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Sociology of the body and sociology of sport – research explorations

edited by

Jakub Ryszard Stempień

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ON THE POSSIBILITIES OF MUTUAL INSPIRATIONS BETWEEN SOCIOLOGICAL SUBDISCIPLINES. THE EXAMPLE OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF THE BODY AND THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT

Abstract. The aim of the paper is to present the phenomenon of the division of sociology into subdisciplines, using the sociology of the body and the sociology of sport as examples, and to show the possibility of mutual inspirations between the achievements of the two subdisciplines. The starting point of the analyses is the critique of the major theoretical projects of Robert Merton and his postulate of building a middle-range theory. The analyses refer also to Talcott Parsons' idea of specialisation. The analytical concepts referred to include Nicolas Mullins' notion of four stages of the formation of new scientific disciplines (the normal stage, the network stage, the cluster stage and the stage of the formation of a new speciality/subdiscipline or discipline) and the typology of sociological subdisciplines proposed by Jakub Ryszard Stempień. The text also presents the characteristics of the two subdisciplines in question, the institutional context in which they operate, the preferred theoretical approaches, the peculiarities of the methodology used and the ethical issues involved in practising each subdiscipline. An example of this cooperation is the national scientific conference "Sociology of the Body and Sociology of Sport. The state of research and mutual inspiration". The article presents the conclusions of this event, including the possibility of going beyond the framework of subdisciplines, as well as the advantages of adopting a non-subdisciplinary and general sociological perspective.

Keywords: sociology of the body, sociology of sport, sociological subdisciplines, sociology in Poland.

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O MOŻLIWOŚCIACH WZAJEMNYCH INSPIRACJI SUBDYSCYPLIN SOCJOLOGICZNYCH. PRZYKŁAD SOCJOLOGII CIAŁA I SOCJOLOGII SPORTU

Abstrakt. Celem tekstu jest przedstawienie zjawiska podziału socjologii na subdyscypliny na przykładzie socjologii ciała i socjologii sportu, a także zaprezentowanie możliwości wzajemnej inspiracji dorobkiem obu subdyscyplin. Punktem wyjścia analiz jest krytyka wielkich projektów teoretycznych sformułowana przez Roberta Mertona oraz jego postulat dotyczący budowania teorii średniego zasięgu. W analizach odwołujemy się także do idei specjalizacji Talcotta Parsonsa. Do przywołanych koncepcji analitycznych należą także ujęcie Nicolasa Mullinsa, wyróżniającego cztery stadia formowania się nowych dyscyplin naukowych (stadium normalne, sieciowe, klastrowe oraz stadium wykształcenia nowej specjalności/subdyscypliny lub dyscypliny) oraz typologia subdyscyplin socjologicznych zaproponowana przez Jakuba Ryszarda Stempnia. Tekst prezentuje także charakterystykę obu omawianych subdyscyplin, kontekst instytucjonalny ich funkcjonowania, preferowane podejścia teoretyczne, specyfikę wykorzystywanej metodologii oraz kwestie etyczne uprawiania każdej z nich. Przykładem, na podstawie którego omawiana jest ta współpraca jest zorganizowana w listopadzie 2023 roku w Uniwersytecie Łódzkim ogólnopolska konferencja naukowa „Socjologia ciała i socjologia sportu. Stan badań i wzajemne inspiracje”. Artykuł przedstawia wnioski płynące z tego wydarzenia, dotyczące m.in. możliwości wykroczenia poza ramy subdyscyplin, a także korzyści płynące z przyjęcia perspektywy pozasubdyscyplinarnej, a socjologicznej po prostu.

Słowa kluczowe: socjologia ciała, socjologia sportu, subdyscypliny socjologiczne, socjologia w Polsce.

1. Instead of an introduction – about the legitimate development of subdisciplines in sociology

Why are there subdisciplines within sociology? This fundamental question is often treated as trivial and not in need of an answer. After all, most – or perhaps all – mature, advanced and developed disciplines have some kind of specialisation. But let us ask the question seriously: what is the purpose of subdisciplines in sociology? Why this fragmentation, which is only slightly younger than sociology itself (after all, when sociology was still being institutionalised, there were already proposals to create the first subdisciplines of it)?¹

We could draw inspiration for our response from Merton's reflections. After all, his critique of grand theoretical projects and his call for the construction of a middle-range theory can be interpreted as a call for the parcelling out of the sociological field. Let us briefly recall this idea. Well, according to Merton, the construction of *ad hoc* general sociological theories would be – he formulated this thought in the middle of the 20th century – premature. The products of such efforts would be philosophical systems rather than in fact sociological theories. As Merton lamented, *some sociologists still write as though they expect, here and now,*

¹ For example, the term “medical sociology” was first used in 1894, while the term “sociology of sports” celebrated its 100th birthday in 2021 (Stempień 2020: 119–120).

formulation of the general sociological theory broad enough to encompass the vast ranges of precisely observed details of social behavior, organization, and change and fruitful enough to direct the attention of research workers to a flow of problems for empirical research. This I take to be a premature and apocalyptic belief. We are not ready. Not enough preparatory work has been done (Merton 1968: 66).

A key element of this preparatory work would be the formulation, testing and refinement of so-called middle-range theories, which are much less abstract than the general sociological theory mentioned above. Middle-range theories would thus be strongly linked to the empirical sphere, stimulating research that would refine and clarify the conceptual apparatus and theoretical generalisations (Turner 2004: 25–26). Importantly, middle-range theories would refer only to certain parts or areas of social reality, and within these they would retain their legitimacy.

According to Merton, it is on the basis of middle-range theory that it should be possible to gradually and unhurriedly create more and more general theoretical schemes. A grand sociological theory would thus be the product of the synthesis and consolidation of middle-range theories (Merton 1968: 71). For this to be possible at all, special theories would have to emerge according to a common template, each based on a paradigm that Merton called the paradigm for functional analysis (Merton 1968: 124 ff.). Functionalism would thus be a method (or, in other words, a matrix) for the formation of middle-range theory and, in the long run, of general sociological theory (cf. Boudon 1977: 61–62).

One can interpret Merton's idea as a kind of call for specialisation in sociology and the establishment of sociological subdisciplines. Each subdiscipline would be responsible for a particular area of social life (industry, religion, medicine, culture, politics, family, etc.) and would formulate and refine middle-range theories in relation to that area, which could then form the appropriate building blocks for a grand sociological theory. Reality, however, does not correspond to such an outlined project. Of course, the idea of middle-range theory has indeed gained some popularity and sympathy among sociologists, and the term itself has become firmly established in the sociological vocabulary. Moreover, within some subdisciplines it has indeed been possible to formulate such theories, although with limited legitimacy. Examples include the sociology of religion (with its theory of secularisation), the sociology of medicine (with its concept of the medicalisation of society and medicine as power), the sociology of politics (e.g. with its theories of revolution, circulation of elites, models of public opinion formation) or the sociology of migration (e.g. with its concept of migration network theory or institutional theory) (Mariański 2017: 233; Wieczorkowska 2012; Gałuszka 2003: 49 et seq.; Wiatr 2018: 23–73; Jaskułowski, Pawlak 2016: 136–138).

However, problems arise in two ways. First, some of the subdisciplines have not made their own theoretical proposals. One example is the sociology of sport. These subdisciplinary sociologies simply use the theoretical 'arsenal' common to all sociology in their researches and apply general sociological theories in

their studies. Secondly, the emerging middle-range theories are often not built according to Merton's paradigm for functional analysis, and functionalism itself has over time ceased to be a theoretical and research option that aspires to some kind of sociological supremacy or even exclusivity. It is now just one of many ways of doing sociology, by no means the most popular.

So why do we need sociological subdisciplines, if not to ensure that the research and analysis carried out within them leads us towards the development of a single, common and possibly well-rounded sociological theory? Perhaps we need to turn to another classic of functionalism for help in explaining the sense of specialisation. Talcott Parsons is most associated with so-called social statics, but he was also concerned with the question of long-term social change. In his view, societies moved from simple to more complex forms over the course of history; the division of labour progressed. The history of human societies is thus the history of the multiplication and differentiation of structures, subsystems, roles and tasks. The difference between primitive and modern societies lies therefore not only in size of the population or the sophistication of the technology used, but also the simplicity or complexity of the relationships in which the homogeneous or heterogeneous elements constituting the collective remain. The reason for the progressive complexity of the social structure, and thus for specialisation and increasing complexity, is the increase in efficiency in the performance of functions. Specialisation takes place through the division of the existing structure into at least two elements, which, however, turn out to be more efficient than the initial element and thus perform their tasks better, as indicated by the so-called adaptive upgrading mechanism. Moreover, progressive specialisation increases the adaptive capacity of the entire social system (Parsons 1966, 1971; Sztompka 2005: 122–123). What does this tell us about specialisation in sociology?

We can consider – in the mode of Parsons' argument – that specialisation serves a better diagnosis, and therefore research and analysis carried out within certain subdisciplines are more adequate, reliable and authoritative than if they were carried out in a given field by researchers without the relevant experience, competence, in-depth knowledge of previous studies and of previous successes and mistakes (and thus by researchers with only a general sociological education). Finally, we should not forget that researchers who focus on a specific field are also familiar with specific theoretical concepts or concepts developed for the analysis of specific phenomena. They are also more aware of and skilled in using research methods and techniques that take into account the specificity of the phenomenon. For example, it is better for the study of social deviance to be carried out by teams that have been working on a specific topic for a long time, to consult other similar teams, to compare results, to propose their own explanatory schemes, to use a specific terminology consistently, to adapt and develop new methodological solutions, to create specific schools, etc.

A second argument can be added. Well, perhaps specialisation in sociology would stimulate its adaptability and thus increase its readiness to respond to changes in its object of interest. According to this idea, rapid and radical social change would be better recognised within subdisciplines ('closer to the concrete') than at the level of general knowledge about society. Given the accelerating pace of social change, this is a non-trivial argument. Indeed, it would imply that if sociology wants to 'keep up with society' it should work through the subdisciplines.

The perspectives of Merton and Parsons differ. It can be assumed that, from Merton's point of view, the functioning of subdisciplines in sociology is legitimate insofar as it allows preparation for the development of a grand social theory. In other words, subdisciplines would be a particular historical product that retains legitimacy at a particular stage in the development of the general discipline. From a Parsons-inspired point of view, subdisciplines are necessary and one should rather expect their development, their further division. Sociology as a system should become more and more complex. This follows from the very logic of the development of social systems, but in this case it would also be particularly justified by the increasing complexity of social life itself, i.e. of the matter with which sociology deals.

In a perspective inspired by Parsons' views, however, we think there may be a trap. The proliferation of sociological subdisciplines is undoubtedly a fact. At present (2024) there are more than thirty specialised sections in the Polish Sociological Association and 38 research networks in the European Sociological Association. The International Sociological Association currently has 57 research committees, 5 thematic groups and 6 working groups. Well, we believe that an excessive division of social reality into detailed sociologies could strengthen the sociographic tendency. This would mean focusing on the 'social concrete', on the study of narrow slices of social reality, without reference to more general sociological problems and concepts. To take the situation *ad absurdum*, the number of subdisciplines could, at some point, be only slightly smaller than the number of sociologists themselves.

The danger, in our view, is that these researchers will collect detailed information about social life without any sense of the need to integrate it into a system of knowledge about society, and will lose sight of the big sociological questions (e.g., what is society? How can it be meaningfully described? What factors drive social change? How do people influence each other's actions?) This problem was highlighted by Jakub Ryszard Stempień (2023) when he proposed the term "reportage sociology".

It should be noted that Parsons himself saw the limits of specialisation. If differentiation (division) does not lead to an increase in adaptability (or simply to an increase in the efficiency of the subsystem in question), then such division has no *raison d'être* and the mechanism of inclusion (the incorporation of new subsystems into society) cannot work (Parsons 1966, 1971; Sztompka 2005: 123).

We therefore adopt a critical stance towards the two perspectives outlined, while recognising their usefulness. Merton's perspective, with its inspiring emphasis on the idea of developing a grand sociological theory, has its important limitations in that the achievement of a considerable degree of generality, as envisaged by this scholar, seems an unattainable goal. Progressive specialisation (see Parsons), on the other hand, could reduce sociology to sociography, i.e. to the practice of research without reference to existing sociological concepts, without creating new theories, without proposing recommendations to the environments under study (applied sociology).

Accepting the legitimacy of distinguishing sociological subdisciplines in the perspective of Parsons, and respecting Merton's ideal of laying the foundations for a grand sociological theory, we see the need to go beyond subdisciplinary divisions. This is especially possible in the case of those specific sociologies whose objects of interest are similar, as is the case, for example, with the sociology of the body and the sociology of sport.

2. Sociology of the body and sociology of sport – affinity, difference, inspiration

The subject of the sociology of sport is the social context, conditions, consequences and manifestations of such phenomena as sport *sensu stricto*, physical recreation and physical education (Stempień 2018: 177). During the time of the Polish People's Republic and even immediately after the breakthrough of 1989, the term 'sociology of physical culture' was used, which objectively had its justification. However, the term 'physical culture' was ideologically exploited by communist activists, and as a result it was and still is used reluctantly in the western countries (Murrmann 2017; Kobierecki 2016). Instead, the term 'sociology of sport' has become more common, although specialists in this field actually go beyond considering the social aspects of sporting activities themselves in their work.

The sociology of the body, on the other hand, is concerned with all kinds of social phenomena and processes that affect the human body. This may involve different levels of social life. In terms of macro-social phenomena, the sociology of the body may be concerned, for example, with the influence of religion on believers' perceptions of the body as the seat of sin or the temple of the soul (Krajewska 2023), or with the marketing strategies of large cosmetics companies. At the *mezzo* level, the sociologist of the body may be interested in the specific ways in which the body is used in certain communities (e.g. in the course of rituals) or in closed institutions such as prisons. At the micro-social or even interactional level, on the other hand, the mutual influence of so-called body language signals on the course of interaction or identity processes of individuals may be of interest (Goffman 2005).

In this way, the domains of the two sociological subdisciplines partly overlap. It is a matter of social research and analysis of the corporeality of the athlete,

with the sporting and training body as its object. The common field of action and interest of both specific sociologies is thus the body in the area of sport: the body perceived in a culturally shaped way, the body disciplined by social conditions and requirements, the body whose qualities are decisive for personal identity or professional success. The common space may also include issues of gender: its significance in amateur and professional sport, the socialisation of children into certain sports as stereotypically masculine or feminine, the construction of representations of the feminine and masculine body in media messages, and issues related to the emergence of non-binary or transgender people in sport.

These practices of perceiving, naming, using, disciplining, shaming and judging the body, and in some cases sanctioning violence and oppression against it, can be a fascinating subject for sociological or, more broadly, humanistic-social studies. Outside the usual scope would be, on the side of the sociology of sport: the study of the social aspects of sport free from corporeal connotations (e.g. the study of sports organisations or the sport mega-events), and on the side of the sociology of the body: sociological analyses of corporeality beyond the realm of non-utilitarian physical activity (e.g. in relation to work, beauty standards, food or sexuality).

Both sub-disciplines share a similarity in terms of the completion of their institutionalisation process. Following Nicolas Mullins' notion of four stages of formation of new scientific disciplines (normal stage, network stage, cluster stage and stage of formation of a new speciality/subdiscipline or discipline), it can be argued that both sociology of the body and sociology of sport are now in stage four. This means not only the functioning of the leaders of the field and the frequent communication of the people who form it, and the education of the next generation of researchers, according to the classical model of master-student relations (which was inherent in the network and cluster stage), but also the acquisition of legitimacy for this very distinctiveness, including the recognition of the singularity of the object of research (Mullins 1972 according to: Loy, Kenyon, McPherson 1980).

At the same time, it seems that each of the subdisciplines of sociology can be assigned to one of the following four types (Stempień 2020: 115–116):

- 1) general sociology and social theory, social structure, social research methodology;
- 2) sociologies of different areas of social life, working independently, based on their own theoretical insights or drawing on theories from general sociology; their output may be useful to practitioners in the fields concerned (e.g. sociology of work, rural and urban life, everyday life, gender, civil society, science);
- 3) sociologies (e.g. sociology of culture, politics, art, religion, economic sociology) whose objects of interest are also in the domain of other social or humanistic disciplines (and have been indicated in the names of these disciplines); these sociologies can communicate with their "partners" on the basis of a common canon of the humanities, i.e. a certain corpus of concepts or slogans (e.g. liberalism, "dramatological perspective" or postmodernism) and

- a similar model of cognition; despite the differences in perspectives, it is possible to inspire each other and benefit from the intellectual output developed;
- 4) sociologies that deal with those fragments of social reality that have hitherto been colonised as objects of knowledge by other, non-human sciences (the sociology of medicine, sports/physical culture, the military, industry); these sociologies oscillate between carrying out social research for these other disciplines and carrying out strictly sociological studies critical of them (and the practical activities associated with them).²

While the sociology of the body can be assigned to the second type distinguished above, the sociology of sport, due to its links with the sports science, belongs firmly to the fourth type.

There are some interesting theoretical, methodological and ethical differences between the sociology of the body and the sociology of sport. The sociology of the body has always been in some way at odds with traditional sociological concepts, perhaps because the emergence of the body in sociology's field of interest was a manifestation of rebellion against the traditional Cartesian dualism. Therefore, at least in terms of simply pursuing the development of theoretical concepts that fit the structural-functional paradigm, its possibilities were limited. As a result, the sociology of the body has tended to draw on the achievements of either postmodernism, symbolic interactionism or phenomenology. It also results in researchers, both Western and Polish, trying to develop their own theoretical propositions regarding the presence of the body in social space, as can be seen, for example, in the work of Zygmunt Bauman (1995) or Anthony Giddens (2010).

The situation is somewhat different for the sociology of sport. It can be assumed that for a long time it was dominated by a functional approach, i.e. sport (or just physical culture) was considered from the perspective of the tasks that this subsystem was supposed to perform for the benefit of the social whole (cf. Krawczyk 1974). The sociology of sport, as mentioned, has not developed its own theoretical option (in the form of some social theory of sport). In this situation, sociologists of sport readily refer to canonical theoretical options and apply them to the analysis of the phenomena they study. As the textbook *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* edited by Richard Giulianotti (2004) shows, the possibilities for applying general sociological theories in sport studies are many. These studies are often examples of critical sociology.

Theoretical issues are also reflected in the choice of methodological strategies and specific techniques. When it comes to the sociology of the body, it is quite difficult

² With regard to the last type and the sociology of medicine included in it, it is worth recalling Robert Straus' distinction between sociology of medicine, which conducts so-called basic research and often has a critical dimension, and sociology in medicine, which is an auxiliary science to medicine and has an applied dimension (Skrzypek 2012: 373). It seems that Straus' dichotomy can be applied to the analysis of functioning and other sub-disciplines belonging to type four, including, as far as possible, the sociology of sport.

to find examples of quantitative research. Given the characteristics of the phenomenon that is the human body, including above all the non-abducibility of bodily experience to narrative, techniques based on it seem insufficient (Byczkowska 2009). By this we mean both quantitative techniques, such as the questionnaire interview or survey, and qualitative techniques, such as the semi-structured or narrative interview. The interviewees' experiences and the knowledge they have acquired are not limited to know-what, but also include tacit knowing (Jakubowska 2017; Polanyi 1966), including know-how. The latter type of knowledge is sometimes crucial for understanding bodily actions, values, norms or practices in different research areas, such as work, food, beauty, sport or sexuality. Thus, in the field of sociology of the body, methodological proposals are emerging that involve persons under study in the production of data, e.g. analysis of photographs or videos in a photo/video elicited interview. An approach based on the researchers' bodily experiences is developing, and thus we are witnessing the popularisation of, among others, autoethnographic methods and techniques (Byczkowska-Owczarek, Jakubowska 2018: 152; Kafar, Kacperczyk 2020).

