

Social Aspects of Physical Education and Sport in Schools

Zbigniew Dziubiński

Josef Pilsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw

ABSTRACT

The paper entitled *Social Aspects of Physical Education and Sport in Schools* follows the tradition of social research on physical culture, focusing on the evolution of physical education and sport in schools. The subject is analysed using terms and theories that are characteristic of sociology, most notably the sociology of physical culture, historical sociology and the sociology of culture. Individual subsections look at physical education and sport from the angle of cultures and societies, analysing them in the context of their presence in different schooling systems. Questions of physical education and sport in schools are presented with regards to the following concepts: institutionalisation of education, pre-modern societies, developing modern societies, and developed modern societies. In the closing section, the paper discusses the situation of physical education and sport in schools during the final phase of modern societies, including in Poland.

KEYWORDS

physical education, sport, schools, social aspects

Due to obvious ties to cultures and societies, physical education and sport are subjects of interest to sociology, especially such branches as the sociology of physical culture, historical sociology, and, to a certain extent, the sociology of culture.

The first section of this paper will analyse physical education and sport in different educational systems. Then, it will move on to analysing the subject from the angle of cultures and societies and the presence of physical education and sport in the educational systems of different societies. The two subsequent sections will thus tackle the position which physical education and sport occupy in pre-modern and developing modern societies. In the next section, the paper will analyse physical education and sport in the educational systems of modern societies in their developed and final phases.

Institutionalisation of education

In this paper, institutionalisation shall be understood as a process where social facts became manifested as social organisations, which eventually made education an important element of a society, modern society in particular, thus leading to the emergence of an educational system. As a result of the process, education became distinguishable from other areas of social life. Institutionalisation also triggered the professionalisation of education, which is to say that education started relying on professionals who possessed theoretical competence (knowledge) and teaching competence (they know how to pass on the knowledge) necessary to educate young generations.

Education shall be understood as a process in the course of which individuals acquire knowledge, skills, and personality traits, and as the condition of a given society with regards to the knowledge it possesses. This idea of education arose in eighteenth-century conceptions and was strictly related to the trust in rational thinking and the faith in the human mind. It sought to foster a higher level of enlightenment in societies. This paper will also understand education as a process of teaching and acquisition of skills that occurs as part of a certain system of schools, which have been entrusted with the process by a society.

The first signs of education, imperfect as they were, could be found in primeval societies. Such societies even developed institutionalised forms of preparing community members to assume certain roles (institutionalisation of initiation). Socialisation took place within families that taught young family members different practical skills that were of high importance from an existential point of view. Competences thus acquired did not require any formal confirmation. Soon after, however, there emerged social roles requiring special knowledge and skills. It thus became necessary to teach individuals to perform certain social roles. The selection of the most gifted candidates for such roles, followed shortly by organised forms of teaching, laid the foundations for schools established at temples.

Institutionalisation tendencies were pronounced during the Middle Ages as royal courts and the church increasingly needed educated people. As a matter of fact, the church was already taking care of organising an educational process during which young boys learned the skills that a knight needed to possess. Monasteries also became, as we would put it today, research centres which studied the *Bible*, logic, rhetoric, and researched natural sciences. Schools also appeared that taught people to read and write and held classes in religion.

The institutionalisation of education continued its progress during the Renaissance, when elementary schools and universities were joined by secondary-level education provided at colleges and gymnasiums. Those resembled present-day secondary schools, with the difference that gymnasiums tended to provide general education, whereas colleges were primarily designed for the gentry and as such, aside from reading and writing, they taught foreign languages, rhetoric, and math to their pupils.

The final decades of the seventeenth century witnessed further changes to the institutionalisation of education. Questions of public education and, consequently, schools became a subject of interest to national authorities and intellectual elites, which paid special attention to ongoing education processes. The result was diverse concepts of education, which complied with the then-idea of a human being. In those years, pedagogues emerged as a professional class of specialists to take care of education. They were the ones to define the objectives of schools, write textbooks, compile syllabuses and work out education methods. Notable figures of the era included distinguished philosophers J. Locke and J.J. Rousseau and pedagogue J. Amos Comenius.

In the nineteenth century, legislation addressing compulsory education created a totally new situation in the domain of common education. On the one hand, education became available for all, including young people from the lower classes, and on the other hand, many countries made education compulsory. Such radical changes resulted from the realisation that educated workers were the driving force of economic growth and social development. Consequently, national authorities took over educational systems willing, in part, to take control over the education and training of future workers.

