf ban for women teachers to be unconstitutional. The federal states were instructed to amend their school statutes. In North-Rhine-Westphalia this amendment was put into effect in June 2015 (cf. press release of the Federal Constitutional Court No. 14/2015 of 13th March 2015:

http://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/DE/Presse/presse_node.html

On the negative consequences of Muslim girls' non-compliance with 'dress codes' on their participation in sport and on choosing a career as PE teacher, see the studies by Carroll & Hollinshead (1993) and Benn & Dagkas (2006) from Great Britain.

that at schools in all federal states there is a considerable lack of sports lessons given by women PE teachers (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, Kastrup & Cachay, 2008), makes the headscarf ban in the teaching profession appear rather counter-productive. Especially Muslim women would be of great benefit as PE teachers for schools since they could also act as sporting role models for girls with a Muslim background.

A further obstacle may be attributed to the fact that, to enter the teaching profession, applicants must have German nationality (German teachers are *Beamte*, i.e. with a similar status to British civil servants). The alternative is to be employed under a salaried employee contract, which, however, has considerable disadvantages. In the past, taking on German nationality was unacceptable for migrants from Turkey, for example, since this meant that they had to renounce their Turkish nationality. This was thought to entail a loss of valuable close bonds with the society they had been part of and was thus rejected by many migrants. It was not until July 2014 that the German government decided to allow the children of Turkish migrants born and raised on German soil to have dual nationality under certain circumstances.²⁰

2.4 Potential effects of sustained involvement in sport on communicative, social and personal skills

Since, for the great majority of migrant children and adolescents, German language proficiency must be acquired in other social settings than the family, different types of contact with the German population (for example in kindergartens and schools, with neighbours and friends) are of great significance. Hartmut Esser, the migration researcher, considers interethnic networks, no matter whether of a formal or informal nature, to be indispensable for furthering migrants' language skills (Esser, 2006, p. 141). It can be argued that sports clubs, too – which as volunteering organisations are accessible to everyone – are to be regarded as social networks in which young migrants are able to form relationships with German children,

²⁰ See “Option obligation amended. Dual nationality possible”:
<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Artikel/2014/04/2014-04-07-staatsangehoerigkeit.html>

adolescents and adults, make friends and improve their language and social skills through all kinds of communication processes. It is a well-known fact from social research that a joint hobby, and especially doing sport together, leads to a significant increase in the number of social contacts one has (cf. Becker & Häring, 2012, p. 266). Furthermore, active membership of a sports club can result in lasting interethnic friendships, which in turn may have a stimulating effect on further integration processes (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, Cachay & Bahlke, 2012, p. 234).

Besides improving communicative and social skills, becoming involved in a sports-related environment, especially in competitive sports, can further the development of important personal qualities such as self-confidence and achievement motivation (cf. Conzelmann, 2008; Seyda, 2011). There is real evidence to suppose that subcomponents of the psychological construct ‘achievement motivation’ (such as the motive to achieve success) are transferable from sport to other areas (such as education); and this is especially the case when young people take part in competitions, involving many years of regular training. This is because they experience their skills and abilities more intensely when associated with competition (cf. Willimczik & Rethorst, 1988). These effects are of special importance to migrants, who mostly come from educationally alienated backgrounds and often face difficulties and setbacks during their school careers. That migrants attribute this kind of positive effect to long-term participation in sport can be seen in the results of an interview study with Muslim women in competitive sports (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, 2011, pp.97ff.).

In the development of individual motivation – whether to succeed in competitions or to aspire to a certain career – role models play a significant role. Migrants are scarcely likely, however, to have anyone in their families who might inspire them to take up an academic career; hence, they need role models outside the family with whom they can identify and who are able to help them develop a motivation to achieve which is sustainable enough for them to make their way successfully along the lengthy and sometimes tedious educational path

to a teaching career. Because of this the present study examines the extent to which the educational and professional goals of their (mostly indigenous German) sports club friends, as well as ‘significant others’ (for example at school or at the sports club), contribute towards raising levels of educational aspirations among migrants.