The situation in the sociology of sport is also different in terms of methodology. Qualitative studies definitely dominate (Stempień 2018), but it can probably be assumed that they are based on either narrative techniques (qualitative interviews in their various forms) or observational techniques (including participant observation during sport events), rather without involving the respondents in the creation or analysis of the data. Quantitative research, although rare, is still used in the form of survey measurements or standardised desk research. Sports sociologists are also keen to use off-the-shelf quantitative studies (e.g. public statistical data), so the low popularity of using quantitative techniques in their own research is unlikely to be due to paradigmatic considerations.

Body experiences and practices are also an area of researches that touch on sensitive and sometimes intimate areas of respondents' lives. These can include the difficulties of living with a disability, issues of appearance, but also, for example, deeply internalised shame. Ethical issues are therefore one of the important criteria in sociology of the body researches, including concern for the welfare of the persons under study. However, the potential sensitivity of this topic does not only affect the subjects, but also the researchers. Dealing with difficult issues, the experiences of the persons under study, listening to many hours of stories of suffering, shame, lack of acceptance of one's own body, also places a psychological burden on the researchers. Of course, this is not specific to research in the field of the sociology of the body, but since the human body is one of the most important elements in the process of constructing of human identity, everyday practices, close and intimate relationships with others, the presence of such difficulties should be noted. For this reason, from time to time, the community of sociologists of the body, in agreement with other sociological communities, raises the issue of supervision or intervention. This process, modelled on those used successfully in psychology, for example,

could provide support for researchers dealing with particularly difficult social problems. Ethical issues, on the other hand, do not seem to be as prominent in the sociology of sport.

3. Sociology of the body and sociology of sport – an example of collaboration

As research practice, but also the broader practice of organising scientific life, shows, researchers in the sociology of the body and the sociology of sport often cooperate with each other. This is not just a matter of collaborating on research projects or publishing articles or academic monographs together. Pure pragmatism, related to the organisational side of the process of awarding degrees and titles, requires cooperation between representatives of both communities. This is dictated by the specificity of the two subdisciplines as well as the partial overlap of interests of the respective researchers. This leads to cooperation between members of both fellowships, to a better knowledge of current research practices or, for example, of theoretical concepts used in research (less often used by representatives of the other subdiscipline). As presidents of the Sociology of the Body and the Sociology of Sport Sections of the Polish Sociological Association, we wanted to take this collaboration to a slightly different level.

In 2023, both sections with the Institute of Sociology of the University of Lodz, and the Lodz Department of the PSA organised the aforementioned national scientific conference “Sociology of the Body and Sociology of Sport. The state of research and mutual inspiration”. The aim was to get to know the circles of both sections and to exchange methodological experiences. One of the ways in which the organisers tried to achieve this was by organising different types of sessions, so that the form of presentation could be adapted to the needs of the speakers. In addition to traditional forms such as an invited lecture or a presentation, some participants opted for a case study session, which took the form of a discussion of a research project, or a poster session, which allowed for intimate discussion of the research presented. One of the outcomes of this conference are two volumes of “Acta Universitatis Lodzensis. Folia Sociologica” entitled “Sociology of the body and sociology of sport – research explorations” and “Sociology of the body and sociology of sport – theoretical explorations”. We hope that papers in both volumes illustrate that mutual inspirations between the two sub-disciplines are possible and necessary.

As we have already pointed out, there are significant differences between the two subdisciplines described, despite a partially shared research field. These include the theoretical dimension, research practices, approaches to ethical issues, relations with other scientific disciplines (see Stempień’s typology 2020), and even the history of their development and institutionalisation (Byczkowska-Owczarek 2023; Jakubowska 2009; Stempień 2020). During the conference,

these differences led to in-depth discussions, often surprising questions and the formulation of insightful conclusions. Those in the early stages of their scientific journey were able to consult their ideas and make new contacts, those on the verge of completing a scientific project were able to obtain interesting and useful comments from other specialists, and researchers who had completed their projects were able to present their results to others.

Certainly, the affinity of the topics of sociological interest was of some help, but at the same time, methodological and theoretical differences raised the temperature of the discussions. However, we feel that the atmosphere of these discussions was so open and friendly that we managed to avoid the “if only there were no questions” kind of wishful thinking among the presenters.

It is hard to deny the considerable scholarly benefits of attending events outside one’s own subdiscipline. Such gatherings of scholars not only allow one to look with curiosity at what other sociologists are doing, but also to take a fresh look at one’s own area of reflection. In contrast to speaking in a circle of people working in a similar field, presenting research results to representatives of other disciplines requires a different, perhaps more reflective approach. For them, not everything is as ‘obvious’ as it is for representatives of a particular subdiscipline who have undergone a kind of secondary socialisation within it.

Contact with representatives of other subdisciplines can also provide a fresh perspective on one’s own research problems. And even if, in the end, we decide to stick to our original assumption, the confrontation with another way of thinking at the level of methods, concepts, paradigmatic assumptions can prove valuable (for both sides of the discussion). Stepping out of one’s own discipline is also, in a sense, stepping out of one’s ‘comfort zone’. Within one’s own subdiscipline, certain issues (methodology, literature) do not need to be clarified. We operate within the same understanding of concepts or processes and may therefore fall into unconscious methodological or theoretical assumptions.

The 2023 conference organised in Lodz was an activity that transcended the divisions of specialisation that placed us in the role of sociologists simply as researchers of a particular slice of social reality. The level of understanding between the sociology of the body and the sociology of sport is not only the athlete’s body, but precisely Sociology and its ability to analyse and reflect on how bodily practices and practices in the field of sport reflect broader social processes and phenomena.


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RADICAL SOCIALIZATION? ANALYSIS OF THE SECONDARY SOCIALIZATION PROCESS IN THE TABLE TENNIS ENVIRONMENT

Abstract. The article is devoted to the analysis of the secondary socialization process in the table tennis environment. Sports communities represent a specific case study in this context because the secondary socialization processes occurring in them seem more radical. The sports environment is characterized by highly specific features and values conveyed, and interest in this phenomenon may be heightened because sports are a relatively less studied area in terms of their socialization impact on individuals. The main goal of the text is to analyse the specificity of the table tennis environment as a secondary socialization environment. More specific goals include issues related to the specific bonds and relationships formed in such an environment, the specific communication system (slang and characteristic meanings), and the impact of the sports environment on the relations of table tennis players with the world outside of sports. The qualitative analysis allowed for discovering unique patterns that characterize the socialization process in the sports environment. Among these patterns is the blurring of boundaries between values acquired in the sports environment and the external world, as the respondents transferred sports principles to everyday life practices. The totality of socialization in the sports environment also influences the formation of a specific “socialization bubble” and problems in establishing relationships with people not belonging to the sports world: the sports environment became, for many respondents, a reality in itself, generating bonds, rules, and communication patterns for its participants.

Keywords: secondary socialization, the social dimension of sports, values in sports, table tennis players, qualitative study.

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SOCJALIZACJA RADYKALNA? ANALIZA PROCESU SOCJALIZACJI WTÓRNEJ W ŚRODOWISKU TENISA STOŁOWEGO

Abstrakt. Artykuł został poświęcony analizie procesu socjalizacji wtórnej w środowisku tenisa stołowego. Sportowe zbiorowości stanowią specyficzne studium przypadku w tym kontekście, bowiem procesy socjalizacji wtórnej zachodzące w nich zdają się mieć charakter bardziej radykalny. Środowisko sportowe charakteryzuje się wysoce specyficznymi cechami oraz przekazywanymi wartościami, a zainteresowanie tym fenomenem może potęgować fakt, iż sport jest obszarem relatywnie słabiej przebadanym pod kątem socjalizacyjnego wpływu na jednostkę. Głównym celem tekstu jest zatem analiza specyfiki środowiska tenisa stołowego jako środowiska socjalizacji wtórnej. Celami bardziej szczegółowymi są kwestie dotyczące specyficznych więzi i relacji wytwarzających się w takim środowisku, specyficznego systemu komunikacyjnego (slangu i charakterystycznych znaczeń) oraz wpływu środowiska sportowego na relacje tenisistów ze światem poza sportowym. Przeprowadzona analiza jakościowa pozwoliła odkryć wyjątkowe wzory, które cechują proces socjalizacji w środowisku sportowym. Wśród tych wzorów należy wskazać zamazywanie się granic między wartościami nabytymi w środowisku sportowym a światem zewnętrznym, badani przenosili bowiem pryncypia sportowe do praktyk życia codziennego. Totalność socjalizacji w środowisku sportowym wpływa także na wytwarzanie się specyficznej „bańki” socjalizacyjnej, oraz problemy w nawiązywaniu relacji z osobami nie należącymi do świata sportu: środowisko sportowe stawało się dla wielu badanych rzeczywistością samą w sobie, generującą więzi, zasady i wzorce komunikacyjne jego uczestników.

Słowa kluczowe: socjalizacja wtórna, społeczny wymiar sportu, wartości w sporcie, tenisiści stołowi, badanie jakościowe.

1. Introduction

The process of socializing an individual, associated with the concept of socialization, is a fundamental element of every person's life in society. Learned values shape us as socially active individuals and prepare us to cope appropriately in later stages by developing in us the ability of human agency. At its core, the socialization process is a complex process of becoming, by a human being, a social being, a member of a given society functioning in a given cultural environment. The socialization process can lead to understanding and defining who we are and help us define the surrounding environment – which is responsible for shaping our social identity, among other things, by defining our roles, obligations towards the social environment, shaping meanings and communication systems through which we interpret social interactions. The understanding of the world by people and their reflexivity about the processes occurring in it have their source in how, in what environment, and by which social actors certain content was instilled in us. Symbolic interactionism, a rigorous theoretical framework, inspires deeper analysis of topics related to socialization. This theory provides a significant understanding of what underlies socialization processes and finds mechanisms responsible for them. According to this concept, the formation of personality, as well as the entire

area associated with the socialization process, is the result of continuous interaction between the individual and society, during which components that make disposition and identity traits are acquired. Its premises also state that the social environment in which an individual moves consists of symbols that are widespread in a given area, exerting a specific influence on the group.

It is worth noting that the socialization process is thoroughly and exhaustively described in the works of sociologists, both in the context of the first stages of socialization when primary socialization plays a decisive role, and at the level of subsequent stages of social functioning when secondary socialization into specific social roles comes into play (Berger, Luckmann 2010). Secondary socialization concerns broader social processes not limited to the immediate family, peer group, or neighborhood circle; it concerns social roles that increase during the life of an individual. The socialization process is difficult to consider complete because individuals acquire new social competencies and learn the responsibilities associated with newly acquired social roles. One such role is the role of an athlete, which can significantly determine or even monopolize identity. It is difficult to unequivocally set a boundary between primary and secondary socialization in the case of the role of an athlete because becoming an athlete sometimes begins very early, e.g., when a small child learns in a sports school. The sports environment can, therefore, be a space for acquiring certain “self-evident” group norms from an early age (Tillman 2005), which determine the interactions of an individual with both other athletes and the outside world. The purpose of our text is to look at how some aspects of socialization in the environment of athletes appear, using the example of table tennis players. More specific goals are issues related to the specific bonds and relationships formed in such an environment, the specific communication system (slang and characteristic meanings), and the impact of the sports environment on the relationships of table tennis players with the world outside of sports.

2. Dimensions of socialization in the environment of athletes

Socialization to sports and within sports is an important topic when it comes to studying the behaviours, attitudes, and identities of people practicing sports. The literature on the subject is quite extensive and concerns various aspects. In the classic work, William H. Sewell (1963) distinguished socialization to sports, socialization within sports, and the process of ending a sports career – the process of desocialization. The desocialization process is also currently described in research using terms such as “sport transition” or “sport retirement” (Válková 2017). As one might guess, the topic of socialization in sports primarily concerns how children and adolescents are socialized into sports (also in the context of gender or race, see Green et al. 2022). Existing research also shows how practicing sports contributes to shaping identity (Rymarczyk, Lenartowicz 2017), which is one of the key subjects of research in sociology.

The topic of socialization within sports seems to be somewhat less popular in the literature – hence our article fills the existing gap (especially since it concerns a rather niche sport about which there are relatively few studies. Exceptions on Polish ground (Lenartowicz, Ciok 2020; Ciok, Lenartowicz 2020). Socialization within sports can, however, be considered on the basis of micro-processes such as the internalization of risk culture in sports (Miller et al. 2022), confrontation with the gendered character of sports (Jakubowska 2014), acquiring competencies related to specific organizational cultures in sports (Benson et al. 2016), as well as issues related to functioning in team games (Leo et al. 2020).

Practicing sports can cause the monopolization of an individual's life in relation to other social roles, especially when it has a methodical nature based on the training program of a given discipline. Then, the role of an athlete can be “total” even in relation to such roles as the role of a student. Such a multidimensional socialization influence means that in the process of socialization of an athlete, various categories such as psychological-emotional traits, social norms, and ethical values come to the fore. In the first case, we are talking about highly engaging cognitive processes such as perception of the world, attitudes, motivations, emotional feelings, or general traits shaping the personality of athletes and their internal disposition, which then affects their practices both in the sports environment and outside it. Personality traits include fighting spirit, ambition, commitment, perseverance and patience as essential values in the pursuit of success. These traits affect the ability to concentrate and focus on goals (Hill et al. 2021). Developing such psychological attributes causes athletes to gain more faith in meeting challenges, enjoy participating in sports more, see their own progress more clearly, and feel greater control over their actions (Stavrou et al. 2015). However, it should be remembered that a strong orientation towards achieving goals, subordinating other attributes in the individual's personality, can also lead to negative consequences such as burnout or depression (Newman et al. 2016).

Sports are an arena for the internalization of important ethical values on which sports competition is generally based. Ethical values serve as a guide or information for athletes on what is good and what is bad – how a professional athlete should behave and how not to, so that the competition takes place in the spirit of sports rivalry. Ethical values have the character of the “generalized other” because they are universal and supra-local. Therefore, some of these values go beyond the arenas of sports, becoming an inspiration for behaviors in social interactions and situations unrelated to sports (Dziubiński 2011).

Among the most common ethical values that extend far beyond sports is the principle of fair play, associated with honest competition. It involves adhering to established rules of the game and engaging in “clean” competition, excluding prohibited or socially unacceptable methods that lead a player to victory. The principle of fair play has a universal, generalized character, and for the rules to be transparent and internalized by the majority, they should be precisely defined and

fully understood by the players of a given discipline (Loland 2001). In table tennis, as well as in other disciplines where a net is present during a match, being honest and honorable is particularly important. During competition, it may happen that the ball hits the net and then lands in the opponent's court. This is a perfectly valid play, but the ball returns to the playing field in an unpredictable manner, meaning it is difficult to predict the characteristics of such a play, such as the speed or spin of the ball. It is commonly accepted in sports that players apologize to their opponent after such a play by raising their hand or giving a verbal apology. Other values mentioned as important in the socialization of athletes include solidarity, personalism, and justice (Kowalczyk 2012), as well as respect towards the opponent, coach, fans, and also towards oneself and one's body. Representing opposing values (e.g., breaking rules through doping and unfair tactics) is subject to formal penalties and social ostracism.

Sport has many social aspects that directly influence the process of socialization. Throughout an athlete's career, many social actors appear, often playing the role of significant others for them. By forming bonds with others in the sports environment, we learn the norms that prevail there. The fundamental social value that athletes internalize in the sports environment is competition. As Józef Lipiec mentioned: "Even the opponent with whom one has to fight turns out to be a member of the same community of principles and goals" (2012: 19). In the sports environment, it is important to internalize the concept of competition so that it aligns with the traditional premises of the idea of sport and does not involve mindless fighting between two opposing sides without adopting any ethical rules and norms. An appropriate approach to competition not only positively affects the perception or media coverage of the given games but also the personality of the athlete and the internal principles they follow in life. Socialization in sports also instils a trait that can have enormous significance in the job market during relationship building or creating innovative projects in various areas. This trait is cooperation, which has significant social importance and is strongly correlated with other people's actions. Cooperation in sports may be associated only with team sports: "Team sports significantly expand the area of socialization by one additional, extremely important factor, namely the experience of building, consolidating, and optimally utilizing the synergy of the collective" (Lipiec 2012: 19). In such disciplines, there is often no room for individuality and personal innovations because it is also crucial to be open to the needs of others. However, a direct form of cooperation in sports called individual can be observed during doubles (a game with two players of the same gender) or mixed doubles (a game with two players of different genders). During the learning of such matches, besides cooperation and the content focused around it, the leading trait of responsibility for oneself and others is also socialized. During doubles or mixed doubles, players must create a certain functional, common organism, something that Norbert Elias described using the concept of "figuration" (2008). To achieve the highest level of synergy, a style of play must be created that

matches the skills of both players and extracts the most efficiency from them. In such a competition structure, the player's responsibility includes themselves and their partner.

Sport, even outside the context of competition, provides a space for the acquisition of skills for interacting with various entities and acquiring competencies related to social relations. During the career path, an athlete enters into certain permanent relationships with individuals or institutions. We are talking, first of all, about relationships with involved actors in the life of a professional athlete, who are often present from his early years. Most often these are social relations of the following nature: player-coach, player-player, player-parent or player-sponsor. Interaction between people at the same level of the social hierarchy is quite different. Communication between athletes is much less formal and rich, with a lot of content that is understood only by them. Among athletes, especially when they are closer to each other or attend the same club, a specific slang is very often formed, which they use to tighten their bonds. However, the dark side of strong relationships in a sports environment is the formation of specific "bubbles" that "lock" the individual into both a limited range of relationships and means of symbolic expression.

Of course, the above values do not exhaust what athletes can acquire in the process of socialization in a sports environment. However, a more detailed analysis is beyond the scope of an academic article. The empirical part will present examples of how some of these dimensions and values function among table tennis players and what consequences there are of functioning in such a specific socialization environment.

3. Methodology of the study on table tennis players

The main mechanism of measurement in the following study was a semi-structured interview, while the additional tool used in the study was the autoethnography method, as well as overt participant observation and non-participant observation (Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias 2001: 220–239). Autoethnography can be described as a very valuable but relatively new pattern of knowledge generation (Kacperczyk 2014). In her text, Kacperczyk reflects on the role and usefulness of the autoethnography method, especially in the context of the methodology of sociological sciences. However, in the case of the discussed study of table tennis players, the technique in question serves as a form of enrichment of the material obtained from qualitative interviews. The most important reason for choosing such tools was the need to qualitatively deepen many issues related to the formation of the respondents' personalities, which cannot be satisfactorily achieved by quantitative methods. From the perspective of the conducted analysis, it is particularly important to discuss the selection of the sample (Babbie 2013: 204–206). In doing so, it should be noted that the informants were professional table tennis players, and the individuals recruited for the interviews were selected by the

method of purposive selection. In the case of the analysis in question, professional male and female table tennis players were selected, who are characterized by their varied modes of practicing the sport in question and lifestyles over the years. Such a division was introduced in order to observe how the values internalized through the field of sports manifest themselves on different levels of the players' lives and how much they were assimilated depending on the activities currently practiced and the form of spending time by the respondents. It should be noted that all of the people surveyed are united by their upbringing in the sphere of the professional table tennis sector and its important role in the socialization process that has taken place. The decision to create such a typology was motivated by the desire to compare the past socialization process and study how its different forms affected the components acquired by table tennis players. For this reason, key categories were created based on the study participants' selection.