The twentieth century can be described as revolutionary as far as education was concerned. Primary education became the standard, which put an end to the era of illiteracy. Secondary education began spreading in the developed countries of Europe and in America, and the percentage of people obtaining higher education soared. The gross enrolment ratio was accepted as a criterion for assessing the level of social development, while human capital, such as well-educated workers, became commonly recognised as one of the greatest social goods. The new, prevalent belief was that a qualified labour force was a prerequisite for economic and social prosperity. The belief was backed by

a theory of human resources, which asserted that the education of societies was the cause of economic success.

The rapid development of education on all levels stimulated unprecedented progress in many other areas. However, the twentieth century also witnessed the first signs of a crisis in education, including the following phenomena and processes:

- the transition to mass education caused a general decline in the quality of education,
- the number of teachers and the range of their responsibilities increased disproportionately,
- the costs of education escalated while the quality of education declined,
- curricula and educational programmes failed to keep up with the rapidly changing economic and social situation,
- educational programmes were subordinated to ideologies which prevailed in a given society,
- all kinds of certificates were debased as a result of growing numbers of holders of such certificates,
- education was not adjusted to the market demands and needs.

Even though educational systems show signs of a crisis, the role of education in modern societies has been on a steady rise. The fundamental good of modern societies is the intellectual capital built up by the education, knowledge, skills, information, and experience possessed by citizens. Knowledge-based societies are one of the primary objectives of all political forces in most developed countries.

Social stratification in modern societies has taken on a new form. The role of capital and property has been diminished, while the importance of expert knowledge and technical qualifications keeps growing. At the same time, the knowledge class, that is, people who deal with the production and distribution of knowledge, keeps gaining strength (Berger 1986, Domański 1994, p. 84).

Physical education and sport in pre-modern societies

Given the many different general and semiotic difficulties in defining physical education, it shall be understood as follows:

- Physical education is a lifelong, complex, and multifaceted learning process that allows human beings to become participants of social life and culture, most notably the particular area of culture that is physical culture. Physical education thus understood is identical with socialisation into physical culture.
- Physical education is an intentional and planned process conducted by professionals, in the course of which people obtain training and education and acquire skills in all kinds of physical activities. Physical education thus understood is a domain of educational systems and constitutes an element of training and educational programmes in schools.

Both the former (wider) and latter (narrower) definition of physical education understand the process as getting to know and acquire skills which constitute the very core of practicing different sports and physical activities. In the process, people also learn socially accepted and culturally determined norms, behaviours, and standard emotional responses, as well as social roles. People learn various ways to live healthy lives, look after their health, and make sure their bodies look aesthetically pleasing. They get to know what they are supposed to do and not supposed to do when, for example, they play volleyball. They learn how to express their joy when they win and how to taste the bitterness of defeat. Finally, they learn the health-related, social, agonistic, and other values of physical culture, which, on the one hand are a goal in their own right, and on the other hand, are a source of motivation for taking part in physical culture (Krawczyk 1997).

Physical education thus understood can in many of its manifestations be referred to as sport. It has accompanied the human race since the very beginning. If we tried to search for its origins, we can trace them back to ancient Greece, as they are in the Homeric poems the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Games

held in Homer's era were the outcome of a certain social and cultural situation. They addressed the urge for marvelling at the perfection of the human body and the agility of people and they were a response to the need to demonstrate the perfection of knights, the need to make a sacrifice to gods, the need to pay homage to a deceased leader, or the need to celebrate major events. Homeric games were of a class character, which is to say they were only open for rulers and leaders. Common folk had games of their own, which were far more modest in form.

Colonisation ventures, advised by the Oracle of Delphi, expanded the boundaries of the Hellenic world, leading to a new institution known as the Panhellenic Olympic Games. The most important games were those held in honour of Zeus in Elis, the Pythian Games (Delphi), the Isthmian Games (Corinth), and the Nemean Games (Nemea in Argolis). The elaborate system that governed the organisation of the games was dedicated to gods, which clearly mattered a lot to the ancient society in that the values attributed to physical fitness and the ability to win a competition were widely recognised and given tremendous social and theological significance. Apart from religious worship, there was an artistic angle to the games, as they encompassed contests for singing, poetry, the lyre, as well as others. A characteristic feature of the Panhellenic Games was that they were widely accessible, open even to impecunious contestants. Admittedly, women were excluded from the games and faced the death penalty for attempting to enter Olympic arenas, but every four years, they got to compete in their own Heraea Games dedicated to the goddess Hera.

