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The Social Sciences of Sport in the Mirror of International and Polish Associations

Origins and development

The social sciences of sport, which constitute an important cognitive phenomenon of the second half of the twentieth century, are a branch of science that developed especially intensively in the last several decades of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This increased development was particularly noticed in the areas of sociology of sport; philosophy of sport; psychology of sport; pedagogy of sport; the history of physical culture, sport, and the Olympic games; sport organization and management; the social and cultural foundations of tourism and recreation; social relationships associated with sport training and tactics; as well as the humanistic theory of martial arts of the East.

The testimony to this development can be seen in the large number of individual and collective monographs and text books, scientific journals initially published in the native languages of the country of publishing, and then – an already widespread procedure – in English. The fact that the publications are increasingly in English facilitates and fosters the ability to refer to them in subsequent publications. These publications are the result of academic findings; at the same time, they become an important and substantial inspiration for further research. The results of findings are submitted and then presented during local and international conferences organized on the continental level (for example, in the United State there is the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport; for Asia: the Pan-Asian Society of Sports and Physical Education; for Europe: the British Philosophy of Sport Association), on the intercontinental level (for South and Central America: ALESDE), and on the global level (for example, the Inter-

national Association for the Philosophy of Sport; the International Association for the Sociology of Sport).

The aforementioned development resulted in the creation of corresponding academic units and curricula, programs of study related to them, and the various syllabuses that refer to them. In some cases, these units have decades-long tradition. Relevant chairs and departments were established in the structures of schools of higher education and universities. Subjects from the area of the social sciences of sport can be treated as being the same and interchangeable with subjects from the area of the humanities of sport. Two concepts contrary to the aforementioned viewpoint assume the diversity and autonomy of social sciences and human sciences, or the partial overlapping content of these two branches of science. Today, the social sciences of sport are – along with the natural sciences (especially biological) of sport – the main educational subjects accompanying vocational and supplementary subjects connected with the education of physical education teachers, coaches, specialists in the field of tourism and recreation, and physical therapy specialists. The social sciences of sport create the necessary basis for education in institutions of higher education related solely or partly to the aforementioned groups of professionals. Aside from specialized departments in regular universities, there are independent universities in Poland and other countries, such as Germany, Norway and Russia, that have several decades of tradition of exclusively teaching the subjects of sport and physical culture.

The existence of the social sciences of sport from the institutional and functional point of view

The presence of the social sciences of sport in the scientific and academic community can be considered from the standpoint of the three institutional and organizational (structural and functional) conditions that must be met.

The first condition relates to the didactic characteristics of the social sciences of sport. Based on this condition, it is assumed that the considered science is included in the curricula of higher education, that is, it is taught, depending on the context, in lectures, seminars, and exercise classes. Students must attend these classes, for which they receive credits, and on that basis they must pass exams.

The second condition concerns academic research. This concerns empirical and theoretical investigations with social and humanistic overtones that are conducted in academic centers, including universities of physical education, and in strictly scientific institutions, as in the various national academies of sciences.

The third condition is localizing a particular unit in the institutional and organizational structure of an entire institution, that is, within the structure of a university or research institute. For example, the area of knowledge connected with the pedagogy of sport can be treated as the foundation for the functioning

of the relevant educational and scientific institution or the research institution. It might apply, for instance, to the division of psychology of sport, the chair of psychology of sport, or other relevant institute or department.

From an institutional and organizational (structural and functional) point of view, the existence of a particular curriculum must first meet at least one of the two aforementioned conditions: the curriculum must be taught to become the subject of research. The third condition is not sufficient to be the general – and in this case – the main rule for the presence of the social sciences of sport in the scientific and academic community. It is not enough to establish the unit with structural properties (that is, a unit as a part of a larger institution), where there is no curriculum that would imply the teaching activity or academic research activity with which the unit would be structurally and functionally connected. Thus, the third condition is met when it is necessarily and indispensably associated with at least one of the first two conditions. That is, when, for example, the department, chair or institute of sociology, psychology, history and philosophy of sport is associated with either the didactic activities or research activities in any or several of the abovementioned social sciences of sport. The mentioned entities (divisions, departments, chairs, institutes and so on) in the academic (university) centers in the country and abroad usually meet both the first and the second conditions.