3 Construction and Implementation of the Study

Against the backdrop of the theory-grounded insights outlined above, interview guidelines were drawn up for problem-centred interviews with narrative sections (cf. Flick, 2006, pp. 161ff.; Mayring 2010). During the interviews respondents were asked to give their personal estimation of the influence that various factors had on their choice of course(s) for university study. By asking open questions and urging the respondents to “narrate”, the attempt was made to incorporate other influences in order to avoid a one-sided perspective. The interviews, which lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, were then recorded, transcribed and analysed. All names and other identifying signs were encoded so as to ensure the anonymity of the respondents. The interviews were analysed according to the criteria previously drawn up and using qualitative content analysis based on Mayring (cf. Mayring 2010). Insights which first emerged in the interviews, i.e. which had not been included in the guidelines, were taken into consideration in the later interviews and added to the catalogue of criteria for the analysis. This enabled us to widen the scope of the assumptions presented in the theoretical frame of reference.

The interviewees and their families came from Turkey. Our decision to restrict the respondents to this group was taken for the following reasons: firstly, Turks represent the largest ethnic group of non-German origin among migrants in Germany. Secondly, Turkish migrants form the most disadvantaged group in terms of education (cf. Kemper, 2015, p. 99), i.e. the number of Turks who take and pass the general *Abitur* exam is low while the number of those who leave school without any qualifications at all is high (cf. Kemper, 2015, pp. 99-100). Thirdly, few Turkish migrants (both male and female) are members of sports clubs. And, finally, they are scarcely represented at all among students studying to become PE and sports teachers.

Recruiting respondents for the interviews, which took place in 2013, proved to be rather difficult due to, for one thing, the very small number of PE teachers of Turkish origin and, for another, the fact that the category “migration background” is not used by education authorities. Our inquiries, sent to all schools in the administrative district of Detmold in North Rhine-Westphalia, eventually led to our receiving the names of ten PE teachers, predominantly male, whom we asked if they were willing to take part in an interview. Six of them agreed to our request. Our choice fell on two women and two men, whose ages at the time of the interviews were between 31 and 35.

All four teachers taught at secondary school Level One (Years 5 to 10 in Germany) in North Rhine-Westphalia, a federal state with a particularly large number of migrants from Turkey (cf. Berlin-Institut für Bevölkerung und Entwicklung, 2009). They had been teaching for between one and seven years as fully qualified teachers, i.e. after their post-university practical teacher training (*Referendariat*). This ensured that the interviewees belonged to closely related cohorts with regard to age and training, and thus had experienced a comparable ‘career path’ on the way to becoming teachers. All four came from ‘typical’ migrant worker families; that is to say their fathers had or had had occupations on the lower rungs of the occupational ladder.²¹ At the time of the interviews their mothers did not work outside the home. Neither of their parents had any more than a rudimentary command of written German. (One of the women teachers interviewed described her mother as “illiterate”.) The language spoken at home was Turkish (or Kurdish), which is viewed as a considerable disadvantage for a young migrant’s school career (Kemper, 2015, p. 301). Two of the interviewees were born in Germany (T.L. and T.P.) while P.X. came to Germany at the age of four and P.B. as late as at the age of 15. They were all qualified to teach at Level One of secondary schools (*Hauptschule*, *Realschule* and *Gesamtschule*) and at the time of the interviews they taught at the following types of school:

Teacher T. L. (female): *Gesamtschule* (comprehensive school)

²¹ For example as unskilled or semi-skilled workers in industry or in the service industry. On occupational scales see Treimann (1979).