The Olympic Games in ancient Greece bore fruit in the form of the palaestra and gymnasium which in present-day terms could be described as institutionalised forms of physical education. The establishments took over the parent's responsibility for the physical education of young generations. The palaestrae (private institutions) were wrestling schools for boys over 7 years old. The training was conducted by trainers known as paidotribes, and the palaestrae were maintained by fees paid by pupils' parents. Gymnasia were public secondary schools supervised by the state. Attended by boys and men, they were compulsory for ephebes, that is, young men aged 16-18. As public schools, gymnasia were managed by public officials with gymnasiarchs at the helm. A gymnasiarch was supposed to supervise the process of physical education and watch over discipline and school administration.

The Roman state cherished family ties and so in the early days of the state, it was fathers that took care of the fitness training of their sons. However, the tradition was soon replaced with the custom to entrust one's child to the care of enlightened slaves or Greeks. A lot of attention was paid to fitness training, especially combat and utilitarian exercises, but the Greek traditions in this department were unattainable for the Romans. Military aspects were the primary motivation for organising fitness training. The goal was to make sure that a future soldier would acquire the right physical strength and fitness. To a lesser extent, fitness training was also provided to girls who got to learn to dance and play ball.

While ancient Rome did not establish Greek-style palaestras and gymnasia, the empire had traditional games of its own, held at circuses and amphitheatres that could seat thousands of spectators. Catering to the vain expectations of the mob, the games degenerated into bloody spectacles that killed what was left of human emotions. Shows during which defenceless Christians were torn apart by wild animals led to the fall of the games (Lipiec 1999).

The declining pagan civilization made way for the medieval Christian Church, which esteemed the ascetic lifestyle. Exponents of asceticism promoted slogans of bringing the soul closer to God through the mortification of the body, which was to be accomplished through exhausting fasting, self-flagellation, and seclusion in monastic cells. Ascetics opposed physical education and as a result, physical education vanished from schools almost completely. Having become the only sanctuary of civilization, the church propagated asceticism as the only proper way of life. Physical education was gone from the theory of education and the only form of physical exercises left were improvised games

and competitions practiced by young people. Yet even those were often subject to severe punishment (Dziubiński 1996).

Living conditions in the Middle Ages forced most people to do strenuous physical work and to learn to use weapons. Knighthood consolidated its position, so a system was developed to train young men to become knights. Between ages of 7 to 26, boys and men obtained intensive physical training from instructors who taught them the art of warfare. Training in chivalry partially consisted of exercises taken from pagan traditions. In the process, the intellectual side of a squire's training was limited to the bare minimum. Unfortunately, the training was restricted to just one social class. Had it been otherwise, the institution could have been perfectly on par with the Hellenic *kalokagathia*, as it looked after the physical development of its charges, paid a lot of attention to moral education, and observed the code of chivalry (Wroczyński 2003).

Forgotten during the Middle Ages, the ancient culture was rediscovered and embraced during the Renaissance and the humanism it brought about (fourteenth-fifteenth centuries). The theory and practice of education entered a remarkable revival phase, first in Italy and then in other European countries. The Renaissance spawned marvellous writings by the finest authors of the era, including Pietro Paolo Vergerio, Hieronymus Mercurialis, Michael de Montaigne, Baldassare Castiglione, and Archangelo Tuccaro, as well as the practical accomplishment of Vittorino Da Feltre, the famous "House of Joy" at Mantua. The aforementioned and other prominent figures of their times took generously from the cultural legacy of ancient Greece, but they also enriched the traditional content and ideas with new elements that were characteristic of their own line of thinking. They built a vast, deepened, and extremely innovative theoretical base for physical education. Firstly, they objected to abstract teaching and burdening pupils with excessive study workload and, secondly, they acknowledged physical education to be as important as the education of the mind.

During the Age of Enlightenment, the Polish theory of physical education emerged very strong, as did the Polish practice in this department, best exemplified by the Commission of National Education (1773-1794). The commission was ahead of its time and was the greatest accomplishment of Enlightenment in Poland in general. It was a ministry that controlled the entire schooling system in the spirit of the best, progressive models of education developed in the West. Poland was where the models entered social practice for the first time. For the first time since Sparta, physical exercises were made compulsory for school children across the country. While the commission obtained sufficient financial support, the main obstacles preventing it from achieving its ultimate goals were the ignorance of a large part of the Polish nobility and a lack of teaching staff with appropriate training.

