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Patterns of Physical Culture and Social Patterns in Disposition Groups

Abstract

High level of fitness and its maintenance is one of the most important conditions of availability of individuals and groups to performing tasks in difficult situations. Physical culture has been accompanying disposition groups since the beginning of their appearance and the patterns of physical culture and social patterns in disposition groups, complement one another and interpenetrate one another, creating autotelic, universal and timeless values. Physical culture in disposition groups can be considered from different theoretical and methodological perspectives and in this work I make an attempt at doing such analysis in respect of symbolic interactionism. From this point of view, physical culture, being in a close relationship with disposition groups is “a system of meanings contributed and communicated mutually by individuals participating in it”. Physical culture in disposition groups considered from the point of view of the adopted paradigm, refers to mutual interaction of individuals and groups engaged in the area of both mentioned systems. Of the presented typology of social patterns in disposition groups it follows clearly, that they include one of the three elements: physical pattern, cultural pattern and moral pattern. All of them are characterized by normative character and unique values. In the light of the above considerations of an application character, physical culture can be understood as a unique tool to achieve professional goals by individuals and disposition groups, who are a significant social capital.

Keywords: physical culture, disposition groups, patterns, values.

A few remarks on culture

Years ago, J.G. Herder paid attention to the fact that: “There is nothing more undetermined than the term culture”¹. The etymology of the word itself is commonly known as the term comes from Latin *cultus agri* (cultivation of land) as

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well as from incidentally used by Cicero *culta animi*\(^2\), the word which meant cultivation of mind. However, the multitude of definitions of this term has been making problems in its standardization. A notable sociologist of culture Antonina Kłoskowska, while making a review of different definitions and general concepts of culture, among others, pays attention to the fact that

Kroeber and Kluckohn made the typology of definitions of culture on the basis of an analysis of its hundred and sixty eight anthropological definitions and distinguished six general types of culture\(^3\).

This distinction regards six definitions such as: numerating, historic, normative, psychological, structural and genetic ones. However, the above mentioned should be treated as ideal types (not providing bases for classification) as it is pointed out by the author: "[...]

Understanding culture as an issue, which is satisfactorily vast and important and mainly connected with human activities, is common for both anthropological and sociological analyses. In connection with the latter perspective it should be stated that

[...\) all the cultural phenomena regard man as a participant of social interactions and all of them are in a sense common for communities, groups and other social categories\(^4\).

The classic definition of culture, which involves the acknowledged and internalised values, patterns and standards, which are a regulator of individual and group behaviours, was determined by Edward B. Tylor and is as follows:

Culture, or civilisation is a notion which involves knowledge, beliefs, art, morality, law, tradition as well as other skills and habits acquired by a man as a member of society\(^5\).

However, in the Polish literary activity, the most recognisable seems to be the definition of culture as understood by A. Kłoskowska, who specifies it as

[...\) a relatively integrated unity which involves human behaviours, adjusted according to patterns common for a social community, which were shaped and acquired in interactions and this unity includes the works of such behaviours\(^6\).

Global understanding of culture directed towards the principle of holism is infeasible due to a complicated and complex structure of modern societies, which in an evident way leads to segmentation of the cultural reality. Showing


\(^3\) A. Kłoskowska, *Sociologia kultury*, p. 20.

\(^4\) Ibidem, p. 21.

\(^5\) Ibidem, p. 35.


\(^7\) A. Kłoskowska, *Sociologia kultury*, p. 40.
patterns of physical culture...

8 typical and autonomic features of various cognitive concepts in a selective understanding of culture is being narrowed to realms such as artistic or symbolic one but beyond symbolic culture there remain also the realm of social culture as well as the existence culture i.e. civilisation.