Teacher P. X. (female): *Realschule* (middle-level secondary school)
Teacher T. P. (male): *Hauptschule* (lower-level secondary school)
Teacher P. B. (male): *Realschule*

Before starting to study at university, they had all been active in competitive sport in German (and not migrant) sports clubs, i.e. they were part of predominantly German-speaking social networks. Teacher T.L. and Teacher P.B. had played football while Teacher T.P. had played handball and Teacher P.X. had been active in martial arts.²² Three of them had even held certain positions such as instructors, coaches or referees. At the time of the interviews two of them still worked in a voluntary capacity in their clubs: P.B. was still active as a player and T.L. as a referee.

4 Results

4.1 Factors encouraging involvement in sport in childhood and adolescence

Even before joining a sports club Teacher T.L. played football in the park for fun with her elder brothers and sisters as well as other children from the neighbourhood. She joined a football club because some of the children of this group were already members and regularly took part in points matches which they talked about enthusiastically. P.B., too, frequently played sports informally in his childhood, which was spent in Turkey. In the interview he reported that when he came to Germany, he joined a football club mainly because, compared with other sports, football was not very expensive and his family could not afford to pay high fees for martial arts classes, for instance. Teacher T.P.'s family lived next to a sports arena and his attention was soon drawn to the large numbers of spectators attending sports events at the weekend and, eventually, to handball; consequently, when he was six years old, his father enrolled him at a

²² Three of them have thus taken up the sports typical of migrants in Germany, whose choice of sports is confined to football and martial arts. This is true even for women (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, Cachay & Bahlke, 2012, pp. 129ff.). In the USA, too, black and minority pupils and students prefer particular sports, especially football, basketball and track sprinting (see Harrison & Belcher 2013, p. 744).

local handball club. In the case of teacher P.X., too, it was the proximity of the taekwondo training centre to her home that made her join the club, as well as the fact that two elder siblings and other close relatives practised this sport.

Two of the interviewees joined their clubs when they were at primary school and one further interviewee in the second class of secondary school. Two of them were mainly encouraged by their parents or other close relatives and another through her peer group. These two factors influencing young people to take up sport are typical of children's socialisation into sport in Germany (cf. Brinkhoff & Sack, 1999, pp. 102-103). P.B., who first came to Germany as an adolescent, reported on the other hand that he enrolled in a sports club himself – a procedure that is not unusual for older adolescents who often lack support from their parents in this regard (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, 2007, p. 31).

4.2 Embedding oneself in a communicative network through sport

All four interviewees reported positive effects of their involvement in sport as a member of a sports club in terms of improving their German language skills, although the influences with regard to both intensity and the areas of language competence differ. For example, when asked whether his membership in a sports club had had any effect on his German language proficiency, teacher T.P. answered with an unqualified 'yes', followed by an elaboration:

If I hadn't joined the sports club then and been to a day-care group, I would never have gone to grammar school and I wouldn't be a teacher now (Teacher T.P., *Hauptschule*).²³

He thus immediately links the question of foreign language ability with his academic achievement and ascribes to the handball club and to the day-care group a decisive influence. He had been to the care group since he was three years old because both his parents worked,

²³ All the citations from the interviews are taken from Mylius (2013).

and he joined the handball club when he was six. He remained a member there until adulthood.

T.L. also reported that the sports club was a factor that helped to improve her German and “definitely influenced her as well” (T.L. *Gesamtschule*). She emphasised, as did T.P and P.X., that when she started school, she could already speak German relatively well; but through contact with German children and adolescents of the same age as well as with adults in the sports club, she was able to raise the level of her German quite considerably with regard to vocabulary and grammar. This was confirmed in the interview with P.X., who also pointed to the example set by the older sports club members and the way they spoke:

I could speak German, but it still helped a lot because (...) we also had the older ones who were there and, you know, who had studied at university and so on at the club. (...). And I saw them too as role models, and they could express themselves differently than someone in the second year of secondary school (Teacher P.X., *Realschule*).