This section would be incomplete without a mention of the Collegium Nobilium in Warsaw, the magnificent work of a Piarist monk named Stanisław Konarski. The Collegium Nobilium, established in 1740, the worst period of the Saxon Kings era in Poland, was founded and developed on the ideals of Locke and modelled on French and Italian colleges for knights. It was the first school in Poland to give equal importance to physical education and the school's other educational tasks. The Collegium Nobilium became a source of inspiration not only for schools run by the Piarists, but also by the Jesuits. More importantly, it laid the intellectual, organizational, and human resource foundations for reforms conducted by the generations that followed.

In terms of physical education, Enlightenment in Poland drew on the unattainable models of the ancient tradition and sought inspiration in the splendid intellectual legacy of the West. Most of all, however, during the period, Poland itself was the source of extremely innovative ideas as regards both physical education and education as a whole.

Physical education and sport in developing modern societies

During the nineteenth century, several elaborate gymnastics systems (German, Swedish) were developed. In different societies, they materialised as, for example, the model school of gymnastics in

Schnepfental (Gutsmuths), the world's first military institute of gymnastics in Denmark (Nachteggall), public gymnastics courts in Germany (Jahn), the Central Institute of Gymnastics in Copenhagen (Ling (father)), and others. To this day, European countries have retained the systems as either separate entities or major components of their systems of physical education.

A particularly noteworthy system of physical education was developed in England, partially based on the traditional culture of ancient Greece and ancient games. Enhanced with elements that were highly innovative by the standards of the day, the system introduced physical education that relied on games and outdoor activities. Ancient Greek games and sports, which had survived in monastic secondary schools and boarding schools where sons of the gentry and rich townsmen obtained education, were now embraced by almost the whole of the English society. The main supporter of this movement was Thomas Arnold, a pastor and the headmaster of the famous Rugby School. Arnold created a modern ethos of education that resembled the Hellenic *kalokagathia*, giving it the name of "Muscular Christianity." The system of games and physical activities, which later received theoretical foundations from Herbert Spencer, was eventually introduced into all English schools.

The English system stimulated the development of the sport movement that spawned a variety of more and less successful sport associations and unions in England as well as other countries in Europe. The English system sparked a social initiative aimed at revisiting the Hellenic tradition of a wide variety of competitions and sport games. Such events were held in England on a large scale and gradually become part of the national culture.

Still, it was not England but France that came forward with the idea to turn sport into an international affair. Thanks to great French activist P. de Coubertin, France gave the world the modern Olympic Games, held to address the needs of the contemporary world and restore the splendour of ancient traditions. De Coubertin's intention was to revive the ideals of noble sport competition in order to foster a commonwealth of nations and work out rules of harmonious cooperation between people of different nations and cultures (Lipoński 2000).

The twentieth century too was marked by a rapid development of sports, which Anglo-Saxon countries cultivated and protected with loving care. The situation was that the German and Swedish gymnastics systems prevailed in all countries in Europe, but they were supplemented with the Anglo-Saxon system of games and physical activities. Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries were the leaders in terms of the theory and organisation of physical education and sport. Sweden excelled in this department and its State Union of Gymnastic and Sport Associations was the model example of perfect organisation. The association initiated the Swedish sports badge that encouraged physical activity among the masses in Sweden as well as other countries, which imported the badge in modified forms.

A remarkable development of physical education and sport also took place in Denmark. Copenhagen built a network of bicycle trails like no other in the world and, on 10 hectares of land, it opened a sports park open to residents of both sexes, all ages, and all social classes. The park was also open to less affluent sport clubs.

Education provided to physical education teachers plays an important role in the evolution of physical education and sport. This type of education is an indicator of the social maturity of physical education and sport. The leading example was the Central Institute in Stockholm whose students obtained the necessary knowledge and expertise during two- and three-year courses. Private boarding colleges for women were opened in England. It would be hard to overestimate the role that American universities played in the process when they introduced compulsory physical training for freshmen and sophomores. Inclusion in the university curriculum was an exceptional honour for physical education. In Europe, the American example was followed by the University of Ghent (1908), which established an institute educating bachelors and doctors of physical education. Copenhagen opened the State Institute of Gymnastics, while the Academy of Physical Exercise and several minor establishments

were opened near Berlin. Physical education found its way into a large part of European universities. The events led to the creation of a new profession called fitness training inspector. Four-year courses for future inspectors were launched at Columbia University in New York.

Throughout the nineteenth century and in the early twentieth century, which in Poland was the time of the partitions, physical education in Poland faced numerous obstacles, despite being rooted in the finest traditions of the Commission of National Education. To begin with, as a result of the partitions, Poland lacked appropriately trained teaching staff in physical education. The partitioned Polish territory was nearly impenetrable to modern ideals of physical education from the West. The authorities also restricted, if not thwarted, all social initiative aimed at fostering physical education and sport (Gaj & Hądzulek 1997).