For the need of the present work, I presuppose that, culture is a phenomenon and at the same time social fact with a meaning given to it by individuals and human communities acting in this area. It is also a notion connected with behavioural context i.e. motorial behaviours of both external (creation and reception) and internal (experiences, feelings and reactions) character. In the sociology of culture A. Kłoskowska also pays attention to the characteristic for the XX century development of sociology, differentiation of numerous sub-disciplines, which undergo further divisions. In this way a lot of particular sociologies came into being, including the sociology of physical culture and the sociology of disposition groups, both of which, except common targets, also have their unique tasks. Moreover, in the field of sociology of culture, there have been differentiated various categories and it has been recognized, that this area should be narrowed to the subject of symbolic culture. The latter involves phenomena such as those being the object of human behaviour – signs and values i.e. symbols.

Symbolic culture is present in the peculiarity of sport, which, in itself is a symbol, mainly in its competitive character. Understanding sport as a phenomenon of symbolic culture and presenting sport as a symbol and sacrum is shown by Zbigniew Krawczyk.

An introduction to the subject

In order to determine the concern of sociology as a scientific branch belonging to empirical social sciences and in connection to the adopted subject, a few definitions would be useful. Władysław Markiewicz recons, that

[...] sociology is mainly interested in all processes taking place in human communities, and it is interested in an individual, insofar, the individual is determined to belong to those communities by his behaviour and attributes.

Tadeusz Szczurkiewicz notes that “The task of [...] sociology as science is to examine social coexistence”. However, a more particular one is the definition of Piotr Sztompka, who writes that sociology

8 Z. Krawczyk, Kultura globalna a kultura fizyczna.
9 A. Kłoskowska, Socjologia kultury.
10 Z. Krawczyk, Sport w zmieniającym się społeczeństwie, Studia i Monografie, AWF, Warszawa 2000.
is a science about people acting in the field of mutual relations (in “the interpersonal space”), who confer upon this field a constant dynamics of functioning and becoming itself (supporting “social life”), and who bequeath the sustained, and very often not intended effects of their activities as structural and cultural framework for the consecutive actions to next generations.  

Moreover, general sociology considers problems in the macro social perspective and deals with specifying basic notions such as, among others: group, authority, interaction, norm, socialisation, role, organisation, conflict or mobility. Empirical sociologies involve mesostructures and microstructures and they have a more descriptive character and narrowed field of research.

They include such sub-disciplines as sociology of physical culture and sociology of disposition groups. In spite of a rich tradition, originating from the last years of the nineteenth century, sociology of physical culture as scientific subject has been developing in Poland since the second half of the fifties of the previous century. Physical education, extreme sports, physical recreation, tourism and rehabilitation, as elements of the system of physical culture have become characteristic social-cultural facts and crucial constituents of communal life. Sociologists dealing with physical activity very often reach for the output of other sub-disciplines, such as ex. social engineering, sociology of education, sociology of occupation, sociology of organisation, sociology of free time and mainly sociology of culture.

In theoretical orientations the sociological understanding of physical culture causes certain problems because

Difficulties to define culture in general come certainly to the fore but, also, discrepancies in contents hiding behind the term “physical”.

Having analysed and having taken into consideration the four separate types of comprehension of physical culture described by Z. Krawczyk I have accepted the following definition:

Physical culture is a relatively integrated and consolidated system of behaviours in the field of care about physical development, mobility, body perfection and expression of a man, which run according to patterns accepted in a given community but, also, consequences of such behaviours.

The first element of this system is sport and it is defined as

[...] activity practised systematically, according to certain rules, characterized by a strong element of competition and a tendency to achieve better and better results which aims at mobility manifestation.

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15 Ibidem.
16 Ibidem, p. 39.
17 Ibidem, p. 40.
When it comes to define what sport is and what cannot be called sport, discussions are still going on among experts on the subject. The second in turn element mentioned is physical education and the third one is physical reaction which is most often understood as

[…] all the activities of a movement-sport character, which a man undertakes of his own free will in his free time, for relaxation, entertainment or his own personality development.¹⁹

Next places are taken by tourism and mobility rehabilitation, which, in my considerations on the accepted subject, play a less essential part.