Table 1. Typology of respondents by current activity

1. Retired players (people who have given up the professional game)	2. Part-time players (persons whose main source of income is other than table tennis)	3. Full-time players (people for whom table tennis is the main source of income)
B1_F ^{a)}	B4_F	B10_F
B2_M	B5_M	B11_F
B3_F	B6_M	B12_F
	B7_M	
	B8_M	
	B9_F	

^{a)} The letter "B" denotes the respondent, and "F" or "M" denotes the gender of the respondent.

The presented typology refers to the current degree of involvement in the table tennis environment and the current lifestyle in relation to it. Such a division was introduced to observe how the values internalized in the field of sports manifest themselves on different levels of the players' lives and how much they have been assimilated depending on the activities currently practiced and the form of time spent by the interviewees.

4. Results of own research

4.1. The unique nature of the sports environment: retired players

Retired athletes grew up and spent most of their lives in the sports sphere, so they spoke at great length about its unique character. The sports environment

can be distinguished by a unique form of relationship, the core of which is mutual support in an organized collective called a team:

B2: For sure, being in a sports team also connects a lot... we have some rituals and habits of our own, and it tightens the bond a lot, unlike such school relationships. [...] We were also united by a common goal, and this support was really amazing, a completely different form of bond – stronger. We were such really a team, we cried together after a loss and rejoiced after a win, and that was important because I played better in such an atmosphere, and I felt better mentally. They never expected too much from me.

B1: In the team, we were always very supportive of each other. In fact, something along the lines of one for all, all for one. At the same time, we were certainly very good friends, very close-knit. I think it's all due to the fact that we grew up together, we grew up together, and this bond was simply related not only strictly to sports, but deeper.

A team fundamentally differs in that each player involved is an equally important element at the time of the sports activity, making up the common organism. The contribution of each participant determines the final result achieved by the entire group. Therefore, it is in the interest of athletes to take care of relationships within the team, which can significantly affect the well-being and disposition of individual players. The team can also be a driving force for the athlete and reduce the feeling of stress during competition – significantly. The interviewed tennis players also speak of a certain automatic support that occurs unconditionally as an integral part of team competition. All joint successes or failures are then considered collectively rather than as individually attributed failures or merits. A sports team is united not only by a common goal but also by the representation of certain values or an unusually strong bond with each other and group-spread ideas. Not surprisingly, the surveyed tennis players also speak about their relationships with other players in relation to the non-sports sphere while comparing relatively different environments:

B2: And for me, it's the people outside of the sports community in general that are a bit of a bore. As an athlete, we, as tennis players, have a lot of these reference groups of our own, and these normal people usually have only one thing, for example, friends from high school. And these tennis acquaintances always stay; you have someone to talk to and from different corners of Poland, and there is always something to talk about. [...]

B3: With tennis people, breaking down various barriers is much easier. You meet someone at a tournament even whom you've never seen, and you still share such energy with them, and you're already compatriots, and in the evening, you go to a party. You have something to talk about, and you come to other related topics more easily. [...] When we had camps in different parts of Poland, we all had this approach... one for all, all for one. There was diversity, that just different clubs, different houses, from different cities, but you could feel that when you come to one place, it's really like we're all the same... maybe not from one mom, but you could feel that you're just among your people and you feel comfortable.

In the respondents' statements, it is possible to note the emphasis on the permanence of the relations of the sports environment and the multiplicity of contacts that participation in it entails. During the interviews, the athletes notoriously compared the sphere of sports to other *normal* planes. According to them, relationships with people associated with the sports environment (especially youth) are much more valuable and interesting because they are contained between people who have more than just school and correlated topics in their interests. Such an assessment is, again, due to the upbringing among players, which results in distinct freedom and lack of embarrassment when making contact.

Regarding the specific way of speaking, the players strongly emphasized the inability of outsiders to understand the slang of tennis players. This is a kind of vocabulary that, in the opinion of the participants of the study, distinguishes them from the rest of the groups or subcultures. To better illustrate the language in question, it is advisable to cite examples that appeared during interviews with retired players:

B1: The kind of thing that sets us apart from others is definitely the slang. The first thing that comes to my mind is the word "zyto", and it refers to something great; when someone plays a really great match, but also universally, we use it for other contexts like getting a good score, I say, "zyto!". No one outside of tennis will understand it that way, unfortunately. There's also the statement "but I'm raw," and it means that I'm just doing poorly at something; that's the opposite of "zyto."

B2: Then there's "popelina." "Popelina", I hear now... somewhere it was also passed around among normal people, but I think the centre was again as I presented it – in tennis. Popelina, if I had to translate... It's such a disengagement disorder – something like that.

People who do not belong to the group of tennis players may have quite a challenge in understanding the meaning or the appropriate context in which communication is carried out through the referenced slang. Acquisition of a such unique vocabulary, specific to a particular group, occurs precisely through the process of socialization. Players often first indirectly experience the presence of a particular slang, then learn its meaning and context, after which they themselves begin to communicate according to its rules. By replicating a group-accepted language and way of speaking, athletes can feel even more of a sense of belonging to a single sports community. However, such a mechanism can also result in a certain alienation from individuals who are in no way connected to the realm of table tennis.

4.2. The unique nature of the sports environment: part-time players

In terms of describing the peculiarities of the sports environment, part-time athletes largely compared it to other levels in which they were given the opportunity to participate directly. They first focused on the characteristics of the social relations of the peri-sport sphere, which, according to all interviewees, have a unique dimension. An example that demonstrates the phenomenal nature of a particular type of relationship draws attention to its permanence:

B6: Such a main difference between, for example, school relationships and those in sports is that we all still keep in touch today, while the school ones, however, often blur. Despite some big age differences, we have a common language and stick together. These are certainly more lasting relationships because we also constantly have something to talk about.

B7: These are friendships that are formed at such an age that they are already practically for life. This is a fundamental difference between the environment of tennis and, for example, school or work. Everything that was created in the past, from a young age between players, has remained until now.

One of the key differences presented by part-time players is the fact that the permanence of relationships in the tennis community is extremely rare. In the sports environment, everyone develops through a similar path and knows each other's needs like no one else, which one of the respondents considered a characteristic of the subculture. It should be noted that the exceptional permanence of relationships in the sports sphere was commented on by part-time athletes, i.e. people whose current main source of income is another job. This means that despite much less intensive sports activity and limited time spent in a given environment, the study participants continue to feel an extraordinary bond with other tennis players. This is certainly related to their understanding of each other and especially of each other's emotions, as they commented during the interviews:

B6: Such an outsider certainly always has a big problem entering our environment and will never succeed fully. Such normal people also don't understand all the emotions that accompany an athlete; for example, you will come back from a match really pissed off, and such a person can't understand how important it is. But these are years of experience in this environment.

B7: It's not even possible for outsiders to understand our emotions, what we experience, and how we experience being in the world of sports. Alternatively, they can understand it, maybe some partners of athletes who also live it. But when you're telling your buddy about some of your competitions, there's just no chance of them understanding it that well.

In the players' statements, one can see some suggestion of a verbal demarcation – the sports world and the “normal” world. Thus, tennis players portray themselves as a separate group, which again indicates the perception of a particular environment in the context of a subculture. Those outside of it are unable to understand what professional athletes deal with on a daily basis. An exception might be a close family member or long-term partner who lives closely with the athlete's various tribulations and thus learns to understand them. However, as the interviewees point out, people external to the sports community may try to comprehend what a professional tennis player's career entails but will never penetrate the player's feelings – as another tennis player can.

Language is an extremely important glue that binds a group together and emphasizes its uniqueness. However, it can also be strongly exclusionary to others without experience as professional players, especially when it results in

a misunderstanding of duplicated linguistic concepts and, consequently, the intentions of the dominant group. The source of the formation of tennis-specific slang is also interesting:

B4: This is an environment of simple word-making. On the basis of a word, on the basis of some situation, on the basis of various events... also not hiding, I mean, I would say that such a centre of word-making in our environment is the Training Center. There a lot of tennis players come there, at one time, in one place, together to school, together in the hall. And there they really rotate in such a company on a daily basis. And that's what I came across coming to this place only; we just lived there, too, in this centre. Separated from the group that lived there permanently in that centre. We were only so hospitable, but it was also an event sometimes with a new language, and it took a while to be instilled. And then a smooth transition to speaking it.

The genesis of the creation of the language present among the players, researchers see among the tennis players living in the training centre. This is related to their constant being in their own company, where people who are not connected in some way with tennis do not have easy access. The players surveyed are convinced that certain terms are understood only by their environment and have been created there. According to tennis players, it is a specific language that can not only describe situations related to the peri-sport plane but also universally describe events concerning other social areas. For this reason, when analyzing the issue related to the unique nature of the players' slang, it was also advisable to deepen the question of its reception by people external to the sports sphere:

B4: Well, and then there was a clash again, in turn, as you went home, to school, and the words I used, somewhere in that environment, everyone understood, everyone knew what situation to use what for. Suddenly, by accident, more from an automatic somewhere I said in my school company, it was just everyone's big eyes and asked for a dictionary.

According to the study participants, people outside the tennis community reacted to their way of speaking with surprise or lack of understanding. Moreover, even the attempt to use it by outsiders – ended in failure due to incompatibility with the situational context. What also becomes important here is the definition of the situation, which can be perceived quite differently by tennis players and differently by colloquially defined – normal people. Because of the contradictions in language issues, most tennis players, when interacting with other people, try not to use or avoid as many phrases as possible typically internalized in a sports environment. Thus, they match their way of speaking or expressing emotions to the dominant reference group to avoid being isolated.

4.3. The unique nature of the sports environment: full-time players

The research also indicated a need to discover how full-time athletes perceive the sports environment and what specific characteristics they believe it possesses. Like retired and part-time athletes, they mainly pointed to the nature of the unique relationships they have gained in the table tennis-related sphere. Many references were made to team relationships:

B10: In the league team, I have always felt supported. We rather help each other, so mega, hint at something. I'm also now playing no longer in the premier league but in the first league, and we have a common goal to get promoted, so we have a focus and helping each other to achieve that goal. I also get very stressed about how my teammates play, so that says a lot.

Players mention support as a key component that makes up team relationships. This is directly related to the fact that they are driven by common intentions, and the final outcome of the match is their collective defeat or victory. Sports, and especially team relationships, are distinguished by the fact that there is a certain state of involuntary and reflexive help or motivation for each other. This is a unique form of bonding because, without the need for extra-sports sympathy, when the moment comes to fight together for victory, one can count on each other, and personal beliefs or prejudices completely disappear for the duration of the game. The type of such support is unique because it is the people on the team who often see the player in moments of extreme emotion – whether euphoria after a win or despair or frustration after a loss. Certainly, such a strong relationship between players from one team with a common goal is something fascinating and peculiar only to the sports environment, as highlighted earlier. Other statements clearly emphasise the uniqueness of this sphere:

B12: I think people outside of tennis would not understand our emotions and experiences. I think they would even try somehow, but then they would realize... they would take such a dismissive approach. Maybe they would listen knowingly, but they wouldn't know it anyway.

B10: We also have entirely different priorities than ordinary people. For example, at school, everyone was concerned about school, results, enrollment, and something else, and when we played in a good tournament, it was all great. Everything depended on how you did in the competition. It affected every other area.

The separation of the sports area from other spaces of social activity is particularly evident in the accounts of full-time interviewees. According to the players, those outside the table tennis community will not be able to understand the world and experiences that accompany professional sports from an early age. This is due to the fact that, in general, school peers have other priorities, don't experience such extreme emotions, don't spend as much time travelling to competitions, don't know from autopsy life under one roof with athletes of different ages, and don't know what their lifestyle entails. Each full-time tennis player unequivocally stated that it is with

the athletes (or, as the respondents describe them – *the normal ones*) that they have daily contact and very rarely with other people they meet. The respondents single out the very way in which athletes of a particular sport interact:

B12: In general, we are a peculiar company. We talk a lot with sarcasm or something, and it's hard, very hard to get along with someone else, someone outside of this tennis.

B10: I was also practically constantly in this training center, and there was no time for me to meet someone. And now, for me, when you talk to someone outside of the tennis environment, it's literally heaven and earth.

The quoted statements again point to the fact that tennis players feel best in the company of other athletes since the rest of the environment does not understand them in the desired way. This tendency is felt even more strongly by respondents living in a training center, as they had far fewer opportunities to form relationships and integrate with others and learn about diverse ways or lifestyles. Being in a sports boarding school in one's youth and currently being an adult and, in a sense, more forced to interact with people outside the tennis environment, one has significant difficulties and obstacles, as indicated by the statements of full-time players. In addition, one can note an indication of the tennis players' manner of speaking as sarcastic and the presentation of phrases taken from this environment, which did not appear during the analysis of previous interviews. As can be seen from the cited example, specific definitions or phrases may be peculiar to a group of tennis players, and to those outside this bubble – there is a risk of misinterpretation. This uniqueness of sports relations, combined with the lifestyle of full-time players, resulted in a much more substantial impact of this area on their daily lives.

4.4. The impact of socialization in sports on daily life: retired athletes

Many years of activity and intensive involvement in the sports sphere have caused athletes, especially after their careers have ended, to feel the strong impact of the socialization they have undergone so far on their daily lives. They grew up surrounded by values around sports, which cannot be automatically cut off from when they give up a particular sport. Thus, in their statements, the study participants cited widely varying manifestations of both positive and negative components in their daily functioning. On the other hand, they first pointed to qualities they felt back in the days of professional competition:

B1: Tennis greatly affected my daily life because I had the same schedule from morning to evening. A person would come to school at 8, let's assume, until 2 pm, and then I only had time to return quickly, eat lunch, and go to training immediately. And so from Monday to Friday. On the weekends, too, league matches, competitions, well, time to meet with people outside of tennis ... well, it was very tiny, practically at times not at all. My life, however, was more subordinated to this tennis. Because of this, my private life, in my opinion, suffered a lot at some point.

The above statement suggests that by being so heavily involved in table tennis, the non-sports sphere was getting significantly neglected. Daily life was subordinated to a particular sport, and the calendar during the tennis season determined the athlete's priorities. The result was reduced time for socialization among other reference groups and a lack of integration with the outside world. Interviewees during the interviews also highlighted other effects of upbringing in sports that adversely affected their lives:

B1: There was a lot of pressure in the first league when I started playing with much older players. I felt a little from the coach and team; this pressure to win was there. [...] This stress also somehow transferred to my daily life because I was more impulsive. I felt such frustration. That was also the main factor that decided me to end my career.

B3: This nervousness and frustration were showing up everywhere. When something didn't go well for me in tennis, I immediately took it out somewhere else, whether at school or at home. It was as if emotions in tennis affected everything else; they were in the foreground.

Among the harmful components affecting the daily lives of ex-athletes, the most common were declarations about the impact of various undesirable emotions. Suppose an individual has internalized in the sphere of sports traits centered around feelings of stress, nervousness, impulsiveness or frustration. In that case, there is a high probability of transferring them to other areas of activity as well. The dominant emotions in the sphere of sports often become the overriding point, determining the remaining behavioral patterns of the individual. It should be noted that the respondents also pointed to decidedly positive values that manifest themselves in their daily lives:

B1: I think these qualities permeate into everyday life. Such prowess and desire to compete is at least once a week. I go to volleyball now, and a person wants to play his best and fight. Perseverance in the same way, if only for a silly example – in a relationship, however, you have to work for this relationship all the time, and I think the sport has helped me develop this trait.

B2: I think I also learned to lose, thanks to sports. However, in our lives, there are a lot of obstacles to go through, and thanks to tennis, I rarely give up, but I also know that sometimes we have to accept that something will not work out for us. It taught me that the sun always comes out after some failures in life and that there won't always be such a nasty streak.

B3: [...] I think that such an experience as a kid in this environment taught me to understand others' oppression later in school. After experiencing it much earlier, I defended and understood these people. I just knew that this was not the way to go. It simply empathized me with everything, and I became a much more empathetic person; I could put myself in the other skin.

Sports activity is encapsulated in the concepts of competition, bravery and perseverance. Not surprisingly, former athletes feel the impact of these concepts on their daily lives. Their effect is explained as a positive reflex that helps in everyday situations, such as those mentioned above – nurturing a partner relationship through diligence and patience, which the athletes learned in the sports environment.

Another essential and desirable skill declared by the study participants is dealing with failures. One interviewee noted that empathy is an exciting component of his daily life. By learning in a sports environment about practices centred around oppressing others, judging or ridiculing – an individual can become sensitive to such behaviour patterns in the future. Through such experiences at a very young age, a greater understanding of the diversity of human behaviour can be learned.

4.5. The impact of socialization in sports on daily life: part-time athletes

Given some subjects' current part-time practice of table tennis, it is necessary to assume their intensive functioning in relatively different spheres of a non-sport nature. Thus, the manifestation of traits internalized through sports can also be seen in other areas. A component drawn from the world of sports that each of the surveyed athletes notes about their daily lives is the need to compete:

B6: Of such more negative traits, I think sometimes there is too much need to compete. In other areas, it carries over, too, even with some silly board games; I don't like losing. I go to another sport; recreationally, it still has to be done well because I get annoyed. [...] I think nothing has changed in me until now. I still very much dislike losing; I get very pissed off when I lose in anything.

B7: The rivalry certainly translates into everyday life. Even with a silly example, no matter where I go with my tennis buddy, to some billiards or bowling, there is always this rivalry between us, and you can feel it a lot. We are at each other's throats, and no one wants to lose. [At work, too, rivalry can be seen with me as much as possible. Often, there is a bonus system, and this rivalry manifests itself a lot, and as an athlete, I definitely feel it.

B5: My rivalry shows that tennis has dramatically influenced everyday life by even shaping thinking in the context of a particular person. If I competed with a person on the court, I would automatically do so at school in terms of grades. How we behaved to each other at the tennis table influenced how we perceived her off the playing field.

The statements indicate that tennis players feel the pressure of competition in their daily lives. As some point out, this is an inherent part of interacting with professional sports and socializing in this sphere. A specific need to be the best is then born, which can have positive and negative overtones. As a positive influence of competition in everyday life, athletes point to activities that motivate and drive them to achieve a specific goal. This approach can be called healthy competition, which is not destructive to the individual. However, far more often, tennis players emphasized acquiring undesirable tendencies and emotions, such as frustration or stress. In such a case, one can speak of excessive competition, which becomes much more burdensome for the player in everyday functioning. The perspective of such extreme rivalry shows that part-time athletes cannot separate themselves from other planes despite less intense immersion in the sports sphere. This is a completely different competition compared to ordinary people (what the athletes call them). For each

athlete, losing has a greater significance, and they seem to experience it more than individuals without experience in professional sports. For this reason, in the company of the athletes themselves, a different form of competition can be observed, centered around an attitude of total commitment, fighting to win or displaying professionalism. On a day-to-day basis, the athletes also note entrenched rivalry in relation to their own workplace or school, especially when giving gratification in the form of a bonus or grade. Other values that the surveyed athletes also notice in themselves outside the sports sphere are those related to their approach to work:

B6: These values acquired in sports, such as punctuality, meticulousness, and such striving, now carry over to other places like work. Indeed, thanks to tennis, I am more dogged at work. It also taught me a lot about patience and faith that doing something systematically brings results. You can see this from sports; you don't achieve anything at once but do it with complex and regular work. This can be translated to learning, that the more you learn and cram, the more it will be perpetuated for you, and this was also my approach. That diligence definitely translated into my school life because I buckled down.