Teacher P.B., who had no knowledge of German when he emigrated from Turkey at the age of 15, reported that the sports club was of very great importance for him in learning the new language. Although his comrades at the football club talked about “everyday topics”, the conversations were excellent opportunities to practise speaking, which he urgently needed at that time:

The fear of making mistakes (...) got less and less as time went by. Because there [in the football club – the authors] you had to speak German. And even if I made a mistake – everybody knew me. They never got worked up about it. They never made fun of me (Teacher P.B., *Realschule*).

Furthermore, all interviewees stressed the fact that contact with members of the sports club had helped them gain German friends of the same age so that they gradually became embedded in networks of friends, whether as children or adolescents.²⁴

I only had German friends. (...) And only from sport. (...) While I was at primary school, I only had friends from sport (...). And later,

²⁴ Many adolescents with a migration background have few or even no friends at all outside their migrant community (cf. Dollase & Ridder, 1999). Contacts in sports groups are therefore felt to be extremely valuable (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay & Kuzmik, 2007, p. 13.)

when I was at grammar school, then I had schoolmates of course. And then my friends from sport as well. But I only had German friends. I never had Turkish friends, never (Teacher T.P. *Hauptschule*).²⁵

Teacher P.B. attaches so much importance to the social contacts acquired through the sports club because these enabled him – as someone who emigrated at a relatively late age – to gain a better understanding of the way of life, the mores and the customs which constitute life in Germany and which he calls “culture”:

And naturally the club helped me a lot. Because there I got into contact even more with the culture. And there I got to know a few people who I met up with now and again. In that respect it helped me a lot (Teacher P.B., *Realschule*).

4.3 Experiencing competence – Strengthening self-confidence – Developing a motivation to achieve

Beyond furthering language abilities, sport can also lead to processes of social recognition – that is, as long as successes can be recorded.

Sport, for example, is something that integrates everybody. And especially my professor at university – what he said is right: “In sport people leave their status behind in the changing rooms.” When I sometimes play badminton with the pupils on Fridays – someone beats me, I beat someone else. (...). Then I really forget that I’m the teacher. (...). And that’s the same whether in PE lessons or in sports clubs. I go in, and nobody says: “You’re Turkish” – or some such thing. They say things like: “You’re a good player” or “You’re a bad player” (Teacher P.B., *Realschule*).

Through the possibility outlined here of being able to change roles, sport is an ideal ‘arena’ to gain social recognition. And this is especially true with regard to migrants, who are often labelled “the others” and, because of the deficits they have in certain areas (e.g. language, school achievement), they have scarcely any chance of

²⁵ The positive effects of early membership in predominantly “white” cohorts are pointed out by Flintoff (2015, p. 199) in her study on British black and minority ethnic PE students, who apparently feel less “out of place” in university PE courses than minority students who did not have this experience.

shaking off the role of “underdog” ascribed to them from outside (and also the role they have come to anticipate).

Experiencing social recognition through their sporting achievements is stressed by all four interviewees as being of great importance to them. Here, it is above all participating in competitive sport that they find highly valuable, particularly because of its role in building self-confidence and assurance.

I think, first and foremost, it [sport – the authors] was good for my self-confidence. (...) At any rate, I came home sometimes with a trophy. And that did a lot to improve my self-confidence – especially because it was a competition (Teacher P.X., *Realschule*).

Building self-confidence in this way and developing trust in one’s abilities is attributable in large measure to the fact that in sport individuals repeatedly face situations in which they must show what they are capable of – and doing so in public.

Being the centre of attention a lot – something I really don’t like doing if I can help it But I was forced to, and then somehow or other I just had to get rid of my shyness. (...) In tournaments, in competitions there are hundreds of people, and you stand there and have to fight and be so self-confident ... you know ... that you manage to get your place or so. And, yes, there were defeats, too ... you had to cope with it one way or another. But I think that did a lot for my self-confidence. (...) And at the club as well, when you trained ... you were in the centre ... and you did your martial arts training, and all the other were watching you (...) (Teacher P.X., *Realschule*).