The Sokol movement, which originated in the Bohemian region of Austria-Hungary, played an important role in the development of physical education in Poland. The movement spread with varying strength across the three partitions, where it took over schools' responsibility for fitness training and patriotic education. Compulsory gymnastics was introduced in the Prussian partition, but since it served for the Germanisation of the population, gymnastics was widely detested by young people. The authorities of the Russian partition, in turn, ignored physical education altogether. The situation thus looked best in the Austrian partition, where valuable publications were printed and important initiatives were put into practice. Some of the most noteworthy figures that worked for physical education in the Austrian partition included Wenanty Piasecki, Antoni Durski, Edward Madeyski, Edmund Cenar, and Tadeusz Żuliński.

Henryk Jordan, a physicist and a professor of the Jagiellonian University, provided a fine chapter in the history of physical education in those days. Jordan travelled to the United States, where he learned a lot about the organisation of games and physical activities in the open air. Upon his return home, he transplanted the American experience to Polish soil. At the end of the 1880s, Jordan decided to devote time and money to invigorating young Poles by encouraging fitness training outdoors. He opened a model institution in the Błonia grounds in Krakow, which went on to play a fundamental role in the promotion of physical exercise among wide groups of the Polish public. Other cities followed suit and, for example, nine such places were opened in Warsaw thanks to a generous donation from E. Rau (Wroczyński 2003, pp. 217-220).

The 1890s witnessed several attempts at reforms of the gymnastic system. Gymnastic establishments founded on a new system were opened in Warsaw as an initiative of Jadwiga May, and in Krakow, they were initiated by Helena Kuczalska and Maria Gebethner. Eugeniusz Piasecki sharply criticised the German system and proposed replacing it with a combination of Swedish gymnastics and outdoor games and sports. In Warsaw, Władysław Ryszard Kozłowski, the director of Rau's Gardens, set up the first Swedish gymnastics hall in the Saski Garden.

Part of the aforementioned projects was education provided to future physical education teachers. Numerous projects involving training for physical education teachers were introduced at the University of Lvov, Jagiellonian University, the University of Poznań, and the Central School of Military Gymnastics and Sports in Poznań. Such training was also available at the School of Physical Education in Poznań, the Pedagogical School in Krakow, the State Institute of Pedagogy, and the Free University in Warsaw. Despite it all, the schooling system continued to lack qualified staff to teach physical education and so physical education was really a chaotic process, especially when it came to public schools, which had practically no specialists in physical education.

The shortcomings of the schooling system were to a certain extent remedied by the army and its undertakings in the area of physical education. The ministry responsible for military affairs established a Department of Physical Education, headed by Władysław Osmolski. The department conducted short-term and long-term courses for instructors who, having completed the courses, were assigned different tasks in teaching physical education in the military and in schools.

The sport movement in Poland was still in its infancy. The main establishments that propagated outdoor games were Jordan's Gardens, Rau's Gardens, the "Sokol" Gymnastics Society, and a number of minor enterprises. In 1905, a Society of Physical Games was established in Vilnius. It fostered a variety of sports as well as tourism-related undertakings. The Polish scout movement developed, doing great service to the propagation of fitness training and healthy nicotine-free and alcohol-free lifestyles. Fitness training also became part of the work of the Union of Youth Associations, a Catholic organisation (Ponczek 1997).

Physical education and sport in schools in developed modern societies

Looking at the evolution of physical education in individual European countries, we could say that the strong differentiation of physical education methods that preceded World War II became weaker after the war. The clear division into countries that identified physical education with either the German gymnastic system, or the English system of games and outdoor activities, or other systems, was no longer there. Instead, the prevalent belief was that gymnastic systems and systems comprising games and outdoor activities were complementary to each other, as both had numerous advantages which worked well together. Consequently, while schools in different countries did not abandon their traditions and attachment to one system or another, they nevertheless introduced physical education programs that combined in them the benefits of several systems.

Some countries put special emphasis on the health or sport aspects of physical education and so they added corresponding adjectives to the names of physical education classes.

It still seems possible to distinguish between two types of physical education depending on how many games or outdoor sports their curricula contain. Physical education based on the sports angle of outdoor activities is taught in Anglo-Saxon countries, especially Great Britain and the United States. In other European countries, the sports side of physical education is gaining importance, but the intensity of the process is moderate (Laporte 1998).