B7: [...] through sports and the fact that I had that kind of ambition very much, it's further what I don't get behind – I feel that kind of approach, and it's automatic, I think, for athletes just.

B5: In terms of everyday life, I can say that you do it involuntarily when you have a goal set. You automatically have to get it. That was always important and instilled in tennis, and now, at work doing specific tasks or challenges, I have it automatically dialled in... it's striving at total energy.

The first thing that strikes one's eye when looking at the above statements is that in their attitude toward their work, the players see the very positive values drawn from the sphere of sports. First and foremost, sports have instilled principles centred around reliability in performing duties. Systematic and hard work is required to see the desired results in an athlete's career. Achieving a satisfactory result is much more challenging without acquiring such values as perseverance, belief in success or ambition. The same applies to non-sports work, to which the survey participants devote much time. They declare that due to their experiences with professional sports, they also have an incredibly engaging and reliable attitude towards their professional duties. The above statements prove that sports, even if they don't bring many trophies or medals won, can positively impact an individual's overall life and attitude towards his profession. On the other hand, the issue of the impact of socialization in sports on school and college life should be further highlighted. In the case of tennis players, one can see the powerful influence of sports on the limitation of this time and the related consequences:

B5: More than once, that gee... it was a time that others were having fun, going outside, and with me, it wasn't like that. People would go to the yard at 3 pm after school, and I was the one in training. When at 6 pm, they would come to pick you up to go out, and then you would sit down to learn. [...] I also felt strongly about some social unacceptance. Maybe not that I was oppressed, but others I don't know... they went for a beer, at school it was to some square, and I missed it

somewhere because I had no time. There were some events and just no chance because, for example, you had a game on Saturday. Regarding such an everyday social life, sports excluded me a bit.

B7: When I went to college, I had trouble establishing relationships with these non-athletic ones. I didn't even feel such a desire and need to integrate with ordinary people. Not that they were inferior or anything, but I felt a different energy simply and a lack of desire because, at school, I didn't have that. You could even say I was a bit selfish about it because I only had relationships with the two guys there, to have someone to speak to in class or take notes. Still, I didn't need it for anything else, and I also found it hard to imagine such relationships.

The interviewees emphasize a certain degree of exclusion from the world of school peers through their deep immersion in the sports sphere. They didn't have as much time to integrate with others, which later even contributed to the problem of establishing relationships, which was extensively discussed earlier in this paper. Many events of daily life escaped them, resulting in alienation and exclusion from a critical arena of social activity for a young person. Suppose one becomes accustomed to one environment in the early stages of life and neglects to integrate with the rest of the social environment. In that case, one can have significant problems in the future. During adolescence, many leading moments occur in school life, in which participation is a kind of rite of passage for the child or teenager, such as the aforementioned – integration trips and parties.

4.6. The impact of socialization in sports on daily life: full-time athletes

Analyzing the interviews conducted with full-time athletes shows that the most significant impact of socialization in sports is manifested in them in relation to the school or university space. School is a field of social activity that cannot be avoided, even if one has been training professionally in a particular sport since childhood. On the other hand, studying is included in an optional form of education, which, however, becomes a frequent choice of athletes to have an additional opportunity for development and a so-called “plan B” (should a sports career not give the desired satisfaction). Against the backdrop of confrontation with different social strata, it is possible to see more clearly how sports have influenced socialization, internalization of specific qualities and how they differ from other spheres:

B12: I continue to feel very alienated from environments other than tennis. In fact, at the university, I continue to go only with my tennis friend, and we don't socialize; I sit alone when she's not there. Knowing they like people are friendly, but everyone is in such groups, and I don't fit in. I'm mega scared, that's for sure.

B11: Generally, in tennis, I'm mega open, and I can talk to people I don't know, like I've never talked to them, and I somehow find it easy to talk to them anyway. And suddenly, I'm going to college and must make a significant effort to find a topic.

B10: Certainly, through sports, I'm just so closed off to other people.

The respondents' statements show the prevailing negative feelings toward an environment other than table tennis. The experiences the players have are associated with a sense of alienation, alienation, misunderstanding, and fear. It is also interesting to note that in the case of the second statement, there is a certain duality in the characteristics represented. Openness and self-confidence in the world of sports do not mean, from the perspective of a full-time athlete, that the same components will be exposed when encountering a relatively different environment. They may disappear completely, and confusion will be felt, not only in a given company but also about one's personality, the true face of which they cannot fully externalize. Such a situation can result in the fact that for full-time players, going to school or college means a real challenge and stress. It is often greater than for the average peer, who is more strongly integrated and familiar with educational structures and norms. Another effect of the accompanying sense of isolation from the leading community can be confinement to a particular bubble or loneliness:

B12: The moment I moved to the center I started thinking about tennis as my total future. I felt that, in general, I had nothing left. In general, because of that, I began to fall into such depressive states because I started to stress that what if I don't succeed in tennis, and I have nothing else? And I began to worry that I didn't have a future. And that was also killing me terribly.

B11: And I also think it's impossible to be such a professional athlete and study to the max. There's no way to combine that. However, good studies are essential for work and familiarity with other places and people. We don't live in this tennis space only because it can close off many different opportunities.

From the above accounts, it can be concluded that despite the perceived happiness and the impression of genuine authenticity among table tennis players, this confinement to a specific bubble creates a significant risk of falling into a deep melancholy, which over time can develop into depressive states. The source of this can be sought again in the form of isolation from the outside world and various areas of activity undertaken by peers. There is also the fear that one will be left with nothing when one loses a job centered around table tennis. Concerning the quoted statements, one can again refer to the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance. On the one hand, the interviewees announce that having experience or competence in a field different from their sport is befitting. On the other hand, there is a deep fear and stress about such an attempt, which often prevails during their speculations or decisions about the future. Nevertheless, attachment to the peri-sport sphere can sometimes be so strong that a lack of confidence in their ability to maintain relationships with the rest of the individuals they meet appears, which can even affect their preference for choosing a partner:

B12: I've also noticed that I'm drawn much more to guys who are into sports. It's just the kind of professional sports, not some gym or something. I mean that seriously professional. [...] And all in all, when I see someone at the university with something to do with sports, I immediately feel much more comfortable. I can make a joke or something. And I'm not drawn to others at all... I also don't believe anything could come out of it in the long run.

Concerning the circumstances cited, the thesis that says that we look for those similar to ourselves would work among people. However, here we see a search for a match to one's interests and a greater likelihood of rejection or closure to those who deviate from the player's main field of activity and preferences. This approach only underscores the limitations of such vital socialization in one environment. At the same time, however, it should be remembered that full-time players devote most of their time and lives to developing their competencies and personalities within table tennis. So it is unsurprising that they need someone who can adequately understand their dilemmas, sacrifices, emotions or needs.

5. Conclusions

The above analysis was designed to provide an insight into the phenomenon of the unique nature of the sports environment and how its influence becomes apparent in the players' daily lives. The study unequivocally showed that regardless of their current training regimen, each interviewee feels the significant impact of participation in the sports environment on their disposition and approach to life. The survey of sports players revealed how hermetic and unusual the collective of table tennis players is. During the interviews, separating those belonging to the sports sphere from those normal, other individuals was repeatedly emphasised. The peculiarities of the tennis players' environment, differing priorities, rituals, ways of spending time, preferences or general interests were noted. However, what most strongly differentiates the players from those not associated with the sports community is how they interact, the language used to interact, and the definition of meaning shared by the tennis collective. These are premises analysed in the stream of symbolic interactionism, according to which certain group aspects contribute to the concrete formation of individual personalities. For these and many other reasons, the study found that those in the external environment cannot understand the subjects' intentions and fully grasp what the life of a professional athlete entails, resulting in their alienation from the rest of the individuals. Depending on the category of athletes studied, the intensity of the social distance they feel varies, as shown in the form of a table:

Table 2. Type of respondent in the context of feelings of alienation

Retired players	Part-time players	Full-time players
Moderate sense of alienation	A strong sense of alienation	A powerful sense of alienation

The most potent form of misunderstanding is felt by full-time athletes, for whom the sports environment is the most critical plane of activity. As a consequence of a specific lifestyle, which since childhood has been characterised by devoting the dominant amount of time to activity in the sports environment, the subjects – about

other social spheres – feel alienation and closure to others. The sense of confinement to a particular bubble diminishes as the respondents become involved in different areas, interacting with people outside the peri-sport environment. However, it should be noted that combining all the study participants' upbringing in a closed group related to sports is characterised by a more or less intense feeling of separateness. The analysis also showed that the traits acquired in this area influence other spheres of activity of the subjects (such as school, work or partnership) and guide their decisions. However, the intensity of the impact varies depending on the current immersion in the sports sphere:

Table 3. Type of respondent in the context of the impact of the sports environment on daily life

Retired players	Part-time players	Full-time players
Less impact on daily life	Dominant impact on daily life	Total impact on daily life


A limited impact can be seen on retired tennis players due to their “separated” lives from professional sports. However, It should be noted that the qualities and values internalized through sports remained a further part of their personality. On the other hand, the impact of the sports environment itself seems to be less than in the case of part-time or full-time athletes because the place of the peri-sport sphere has been filled by other social planes on which they focus their attention. The most decisive influence can be seen in full-time athletes, whose personalities have been entirely dominated by sports-shared behaviour patterns. This underscored that the socialization in sports of this group took place at the deepest level, which is the core of their personality and is an essential point of reference.

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THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL ROAD CYCLING IN THE CONTEXTS OF MEDIA AND FINANCE¹

Abstract. The article aims to present the current situation of women in professional road cycling with a special focus on areas of inequality in media and finance. The research had two main objectives: (1) to analyze the situation of women in road cycling based on secondary data and (2) to gather opinions from women in the cycling community regarding the current situation of women in professional road cycling. Two research methods were used to achieve the stated research objectives: survey and desk research. The survey included 145 women between the ages of 19 and 56 who declared that they ride a road bike or gravel bike. The results indicated that the majority of female respondents were aware of existing inequalities in the areas of finance and media visibility. To explore areas of inequality in more detail, an analysis of the secondary data was also used. The results indicate significant inequalities in prize pools between men's and women's races, in favour of the first category. Furthermore, media coverage of women's cycling remains notably underrepresented.

Keywords: professional women's road cycling, gender inequality, financial dimension, media dimension, media-sports complex.

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SYTUACJA KOBIEC W PROFESJONALNYM KOLARSTWIE SZOSOWYM W KONTEKŚCIE MEDIÓW I FINANSÓW

Abstrakt. Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie obecnej sytuacji kobiet w profesjonalnym kolarstwie szosowym ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem obszarów nierówności w kontekście mediów i finansów. Ponadto określone zostały dwa główne cele badań: (1) przedstawienie sytuacji kobiet w kolarstwie szosowym na podstawie analizy danych zastanych oraz (2) poznanie opinii kobiet związanych ze środowiskiem kolarskim dotyczącej obecnej sytuacji kobiet w profesjonalnym kolarstwie szosowym. Do realizacji wyznaczonych celów badawczych posłużyły dwie metody badawcze: metoda ankietowa oraz desk research. W badaniu ankietowym wzięło udział 145 kobiet w wieku od 19 do 56 lat, które zadeklarowały jazdę na rowerze szosowym lub gravelu. Wyniki wskazały, że większość respondentek ma świadomość występujących nierówności w obszarze finansów i widoczności medialnej. W celu bardziej precyzyjnego zbadania obszarów nierówności wykorzystano również analizę danych zastanych. Wyniki wskazują, na znaczące nierówności w wysokości puli nagród w wyścigach mężczyzn i kobiet, na korzyść pierwszej kategorii oraz niedoreprezentowanie treści medialnych dotyczących kolarstwa kobiet.

Słowa kluczowe: profesjonalne kolarstwo szosowe kobiet, nierówności płciowe, wymiar finansowy, wymiar medialny, *media-sports complex*.

1. Introduction

In 2023, Demi Vollering won the Tour de France Femmes, earning a prize of 50,000 euros, while the winner of the men's edition of the Tour de France (Jonas Vingegaard) received 500,000 euros. This represents a tenfold difference in prize money, despite both being one of the world's most lucrative and recognizable cycling races.

The situation of women in sports can be examined in various contexts, such as, competition organization, working conditions, media, and finance. This article presents the situation of women in sports, specifically focusing on road cycling, and considers the roles of media and finance in this regard. Women's road cycling is not a frequently researched subject, although some publications cover and describe some aspects of women's cycling (e.g. Ryder 2021; Ryder, Mc Lachlan, McDonald 2021). In her thesis, Ryder highlights the dominance of men in professional road cycling, both in terms of the preponderance of male riders and the significant male dominance in the sport's power structures (e.g., governing bodies of clubs, associations, federations and sports organizations). Ryder also notes further inequalities in women's cycling: fewer races, significantly lower wages, and fewer sports clubs. The second publication focuses primarily on the financial conditions of the riders, addressing issues such as health insurance, equipment, and visa costs, which are often borne by the riders themselves. Additionally, interviews with female cyclists reveal the sexism that athletes frequently encounter in their work. The article aims to partially address the scientific gap in this area by describing

the current situation of female riders and pointing out areas that need to be changed for women's cycling to gain better development opportunities.

The article is divided into four subsections. The first subsection highlights the inseparability of sports and the media, analyzing selected studies on the representation of women's sports in the media. The second subsection is dedicated to the research methodology. The third subsection describes the financial situation of women in road cycling, while the fourth discusses it in the media context. The final part of this article focuses on discussion and concluding thoughts.

2. Media-sport complex and the representation of women's sports in the media

The choice of the research area was not accidental, and the selected dimensions (media and financial) are closely related, as explained by the concept of the media-sport complex, created by Sut Jhally in 1984. The researcher pointed out the commercial and ideological symbiosis between sports and the media (Jhally 1984). According to this concept, for a sport to gain popularity and visibility in the public spaces, it must receive greater media exposure. However, achieving this requires sponsorship, which in turn demands access to the necessary financial resources. This creates a vicious circle: a sport without a media presence cannot attract sponsors, leading to limited financial resources, which further limits media visibility.

In addition, the media area interested me because of the overrepresentation of men's sports media coverage and the underrepresentation of women's sports.

The media exacerbates the lack of visibility of women in sports with less frequent and much shorter coverage of women's events. Men's achievements dominate articles, television broadcasts, radio, or websites (e.g., Antunovic 2021; Cooky et al. 2021; Cranmer et al. 2014; Musto et al. 2017). Research on sports coverage in traditional media confirms the overrepresentation of male sports content. In Poland, research conducted by Dziubiński, Organista, and Mazur (2019) between 2010 and 2013 analyzed 2,997 articles published in *Gazeta Wyborcza*. Out of the analyzed articles, the substantial majority (84%) concerned men's sports, while only 12% covered women's sports. Additionally, more than half of the articles were related to men's football, which is not surprising considering it is the national sport of Poland. The Polish study also showed the dominance of male athletes in new media (Organista, Halter-Bogołębska 2016).

Research conducted longitudinally since 1989 approximately every five years by Cooky, Messner, and Musto (Cooky et al. 2010, 2013, 2015; Messner et al. 1993, 1996, 2003, 2006; Musto et al. 2017) provides substantial knowledge about the marginalization of women's sports. Until 2014, the research focused solely on television sports content. News segments and sports reviews were recorded on local television stations in Los Angeles (KCBS, KNBC, and KABC), the research

team also recorded the SportsCenter broadcasts on ESPN. However, in 2019, two new sources of sports information were additionally analyzed – daily online sports newsletters (cbssports.com, nbcsports.com, ESPN.com, espnW.com) and content posted on social media by official television networks accounts on Twitter (@cbssports, @nbcsports, @ESPN, @espnW). The results indicate that the airtime for women’s sports remains low, constituting 5.1% on TV news and 5.7% on SportsCenter in 2019. Moreover, coverage of women’s sports on online and social media, excluding platforms specifically dedicated to women’s sports (espnW), mirrors the level of airtime on TV news and SportsCenter. When researchers included content from espnW, media coverage increased to 8.7% for daily newsletters and 10.2% on Twitter. It was also noted that the coverage continues to be dominated by the men’s “Big Three” of football, basketball, and baseball. Moreover, when a story about women’s sports appears on television, *it is usually a case of “one and done,” a single women’s sports story obscured by a cluster of men’s stories that precede it, follow it, and are longer in length* (Cooky et al. 2021: 1). In addition, the way women’s sports are reported has been transformed over the years. Studies conducted in the late 20th century (1989, 1993, 1999) *revealed that women’s sports, women athletes, and even women spectators were habitually insulted as objects of derision, trivialization, infantilization and humorous sexualization* (Cooky et al. 2021: 12). By 2004 and 2009, there was a noticeable decline in humorous sexualization and overt insults directed at women’s sports, but there was an increased emphasis on the roles of women athletes (as mothers, wives, and girlfriends), rendering less visible those women athletes who had a non-heteronormative sexual orientation or were childless. Since 2014, a new phenomenon called gender-bland sexism, has emerged in the way women’s sports are presented in the media (Musto et al. 2017). Gender-bland sexism, as explained by the authors, is the phenomenon where commentators cover women’s sports in a monotone voice, displaying far less excitement and involvement compared to their coverage of men’s sports, making women’s coverage seem boring and rendering their accomplishments as less impressive and interesting than men’s (Musto et al. 2017).

The marginalization of women’s sports in the media means they receive less funding than men’s sports. In the 2023 Forbes list of the world’s highest-paid athletes, only one woman, Serena Williams, ranked 49th on the list of 50. Forbes rankings from 2021 to 2023 consistently show that the highest earnings predominantly come from men in sports such as football, basketball, golf, boxing, and tennis. For women, tennis is the primary source of high earnings, but golf, gymnastics, and basketball also appear. In 2022, Naomi Osaka topped the list of the world’s highest-paid female athletes with \$51.1 million, while Cristiano Ronaldo led among men with \$115 million (Birnbaum, Knight 2023; Knight 2023). The findings underscore the significant gender pay gap and show that even the biggest female sports stars earn significantly less than men.

3. Methodology

The analysis of the literature on the subject concludes that women in road cycling are not treated equally to men. Based on this, two main research objectives were formulated: (1) to present the situation of women in road cycling based on an analysis of secondary data, and (2) to gather opinions from women within the cycling community regarding the current state of women in professional road cycling.

Two research methods were used in this study: the survey method and desk research. The desk research method was used to collect and analyze the secondary data on professional road cycling in the contexts of finance and media. The data primarily comes from online sports magazines, the official Union Cycliste International (UCI) website, articles, and specific regulations (roadbook) regarding the organization of cycling races. I utilized data gathered from online magazines, the UCI website, and roadbooks to conduct a quantitative comparison of the financial aspects between men and women in road cycling. Meanwhile, data collected from articles were used to provide statistics on the length of broadcasts and viewership levels of women's and men's competitions. Data was sourced by entering the relevant phrase into web browsers such as Google, Firefox, and Yahoo.