The author of sociology of disposition groups Jan Maciejewski, on the basis of twenty year surveys which concerned this area of social reality, gives its definition of project character:

sociology of disposition groups is one of the fields of sociology, which deals with organised structures prepared to immediate reacting, which are established in military, paramilitary, or civil systems, in order to perform special tasks, connected with preventing or facing dangers that threaten particular communities or a particular nation and resources of that country.²⁰

Due to the specifics of social system, in which disposition groups came into being there is a differentiation of them into “[…] disposition groups of military, paramilitary and civil social system”²¹. In Poland, there are following disposition groups in the military system: Military Secret Service, Military Police, Border Guards, special units (brigades/platoons) or Government Security Bureau. One of the several tasks of military disposition groups is the question of ensuring internal and external security for the state. As far as, paramilitary disposition groups in Poland are concerned, their target is to ensure internal security, social tranquillity and aid in military forces activity and they are as follows: Police, Prison Officers, State Fire Brigade, Central Anti-corruption Bureau or Internal Security Agency.

However, the civil disposition groups such as medical, mining, road or chemical rescue services do not have military or paramilitary character but they came into being along with social and civil development.²² They refer directly to culture of safety in the area of functioning, in form of organised structures, whose powers regard professional provision of social needs of defence and protection which were shaped under the influence of culture. Safety culture is one of the highest forms of culture, shaped and developed through ex. “[…] respect-

²¹ Ibidem, p. 166.
²² Ibidem, pp. 62–75.
ing the value of safety as commonly accepted norm strengthened by orders of law. Thus, both disposition groups as organised groups of targeted action and also organised forms of physical activity refer to cultural sources. Participation in culture in a special way creates cultural models, or models of participation in culture that perform numerous functions of which the basic are quality and life style.

Physical culture patterns and social patterns in disposition groups

The above mentioned definition of physical culture describes it as a socially directed and regulated system of behaviours, the aim of which is creation of human body according to accepted patterns. In a special way, among many others, patterns of somatic culture established in the European tradition, influence phenomena which refer to attitudes towards human body. They do not represent ideal patterns, however, they are still trendy, though not completely verified empirically, theoretical types. I present their synthetic analysis and overview according to Zbigniew Krawczyk, who reduces the above mentioned patterns to the following types:

Esthetical pattern. As it is well-known, the category of beauty was functioning in the antique axiology along with the idea of goodness and wisdom. Originally, beauty was associated exclusively with human body, the attributes of which were: tallness, harmony and proper proportions of particular parts of the body. […] Relativism of bodily beauty, initiated in the Renaissance, has developed currently in convention of alternative esthetical patterns or even in reference to the rule of anti-beauty. However, most of all, it was the realisation of the pattern of “created beauty” that was focused upon, mainly with the help of suitable outfits and – especially in case of women – by taking advantage of dietetics and cosmetic beautifying treatments. The appearance of fashion led to a total decline of relatively steady canons of beauty. It might be certain overload of “artificial” environment of man in the industrial civilisation and, as a result, a pursuance of a more natural state that can be treated as a prediction of a non-exclusive and dominant meaning of the idea of harmony, strength and body condition in the contemporary esthetical canons of body beauty. Moreover, the promotion of folk culture patterns and popularisation of sports life style, particularly among young people, has also contributed to this idea.

Hedonistic pattern. Generally speaking, we differentiate three basic types of hedonistic bodily sensations: gustatory, sexual and kinetic ones. The first ones emerge in various forms and in different intensity: from non-intricate and modest in number forms of consumption, the aim of which is just to satisfy hunger, to more sophisticated, full of artistry feasts, that are an integral part of life style, showing social position of a given group. Similar, extreme quality differentiations are characteristic for sexual behaviours. However, movement, as a source of pleasure emerges most often in the form of games and motion plays.