Physical education in the United States and, to a certain extent, Great Britain also differs from physical education in other countries in Europe in terms of what is expected of it. While the United States and Great Britain prioritise the ethical, social and, more recently, health-related aspects of physical education, the rest of Europe focuses on the utilitarian role of physical education as a means to prepare the population for labour and national defence. It has to be said, however, that while the division was quite conspicuous back in the 1960s, it is no longer as pronounced in the twenty-first century. Physical education nowadays starts manifesting hedonistic goals, which stem from the pursuit of pleasure and excitement, or in other words, kinetic consumption.

All countries in Europe, as well as the United States have many different organisational forms of school sport. On the one hand, school sport is treated as an extremely important complement to physical education, as it provides pupils with an opportunity to pursue their athletic passions and interests in leisure time. On the other hand, some educators notice threats that such athletic activity can pose to the harmonious growth of a young person. Such threats mainly result from the narrow specialisation of physical education classes, which serve the objectives of sports competition. Other problems include inequalities in access to such classes for children of inferior physical development, poorer health, and poorer fitness. This is true about almost all countries, but it particularly applies to the United States, where a comprehensive network of well-organised systems has evolved to ensure elaborate selection of school athletes to practice different sports.

A characteristic feature of all modern societies is legislation to institute compulsory education for children and adolescents in a certain age bracket. Compulsory education entails compulsory classes in physical education for pupils attending schools of all levels. Such classes are thus attended by boys and girls, children with different degrees of structural and functional potential, children from both rich and poor families, pupils from educated families and the working class, children of farmers, and those

who live in urban and rural areas. Moreover, most countries create all kinds of support systems to ensure equal opportunity for everybody to obtain education on all levels, and that includes access to physical education.

European and American physical education has moved on from a phase where systems were being worked out and disputes were taking place about the superiority of one system over another, a phase where the very need for physical education to be taught in schools was still a subject for a public debate. Physical education in those countries has now reached a more advanced phase of elaborate research involving social and natural sciences. This new phase analyses the process of education in order to extract the most beneficial effects for individuals and communities. A great deal of attention is paid to optimising physical education and accomplishing social goals inherent in it. Consequently, the point of physical education is no longer about being able to work and defend one's country, but being able to take part in the consumption of all kinds of social goods (Pośpiech 2006).

It is interesting to look at compulsory physical education in European countries. For children aged 6-12, physical education classes last the longest in Poland at 180 minutes per week, followed by France (165 min), Luxembourg and Switzerland (150 min each) and Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia, and Austria (135). The least time devoted to physical education is in Ireland (45 minutes per week), Norway and Portugal (75 min each), Sweden (80), Finland, the Czech Republic, and the Netherlands (90) (Fischer, Van Guten & Loopstra 1997).

The total class time devoted to physical education for children aged 10-12 years in individual countries in Europe is as follows: 2,025 minutes in Poland; 1,890 in France; 1,800 in Switzerland; 1,530 in Austria; and 1,500 in Belgium and Luxembourg. The time is shortest in Ireland (490 minutes), Sweden (855), Finland (906), the Czech Republic (1,080), Denmark (1,125), and the Netherlands (1,140) (Fischer, Van Guten & Loopstra 1997).

In the United States, the amount of compulsory classes in physical education is highly varied, because education is not a responsibility of the federal government. Instead, it is the public that regulates issues of education through thousands of school districts, allocating time for physical education as well. However, under a recommendation of President John F. Kennedy, physical education classes should take place every day in grades one through four (elementary school), and in high schools (grades 7-12), there should be three hours of physical education per week.

In the process of institutionalisation, the athletic side of physical education kept gaining importance and there occurred efforts to enhance physical education with extracurricular sports activities. In Poland, the institutionalisation of school sport started at the beginning of the twentieth century and went through several different stages. Ever since that time, the role of sport in the schooling system has been the subject of an animated discussion involving the biggest authorities in physical education and social practice.

Without a doubt, the most distinguished sport organisation to have functioned in the Polish educational community is the School Sport Association (Szkolny Związek Sportowy, SZS). Its formation in 1957 followed concentrated efforts undertaken by different organisations to unite into a single organisation that would cover all types and levels of education except for university-level education (Gaj & Hądzulek 1997).

The work of SZS extends to almost all schools in Poland. Throughout the year, the SZS systematically organises training groups for children and youth, utilising the physical education equipment available at schools and providing experienced and well-prepared teaching staff. It also organises many sport camps during summer holidays and winter recesses. Some of the association's most recent projects, carried out together with the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, include following nationwide programmes: "Olympic Energy School Youth Mini Basketball Games for Girls and Boys", "Animator-My Orlik 2012 Football Pitch" (pilot programme), "Organiser of Sport for Children and Adolescents", and "Organiser of Sport for People with Disabilities".