For the survey method, the research tool was an online questionnaire designed to capture the opinions of women associated with the road cycling community (those who ride road or gravel, follow cycling races, or are interested in road cycling) regarding the situation of women in road cycling. Out of the 13 survey questionnaire questions, six were used for the article. The survey was conducted in April 2023 and distributed through social media, primarily Facebook and Instagram. The survey link was posted in cycling groups and directly sent to female cyclists. The sample selection criteria were: self-identification as a woman, and riding a road or gravel bike. The selection process did not impose specific riding criteria, allowing respondents to engage in biking recreationally, as amateurs, or professionally. The declaration by respondents about riding road or gravel bikes increased the likelihood that they participated in group rides specifically dedicated to road cycling and that, as a result, they might have been more interested in professional cycling, such as following it on social media, watching races. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. A total of 152 women aged between 19 and 56 completed the questionnaire. However, the analysis was limited only to responses provided by women who declared riding a road or gravel bike ($N = 145$). Gravel riding was included due to its presence in road group rides. The research findings were gathered and analyzed using Excel spreadsheets. The collected data were used for statistical comparison of the financial and media contexts between female and male athletes. Respondents' opinions on the financial situation of women in professional road cycling were assessed using their level of agreement with survey questions, measured with a Likert scale.

4. Results

4.1. Finance

An analysis of the Gender Pay Gap, or wage inequality related strictly to gender, should consider the salaries of male and female cyclists, the rewards they receive for winning competitions, and any sponsorship and advertising contracts. Due to limited access to the number of salaries associated with advertising contracts, I focused solely on the amount of awards for professional male and female cyclists in my analysis.

The inequality related to prizes between men's and women's races is significant. There is a noticeable difference in the total prize pools for men and women, with men's prize pools being up to 600% larger. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the differences in prize pool amounts between men's and women's races over several years in the World Tour races selected in terms of popularity (UCI World Tour – UWT and Women's World Tour – WWT), which have both women's and men's counterparts. It is important to emphasize that despite the differences in course distance or elevation – the effort, commitment, and skill required to win are at similar levels in both men and women.

Table 1. The amount of the prize pool in multistage World Tour races (amount in euros)

Race	Number of stages		2020		2021		2022		2023	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Giro d'Italia	10	21	X	1.370.000	50.000	1.377.210	250.000	1.500.000	250.000	1.500.000
Santos Tour Down Under*	3	5	105.000	105.000	105.000	105.000	105.000	105.000	105.000	105.000
Tour de France	8	21	–	2.293.000	–	2.288.450	250.000	2.282.000	250.000	2.293.000
Tour de Suisse	4	8	–	X	10.575	146.450	33.490	148.250	X	130.100
UAE Tour	4	7	–	X	–	X	–	180.000	100.000	300.000
Vuelta a España	7	21	–	1.120.000	–	1.382.355	–	1.112.640	130.020	1.118.205

“W” – Women's, “M” – Man's, “X” – lack of information, “–” no female version of the race
 Bold font – 1st women's edition of the race, * – amount stated in Australian dollars

Source: own elaboration based on online sources (given in bibliography)

The Santos Tour Down Under is the only multi-stage race to offer equal prize pools for men's and women's cycling races. The breakthrough came in 2018, when the Australian Ministry of Sport allocated AUD 90,000 to bring the women's prize pool up to par with the men's, making Australia a forerunner in equal prize funding in the sport. Previously, the women's prize pool was AUD 15,000, thanks to the ministry's budget, it increased to about AUD 105,000 (Gailberger 2018). It is also worth noting that the Women's Tour Down Under gained UCI ProSeries status in 2020 and UCI World Tour status in 2023 – the highest UCI status. The Tour de France, Giro d'Italia, and Vuelta a España, known as the Grand Tours, are undoubtedly among the most prestigious races globally, attracting media attention, sponsors, and viewers. These races also have the highest prize pools disparities between men's and women's cycling at 89%, 83%, and 88% respectively.

Table 2. The amount of the prize pool in one-day World Tour races (amount in euros)

Race	2020		2021		2022		2023	
	W	M	W	M	W	M	W	M
Amstel Gold Race	10.000	40.000	10.000	40.000	40.000	40.000	40.000	40.000
Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race	44.000	44.000	P	P	P	P	44.000	44.000
La Flèche Wallonne	18.490	40.000	18.490	40.000	18.490	X	18.490	40.000
Liège–Bastogne–Liège	X	50.000	10.505	50.000	22.020	50.000	22.020	50.000
Classic Brugge–De Panne	7.700	40.000	7.700	40.000	40.000	40.000	40.000	40.000
Paris–Roubaix	–	91.000	7.005	91.000	50.000	91.000	49.000	91.000
Ronde van Vlaanderen	5.765	50.000	5.765	50.000	50.000	50.000	50.000	50.000
Strade Bianche	10.000	40.000	10.000	40.000	10.000	40.000	10.000	40.000

“P” – pandemic, “X” – lack of information, “–” no female version of the race

Source: own elaboration based on online sources (given in bibliography)

The Belgian classic, Ronde van Vlaanderen (also known as Tour of Flanders) deserves special attention and commentary. Following a wave of social protests and criticism of the race, the organizers (Flanders Classic) implemented equal prize money for both women and men starting in 2022. Additionally, from 2023, they equalized the prize pools in the other five Belgian classics in which women also participate – Omloop Het Nieuwsblad, Gent-Wevelgem, Dwars door Vlaanderen, Scheldeprijs and Brabantse Pijl. Another race offering equal prize money regardless of gender is the Australian Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race, affirming Australia's pro-woman policy. Notably the Belgian race (Brugge de Panne) and the Dutch race (Amstel Gold Race), organizers have introduced equal prize pools for professional female and male cyclists since 2022. However, the other races presented in Table 2 indicate a disparity in prize money between men and women, in favor of the first category.

At this point, I will also refer to the results of my research. The survey questionnaire included four items related to finances in professional road cycling. The collected data indicate that the vast majority of respondents (84.14%) are aware of the differences in earnings and prize money between men's and women's cycling. Additionally, a significant majority of surveyed women believe that earnings in women's cycling and team funding should change. Furthermore, addressing the issue of earnings, it is essential to mention the significant role of sponsors, who have a tangible impact on higher earnings for female cyclists. Most respondents (83.44%) believe that the number of sponsors for women's professional teams should be increased.

In anticipation of arguments attempting to justify the differences in prize pools between men's and women's races due to different organizational units, I analyzed this aspect to verify whether indeed the women's counterparts to men's races are organized by different institutions. La Vuelta a España and La Vuelta Femenina are organized by Amaury Sport Organization (ASO) in cooperation with Unipublic. ASO is also the organizer of the Tour de France, Tour de France Femmes, and the one-day classics in the men's and women's race categories: Liège–Bostogne–Liège, La Flèche–Wallonne, Paris–Roubaix. Despite being managed by the same institutions all the mentioned races exhibit significant financial disparities. The Giro d'Italia is managed by RCS Sports, while the Giro d'Italia Donne was organized by PMG Sport until 2023, and from 2024, under a changed name (Giro d'Italia Women), will be managed by RCS Sports. The same institution also organizes the UAE Tour (in cooperation with the Abu Dhabi Sports Council) and Strade Bianche – men's and women's editions, yet they do not provide equal prizes for men and women. However, other races are also under the same organizers and offer equal prizes regardless of gender, such as the Amstel Gold Race under Leo van Vliet, Bruge de Panne under KVC Panne Sportief, and Tour of Flanders managed by Flanders Classic. Given these considerations, I believe that the organizers are capable of providing equal prizes in men's and women's races, and they bear significant responsibility for changing the funding situation for women in the sport. An additional regulation to ensure equal prize pools in men's and women's races could be a requirement by the Union Cycliste International (UCI) to provide equal prizes in both categories of competition. Nevertheless, currently, such an initiative remains in the realm of utopian aspirations.

4.2. Media

When discussing the status of women in professional road cycling, it's essential to address the issue of media visibility and the role of media in promoting the sport. In 2020, the UCI established a legal regulation requiring organizers of races included in the Women's World Tour (WWT) calendar to provide 45 minutes of live broadcasting for each stage of the race (Flottorp, 2020). Failure to meet

this requirement results in the demotion of the race to .Pro² status (Jones 2022). An example of a race facing demotion due to non-compliance is the Giro d'Italia Donne, where organizers in 2020 failed to adhere to UCI requirements, resulting in the demotion of the race to 2.Pro status for the 2021 season (Frattini 2021). Although races with Pro status are not obligated to provide media coverage, the Giro Donne aimed to return to the prestigious World Tour race calendar, necessitating live coverage of the final 15 kilometres of each stage. The UCI approved this form of coverage because it fits into the broader 60-minute live package including the award ceremony, post-race interviews and race analysis (*ibid.*). Eventually, the Giro d'Italia Donne returned to the list of the most prestigious cycling races in 2022.

Most of the men's races are broadcast in their entirety and can be viewed, for example, in Poland on Eurosport, Player, and through the Global Cycling Network (GCN) platform. A report from 2019, covering 12 countries (Australia, Belgium, Denmark, France, Spain, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States) indicates that the broadcast of each stage of the Tour de France (men) in 2019 was watched by an average of 10.52 million viewers (Van Reeth 2019). The highest viewership was recorded in France, Italy and Germany. The 2023 Tour de France Femmes attracted nearly 20 million viewers on France Télévisions (Sim 2023a). In addition, Eurosport's coverage of the race reached 15 million viewers, marking a 7.14 percent increase over the previous edition of the race (Sim 2023a). In comparison, the 2023 Tour de France attracted 42.5 million viewers on France Télévisions (Sim 2023b). Van Reeth's analysis of 75 television broadcasts of women's cycling races in 2019 (there were 65 in 2018) indicates that men's cycling races received higher viewership (see Van Reeth 2019). Figures published on the official UCI website show that during the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, broadcasts on France Télévisions channel attracted 1.8 million viewers (Men's Elite road races), and the Women's Elite races attracted 1 million viewers – a record since 2013 when viewership was 0.6 million viewers (UCI 2023). Belgium also saw record viewership levels, with VRT registering a viewership share of 71.4% of the men's Elite road races and 66% of the women's Elite road races (UCI 2023). Although data on the viewership of women's and men's races are not exhaustive and indicate a higher viewership level for men's races, there is a noticeable upward trend in the viewership of women's races.

The research I conducted refers to the visibility of women's cycling, considering media visibility, recognition of women's teams and their riders, and viewership of women's races. The survey questionnaire included two questions about

² The UCI distinguishes two categories of races: World Tour (UWT and WWT) and ProSeries, which are divided into: .Pro, .1 category, and .2 category. World Tour races mainly involve WorldTeams (the highest level of UCI licensing), and ProTeams can only participate in World Tour races if they are granted a "wild card" (Tyniec 2022). Approximately 70% of WorldTeam-licensed teams can compete in .Pro category races, with the rest of the teams being ProTeams and ContinentalTeams (Tyniec 2022).

race broadcasting: *Do you watch broadcasts of cycling races?* and *If yes, do you watch broadcasts of men's or women's races?* The survey results indicate that nearly 83.5% of female respondents have watched a broadcast or excerpts of some type of cycling race. Additionally, about 35% of female respondents reported that they watch cycling races several times a year, and more than 20% stated that they watch most televised cycling races. Nearly 18% of respondents indicated that they only watch excerpts of broadcast races. In response to the second question the vast majority of survey respondents (83,6%) stated that they watch both women's and men's cycling races. Nearly 14% of female respondents watch only men's races, while 2.5% claim to exclusively watch women's races.

The survey results indicate that men's UCI WorldTeams are more recognized, but the differences between the recognition of men's and women's teams are not so significant. The teams most recognized by female respondents are the men's team Bora-Hansgrohe and the women's team Canyon Sram Racing. Interestingly, women's teams affiliated with men's teams (Movistar Team Women, Trek-Segafredo, Team Jumbo Visma Women, or EF-Education-Tibco-SVB) are less recognized. In addition, female respondents were asked to select from a pool of the 30 most popular male and female cyclists they recognize. The results indicated a tendency for female respondents to recognize Polish riders and female athletes more often: Michał Kwiatkowski, Rafał Majka, Katarzyna Niewiadoma, and Marta Lach. Male cyclists enjoy greater recognition, with more than half of the female respondents recognizing 11 out of 15 listed male pool riders and four out of 15 listed female cyclists. The lower recognition of female athletes may be attributed to the lower media visibility of women's cycling compared to men's. In addition, the smaller number of fans following the achievements of the top female cycling stars may contribute to the limited presence of this discipline in the media. While high viewership rates benefit media, low ratings may make it economically unfeasible to produce content related to women's cycling. It is worth noting, however, that limited access to media content on women's cycling may further reduce viewership, as published content may not reach potential new audiences that might be interested in following women's cycling.

5. Discussion and concluding thoughts

When discussing the status of women in professional road cycling, it is crucial to emphasize the growing trend towards and equalizing prize pools between women's and men's races. Nevertheless, most races of the UCI Women's World Tour calendar still offer significantly lower prize money, directly leading to lower salaries for female athletes. Moreover, women's earnings are directly affected by the visibility of women's cycling, characterized by a lower level than men's cycling. Greater visibility attracts more sponsors, advertising partners, viewers, and fans, thereby

enhancing the sport's popularity and resulting in longer and more frequent broadcasts of competitions. Although there are legal regulations for media coverage of UCI Women's World Tour races they typically cover only 45 minutes of racing per day, while the races themselves often span from two to four or even six hours, depending on the route's distance and difficulty. The literature presented in the introduction confirms the media marginalization of women's sports. The infrequent and shorter broadcasts of women's sports make it challenging to popularize sports involving women and to close the gender gap.

Some races did not have their first women's editions until after 2020. For instance, the Tour de Suisse Women and Paris–Roubaix Women premiered in 2021, Tour de France in 2022, and UAE Tour Women and La Vuelta Femenina in 2023. While the emergence of new races for women reflects an upward trend in the development of professional women's cycling, current salary discrepancies and the significantly shorter number of stages undermine their standing in the cycling community, perpetuating the dominance of men in the sport. In addition, discussions arise regarding the duration of women's events, with some proponents arguing that women should not receive equal prize money as men due to the shorter duration of their events. However, this argument is countered by examples such as major tennis tournaments. Women play two sets and men three, and therefore spend more time on the court, yet receive equal financial rewards. This underscores the argument that earnings should be determined by the length of competition. However, media exposure and commercialization play a major role in shaping athletes' earnings, forcing sports to adapt to and conform to the prevailing market rules (Jakubowska 2012: 194–195). The media popularized individual sports through the viewing rate, which leads to gender disparity in financial terms (*ibid*). Consequently, the highest earnings are achieved by the most popular athletes, whose achievements and sports attract high audience viewership (Jakubowska 2012: 194–195).

The survey revealed a high level of awareness and knowledge among respondents regarding the situation of female road cyclists. The majority of respondents are aware of the inadequate funding in women's cycling and believe this should change by increasing prize pools in races, securing more sponsors, and providing better funding for teams. As members of the cycling community, surveyed women are interested in professional road cycling for both men's and women's events with some following most race broadcasts and others watch at least a few times a year. Additionally, some female respondents watch excerpts of race broadcasts, focusing on the most important and spectacular parts of the races. However, respondents find it more difficult to recognize female athletes, likely because male athletes dominate media coverage and female athletes are mentioned less often.

Based on my research I identified actions to address financial inequalities and enhance the visibility of women's road cycling in the sport. Firstly, increasing media coverage of women's cycling by expanding coverage of women's races and news in traditional and social media platforms is essential. Additionally, conducting

campaigns to promote women's cycling could help popularize the sport among the public. A crucial aspect is establishing top-down regulations to ensure equal pay and rewards for both women and men, along with developing a strategy to provide greater financial support for women's teams. Increasing the number of cycling clubs dedicated to women is also important to give them better chances for career development. Achieving equality in terms of media presence, and publicity, and increasing the visibility of women's sports events compared to men's events can contribute to convincing a broader audience that women's competition in sports is just as interesting and exciting as that among men.

The publication aimed to fill at least in part the scientific gap in the selected area. To deepen the research on the situation of women in professional road cycling, it would be worthwhile to interview professional female cyclists, compare the coverage between women's and men's cycling in the new media, as well as collect data on viewership levels for individual races on the UCI World Tour calendar.

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DIET AS A CHALLENGE AND A STRATEGY: ON THE PHENOMENON OF DIET RATIONALISATION IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Abstract. This article describes the diet catering service (delivering ready-made meals to customers' homes or work in a selected period) as an example of rationalization and professionalization of diet. The article is based on the results of interviews conducted with 15 users of dietetic catering from Poland, conducted between 2021 and 2023. The aim of the interviews was to try to answer the question of what benefits the respondents derived from using dietetic catering in their everyday life. As the results of the analysis show, respondents try to live a healthy lifestyle, which they do not always succeed in doing. Outsourcing the preparation of meals to the specialized companies allows them to save time and receive well-balanced meals, at selected times of the day adapted to their rhythm of work. There is a compromise between meeting healthy eating norms and social norms relating to food consumption, both in terms of mealtimes, the number of meals per day as well as what is meant by a 'proper lunch'.

Keywords: nutrition, dietetic catering, Poland, diet, rationalization.

DIETA JAKO WYZWANIE I STRATEGIA: O ZJAWISKU RACJONALIZACJI DIETY W CODZIENNYM ŻYCIU

Abstrakt. W artykule opisano usługę cateringu dietetycznego polegającą na dostarczaniu klientom gotowych posiłków do domu lub pracy w wybranym okresie jako przykład racjonalizacji i profesjonalizacji diety. Artykuł bazuje na wynikach badań własnych, wywiadów przeprowadzonych z 15 użytkownikami cateringu dietetycznego z Polski, w latach 2021–2023. Celem wywiadów była próba uzyskania odpowiedzi na pytanie, jakie korzyści daje badanym korzystanie z cateringu dietetycznego w codziennym życiu. Jak pokazują wyniki analiz, badani starają się sprostać zasadom prowadzenia zdrowego stylu życia, co nie zawsze im się udaje. Powierzenie przygotowywania

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posiłków w ręce wyspecjalizowanych firm pozwala im zaoszczędzić czas i otrzymywać odpowiednio zbilansowane posiłki, w wybranych porach dostosowanych do ich rytmu dnia. Mamy tu do czynienia z kompromisem pomiędzy realizacją norm dotyczących zdrowego odżywiania a norm społecznych odnoszących się do spożywania posiłków, zarówno jeśli chodzi o pory posiłków, ich liczbę w ciągu dnia, jak i to, co rozumie się jako „porządny obiad”.

Słowa kluczowe: odżywianie, catering dietetyczny, Polska, dieta, racjonalizacja.

1. Introduction

In this article, I would like to describe the service of diet catering, providing clients with ready-made meals for the day to work or home, as an example of diet rationalization and professionalization. I will use the term “diet rationalization” as it was used by Bryan S. Turner (1994: 177), who wrote about the impact of rationalization processes on the human body. It is about the subordination of the body and diet to the norms of rationalization and calculation.¹ Diet is conceived as a means to an end, which is a healthy, fit body. I understand the professionalization of diet as putting preparation of meals in the hands of professionals (Poulain 2017).

I will try to show what benefits diet catering can give to its recipients. In the article, I will use the results of analysis of in-depth interviews with diet catering users, conducted in the years 2021–2023 with 15 diet catering users in Poland.