Ascetic pattern. It should be underlined, that contrary to the accepted stereo-

23 Ibidem, p. 18.
24 M. Krawczyk, Sport w zmieniającym się społeczeństwie.
type about the indivisibility of the Plato’s kalokagathia model in ancient times, this model has never had a status of full exclusiveness. Somehow, along with it there were philosophical conceptions indifferent towards bodily matters; Pythagoreans, moderately and, then, Euripides openly and vociferously came out against physical education as an instrument of shaping personality. Thus, at the end of the Helenian epoch, criticism of the idea of fitness and physical strength, the features connected with extreme sport that were mostly (as it was thought) associated with animals than people, increased. As it seems, this pattern is present in contemporary culture. It emerges in ex. ascetic attitudes towards bodily needs, prevalent in left wing ideologies, especially in the early stage of revolution and, perhaps most of all, in the catholic criticism of consumption societies that lose – as it is said – spiritual values in favour of goods of the alienated technical civilisation. **Hygienic pattern.** There are two types of hygienic pattern: existential and utilitarian one. The first accompanies the fight of a man against illness and death. It has, thus, a somehow timeless character; only the forms, in which it occurs, change along with progress and especially with the progress of medicine. In primitive societies, it is defined by elementary needs of group survival and emerges in form of customs, which are most often routine ones [...]. In modern societies it takes a form of a pattern, that was popularised mostly by home and school. As it seems, current anthropological conceptions of health, involving not only somatic needs, but also psychic and social ones, to the same extent, aim just at constructing a universal hygienic model, that would be an axis organising the entire life of a man. The second type of the hygienic model is subordinated to social utilitarian targets. It appeared like the first one in the oldest times, however, it takes on a special meaning in industrial societies, which, yet in the first stage of their development construct practically weighty projects of social hygiene. This is, most of all, connected with awareness of negative health effects of intensive and long lasting industrial work and also with political needs and especially military ones. As it seems, this type of idea was the base of modern physical education. **Physical function pattern.** In spite of the attractiveness of the hygienic model, there has always prevailed an instrumental treatment of the body in societies so far; as a rule, it has been subordinated to practical or military targets such as: offensive or defensive ones. Perhaps, the most extreme and consequently realised model of utilitarian attitude towards physical function we owe to experiences with the Spartan education pattern. Despite all diversities, this model was continued in the later knightly upbringing. In fact, the same aims refer to physical education in the modern army, though the fast development of war techniques pushes physical function of soldiers into the background. In social practice, taking advantage of physical strength of “lower social classes” in manual work has had a wider meaning. Nevertheless, as surveys show, also the modern production work demands intensive physical exercises namely: prophylactic, compensative and corrective ones [...]. **Agonistic pattern.** According to Thorstein Veblen, category of valour, expressed most fully in fighting and sports competition, is characteristic for “wastrel’s class” and originates from its marauding character, as well as life to show off an ostentatious idling [...]. Agonistic behaviours, thus, have the initial range which is class limited: that is they are included in the aristocratic life style and only secondarily infiltrate to other social spheres, which aspire to that style. Over time, however, these models – as it is known – have also spread among other social classes, especially across young generation, manifesting its universal character in this way. Agon, as a way of life has infiltrated into nearly all spheres of social and individual activity of the modern man, that is why it has been the subject of almost common interest, mainly in the spectator’s form, but also – to some extent – in the form of active participation\(^{25}\).

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\(^{25}\) Ibidem, pp. 80–83.
The typology mentioned above is commonly known on the Polish ground and numerous authors refer to it in their scientific papers for example Wojciech Cynarski in his work which is devoted to changes in the Polish theory of physical education since 180526. In all the above mentioned types of disposition groups there is a connection – though of various intensification – with physical culture, and particularly with physical education, sport, and a little weaker with physical recreation. Social patterns in disposition groups as we shall learn soon, have features common with models of antique culture, they infiltrate to one another and complement one another. Jan Maciejewski devoted a lot of attention to social patterns (I present only selected fragments) and according to previously described typology, he distinguished the following:

**Social pattern of a soldier.** [...] Military model of disposition groups is based on the general model of a soldier. Features of this pattern include basically its historical conditioning, originating from knight’s ethos and the later shaped ethos of a soldier. [...] Priority values are fatherland and honour, reflecting glory and pride of possibilities to play these professional roles but also discipline, loyalty and devotion. These features are strongly connected with the sense of self confidence and faith in the accepted moral principles. [...] An important element of the social pattern of a soldier is his appearance, so his athletic stature, great physical function and a very good health condition. In the army the appearance of the candidate to be soldier is one of the basic characteristics deciding about being enlisted to that occupation category. [...] Due to [...] rigours there is a strict discipline attributable to improving physical condition, which would enable the realisation of the role of the soldier. Body build and strength determine physical function of soldiers which they shape during regular physical exercises [...]. [...] Maintaining the required stature is supported by many orders and prohibitions, which discipline the body as a “tool” of realisation of the services tasks and which limit its drives and desires. Crucial element of the moral model are social behaviours included in regulations [...].