The conditions presented above refer to the social sciences of sport that have fulfilled or have yet to fulfill the requirements of maturity and autonomy, both in terms of content (for example, the philosophy of sport in relation to the general philosophy and the related specific philosophies) and in the sphere of methodology (with regards to the particular methodologies related to the general methodology and other specific methodologies)¹.

A few remarks on the methodological and organizational status of the social sciences of sport

When considering the status of the social sciences of sport from the perspective of the methodological types of sciences², it must be highlighted that the social sciences of sport are components of the social sciences in general and the humanities in general (depending on the definition of these sciences), and components of sport science (or, more broadly, the science of physical education), for which the methodological and formal status have not yet been regulated due to the diversity and existence of different specialized methodologies of those sciences.

¹ J. Kosiewicz, *Philosophy of Sport from the Institutional, Content-related, and Methodological Viewpoints*, "Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research" 2008/2009, XLVI, pp. 5–38.

² K. Ajdukiewicz, *Metodologiczne typy nauk [Methodological types of sciences]*, [in:] idem, *Język i poznanie [Language and cognition]*, PWN, Warszawa 1985, pp. 287–313.

Presentations during conferences, as well as numerous publications based on individual and team studies, including international team studies, have shown that the social sciences of sport have neither a common nor clearly defined methodology that would be specific only to these sciences and that would have, as it were, a common denominator for all of the sciences. Quite the opposite, each of the sciences operates within its own methodology relating to the corresponding fundamental disciplines of the science, and – of course – to the main assumptions of the general methodology. For example, the philosophy of sport operates within the methodological assumptions of the methodology of philosophy, but it also refers to all its various fields and specific philosophies, as well as to the general and theoretical concepts, hypotheses, and substantive assumptions specific to these types of philosophies. A similar situation also occurs in other social sciences of sport including sociology of sport, psychology of sport, pedagogy of sport, and history of sport.

There is no doubt, however, that the social sciences of sport are distinctive, autonomous parts of sport science due to their specific content and detailed methodological conditions. They form, along with the natural sciences (especially the biological sciences), a vital and fundamental component of the science of sport.

Generally, one can say that the natural sciences of sport (biological) mainly refer to the physical bodies of athletes, while the social sciences have in mind primarily the axiological, cultural, symbolic, aesthetic, and ethical reception of sporting effort. The social sciences of sport also refer to the pragmatic, purifying, escapist, ludic, hedonistic, epistemological, and recreational aspects of the variously understood competitive sport and sport for all.

Thus far, the representatives of the variety of social sciences of sport have organized separate national, continental, international and global societies. They have also organized conferences devoted exclusively to one discipline, such as the philosophy or sociology of sport, which, of course, has highlighted the distinctive identity of the particular discipline. Representatives of the natural sciences of sport have their separate organizations. Additionally, however, they have one unifying organization, the European College of Sport Sciences, which has existed since 1995. This organization primarily attracts representatives of the natural sciences. Very few (in terms of the ratio of participants) social scientists attend conferences organized by this society. Presentations during the conferences organized by the European College of Sport Sciences are limited to 10 minutes, which is enough for a narrative presentation of empirical data in the field of natural science, but it is by no means a sufficient period of time for presentation of the usually complicated and complex considerations and findings in the field of social sciences.

The aforementioned fact became one of the reasons driving the development of a common organizational structure for the social sciences of sport. Thus, relatively recently (2009) the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport

(ISSSS) as well as the Polish Society for the Social Sciences of Sport (the Polish abbreviated name is: Polskie Towarzystwo Nauk Społecznych o Sporcie – PTNSS) were established. The former organization was established at the beginning of 2009; the latter – Polish Society – at the end of 2009. Both organizations began operations after more than two years after conclusion of the registration procedure. The ISSSS has already organized eight conferences: two in Warsaw (Poland, 2009 and 2010; chairman of these Conference Prof. Dr. Jerzy Kosiewicz); one in Olomouc (the Czech Republic, 2011; chairman of the Conference prof. Dr. Ivo Jirasek); Koper (Slovenia, 2012; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Lev Kreft), Porto (Portugal, 2013; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Daniel Seabra); Kaunas (Lithuania, 2014; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Irina Valentine); Budapest (Hungary, 2015; chairmen of the Conference Prof. Dr. Andrea Gal and Prof. Dr. Gyongyi Foldesi) and Isfahan (Iran, 2016; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Hamidreza Mirsafian). All interested parties are invited to participate in the next conferences organized by the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport and Polish Society for the Social Sciences of Sport.