2. Theoretical background: rationalization, diet, and the body

In his works, Max Weber described the process of rationalization. He distinguished four types of rationality: practical, theoretical, formal, and substantive. Practical rationality, associated with purposive-rational actions, is based on pragmatic individual actions leading to the satisfaction of material interests in isolation from the realization of ideas. Theoretical rationality is related to expanding systems of abstract concepts and increasing role of expert knowledge and science in perception of reality. Formal rationalization guarantees the stability of the social action system by formalizing and standardizing certain practices in the form of action rules. Substantive rationalization is associated with a focus on non-egoistic values. These are organized into general sets (such as “friendship”). Sets of such values are at the root of modern capitalism (see: Kalberg 1980; Kuryłowicz 2021: 85–86). Weber used the notion of rationalization as a conceptual scheme to analyze “regularities of action” within institutions, organizations, strata, classes, and groups (Kalberg 1980: 1148). The types of rationality and the various rationalization processes are often

¹ Diet rationalization in nutritional science includes the selection of products in such a way as to provide the body with all the necessary nutrients. It also refers to the formation of proper eating habits aimed at preventing disease (Biedrzycka 2015: 163)

discussed by Weber in reference to Western civilization distinctive modernization path. Rationalization processes of historic significance in societies and in entire civilizations have often originated when a constellation of factors crystallized that rewarded methodological, rational ways of life (Kalberg 1980: 1148–1149). Weber wondered what the peculiarities of modern Western civilization consisted of and resulted from. One of these is the rationalization of the world, the detachment of individual consciousness from religious notions legitimizing the order of things, the invalidation of the absolutism of tradition, the relativization of ethics and the transfer of the justification of social action to the purposive-rational reasoning (Kuryłowicz 2021: 84).²

Brian S. Turner points out that in one of Weber's works, namely "Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (Weber 2010), there is a reference to the rationalization of the human body and diet. In this work, Weber mentioned how religious rules served as a form of control of desire. One of the recommendations to religious doubts and sexual temptations was a moderate vegetable diet and cold baths (Turner 1982: 256). According to Turner, "Weber discusses the rise and development of rationalization in the context of theological systematization, the extension of the principles of calculation, prediction and reliability in the scientific knowledge to all areas of life, the decline of magic and superstition, the growth of bureaucratic forms of organization in the military, state and industry" (Turner 1982: 259). While Weber was not explicitly concerned with the body, he was interested in ascetic practices³ and the development of a sober, disciplined, and rational lifestyle in capitalism (Turner 1982: 259). Turner traces inspirations with Weber's concept of rationality in Michel Foucault's theory of power/knowledge. In "Discipline and Punish. The Birth of the Prison" (Foucault 1991) Foucault was specifically concerned with the growth of examinations, timetables, taxonomies, and registers which provided the means for the detailed surveillance and disciplining of the body (Turner 1982: 257; 1994: 180). According to Turner, by referring to the examples of institutions which were created to exert discipline on the human bodies (factories, schools, prisons, or asylums) Foucault reproduces Weber's argument form "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" (Turner 1982: 259).

Turner sees an example of the systematization of knowledge in the application of science to the problem of food consumption suitable for representatives of different social groups. As late as the turn of the 20th century, the prevailing belief was in the duality of body and mind. The body remained a prison for the soul, preventing the individual from achieving full humanity (Aries, Duby 2000: 99). The mind hinges

² With reference to Weber's concept of rationalization Kuryłowicz proposed to distinguish between several notions: rationalism – the optimal choice of means to achieve a given end; rationalization – systematization of a set of ideas into a logically clear, non-contradictory system of rules and rationality: the influence of ideas on the choice of a given action (Kuryłowicz 2021: 85).

³ According to Turner, the ascetic is someone, who practices self-discipline by a system of rules (Turner 1982: 259).

on the body, which is supposed to function efficiently (like a machine) (Turner 1994: 183). The body was conceived primarily as a “tool” for physical labor. The principles of rationality were supposed to apply to food as well to be able to provide the body with the energy it needed to function. Interest was then taken in the caloric content of meals and how eating affects the body (Vigarello 2012: 273). It was postulated that diet should be adapted to the body’s needs: type of work, age, social class (Turner 1994: 190; Vigarello 2012). With the process of formalization of medicine, the rationalization and medicalization of diet progressed (Turner 1994: 177; 1982: 258). As Turner notes: “the development of the mechanistic metaphors of the body seems decisive for the emergence of a scientific discourse of the body and the development of dietary classifications” (Turner 1982: 259). Dietary tables were typically aimed at forms of consumption which were regarded as ‘irrational’ threats to health (Turner 1982: 267). The dietary programs were originally addressed to the social groups which were exposed to abundance (the representatives of the elite) but in the second half of the 19th century the science of diet was also applied to the problem of inadequate calory intake of the representatives of the working class. The aim was to establish a minimum number of calories whose intake would ensure maximum physical performance.

The rationalization of diet is also a consequence of changes in the ways in which nutrition is organized. Georges Vigarello (2012: 275) wrote about the birth of gastronomy in the second half of the 19th century. Barry W. Higman (2012: 311) places the development of dietetics in the same moment in history (the second half of the 19th century). To the emergence of dietetics and gastronomy we can add the phenomenon of professionalization. According to Jean-Pierre Poulain, the industrial era saw changes in the ways in which food was produced and distributed. Off-farm food production has expanded, and new technical possibilities for large-scale food delivery have emerged (due to the development of means of transportation). At the same time, changes in the labor market have forced a reduction in the time spent in households on meal preparation in favor of buying ready-to-eat products. The food service sector has also developed: restaurants, canteens, cafeterias, allowing people to dine out, which allowed households to relieve the burden of food production (Poulain 2017).

According to Gillian Crowther, public eating was born of necessity: work demanded access to food away from home (Crowther 2013: 191). Crowther mentions two founders of French gastronomy: Grimod de La Reynière and Anthelme Brillat-Savarin. The latter was interested in the healthy working of the human body. This was directly related to the prevailing French concern that the health of the population was tied to the health of nation. Diet was regarded as instrumental to the nation’s economic success (Crowther 2013: 191). Brillat-Savarin, author of the “Physiology of Taste”, as well as the author of the concept of ‘gastronomy’ (the rational science of man as a being who feeds himself; Vigarello 2012: 275) argued that taste was something that everyone had, regardless of their social position. He

made gastronomy open to anyone. Among other things, his work included tips for preventing obesity. He suggested seeking pleasure in eating despite an imposed diet. His works contributed to the transformation of the French cuisine of the early nineteenth century and the change in requirements from quantitative to qualitative (Vigarello 2012: 278).

One of the characteristics of contemporary societies is the lack of time to devote to food purchasing and preparation. Convenience became an important factor in food choices (Crowther 2013: 211). Today, diet is subordinated to the rhythm of work. The continuity of the working day has given birth to ‘nutritional Taylorism’. Nutrition is collective, modern, industrial, and dietary. The rapid preparation of meals and their consumption are the characteristics of today’s times (Aries, Duby 2000: 336).

3. Materials and methods

Currently, there are many companies offering services of diet catering mainly in larger cities in Poland. Some of the companies offer the possibility of delivering their meals over a larger area of more than one city which allows frequent travelers to take advantage of their offer. There are no surveys that illustrate the current scale of diet catering use in Poland. A nationwide survey conducted on behalf of Kukula Healthy Food in September and October 2021 showed that diet catering was used by 37% of surveyed Poles, with one in five (21%) ordering the service regularly (an 8% increase compared to 2020) and 60% of respondents using the service occasionally.⁴

Zborowski and Mikulec point out to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic and numerous restrictions aimed at reducing the frequency of movement as well as to maintain social distance and isolation have undoubtedly intensified the use of this form of food delivery. Among other factors which contributed to the popularization of the use of dietary catering services one can mention the increase in the awareness of the impact of the quality of consumed food on the human body. The undoubted benefit of using dietary catering is the possibility of dietary consultation while using the diet. (Zborowski, Mikulec 2022).

In order to learn more about diet catering offerings, in the first week of November 2023 (1.–8.11.2023) I reviewed the websites of companies offering “boxed diet with delivery” nationwide. The review focused on the offers of the 60 providers most popular in the ranking of the portal cateromarket.pl. This portal offers a search engine of offers of companies providing diet with delivery services in Poland with

⁴ According to Bankier.pl Internet website, Polak “na pudełkach”: krajowy rynek cateringu dietetycznego wart ok. 2 mld złotych i ciągle rośnie, <https://www.bankier.pl/wiadomosc/Polak-na-pudełkach-Krajowy-rynek-cateringu-dietetycznego-wart-ok-2-mld-zl-i-ciagle-rosnie-8441892.html> [accessed: 22.02.2024].

the possibility of searching the offers and taking into account certain criteria (e.g. type of diet) as well as a ranking of the most popular offers and the possibility of reading reviews of each of them. Guided by the popularity ranking, I reviewed the offers of the 60 most popular companies. I was interested in what types of diets are most often offered.

The most popular turned out to be vegetarian diets, weight loss diets (with reduced calories), elimination diets, e.g., excluding gluten, lactose. Very rich was the offer of specialized diets, aimed at people with specific health problems, with diabetes, Hashimoto's disease or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS, the low FODMAP diet). The range of diets aimed at people actively engaged in sports activities was also rich. These included diets with increased protein, reduced carbohydrates (sugars, the so-called low-carb diet), or the ketogenic diet. On average, each of the 60 suppliers whose offerings I checked offered ten different types of diets. Some of the companies gave their customers a choice of menus (for each meal, one can choose from at least two dishes). In addition, the customer can choose the number of meals per day (usually 3–5 meals) and specify how many days per week they would like to receive meal delivery. It is possible to receive delivery only on working days, on all days of the week including weekends, or only on selected days.

Usually, the caloric content of the selected diet and the macronutrients included in the diet are listed on the supplier's website. Only 3 out of 60 offers did not specify macronutrients and calories. Table 1 presents the diets that most frequently appeared in suppliers' offers.

Table 1. Prevalence of different types of diets offered by catering companies

Type of diet	Incidence
Vegetarian	34 (out of 60 offers analyzed)
Ketogenic	34
For those practicing sports	33
Elimination diets (excluding gluten, lactose, milk, fish, etc.)	26
Low glycaemic index	22
Weight loss	17
Low carbohydrates	14
Vegan	14
Diabetic	7
Low FODMAP	4
Hashimoto	4

Some of the companies on their websites also describe what result a certain type of diet can bring. For example: “Are you dreaming of a diet that will allow

you to reach a state of ketosis, burn unwanted body fat and enjoy full health? The Ketogenic Diet, which we have prepared especially for you, may be just what you need”⁵ or “A diet ideal for people who want to eat healthy and look great. The biggest advantage of this diet is that it will help you maintain a healthy and beautiful figure without unnecessary sacrifices. The caloric content of the diet is individually selected for each person”⁶ In the quotes given, it is argued that using the diet will benefit both appearance and well-being. It is also argued that the diet offered has been prepared by nutritionists: “all the meals and juices we offer are created by qualified technologists and experienced dietitians, who have turned “healthy” tables of nutritional values into delicious meals and extraordinary smoothies”⁷.

Reviewing the websites of companies offering the diet catering was helpful in learning more about the specificity of their offer. In addition, in the years 2021–2023, I conducted 15 in-depth interviews with people who had used the offer of diet catering with delivery for at least a few months. The selection of participants for the study was purposive. Snowball sampling method was used: interviewees were asked to identify other catering users who would like to participate in the study. Usually, the inspiration to use the diet catering service was a recommendation from friends or people in the work environment. Therefore, snowball sampling was used. The service appeared to be a way to ensure regular meals especially during workdays. (None of my interviewees used the diet catering service on weekends). My interviewees were people living and working in Warsaw. The youngest participant in the study was 22 and the oldest was 46. Among the respondents there were 5 men and 10 women.

The primary research question was: What are the benefits of using diet catering for respondents? Respondents were eager to share their thoughts and observations on this topic. The shortest interview lasted 12 minutes, the longest – half an hour. The interviews were unstructured. The respondents’ views related to their various experiences of using the diet catering service were recorded and then transcribed and analyzed using the “cross-case” analytical approach (Miles, Huberman 2000: 180). The analysis of the material collected in the interviews was carried out without a predetermined list of coding categories. The codes emerged later, during the analysis. Event-by-event coding was used: certain recurring themes were identified in the texts of the interviews, and each theme was assigned a code. “This makes it possible to track the recurrence of certain key themes” (Glinka, Czakon 2021: 126). Below I will try to present the answer to the research question, using quotes from the interviews.

⁵ MójKatering.pl, <https://mojkatering.com.pl/dieta/zestaw-sport/> [accessed: 2.11.2023]

⁶ Dieta Pirata, <https://dietapirata.com.pl/zestawy/> [accessed: 2.11.2023]

⁷ Fitpapu, <https://www.fitpapu.com/jak-to-dziala/zdrowy-styl/> [accessed: 2.11.2023]

4. Analysis

What are the benefits of using diet catering for respondents? Firstly, it allows them to feel that they are eating healthy, or that their daily diet is not entirely “unhealthy.” As one interviewee put it:

It’s healthier than going for some fried food for lunch every day (W1).

Among my interviewees, everyone reached for diet catering at least once to lose weight. The motivation, then, was the desire to reduce body weight. Ordering catering was preceded by a search for information on which diet to choose. Catering companies usually have tools on their websites to facilitate the search for diets – a simple questionnaire, in which, after specifying such parameters as age, gender, weight and height, as well as providing information on physical activity during the week, one gets a proposal for approximate caloric requirements, and on this basis, they can choose among the diets offered. This is what my interviewees did most often:

There is an algorithm on the site, I calculated the result only once, to count calories for me. You enter information on how many times you exercise in a week, how much you weigh, and it calculates your calories (W2).

Guidance on the caloric content of a diet makes it easier to make a choice from the range of diets offered. In doing so, one does not have to delve into the ins and outs of healthy eating on their own:

The first time I used catering was to lose weight, so I paid attention to the very low caloric intake (1200) (W1).

It is worth noting that in the quoted statements there is an assumption of a specific result that the respondents want to achieve with their bodies (weight reduction). There is an anticipation of the effects of the diet. Algorithm is helpful in choosing the diet. From the client’s perspective, this means ceding (to the algorithm, to “professionals”) part of the responsibility for healthy eating, getting help in designing measurable diet results. These are examples of rationalizing of the body and the diet, as the interviewed expect a specific effect in the appearance of the body by means of a specific action (calorie reduction).

Reaching for a diet catering is a manifestation of rationalization in other dimensions as well. When choosing a diet for themselves, respondents are often guided by financial calculation. They strive to get the most varied offer possible at a reasonable price:

When choosing a diet, I consider value for money (W3).

Respondents declare that ordering diet catering is supposed to “pay off” for them. When ordering it, they want to fit in the amount of money that was supposed to be spent on food monthly, which is why some of the respondents decided to reduce the number of meals in the diet (for example, from five to four or three per day). This matters because the service is quite expensive. The cost of daily meals averages PLN 65 per day (monthly expenses of PLN 1300–1500 per one person). The element of rational calculation and budget planning is thus important here.

Diet catering turns out to be a great convenience in the daily routine of preparing meals. It allows to enjoy varied food, but without having to compose the meal on one’s own. Using a diet catering service also gives the opportunity to consume something different every day without having to constantly make a choice. By deciding on a certain diet, at least for a while one can forget about the annoyance of coming up with a menu:

I know they will balance it (the meal) and I can’t count calories (on my own) and don’t want to (W4).

It was all so pragmatic, that is, I don’t have to cook, I don’t have to do the dishes, I have everything brought home directly (W5).

Catering is convenient – I don’t have to cook or go shopping (W6).

Diet catering is a manifestation of rationalization in time management as well. Time spent on buying the ingredients or doing the shopping can be saved:

I don’t have time to figure out how much of what to buy every day, I gave up for such practical reasons: I didn’t have time to prepare fresh things every day (W7).

The use of catering services can also be interpreted as entrusting nutrition into the hands of professionals (Poulain 2017), relying on the authority of professionals in this field. Those willing to use the offer of catering companies trust that their menus are prepared by specialists in nutrition. This increases the certainty that one is providing their body properly balanced meals. The potential user of the service can also be supported in planning meals, establishing nutrition plans, and designing a specific vision of their body.

In addition to the advantages of food catering, respondents also mentioned their doubts about this service. After a certain period of using diet catering, there comes a point when the users for whom one of the most important motivations to use the service was to reduce weight, realize that their expectations were not realistic. At that point, there is a shift in their expectations: they no longer define the effects of the diet in pounds shed but recognize other benefits: that they feel good or that their body takes on a certain shape. Respondents are also aware that getting good results, such as losing weight, requires regularity:

It's all about consistency, so I would either have to order "boxes" all my life or be consistent with calories even when I quit "boxes", because then the weight comes back or even doubles (W7).

Respondents know that food catering is simply a delivered ready-made meal, but the meal itself won't keep them healthy if they don't follow healthy eating rules.

The issue of trust in the supplier also appeared in the interviews. The food in the deliveries does not always meet the respondents' expectations in terms of taste, freshness or variety of ingredients. After some time there comes fatigue with a particular type of diet, which usually leads to a search for a new catering company. To reduce uncertainty about whether the new supplier's offer will meet their expectations, respondents often follow recommendations of their friends who also use diet catering.

The most common expression of trust was when the food provided was described as "close to homemade". Respondents commented in interviews on what distinguishes delivered food from "homemade" food (prepared by a trusted person; see: Crowther 2013: 178). For example, one respondent understood homemade food as low-processed food:

If it's minimally processed, that is I buy it and I open it and I see that there's corn or beans and chicken and I can recognize it, it's like a "Better-Checked Almost Homemade Dinner" (W2).

Other respondents looked for catering that offered familiar dishes, because it was more "homey" food in their understanding.

Respondents also expressed their concerns when it comes to eating dishes containing meat delivered by catering companies: some of those surveyed order vegetarian dishes for fear of eating meat from "unknown sources". Given that catering is a type of mass food production and a for-profit business, fears arise that caterers will "save money on meat":

I try to limit eating meat for environmental reasons and that you never know what meat that is (W8).

I took a vege diet because I was a little afraid of what the meat would be, at this price, what the quality would be (W1).

These opinions expressed the lack of confidence in catering companies.

5. Discussion and conclusions

From the interviews, a picture emerges in which reaching for diet catering can be interpreted as an attempt to control the activities of preparing meals on a daily basis ensuring that they are prepared regularly, in appropriate portions, in accordance with the principles of healthy eating. Cooking seems to many of my interlocutors

to be a tedious and time-consuming activity, and one that does not always yield the expected results. At the same time, they try to live up to the principles of leading a healthy lifestyle, which is not always successful. It can be said that entrusting this issue into the hands of specialized companies (professionals), is a kind of strategy for adapting to urban life. These findings overlap with the results of quantitative research studies on using diet catering services conducted in Poland, which showed that among the main motivations of clients were the desire to support proper eating habits and to reduce body weight. One of decisive factors to use the services of diet catering was also the lack of time to prepare wholesome meals (Pyrzyńska 2018; Zborowski, Mikulec 2022).

Jean-Pierre Poulain described longer commute times and thus reduced time for meals as characteristics of the urban lifestyle. In addition, the urban lifestyle is characterized by more frequent eating out, not only at restaurants or employee cafeterias, but also at the office during the lunch break. As Poulain noted, a lunch box becomes a fixture of the modern city dweller. A meal becomes not only a moment of leisure, but also a “moment for oneself” (Poulain 2017). Diet catering meets these needs: it allows to simplify healthy eating in the conditions of urban life.