**Social pattern of a policeman.** [...] Members of this structure are obliged by autonomic social patterns, manifesting themselves in physical, psycho-social, moral, professional and cultural competences, forming behaviours of their members. Each of the mentioned types of competences is a measure of evaluation of the realisation of the binding social model, regards providing security and public order. [...] While specifying physical characteristics of a social pattern it would be important to try to distinguish physical skills and health requirements, necessary for that occupation category. Original virtues of the organism – thus, strength, mobility, fitness, efficiency – are responsible for a fluent realisation of professional activities by police officers. [...] As a member of this group he is subjected to rigours regards professional look. [...] Moral norms that should be obeyed by policemen involve protection of privacy of individual people [...] helping people who are in need, or impartiality. [...] Values held by policemen emerging from professional ethos as well as commonly accepted autotelic values come down to altruistic behaviours of a sociometric, intellectual or ethical character. **Social pattern of a border guard officer.** [...] Physical pattern of a border guard officer is the same as of a soldier. This officer should have the same psychophysical and moral features as people rendering services in military system disposition groups. **Social pattern of a fire brigade officer.**

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Patterns of Physical Culture...

...taking into consideration the character of services in unusual and dangerous conditions of the surrounding ... fire brigade officers are extremely burdened in physical terms, therefore, it is demanded of them a high efficiency of the body as well as physical functionality and skills. [...] The efficiency of the body of firefighters is maintained and controlled during examinations and functionality tests [...] Social pattern of a prison services officer. This pattern [...] is determined by legal regulations. [...] Candidates for a job in prison system have meet several rigorous requirements regards health, physical strength, physical function endurance and psychical resistance. These requirements are verified systematically in course of individual career. [...] Physical pattern involves appearance, stature, health condition and hygiene. Social pattern of a medical rescue worker. [...] Candidates for this job are imposed strict psychophysical and moral requirements. Psychophysical features regard good health condition, endurance as well as sensomotoric function, that is acquiring skills and habits to perform sensual-motoric tasks [...] Social pattern in voluntary disposition groups. [...] The social pattern of a member is determined by customs of particular groups as well as by binding regulations. [...] Physical pattern defines appearance, that means, psychophysical function, hygiene and dress code, indicating clearly a particular formation membership by a suitable uniform and badges [...] 27.

Of the presented typology of social patterns in disposition groups it follows clearly, that they include one of the three elements: physical pattern, cultural pattern and moral pattern. All of them are characterized by normative character and unique values. Here, a proper complementation would be pointing at values of physical culture, of which

Fundamental feature [...] expressed in categories of value is its autotelicity [...] . Participating in it is undertaken mostly on hedonistic grounds [...] 28.

However, with time there have been observed other values, definitely more priced than values coming out of motion, namely instrumental values. It is obvious that the place of values connected with motion will be dependent on the hierarchy of values of individuals and groups, both these engaged in the system of physical culture and those functioning in disposition groups. In addition, it should be pointed out, that it was mainly physical education as one of the element of physical culture that became a legitimized “tool” serving to achieve professional goals of individuals and disposition groups. However, conditions and motivations for effective participation in so called disposition groups members activities, in which physical education is an obligatory activity within the rendered service, could be a separate question to discuss in the future.