Tasks performed by the SZS address the needs of competitive sports and, first and foremost, the needs of commonly available physical and health culture for school children and youth, a culture of inclusion for all who want to participate in it.

In 1994, the Office of Physical Culture and Tourism, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health and Welfare came forward with a new initiative in the area of school sport and established school sport clubs (UKS). New legal regulations were introduced to facilitate the formation of such clubs. School Sport Clubs were defined as a special type of sport clubs with membership available to pupils, parents and teachers. The leading UKS programmes are: “Sport for All Children” and “Training and Competition of Talented Athletic Children and Adolescents.”

In their work, Student Sport Clubs aim to:

- refine the physical fitness of children and adolescents,
- stimulate the development of sport among young people,
- propagate sport among young people,
- search for talented individuals.

Surveys indicated there were around 6,000 UKS in Poland in 2006. They radically improved the popularity and availability of different forms of physical culture and promoted a variety of sports hardly known in Poland thus far, including korfbal, floorball, baseball, kayak polo, and others. UKS account for 37 percent of sport clubs for young people and, in seven sports disciplines, UKS members account for over 50 percent of competitors.

UKS have become a fixture on Poland’s school sport landscape, playing an important role in the promotion of physical activity among children and adolescents. They also help optimise the system of sports education for young people of school age (Tomik 2007).

The two initiatives presented above are extremely important not only because they help accomplish goals that are specific to sport and physical culture, but also because they foster a civil society where citizens take matters in their own hands to address important social issues. In this case, these are issues of school sport.

The traditions of physical education and sport at university-level schools date back long ago and include not only work for the student community as such, but also leadership in all kinds of initiatives aimed at building a system to organise physical education and sport on all levels of education.

The organisation of physical education in university-level schools in modern societies is far from uniform. It is possible to distinguish between two systems that differ in their approach to the physical development of students and, consequently, the organisation of classes in physical education and sport. The first system could be defined as American, although it has also been at work at European universities. This system gives up on compulsory physical education classes in favour of providing students with a rich and diversified selection of sport classes and physical activities adjusted for different proficiency levels. Comprised of sports classes taught throughout the year, this system is an integral part of an elaborate system of tournaments, competitions, and leagues of different levels, all divided according to different criteria. In the majority of cases, good organisation and quality coaching are backed by a modern sport infrastructure that includes swimming pools, sport halls, football fields, stadiums, gyms, and so on.

The other system could be called European, but the term is not perhaps entirely appropriate, as it does not cover the whole of Europe. This system involves compulsory physical education classes for all students, organised according to different methods. This could either be the traditional system of classes or a system with specialised groups formed by students themselves as they sign up for the groups. In this system, an important role, complementary to classes in physical education as such, is played by student sport associations, which usually approach students with an interesting selection of activities with varied contents and organisational forms. Such associations usually coordinate and organise all kinds of interuniversity games and sport competitions.

In 1817, Jagiellonian University became the first university in Poland to institute compulsory physical education classes. Eugeniusz Piasecki, who in 1922 established the first School of Physical Education at the University of Poznań, also played an important role in physical education at the university level.

In 1950, the then-Ministry of Education issued an executive order to introduce compulsory physical education classes for first- and second-year students. In 1952, by virtue of a decision of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, university-level schools established schools of physical education as interfaculty teaching and educational units.

Until 1978, university-level physical education in Poland was undergoing systematic development. The number of academic teachers kept growing; more hours of physical education were introduced; students were presented with new opportunities to plan sports camps and pursue tourism and physical recreation; training groups were adjusted for the needs, health capacity and fitness of students; and schools worked out framework development programs and conducted research on the physical culture of students and other people (Obodyński 1992). That upward trend clearly stopped after 1980, when the number of students taking part in non-compulsory classes, sports camps, and almost all other forms of physical culture started to decline. The amount of compulsory physical education classes for first- and second-year students remained at two hours per week, but the form of the classes was now somewhat restricted.

The year 1989 marked the beginning of tremendous social and political changes in Poland. In the process, university-level schools gained autonomy and since the state budget now earmarked fewer funds for higher education, the position of physical education changed after 1989. Many university-level schools decreased the amount of compulsory physical education classes, in many schools physical education was only taught in non-compulsory classes, and in some cases, physical education was removed from study programmes altogether (Dziubiński 2000).