The notion of *gastroanomie* comes to mind here. It refers to the dilution of eating rules in modern societies (see: Fischler 1988; Domański et al. 2015; Poulain 2017; Crowther 2013), examples of which include simplification of meals, lack of regularity in eating, and difficulty in carving out time for regular shopping and cooking. The diet catering service allows respondents to provide some predictability and regularity in their meal intake. Since all of the interviewed participants are young adults of working age, but most of them do not yet have families of their own, the rhythm of meals is less determined by their participation in the family structure and eating becomes “a separate marker of their social identities” (Domański et al. 2015: 15). Other transformations in eating patterns described with reference to modern societies can also be noted here: “an increase of purchased food at the expense of that produced independently” in food consumption patterns which Domański et al. (2015: 17) described as the example of the “commodification of food”, the popularization of eating out (rather than – eating at home or “at someone else’s place”), and the individualization of eating patterns (Domański et al. 2015: 17–18).

Gillian Crowther wrote about the creation of “urban mass gastronomy” as of an endeavor which made it possible to eat according to healthy eating principles, which in turn – would translate into an increase in the productivity of society. Therefore, food should taste good to representatives of different social groups: “gastronomy is a field, allowing good food to be made available to everyone, regardless of their taste” (Crowther 2013: 191).

On the other hand, Pierre Bourdieu (2023) identified the use of catering services (e.g., restaurants) as a way of marking social differences between representatives of different status groups. This also applies to diet catering. It offers food “to suit every

taste” but also, since ordering diet catering is quite expensive, it can be assumed that using it is a manifestation of high material status and a modern, urban lifestyle. According to Zborowski and Mikulec, the diet catering services are especially popular among young people living in cities (Zborowski, Mikulec 2022). Pyrzyńska noted that the popularity of diet catering services is due to increase of wealth in society (Pyrzyńska 2018).

The beliefs expressed by respondents show that social norms regarding the preparation and consumption of meals have been evolving. Meat is not considered a necessary component of a “decent dinner” by my respondents. Rather, it is important that it be a balanced (in terms of nutrients) dinner. The fact that the respondents put balanced meals before having meat shows that nutritional norms come before social norms (Poulain 2017). Social norms refer to social knowledge about what one should eat for lunch (meat as an indicator of a “proper dinner”).⁸ Nutritional norms refer to the alignment with knowledge about healthy eating.

Other examples of the shifts in social norms regulating the preparation and consumption of meals refer to the acceptance of eating outside of home (e.g. at a workplace) and the fact that the meals are not prepared by the interviewees themselves or their family members.

Justyna Straczuk, describing eating patterns during the communist era in Poland, mentions three important beliefs prevailing at the time. The first was the belief that meat was an indicator of high social status and an essential ingredient of a “decent dinner” (Straczuk 2016: 202). The second was an aversion to eating out, stemming from the important role of the family in the social structure (Straczuk 2016: 204). The third, was the belief that homemade, “one’s own” food was more valuable than already prepared food (Straczuk 2016: 207). Having “one’s own” food, made at home, by family members was associated with self-sufficiency in food production and was an expression of independence from state institutions. “One’s own food” also signified membership in a network of exchange, where food was treated as an important element in building social bonds.

From conversations with diet catering users, it appears that they indeed value homemade food most highly, however, since their day is subordinated to their work rhythm, they choose diet catering. This fits in with the “urban lifestyle” criteria described by Poulain and Crowther, cited above. The choice of diet catering also sometimes stems from a reluctance to cook or a lack of time for this activity. An important benefit which diet catering gives to the research participants is the belief, that their meals are more balanced because they have been prepared by professionals, even if a trusted person doesn’t prepare meals for them. They prioritize adapting the service to their daily rhythm.

Diet catering can also be considered an example of rationalization (of the diet and the body). By rationalization of diet, I understand looking for ways to adapt

⁸ Or – how many meals one should eat in a day.

meals to the principles of healthy eating.⁹ This service is based on the idea that a certain vision of the body can be realized through diet. Among the offerings of catering companies, we can find diets aimed at sports people, people with specific health problems, or addressed to those who want to reduce weight. An example of ‘theoretical rationalization’ described by Weber can be noticed in referring to the experts’ knowledge in preparation of nutritional plans. Practical rationalization can be traced in effectiveness in selecting means to an end (diet catering can be used to achieve a slim, fit, healthy body). Formal rationalization appears in formalizing and standardizing certain practices in the form of action rules. This is exemplified in dietetic recommendations in the form of tables, and measurements. According to Bryan S. Turner, the contemporary preoccupation with such problems as obesity, dieting and weight loss are examples of the extension of rational calculation to the body and the involvement of science as an apparatus of social control (Turner 1994: 192).


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⁹ As B.S. Turner noted, dietary tables were typically aimed at forms of consumption which were regarded as ‘irrational’ threats to health (Turner 1982: 267).

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THE IMAGE OF PARALYMPIC ATHLETES IN THE POLISH MEDIA ON THE EXAMPLE OF “PRZEGLĄD SPORTOWY”

Abstract. One of the key components of the image of athletes is the media discourse. The media message reaching its recipients affects their perception of sport and people involved in it. This seems particularly important in the context of sports for people with disabilities due to a number of stereotypes attributed to people with disabilities in society. The image of para-athletes created in the media can have various consequences, and what largely determines them is the way media messages are formulated. The purpose of the following considerations is therefore to analyze sports articles with particular attention to the types of media used in writing about sports for people with disabilities. In the first part of the work, I wanted to present the specificity of parasport related to it, as well as the role played by the media in relation to the situation of para-athletes, including Paralympic athletes. Then, I described the research methods and tools that I used at the stage of analyzing press materials and selecting appropriate typologies. The last part contains the results of my analysis of press articles contained in 25 issues of “Przeгляд Sportowy” from the period August 17, 2021–September 13, 2021, around the Paralympic Games in Tokyo on August 24, 2021–September 5, 2021.

Keywords: Paralympic Games, disability, parasport, paraathletes, sport of people with disabilities, paralympic athletes, media discourse.

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WIZERUNEK PARAOLIMPIJCZYKÓW W POLSKICH MEDIACH NA PRZYKŁADZIE „PRZEGLĄDU SPORTOWEGO”

Abstrakt. Jednym z kluczowych elementów składających się na wizerunek osób uprawiających sport jest towarzyszący im dyskurs medialny. Narracje medialne docierające do ich odbiorców wpływają na ich postrzeganie w przestrzeni publicznej. Szczególnie istotne wydaje się to w kontekście sportu osób z niepełnosprawnościami z uwagi na szereg stereotypów przypisywanych niepełnosprawności. Obraz parasportowców wykreowany w mediach może mieć istotne konsekwencje, a tym, co w dużej mierze o nich decyduje jest właśnie sposób formułowania komunikatów medialnych. Celem poniższych rozważań jest więc analiza artykułów sportowych pochodzących z prasy sportowej ze szczególnym zwróceniem uwagi na rodzaje środków wykorzystywanych w pisaniu o sporcie osób z niepełnosprawnościami. W pierwszej części tekstu przybliżyłam specyfikę parasportu, a także rolę, jaką pełnią media w odniesieniu do sytuacji parasportowców, w tym paraolimpijczyków. Następnie opisałam metody oraz narzędzia badawcze, z jakich korzystałam na etapie analizy materiałów prasowych oraz wyłaniania odpowiednich typologii. Ostatnia część zawiera wyniki wykonanej przeze mnie analizy artykułów prasowych zawartych w dwudziestu pięciu numerach „Przeglądu Sportowego” z okresu 17.08.–13.09.2021, a więc w czasie zbliżonym do Igrzysk Paraolimpijskich w Tokio trwających 24.08.–5.09.2021.

Słowa kluczowe: igrzyska paraolimpijskie, niepełnosprawność, parasport, parasportowcy, sport osób z niepełnosprawnościami, paraolimpijczycy, dyskurs medialny.

1. Introduction

Sport for people with disabilities has always been an underrepresented field in mass media (Sahaj 2016). In major Polish media, athletes with disabilities are rarely seen, and the coverage is usually limited to information about individual sporting events featuring the national team (Niedbalski 2015). This situation has started to gradually change in our country in recent years. We can now follow the Paralympic Games on television, evidenced by Telewizja Polsat purchasing the broadcasting rights for the Winter Paralympic Games in Beijing and their summer edition to be held in Paris in 2024 (Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities 2022). Additionally, on the Internet, we have the opportunity to observe Polish athletes with disabilities on their private channels, where they can shape their own image (Niedbalski 2015). The presence of para-athletes in the public sphere is extremely important; however, without the right narrative around it, it is insufficient to achieve inclusive goals. The way media talk about parasport also reflects its social perception. Mass media are active in the production and distribution of knowledge, and what they share can be a leading source of awareness about a given phenomenon for many (Niedbalski 2015). Some recipients, in matters they do not encounter daily, build their worldview based on mass communication (Struck-Peregończyk, Leonowicz-Bukała 2018). Therefore, the way mass media formulate their messages and the topics they address is extremely important.

The issue of the image of athletes with disabilities in Polish media was analyzed by Niedbalski in 2015. The sociologist, studying the media discourse about sports for people with disabilities, examined radio and television broadcasts as well as the press. The analyses conducted by the researcher, as he notes, “were based on data and information from before 2013 and earlier years” (2015: 143), so the way media have treated para-athletes over the years could have changed. Niedbalski categorized and described the types of media discourses and how within them, athletes with disabilities are discussed. He identified a stereotypical discourse framework, a discourse of ignorance, a discourse of superiority and condescension, and a discourse of comparing people with disabilities to fully able-bodied people. According to him, the initial appearances of parasport in the media were accompanied by a stereotypical discourse framework. However, this is a broad category encompassing many aspects; by focusing on specific aspects through discourses, I distinguished: the discourse of absence, the discourse of tragedy, the rehabilitation discourse, and the superhero discourse, which I compared with my findings in the final stage of the study.

The most popular types of images of people with disabilities created by the media, as indicated by sociological analyses, are the figure of the victim and the hero or, alternatively, the “super-crip” (Struck-Peregończyk, Leonowicz-Bukała 2018). The ill and dependent individual requiring assistance, and the person with extraordinary abilities overcoming adversity. Niedbalski (2015) also points to the low interest of the media and the fragmentary nature of media materials on the topic of sports for people with disabilities.

The issue of the narrative around para-athletes was also partially discussed in the context of advertising and mass media by Sahaj (2016), focusing on people with disabilities as creators, recipients, and users of media. Many aspects of how athletes are talked about or how their images are created by the media remain unexplored or superficially examined.

The aim of this article is to analyze and identify ways of talking about athletes with disabilities in the context of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games in Polish sports press, using the example of “Przegląd Sportowy”. In such a medium as a sports magazine, messages are exclusively about sports, targeting readers who are interested in this topic, which distinguishes my analysis from existing research works. Moreover, in my study, I focus only on the images of athletes with disabilities. From the sociological texts I have accessed, only Niedbalski (2015) paid attention solely to the figures of athletes with disabilities. Furthermore, in my analysis, I emphasize how the entire journal is constructed in the context of content about parasport, the language used, and the themes addressed.

Therefore, the text supplements the state of knowledge about the image of para-athletes in the media and the discourse related to them, simultaneously capturing certain methods and tools used to build the image of sports for people with disabilities. In this context, the influence of media on public opinion and the

shape of sport is significant, as well as the fact that “broader processes that are already present in other fields of social life are reflected” (Nosal 2015: 17) in sports competitions themselves.

2. The specific nature of sports for people with disabilities and its “non-media-friendly” aspect

Sports for people with disabilities, although increasingly similar to sports for fully able-bodied individuals, differ significantly in many aspects. Broadly understood sports activities for people with disabilities should be seen as “a form of participation in physical culture (physical recreation and sports), whose main goal is to maintain and develop functional agency regained in the process of medical rehabilitation, and for those who express a need for competition, striving to achieve the best possible results” (Koper, Tasiemski 2013: 117). A crucial characteristic of sports for people with disabilities is the existence of rules and regulations that take into account the functional capabilities of individuals with various types and degrees of dysfunction. Additionally, there are specific disciplines created specifically for certain categories of disabilities, such as goalball for the visually impaired. The specificity of sports for people with disabilities is also reflected in the specialized equipment they use: “the development of new technologies has enabled people with significant movement impairments to participate in sports competitions in disciplines that were previously completely inaccessible to them” (Koper, Tasiemski 2013: 120). For example, the creation of hand-powered bicycles has made it possible for individuals with severe lower limb dysfunctions to compete in cycling.

The continuous improvement of equipment translates into better results for athletes and increasing competition, which leads to the growing specialization of sports for people with disabilities. This field can be divided into three types based on the level of specialization: adaptive sports, recreational sports, and elite sports. This analysis focuses on articles related to elite sports for people with disabilities, characterized by extensive and ongoing specialization. This type of sports involves the most rules and regulations governing competition. These can be felt even at the stage of choosing a sports discipline, as not every disability will fit within the formal frameworks applicable in a given area. The Polish Paralympic Committee states that “each sports discipline has a separate medical classification, which also determines the start groups” (Polish Paralympic Committee 2017: 9), meaning categories in which athletes with similar or the same types of disabilities can fairly compete. Classification of athletes is crucial to ensure the fairest competition possible. It is essential to apply the appropriate rules governing a given sports discipline and a systematic way of grouping athletes according to their functional capabilities (Koper, Tasiemski 2013). The classification system is continually refined in response to the ever-evolving sports competition.

The primary objective of individuals participating in elite sports is to achieve the highest possible results, set records at prestigious national competitions, and subsequently excel on the international stage (Koper, Tasiemski 2013). Practicing elite sports involves systematic training and competing in events: “Elite sports take the form of a spectacle, whose participants are essentially individuals with exceptional physical abilities and psychophysical capabilities, subjecting themselves to intense training and strict personal life regimens” (Koper, Tasiemski 2013: 117). The presence of this type of sports in the media is valuable for gaining sponsors and related financial rewards (Niedbalski 2014). According to Niedbalski, sports and media “constitute a kind of tandem, based on mutual exchange, from which both parties derive mutual benefits” (Niedbalski 2014: 302).

However, despite the growing specialization, sports for people with disabilities face “the problem of so-called ‘non-media-friendliness’ (...) and low public interest in events from the world of elite sports” (Niedbalski 2015: 207). Parasports typically appear in the media when it is politically correct to do so, gaining the status of the most noble when compared to other competitors, without paying attention to the accuracy of the messages. During sports events, there is a sudden interest in sports for people with disabilities. The temporary focus is on the “spectacle”, where “what is visible is primarily difference, but not shown in its positive variation, forcing a redefinition of the way of looking at and understanding a different body, but in a poorly understood carnivalization and grotesqueness” (Kubiński 2017: 175). Watching this can evoke admiration in viewers, transforming into discouragement caused by, on one hand, an inspiring individual, and on the other hand, a sense of guilt for not achieving anything remarkable with their normative, fully able-bodied selves (Kubiński 2017). This reaction may stem from the fact that “very often a person with a disability, especially practicing sports, is for the normative society not so much an athlete, but a ‘patient struggling with their limitations’” (Kubiński 2017: 171). Thus, the way mass media formulate their messages and the topics they address is extremely important. The message broadcast in mass media is a kind of “carrier of views, creating knowledge for the broader masses” (Niedbalski 2015: 132). The most significant parasport event enjoying exceptional media interest is the Paralympic Games. It is during these Times – directly before, during, and immediately after them – that the most media coverage about athletes with disabilities appears. These messages were the subject of my interest in the conducted study.

3. Methodology

The main aim of this article is a qualitative analysis of the content of the printed sports daily “Przegląd Sportowy” to identify ways of building narratives about parasport and its athletes. This is important due to the fact that, according to Jabłońska citing Teun van Dijk (2006: 56), “there are a number of similarities

between the ways of speaking and writing that individuals use to express their beliefs". This also applies, according to the researcher, to the processes of discourse reception. The aim of this analysis is to describe the ways of formulating messages about people with disabilities in sports and to identify patterns emerging in this area. The research attention is focused on the space allocated to materials about sports for people with disabilities, its composition, the topics covered, and the language used for description.

The subject of the study was 25 issues of the daily "Przegląd Sportowy" published in the period (17.08.–13.09.2021), as this was the time when the most materials on the topic of interest appeared. The issues selected for the study were published in the week preceding the Paralympic Games in Tokyo, during the Games, and the week after their conclusion. The reason for choosing these issues was preliminary research suggesting that articles related to sports for people with disabilities appear in "Przegląd Sportowy" only during major parasport events. "Przegląd Sportowy" is the oldest and most widely read sports daily in Poland, as well as the only printed sports daily in Poland. Due to the unique structure of printed press and its wide availability, the printed version of the daily was analyzed.

The main research question was: How does "Przegląd Sportowy" talk about sports for people with disabilities in the context of the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games? It was further refined by four detailed research questions: (1) Does "Przegląd Sportowy" write about athletes with disabilities? (2) How much space is allocated to athletes with disabilities in individual issues of "Przegląd Sportowy" and in which part of the daily is this space located? (3) How are athletes with disabilities portrayed in "Przegląd Sportowy"? (4) What language is used by "Przegląd Sportowy" journalists to write about athletes with disabilities?

The issues of the daily from the period (17.08.–13.09.2021) were analyzed using discourse analysis, which, as Jabłońska (2006) writes, should show the relationships between text, social cognition, power, speech, and culture. This seems important due to the fact that language, according to French sociologists Foucault and Bourdieu, is a source of violence and hidden power relations (Jabłońska 2006). Although the theories of the classics characterize different philosophies of discourses, "they situate language at the center of all practices and socialization" (Jabłońska 2006: 58). A researcher analyzing discourse should therefore take an interdisciplinary approach and reveal the aforementioned linguistic violence and power relations (Jabłońska after van Dijk 2006). The author also points out that in contemporary discourse research, both statements and texts are included as part of the analysis, whereas in the past there was no agreement on this issue (Jabłońska 2006). Discourse analysis is conducted by examining the meanings and textual statements, "text" is broadly understood here as any object or activity endowed with social meaning (Rancew-Sikora, Pawliszak 2012: 6), including images. Discourse thus consists of written and spoken messages present in the public

sphere. Content analysis, which involves examining recorded human messages, according to Babbie (2004: 346), is a method "well-suited to studying messages and answering the classic question in message research: 'who says what to whom, why, how, and with what effect?'"

To study discourse, it is therefore necessary to analyze messages formulated for the general public. Due to the transient nature of spoken content, I decided to analyze textual materials and the images published with them, which in printed form allow for the closure of the boundaries of the studied material. Grounded theory allowed for an open and flexible research process that began with observation, which then enabled the formulation of preliminary research hypotheses. In this research method, "hypotheses, concepts, and properties of concepts are built during empirical research and are modified and verified during research" (Konecki 2000: 26). According to it, "data collection, hypothesis building, and hypothesis verification are not clearly separated in time as in traditional research but are procedures that intertwine multiple times during a long proces" (Konecki 2000: 27).

The research process began with analytical observation. It allowed, at the initial stage, to notice certain regularities in describing athletes with disabilities in the media and to familiarize myself with those already described by other sociologists, with which the research hypotheses were confronted during the comparative analysis stage. This analysis was conducted by comparing the author's distinguished modes with the discourses developed by Niedbalski (2015).

Each stage of data collection and analysis was accompanied by note-taking to appropriately understand the regularities occurring in the discourse. According to Babbie, this allows finding order in the chaos that arises during data collection. In qualitative data analysis, it is important to organize and sort emerging thoughts during the process (Babbie 2004: 346). Based on the noted observations, I identified the following modes of writing about athletes with disabilities in "Przegląd Sportowy":

- Sports Mode,
- Barriers and Overcoming Them Mode,
- Role Combination Mode,
- National Mode,
- Technical and Structural Mode.