Polish Society for the Social Sciences of Sport has organized six Conferences: in Targowiska under the auspices of the University of Rzeszów (2011; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Kazimierz Obodyński, Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education); in Olejnica under the auspices of the University of Physical Education in Wrocław (2012; chairmen of the Conference Prof. Dr. Tomasz Michaluk and Dr. Krzysztof Pezdek), in Zielonka under the auspices of the University of Poznań (2013; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Marek Kazimierzczak); in University of Physical Education in Kraków (2014; chairman of the Conference Prof. Dr. Maria Zowisło); in Złoty Potok under the auspices of the Jan Długosz Academy in Częstochowa (2015; chairmen of the Conference Prof. Dr. Eligiusz Małolepszy and Dr. Teresa Drozdek-Małolepsza) and in the Institute of Physical Education and Sport of the Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Biała Podlaska (2016; chairman of the Conference Dr. Anna Bochenek).

The common publications and scientific annual conferences that have already been held provided the opportunity to exchange interdisciplinary experience, to examine different and specific methods and assumptions. They inspired the comparison of a variety of topics, points of view, and methodological and theoretical considerations as well as their empirical, practical, research, and propositional implications and applications. The meetings led to interesting discussions and more or less in-depth scientific disputes that related to the relationship between the theoretical disciplines, such as philosophy of sport³, or the history of sport and other sciences that are generally empirically oriented, for ex-

³ Compare: J. Kosiewicz, *Philosophy of Sport from the Institutional...*, pp. 5–38.

ample, sociology, pedagogy, psychology or sports organization and management. They also facilitate presentation of the latest and best achievements within the aforementioned disciplines by conducting panel and scientific sessions and motivating exchanges of research experiences within and between the aforementioned disciplines in order to popularize and disseminate the main theoretical and research issues and the methodological assumptions of individual disciplines and to expand the scientific apparatus of persons interested in the project, as well as to initialize individual and team-based international research, and to conduct joint publication activities in the scientific journals and common collection books.

Be so kind as to pay attention to the fact that the aforementioned disciplines are internally divided into the empirical and theoretical subjects. For example, in the sociology of sport we can distinguish between the empirical sociology of sport and the theoretical sociology of sport.

The work and achievements of Professor Zbigniew Krawczyk, PhD, are an excellent example of this type of dichotomy and relations occurring internally between the results of empirical and theoretical research⁴. He is a great sociologist of sport with a global reputation who has led many research teams pursuing international empirical research projects. By the way, Professor Krawczyk's *Selected Writings*⁵ contains only the results of theoretical research. Indeed, Professor Krawczyk stated that the results of empirical studies – even those that are important and highly respected at the time they are published – quickly become irrelevant (just as other authors' publications), and they lose importance. More immutable – which seems obvious from the point of view of the particular sociologies – and even more memorable and universal are theoretical texts of good quality (good quality in terms of content and methodology). The work of Zbigniew Krawczyk clearly demonstrates this.

The aforementioned claim, however, is not sufficient to assume the superiority of theoretical over empirical inquiry, whether in the area of social sciences of sport or in the natural sciences, including issues and questions related to sport. The superiority of theoretical research over empirical research cannot be proved in an irrefutable and definitive way. Neither can the opposite be proved: that is, the superiority of empirical over theoretical studies. It is not possible to obtain such proof from the perspective of epistemology, philosophy of science, general methodology, or comparative and axiological studies.

⁴ Idem, *Philosophy of Sport In Poland: Observations*, "Physical Culture and Sport. Studies and Research" 2012, LIV, pp. 87, 89, 97–98.

⁵ Z. Krawczyk, *Selected Writings*, [in:] J. Kosiewicz (ed.), *Sport, Culture and Society*, Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education, London 2005, pp. 21–161.