It is necessary to add, that, as far as physical culture is considered, we very often call for a popular definition of Stanisław Ossowski, who differentiated three types of values: the acknowledged ones, the sensed ones and the realized ones 29. Taking in-
to account the range of my scientific interests, in which, the notion of value is frequently a subject of my investigations, I have made an attempt of their unification. Thus, the acknowledged values refer to those which should be priced by a man. They are connected with goods, defined by a given community, as important and weighty. The sensed values, that means internalized ones are those reaching which becomes important for an individual, as his own desire, drive or urgent need. The realized values, on the other hand, are those, which are accomplished and achieved and not only declared. In perspective of both physical culture models and social models in disposition groups the acknowledged values, the sensed values and the realized ones have their legitimization. Individuals in disposition groups aspiring to be social model with reference to each of the above mentioned typologies, are obliged to derive really from the values, which a widely understood physical culture involves. In each of the above mentioned types of social patterns, there are elements which are impossible to achieve without a strict connection with physical education and sport. Facing up to daily routines and duties at work, often of an extreme character in disposition groups, ruthlessly demands a permanent improving of physical function. Moreover, an engagement in activities connected with physical activity, especially the activity of a team character, enables to achieve better social relationships between members of the groups.

Summary

Physical culture in disposition groups considered from the point of view of the adopted paradigm, refers to mutual interaction of individuals and groups engaged in the area of both mentioned systems. Members of disposition groups communicate with one another through activities, including those, which are connected with physical culture and

[…] are always equipped with certain meaning assigned to an activity by the active men themselves, as well as by others, who undertake activities toward them.

In such a process of social action, a net of symbolic interactions is built, through which meanings are being created. However, meanings are assigned by people in a similar way as people set values and their importance. Thus, cultural patterns and proper axionormative systems, are present in social life as symbols of intentions of active subjects. Physical culture has inalienable autotelic values, both symbolic and instrumental, from which individuals in disposition groups derive and through which they stimulate their activities. In the light of the above considerations of an application character, physical culture can be understood as

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a unique tool to achieve professional goals by individuals and disposition groups, who are a significant social capital.

References


Wzory kultury fizycznej a wzory społeczne
w grupach dyspozycyjnych

Streszczenie

Wysoki poziom sprawności fizycznej i jego utrzymanie są jednym z ważniejszych warunków dyspozycyjności jednostek i grup do wykonywania zadań w sytuacjach trudnych. Kultura fizyczna towarzyszy grupom dyspozycyjnym od początku ich powstania, a wzory kultury fizycznej oraz wzory społeczne w grupach dyspozycyjnych dopełniają się, wzajemnie przenikają, tworząc wartości autoteliczne, uniwersalne i ponadczasowe. Kulturę fizyczną w grupach dyspozycyjnych można rozpatrywać z różnych perspektyw teoretycznych i metodologicznych, a w niniejszym opracowaniu podejmuję próbę takiej analizy w ujęciu symbolicznego interakcjonizmu. Z tej pozycji rozważań kultura fizyczna, pozostając w ścisłym związku z grupami dyspozycyjnymi, jest „[..] systemem znaczeń współtworzonych i wzajemnie komunikowanych oraz interpretowanych przez osobników biorących w niej udział” (Z. Krawczyk, Teoretyczne orientacje w socjologii kultury fizycznej, [w:] Z. Dziubiński, Z. Krawczyk (red.), Socjologia kultury fizycznej, Warszawa 2011, s. 44).

Kultura fizyczna w grupach dyspozycyjnych rozpatrywanych z punktu widzenia przyjętego paradigmatu odnosi się do wzajemnych interakcji jednostek i grup zajmujących się obszarem obu wspomnianych systemów. Z przedstawionej typologii wzorów społecznych w grupach dyspozycyjnych jasno wynika, że zawierają one jeden z trzech elementów: wzór fizyczny, wzór kulturowy i wzór moralny. Wszystkie charakteryzują się układem normatywnym i unikalnymi wartościami. W świetle powyższych rozważań o charakterze aplikacyjnym, kulturę fizyczną można rozumieć jako unikalne narzędzie do osiągania zawodowych celów przez jednostki i grupy dyspozycyjne, które są znaczącym kapitałem społecznym.

Słowa kluczowe: kultura fizyczna, grupy dyspozycyjne, wzory, wartości.