Moreover, if athletes want to be successful in sport, they must learn to cope with defeats. In this way, they gradually build up a certain threshold for frustration which enables them to face situations requiring best performance in future, too. Teacher P.X. thought that developing such self-assurance made a major contribution to her success in passing her exams:

In my *Referendariat*, as soon as a head of department sat at the back, or even a supervisor when we were taking a class together. Of course, exams and things ... that’s always something different. But

it definitely helped ... all in all ... to develop self-confidence (Teacher P.X., *Realschule*).²⁶

Teacher T.P. has a similar view, which he expressed as follows:

[Competitive sport – the authors] leaves its mark, and that’s probably why I’m so relaxed in my job at the moment (Teacher T.P. *Hauptschule*).

All the interviewees were convinced that the experience of achievement after long years of training in sport had a great influence on the willingness to work hard at school and university – and on increasing the level of their educational aspirations in general. P.X. and T.L. emphasised in particular the long years of effort one invests in relation to the step-by-step ‘rewards’ that one gains in sport:

This kind of year-long constant effort to be disciplined in sport. And that’s how I went about my homework (Teacher P.X., *Realschule*).

Because I had really lots of success playing football, I wanted to be successful at school, too. (...) Ambition was always, like, there. And, well, I always had my goals for certain stages, sort of thing ... and always dreamed about something to do with them. (...) First, it was, like, grammar school, and in football it was the Cup. And then came university, and in football it was playing in a higher league ... and so on. They both ran parallel with each other, I must admit. I really believe that the one went hand in hand with the other – career and sport (Teacher T.L. *Gesamtschule*).

In this respect it seems as though, through sport, the kind of outlook developed among the interviewees that in psychology is termed “delay of gratification” (cf. Mischel & Ayduk, 2004) and which is considered the prerequisite for all long-term endeavours and aspirations (e.g. at school, at university and in one’s profession).

Asked whether there was a possible connection between the willingness to make an effort in sport and the same willingness in other areas of life, Teacher P.B. gave an affirmative answer (“yes, definitely”) but then added a qualifying remark:

²⁶ The *Referendariat* is a post-university, practically orientated phase of teacher training in Germany which ends with extensive practical and theoretical exams and is felt to be very stressful by the great majority of trainee teachers.

Well, I was always ambitious, ever since Turkey. Ambition has been my strong point. Without ambition I wouldn't be sitting here as a teacher (Teacher P.B., *Realschule*).

Two other interviewees put forward similar views:

I think I was always ambitious, even when I was in kindergarten – always a team player, but ambitious as well (Teacher T.P., *Hauptschule*).

I was always sort of – I know it sounds a bit funny – but sort of a “winner type”. I always just wanted to be the winner ... wanted to score the most goals. (...) And, well, I think it has a bit to do with it that I was successful in sport and at school as well (Teacher T.L., *Gesamtschule*).

These narratives of three of the four interviewees suggest that one cannot ascribe the development of these respondents' high motivation to achieve to their involvement in competitive sport alone; one must also hypothesise an interaction between a specific disposition to willingly face situations in which high performance is required on the one hand – and active membership of a sports club, combined with participation in competitions and remaining active in the sports system over many years on the other. Thus, sport offers talented and willing young people (with or without a migration background) the opportunity to gratify their need to demonstrate their ability in situations which demand high performance. In the case of migrant children and adolescents, the possibility of experiencing – at least temporarily – a ‘change of roles’ through sporting success might act as an additional motivator.

Beyond strengthening self-confidence and instilling a motivation to perform well, playing sports intensively in a club makes it easier to acquire the motor skills indispensable for studying sport successfully at university. All four interviewees, for example, reported that they would never have had the courage to take up sport as a university subject either without their long years of training and their experience of taking part in competitions or without the development of important sport motor abilities and skills that this commitment brought with it.