The first private university-level schools were established in 1991 and since they needed to economise, they did not have a sports infrastructure of their own. Consequently, student physical culture was non-existent in such schools. Physical culture-related classes were later introduced in such schools, in response to requests from students.

Any discussion of physical education and sport in university-level schools would be incomplete without a mention of the significance of the Academic Sports Association (AZS), established in 1908 by a group of social activists at Jagiellonian University. Poland was still under partition before World War I and so the period was extremely unfavourable for efforts aimed at fostering physical education and sport. The AZS functioned at university-level schools, rendering great service to the development of sport, tourism and recreation in the academic community. Today, the AZS is one of the largest sport organisations in Poland that works at most universities, academies, and colleges, both public and private. In part, the AZS works for the masses and deals with popular sports, but the other aspect of its work is competitive sport, as the AZS prepares athletes for taking part in major sport events. A noteworthy fact: athletes who are students constitute the core of the Polish sport community and the Polish Olympic team.

REFERENCES

- Berger, P. (1986). *The Capitalist Revolution*. New York: Basic Books.
- Domański, H. (1994). *Spoleczeństwo klasy średniej /Middle class society/*. Warsaw: IFiS PAN.
- Fischer, R.J., Van Guten, T., Loopstra, O. (1997). *Physical Education from a European point of view*. Ghent: Annual EUPEA.
- Dziubiński, Z. (1996). *Kultura somatyczna kleryków. Studium socjologiczne /Somatic culture of clergy. Sociological study/*. Warsaw: ChAT et al.
- Dziubiński, Z. (2000). *Studencka kultura fizyczna na przełomie wieków. Próba diagnozy i propozycje zmian. /Physical culture among students at the turn of the century: An attempt of a diagnosis and a proposal for*

- changes/. In Z. Dziubiński, B. Gorski (Eds.), *Kultura fizyczna studentów w okresie transformacji szkolnictwa wyższego w Polsce /Physical culture among students during a period of transition of higher education in Poland/*. Warsaw: Politechnika Warszawska.
- Gaj, J., Hądzelek, K. (1997). *Dzieje kultury fizycznej w Polsce /History of physical culture in Poland/*. Poznań: AWF.
- Krawczyk, Z. (1997). *Kultura fizyczna /Physical culture/*. In Z. Krawczyk (Ed.), *Encyklopedia kultury polskiej XX wieku. Kultura fizyczna, sport /Encyclopedia of Polish culture of the 20th century. Physical culture, sport/*. Warsaw: Instytut Kultury.
- Laporte, W. (1998). *Physical Education in the European Union in a harmonization process*. Gent: Annual EUPEA.
- Lipiec, J. (1999). *Filozofia olimpizmu /The philosophy of Olympism/*. Warsaw: Sprint.
- Lipoński, W. (2000). *Olimpizm dla każdego. Popularny zarys wiedzy o historii, organizacji i filozofii ruchu olimpijskiego /Olympism for everyone: a popular outline of knowledge of the history, organization, and philosophy of the Olympic movement/*. Poznań: AWF.
- Obodyński, K. (1992). *Kształtowanie się kultury fizycznej młodzieży akademickiej w Polsce /Development of the physical culture of students in Poland/*. Rzeszów: WSP.
- Podstawa programowa z komentarzem. Wychowanie fizyczne i edukacja dla bezpieczeństwa /The core curriculum with comments: physical education and education for safety/* (2009). Warsaw: MEN.
- Ponczek, M. (1997). *Kultura fizyczna w polskich katolickich organizacjach młodzieżowych II Rzeczypospolitej /Physical culture in Polish Catholic youth organizations of the Second Republic of Poland/*. Katowice: AWF.
- Pośpiech, J. (2006). *Jakość europejskiego wychowania fizycznego w świetle badań /Research results on the quality of European physical education/*. Racibórz: PTNKF, PWSZ.
- Tomik, R. (2007). *Znaczenie działalności uczniowskich klubów sportowych /Importance of students sport clubs/*. In Z. Dziubiński (Ed.), *Drogi i bezdroża sportu i turystyki /The paths and rocky roads of sport and tourism/*. Warsaw: AWF, SALOS RP.
- Wroczyński, R. (2003). *Powszechne dzieje wychowania fizycznego i sportu /Universal history of physical education and sport/*. Wrocław: BK.

AUTHOR'S ADDRESS:

Zbigniew Dziubiński
Department of Sociology, Chair of the Social Sciences
Josef Pilsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw
34 Marymoncka str., 00-968 Warsaw, Poland
Email: zbigniew.dziubinski@awf.edu.pl