Joint scientific publications

The International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport (ISSSS) as well as the Polish Society for the Social Sciences of Sport has been published several collections of books: 6 in English and 8 in Polish.

1. Kosiewicz J., Żyśko J., Piątkowska M. (eds.), *Social Sciences vs. Contemporary Sport*, Wydawnictwo BK, Warszawa 2009, pp. 258.
2. Kosiewicz J., Piątkowska M. (ed.), *Społeczne i kulturowe aspekty sportu [Social and Cultural Aspects of Sport]*, Wydawnictwo PRINTPAP, Warszawa 2011, pp. 327.
3. Cynarski W., Kosiewicz J., Obodyński K. (eds.), *Sport in the Context of Social Sciences*, Wyd. Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2012, pp. 282.
4. Kosiewicz J., Obodyński K., *Social Sciences of Sport. Assumptions and Perspectives*, University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów – Warszawa 2013, pp. 303.
5. Kosiewicz J., Obodyński K., Cynarski W., *Kultura fizyczna i sport w zwierciadle nauk społecznych [Physical Culture and Sports in the Mirror of Social Sciences]*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Rzeszów 2012, pp. 470.
6. Kosiewicz J., Jrasek I., Roberson Jr. D.N. (eds.), *The 3rd Conference of the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport Conference. "Sport and Physical Culture in the Mirror of the Social Sciences"*, Electronic Proceedings Book, Faculty of Physical Culture, Palacký University Olomouc, Olomouc 2012, pp. 181.
7. Kosiewicz J., Michaluk T., Pezdek K. (eds.), *Nauki społeczne wobec sportu i kultury fizycznej [Social Sciences on Sport and Physical Culture]*, Wydawnictwo Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego we Wrocławiu, Wrocław 2013, pp. 366.
8. Kazimierczak M., Kosiewicz J. (eds.), *Sport i turystyka. Uwarunkowania historyczne i wyzwania współczesności [Sport and Tourism. Historical Context and Contemporary Challenges]*, Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego w Poznaniu, Poznań 2013, pp. 573.
9. Zowisło M., Kosiewicz J. (eds.), *Sport i turystyka w zwierciadle wartości społecznych [Sport and Tourism in in the Mirror of Social Values]*, Wyd. Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego im. B. Czecha, Kraków 2015, pp. 616.
10. Seabra D., Kosiewicz J. (eds.), *Social Determinants of Sports Activity*, University of Fernando Pessoa, Porto 2015, pp. 191.
11. Kosiewicz J., Małolepszy E., Drozdek-Małolepsza T. (eds.), *Filozoficzne i społeczne aspekty sportu [Philosophical and Social Aspects of Sport and Tourism]*, Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 2016, pp. 323.
12. Kosiewicz J., Małolepszy E., Drozdek-Małolepsza T., (eds.), *Z dziejów wychowania fizycznego, sportu i turystyki w Polsce i w Europie [History of*

Physical Education, Sport and Tourism in Poland, and in Europe], Wydawnictwo Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa 2016, pp. 318.

13. Kosiewicz J., *Moralność i sport [Morals and Sports]*, Wyd. Międzynarodowe Towarzystwo Nauk Społecznych o Sporcie, Warszawa 2016, pp. 301.
14. Gál A., Kosiewicz J., Sterbenz T. (eds), *Sport and Social Sciences with Reflection on Practice*, Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education, International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport, supported by University of Physical Education (Budapest), Warsaw 2016, pp. 324.

One monograph is in preparation:

1. Kosiewicz J., Małolepszy E., Drozdek-Małolepsza T. (ed.), *Social Sciences of Sport: Achievements and Perspectives*, Wydawnictwo Akademia im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie, Częstochowa [2017].

The aforementioned forms and results of the scientific activity of the Polish Society for the Social Sciences of Sport and of the International Society for the Social Sciences of Sport confirmed the desirability of such meetings and the need for their continuation. They provide opportunities to improve knowledge related to interpersonal relationships that occur during the sports activities. It should be remembered that both high-performance sport and sport for all contribute – as cultural and economic social phenomena – to the strategic objectives of the European Union, such as solidarity, health and prosperity.

References

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