4.4 Factors which inspire a career in education

All the respondents considered the experience of training children and adolescents in a sports club to be an important factor in motivating them to choose a career as a PE teacher. Also named as factors were role models (for example, an elder brother who was already a teacher in the case of P.B.), as well as giving private tuition (in the case of T.L.). Moreover, in every interview a strong interest was noticeable in furthering as far as possible pupils who were disadvantaged in an educational sense.

4.5 Barriers

The factors named by the interviewees as deterrents to taking up a career in Physical Education were, first and foremost, the barriers connected with the “institutional discrimination” prevailing in education (cf. Gomolla & Radtke 2007): early selection through Germany’s three-tier secondary school system; the lack of a stimulating setting for pupils in the *Hauptschule* on account of the pre-selection of pupils from advantaged social backgrounds and higher achievement levels for other types of school; a lack of targeted language tuition; and, finally, inadequate counselling by teachers, coupled with a lack of parents’ knowledge about the various sorts of educational opportunities in Germany. These barriers are impressively documented in the educational paths actually taken by our respondents: only one of them managed to attend a *Gymnasium* after primary school (which he ascribed to his intensive German language socialisation in day care and then at a sports club). One of the interviewees refused to accept the official recommendation given to her by her primary school teacher that she should go to a *Realschule* since she felt that this was unfair when she compared her marks to those of other German children. She then went to a *Gymnasium* (without any recommendation from her primary school) and completed her school career there right up to the *Abitur* exam without any interruption. The other two interviewees took an indirect route to the *Abitur* exam: their good marks at *Hauptschule* in one case and

Realschule in the other allowed them to join the sixth form at a comprehensive school.

5 Conclusion

Although our study cannot be considered representative, it contributes nevertheless to our understanding of how migrants might be integrated into the PE teaching profession. On the one hand, it reveals certain things that sports students with and without a migration background have in common, for example with regard to the factors that motivate young people to study sport and choose a teaching career.²⁷ On the other hand, it also documents the difficulties which young migrants face on their way to becoming a PE teacher.

In the case of migrants, too, major impulses for the choice of a teaching career in Physical Education come from long years of involvement in sport, including competitive sport. Both the fact that they played sports themselves and their wish to impart certain things to children and adolescents in PE lessons are ultimately the deciding factors which make young people choose Physical Education at university. Our respondents, though, also placed great emphasis on the motive of imparting not only knowledge, combined with a wish to act as “role models” for disadvantaged children and adolescents, motivating them to strive for a successful career both at school and in sport.

According to our respondents, moreover, nurturing the wish to become a PE teacher, as well as the specific competences, attitudes and values which are indispensable for a successful school career and also, ultimately, for obtaining a place at university to study Physical Education, was greatly influenced by their active membership in a sports club and, in particular, taking part in competitive sport. However, in view of the small number of respondents in our study, further research on this issue is urgently needed in order to shed light on all the factors which influence the choice of Physical Education as a career among migrants and also to arrive at differentiated results in which the heterogeneity of the migrant group under study is taken into consideration. From a methodological point of view, such research

²⁷ For similar results in Great Britain see Flintoff (2015, p. 198).

studies must on no account neglect issues of intersectionality between the categories of gender, social status of the family, ethnic affiliation – and, related to this, the intensity of religious feelings (cf. Winker & Degele, 2009; Flintoff & Webb, 2012, 574ff.).

Great care must be taken not to glorify the ‘sports club’. Rather, it must be pointed out with emphasis that there are excluding factors in sports clubs which, for example, make access to sport or to long-term involvement in sport either more difficult or even impossible for migrants (cf. Seiberth, 2012; Bahlke, Borggreffe & Cachay, 2012). That such excluding factors exist, no matter whether it is a question of excluding others or of self-exclusion (cf. Bahlke, Borggreffe & Cachay, 2012), is indicated by the small numbers of members of sports clubs with a migrant background, alongside the increasing numbers of migrants to be observed joining clubs of commercial providers, in particular fitness and health sports studios (cf. Kleindienst-Cachay, Cachay & Bahlke &, 2012, pp. 120, 129, 162-163). Furthering the inclusion of migrants is a question that most sports clubs have yet to address: a recent study revealed that more than three quarters of sports clubs have never looked into this question (Kleindienst-Cachay, Cachay & Bahlke, 2012, p. 223).

On the whole, one may assume that even if sports clubs claim to be inclusive in the sense of allowing the membership of migrants, this does not mean at all that the sports club offers – as it were, automatically – the supportive social climate outlined above that furthers migrants. At best, one may suppose that sport played in clubs is the precondition of providing opportunities for motivating young people, as described above in the narratives of our respondents. Whether clubs are able and willing to take advantage of these opportunities, whether they are in a position to and also prepared to undertake the task of furthering talented young migrants with regard to their taking over an office in the sports club or even entering the teaching profession – this is decided *in situ* by the club’s leaders or those who play active roles in deciding sports-related matters.

In view of the findings of our study, sports club office holders have a key role to play in furthering young migrants’ aspirations to take up a

career in Physical Education. They must ensure that a climate of openness and acceptance is nurtured in the sports club so that children and adolescents with a migration background are happy to become members and remain in the club in the long term. Further, they must make sure that more young migrants are trained to become instructors, coaches and referees, for our findings show that such responsibilities have an inspiring effect on those considering a career as a PE teacher. This would also help the sports clubs themselves since their main problem – as volunteer organisations – is their lack of human resources (cf. Breuer & Feiler, 2015, p. 12).

Further findings of the study point to the enormous significance of certain beneficial socialisation factors, such as a non-segregated neighbourhood in younger years with much contact with German neighbours and peers (reported by Teachers P.X. and T.P.); attending a kindergarten as early as possible in the child's life in order to make up for German language deficits quickly (Teacher T.P.); having elder brothers or sisters or other relatives who might act as role models (Teachers P.X. and P.B.); and, finally, a supportive – or least tolerant – attitude of parents towards an offspring's wish to become a PE teacher.

Finally, the conditions which migrant students are exposed to in PE teacher training (and in their teaching practice in schools) must be examined with regard to their supportive as well as their deterrent factors. As revealed in the studies of Benn (2002), Benn & Dagkas (2006), Turner (2007) and Flintoff (2012; 2015) in Great Britain, especially teacher training in Physical Education seems to be susceptible to stereotyping and exclusion of "others", at least in initial teacher training courses – which is perceived by minority students as a barrier on their way to their chosen career and also a deterrent to their remaining in the profession in the long term (cf. Turner, 2007, p.14).

Thus, in Germany, where there has so far been no such research into the experiences of migrants studying Physical Education, there is a clear demand for studies on this topic. The same is true of research into the experiences of migrant PE teachers during their *Referendariat* phase as well as of those who receive a permanent first appointment.

One finding of our preliminary research ahead of our study was that there have so far been scarcely any regional or national measures to recruit young migrants for a career in teaching, let alone a career as a PE teacher. Only individual initiatives and certain foundations have recently started to make an effort to sharpen awareness for this problem in Germany.²⁸ Specific recruitment measures for the PE profession, however, cannot be expected from this quarter – merely financial and emotional support in general terms for young migrants on their way to a career in Physical Education. Moreover, neither club sports nor PE teacher associations have so far deemed it necessary to put this issue on their agendas. Consequently, in social discourse, much more emphasis than at present must be placed on the fact that teachers with a migration background – and especially those teaching Physical Education – are very much desired in society as a whole, as well as being urgently needed in schools.

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²⁸ Cf. Lehberger & Matthiesen (2013); Zeoli & Basar (2013).

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