Analytical observation, along with the analysis of all appearing materials regarding ways of talking about athletes with disabilities, resulted in the gradual emergence of types that turned out to be crucial at the coding stage. Based on the following guidelines, individual fragments of the daily's issues were coded into appropriate modes.

Table 1. Modes and corresponding types of content

Modes	Types of content corresponding to the ways of writing about athletes with disabilities		
Sport	Discussing competition and rivalry	Information about athletes' achievements	Reporting medals won at events
Barriers and overcoming them	Stories of injuries	Stories of illnesses	Stories of accidents
Role combination	Reflections on how an athlete with disabilities combines private life, professional career, and sports career		
National	Representing the country internationally	Athletes as sources of “our hope” and pride	
Technical and structural	Information about the equipment used by athletes with disabilities	Relationship between disability and sports discipline	

Source: own elaboration.

The results presented below are divided into sections. Each section answers the specific research questions posed in the study. The part discussing the composition of the content in the daily touches on the placement of the text, accompanying photographs, and the most frequently addressed topics. Next, I answer the question about the language used to talk about athletes with disabilities, distinguishing its types. In the last, longest part of the article, I present the five modes – sport, national, barriers and overcoming them, role combination, and technical and structural – describing the ways of talking about para-athletes, which include elements already mentioned earlier – selection of topics, photographs, layout of space in the issue, and language.

4. Content composition in the daily

The presence of the topic of sports for people with disabilities is still rare in sports press. The example of “Przegląd Sportowy” shows the event-driven nature of texts about athletes with disabilities. This means that interest in parasport arises only during major sports events, which fades away after their conclusion. When deciding to select individual issues of the daily (17.08.–13.09.2021), I also wanted to check whether articles related to sports for people with disabilities were created before and after the Tokyo Paralympic Games. However, I did not notice any mentions on this topic outside the period covering the Games. I did, however, note three issues of the daily (3–5.09.2021) where, in addition to articles on the Paralympics, there were mentions of another important sports event involving athletes with disabilities

in Poland, the National Tennis Day. In these three cases, there were brief mentions of the participation of athletes with disabilities in various events and/or photographs showing para-athletes during sports competitions.

Journalists, trying to capitalize on the temporary interest built around popular parasport events, create materials most often presenting stories of athletes with disabilities meant to inspire and evoke sympathy and admiration. The topics that received the most space were the successes achieved by athletes and their private stories. The accompanying photographs usually showed athletes in their everyday sports circumstances.

Analyzing the selected issues of “Przegląd Sportowy”, I noticed a clear tendency of the daily’s creators to place articles about sports for people with disabilities on one of the last pages of the issues. In four out of twelve cases, the articles were placed on the last pages of the newspaper. The remaining texts were located on the third pages from the end of the daily. Exceptions to this rule were the issues (3–5.09.2021) related to the National Tennis Day. In their case, additional fragments of articles or photographs of, among others, athletes with disabilities appeared.

There can be several reasons for such placement of articles about athletes with disabilities. One of them is the probable assumption of low interest in sports for people with disabilities. As a result, they may not reach the last pages of the newspaper because what drove their desire to buy a given issue of the press was contained on the first pages of the issue, losing the chance to arouse interest in parasport.

At the same time, the daily shows signs of creating opportunities for athletes with disabilities to demarginalize. An example of this is dedicating a large space in articles to Paralympians’ statements, quoted as individual citations or interviews on which the entire text was based. This allows athletes to create narratives about themselves to some extent. This also enables, among other things, the recognition of the problem of insufficient funding for parasport and the inequalities associated with it that athletes face daily, which may be overlooked by people outside the parasport environment.

5. Language of narrating sports for people with disabilities

One of the elements that make up a specific narrative in a given thematic area is language. Depending on the author’s intent, one piece of information can be communicated in many ways. Studying “Przegląd Sportowy,” I distinguished three ways of formulating messages about athletes with disabilities: using inclusive language, communal language, and gendered language.

Inclusive language is a type of neutral message formulation. Its use allows for the inclusion of all individuals in a given narrative, respecting their diversity and subjectivity.

Inclusive language covers a range of issues arising from anti-discrimination policies in modern multicultural societies. These include gender-neutral language, ethnophobias (offensive terms for ethnic groups), negative gender or racial stereotypes, religious prejudices, expressions offensive due to appearance or disability (Nasalski 2020: 276).

This type of language was the most commonly used in writing about sports for people with disabilities in “Przegląd Sportowy”. The use of feminatives and appropriate forms describing athletes with disabilities indicates an attempt to follow linguistic and cultural changes. However, there was noticeable inconsistency among the authors in this regard, with incorrect phrases about people with disabilities treating disability as the main feature of a person.

Gendered language, which appeared twice in the analyzed texts, reflects gender norms present in society and “talks” about representatives of the sexes accordingly (Mazur, Organista 2016). This type of language treats gender in a dichotomous way, maintaining traditional understandings of gender and equating representatives with culturally attributed stereotypes. The gendered language in the analyzed press concerned only women, with phrases like “a girl worth her weight in gold” and “girls like gold”.

However, communal language, emphasizing the shared belonging to society of both athletes and readers, was frequently used, almost in every article, in the form of phrases like „our medalist”, “our athletes”.

These measures, however, do not seem to differ significantly from those used for fully able-bodied athletes. “Przegląd Sportowy” also writes about fully able-bodied athletes as “our strikers”, “volleyball players”, and uses phrases like “second racket in the world Agnieszka Radwańska”. Gendered language in publications likely aimed to attract readers’ attention with its catchy and familiar phrases like “a girl worth her weight in gold” or “girls like gold” from everyday life. Using communal language likely aimed to arouse readers’ interest in sports for people with disabilities by evoking a sense of community.

6. Modes of narrating sports for people with disabilities

The way of writing about athletes with disabilities consists of elements previously mentioned – selection of topics, photographs, layout of space in individual issues, and language. Based on these elements, I identified five modes in this area while examining the issues of “Przegląd Sportowy” from the period (17.08.–13.09.2021): sport mode, national mode, barriers and overcoming them mode, role combination mode, and technical and structural mode.



Figure 1. Summary of achievements of Polish athletes on September 1, 2021, at the Tokyo Paralympic Games

Source: “Przegląd Sportowy” (2021d), pp. 17

6.1. Sport mode

The sport mode of writing about athletes with disabilities primarily serves an informative function. This mode focuses on summarizing the most important moments of competitions, presenting sports achievements, appreciating the hard work put in by athletes, and informing about medals won at various sports events.

When formulating such messages, athletes’ performances were reported using phrases like “hard work”, “fighting for medals”, or “willpower and determination”. There were no expressions highlighting the athletes’ accomplishments, but there was mention of the objectively hard work that both athletes with disabilities and fully able-bodied athletes must put in to participate in the Games.

The sport mode appeared independently in two issues of the daily – published on the day of the ceremonial opening and the day of the closing of the Games. These contained articles expressing medal hopes and indicating the team’s goals for the upcoming Games, as well as summarizing the Poles’ performances and confronting their initial intentions with the actual achievements of the team: “We did not win several medals that seemed certain. If we want to return to the top 10 in the rankings, we will have to work very hard” (Przegląd Sportowy 2021f: 24). Such publications did not require the use of other ways of writing about sports for people with disabilities, as they were sufficient to serve as an informative message.

Every analyzed article utilized the sport mode, which served as a base for the publication, with the main theme and general idea of “Przegląd Sportowy” being to report on sports events. The remaining elements of the publication were created using other modes accompanying the sport mode.

6.2. National mode

One of the more frequently used ways of writing about athletes with disabilities by the authors of the analyzed sports daily was the national mode. This term focuses on presenting the achievements of Polish athletes as achievements of the entire nation. This effect is emphasized by the communal language used by the editors, highlighting the Polish origin of the athletes with words like “white-reds”, “Polish Paralympic team”, “our compatriots”. It also draws attention to the sacrifices athletes had to make on their way to representing Poland on the international stage – “represented Poland, could not give up”, “our representatives return to the throne”, “we put our whole heart into it”. This creates sports heroes for the nation, allowing readers to feel national pride in their representatives and encouraging them to support them. This could result in greater engagement in sports for people with disabilities and its gradual popularization through possible grassroots fan actions. The national-community tone is highlighted by photographs showing athletes in white-red colors, holding flags, etc.



Figure 2. Róża Kozakowska, for whom “the Dąbrowski Mazurek was played for the first time in Tokyo” and Michał Derus

Source: “Przegląd Sportowy”, (2001b), pp. 13

6.3. Barriers and overcoming them mode

The basis of another way of writing about sports for people with disabilities is all kinds of barriers they encountered or still encounter on their way and overcoming them. This mode is characterized by recalling stories of illnesses, disabilities, accidents, and even personal tragedies from athletes' lives. In this case, sport appears as a way of life, sometimes as therapy that helped athletes with disabilities function – "sport gave her a sense of life", "sport is everything to us". These stories evoke emotional engagement in readers, which intensifies as they learn about overcoming "life's adversities" and get to know the achievements of a particular person. An example of this was the story of Justyna Franieczek, who battled cancer, surgeries, accidents, and other personal tragedies, which was intertwined with her determination to return to sports in $\frac{3}{4}$ of the article. This combination gives the image of a superhero, providing reasons for readers of sports media to feel proud or find inspiration. The narrative built around athletes with disabilities is emphasized with the use of appropriate language. Phrases like "fought", "fate threw heavier obstacles at her", "performing despite adversity", "life full of suffering", "more hurdles", "proving nothing can stop her" were used.

The barriers and overcoming them mode accompanied longer parts of publications concerning individual athletes, which may result from the still prevalent difficulty in separating disability from the individual and the desire to evoke emotions in the reader. Athletes with disabilities appear as people who have gone through many misfortunes in life and are unbreakable.

6.4. Role combination mode

The role combination mode as a way of writing about people with disabilities highlights the various aspects of athletes' lives in which they are involved and how they combine them. Every athlete not only pursues their sports career but also manages a private life and a job, requiring them to balance these roles. How athletes with disabilities do this was the subject of interviews cited in the daily's articles. In one article, it was indicated that Justyna Kozdryk combines her sports career and training with working in the police and promoting her discipline on social media. "Kozdryk works as a police officer. Besides training, she finds time to promote the discipline" (Przegląd Sportowy 2021c: 13).

Combining the role of an athlete with other roles was only highlighted in "Przegląd Sportowy" concerning female athletes with disabilities, which may be related to the fact that women's participation in sports is considered an additional activity to the traditional role of a woman (Kossakowski 2021). As Kossakowski and Cejer (2021: 136) state, "women are forced to juggle the roles of mother and athlete and use various strategies to reconcile them, such as adjusting training and competitions, using different forms of available support (key here are significant

others)”. An example of attempting to reconcile these roles of mother and athlete can be seen in the “Przegląd Sportowy”, where one of Poland’s representatives – Kamila Kubas – dedicated the bronze medal she won five years earlier in Rio to her daughter. The kayaker added in an interview: “this year I would be selfish and say that I am proud of myself because it wasn’t easy” (Przegląd Sportowy 2021e: 17). The athlete emphasized the work of many people towards her achievement in the further part of her statement. In the words of the Polish athlete, the influence of social norms related to the modesty attributed to women, the opposite of which is selfishness, is evident in appreciating oneself and one’s work.

6.5. Technical and structural mode

The technical and infrastructural way of talking about athletes with disabilities focuses on the technical and structural conditions influencing the shape of a given parasport discipline and the situations of the athletes. This mode appears in sections concerning the specifics of individual disciplines and related procedures, such as qualification.

The coach of the powerlifting team explains that due to the regulations, just qualifying for the Games is quite an achievement. ‘In our discipline, it’s very difficult to get to the Games. Only eight male athletes in a weight category and six female athletes can compete – he says. (Przegląd Sportowy 2021c: 13).

It also discusses the insufficient resources and funding needed for Polish sports for people with disabilities to equalize their chances in international competitions.

Our representatives do not hide that competitors are far ahead of them in terms of equipment quality. ‘In this respect, there is a gap between us. Athletes from the Netherlands or Great Britain have bikes made to measure. We ride on somewhat older technology. It’s impossible to compete on an equal sports level in such a situation (Przegląd Sportowy 2021a: 9).

Inequalities in this aspect and the resulting injustice find their place in this mode, using insider knowledge from people involved in parasport-athletes themselves, their coaches, or sports journalists. This allows readers to be made aware of the difficult situation of Polish sports for people with disabilities and to learn about the specifics of individual sports disciplines, such as hammer throw, “a discipline invented for people with cerebral palsy and tetraplegia who use wheelchairs. An alternative to javelin throw because athletes with paralysis of the limbs would find it difficult to hold it...” (Przegląd Sportowy 2021b: 13).

7. Summary

„Przegląd Sportowy”, over 25 issues of the daily published in the period (17.08.–13.09.2021), described athletes with disabilities. These texts, however, indicate an event-driven nature of creating materials in the sports press on this topic because they appear only when popular sports events take place. Outside the period of the Tokyo Paralympic Games, there were only a few mentions of parasport in 2021.

The content about people with disabilities was usually allocated the third page from the end of the daily or, in some cases, the last page of the issue. The texts in the „Przegląd Sportowy” were accompanied by photographs usually showing athletes with disabilities during sports competitions or after their completion and receiving medals. Less often, athletes were visible in non-sports situations in the photographs.

The image of athletes with disabilities in “Przegląd Sportowy” was created using several basic press tools: the language used by journalists, the topics they chose to describe, the space allocated to them, and photographs. Analyzing the content of the daily’s issues, the following modes of narrating sports for people with disabilities were identified: sport mode, national mode, barriers and overcoming them mode, role combination mode, and technical and structural mode. The modes of talking about parasport generally overlapped. They consisted of materials attractive to the reader because they contained the most important sports information, such as the compilation of the achievements of Polish representatives in recent days, as well as descriptions of Paralympians and their sports and life struggles. Combining the sport mode, national mode, and barriers and overcoming them mode created the image of a parasport superhero. In some issues, the uniqueness of athletes was further highlighted by the technical and structural mode and the role combination mode, indicating the specifics of individual disciplines, regulations associated with them, or inequalities resulting from gender role differences and underfunding of parasport.

“Przegląd Sportowy”, writing about athletes with disabilities, mostly uses inclusive language, a form of anti-discriminatory action aimed at including individuals without violating their subjectivity and autonomy. Inclusive language in the daily I analyzed took the form of feminatives, or female grammatical forms, in relation to women. It also included referring to disability as one of many features of a person, using the form “person with a disability” instead of “disabled”. However, I noticed some inconsistency in the use of this form by the journalists of “Przegląd Sportowy”. The reason for this state of affairs may be the randomness of using such phrases, their inaccurate formulation, or intentional interchangeable use of both forms, which in my opinion, should be communicated to the recipients. The creators of the daily used gendered language in two issues, characterized by formulating theses according to the binary division of gender and culturally attributed stereotypes.

Communal language was also used, visible in almost every article of the daily. It was characterized by phrases emphasizing the common belonging of readers and para-athletes and Paralympians to Polish society. Such language can evoke a desire or sense of duty in readers to follow parasport. However, language is a medium in which certain unconscious internalized norms are manifested. As Wasilewska (2020: 166) writes, “Learning language rules means assimilating cultural and social norms reflected in language”. This likely explains the continued use of phrases by “Przegląd Sportowy” journalists that can be harmful and stigmatizing, yet are considered improper.

The authors of “Przegląd Sportowy”, in most of their actions, are guided by the assumption of readers’ interest in the content of their daily. Decisions about the choice of article topics, their placement, and form are usually dictated by what will attract the audience. However, the low interest in sports for people with disabilities is a result of its marginalization. Athletes with disabilities are not socially considered equal to fully able-bodied athletes. Para-athletes, for whom the media find space, are often still presented and perceived in a stereotypical manner. The superhero discourse, described by Niedbalski, whose features overlap with the barriers and overcoming them mode, is still present in the media. To evoke the right emotions, authors describe the stories of athletes’ disabilities as one of the tragedies in their lives they managed to overcome. However, in every analyzed article of “Przegląd Sportowy”, elements of the sport mode, a sports information message, can be found, allowing the creation of an image of parasport as professional sports. Additionally, in most texts, space was given to athletes and experts in the field of sports for people with disabilities, allowing them to take over the narrative to some extent.

A trend of creating sports messages consisting mainly of informative elements can be seen, ensuring the greatest possible reliability of media products. However, for this change to occur in a broader context, there is a need for a change in the language used by the media and society, so as not to infantilize parasport while not elevating it to a “superhuman” level. This also requires the media to focus on the quality of messages rather than attracting attention through evoking strong emotions.

7.1. Recommendations

This text can serve as an introduction to a series of potential studies on the representation of Paralympians in the media and support the practical application of the conclusions from the above discourse analysis. I would like to highlight the importance of further exploring the dominant narratives and their impact on the social perception of people with disabilities. Below are some suggestions for areas that would be worth examining in future work:

Comparative analysis of audiovisual materials from the time of the Paralympic Games with the above-presented analysis of press materials.

It would be worthwhile to expand discourse studies to include video materials published by leading media, such as broadcasts of competitions within the Games, official opening ceremonies, national team press conferences, and interviews conducted with Paralympians and their coaches. Including such media materials in discourse research would allow for the identification and analysis of differences between narratives presented in textual and visual statements. Including such materials in discourse research allows for a better understanding of what content and values are promoted by the media in the context of the Paralympics. Video analysis can reveal subtle nuances in the way athletes, their stories, and the challenges they face are presented. Moreover, by examining differences between textual and visual narratives, we can explore whether there are any biases or stereotypes that may be present in visual media but might go unnoticed in text analysis. This, in turn, can contribute to a more comprehensive view of how Paralympians are perceived and represented in the media and help identify areas where greater equality and diversity inclusion are needed.

7.2. Including the perspective of athletes

Expanding discourse research to include direct statements from Paralympians can provide valuable insights into their personal experiences and observations. Conducting interviews with athletes and analyzing their activity on social media would allow for a better understanding of how athletes themselves perceive their role and representation in the media. This perspective could reveal how athletes perceive media messages about their achievements and challenges and assess how well these messages align with the reality of their daily lives. Analyzing materials posted on social media by Paralympians would help understand how athletes attempt to control the narrative about themselves and what communication strategies they use to influence their image in the eyes of the sports audience and media. This may reveal how Paralympic athletes negotiate their identity in the public sphere, promoting positive and inspiring images of themselves. Integrating athletes' perspectives in discourse research can also help identify possible gaps and inaccuracies in media narratives, leading to more authentic and accurate representation of Paralympians.

7.3. Public opinion research on its alignment with media messages

Conducting public opinion research to assess its alignment with media messages about the Paralympics and Paralympians would help understand how audiences interpret and respond to various forms of media messages – both textual and visual. It would be worth including surveys, interviews, and analyses of comments posted on social media to gather data on the perception of Paralympians by different social

groups. This might reveal whether there are discrepancies between the narratives presented by the media and the actual beliefs and feelings of the public. Including public opinion research in the analysis of media discourse would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of whether and to what extent media messages are reflected in the social perception of Paralympians. It can also help identify stereotypes or prejudices present in society that may be reinforced or weakened by the media.

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PRO MEMORIA
ŚP. PROFESOR ZBIGNIEW KRAWCZYK (1930–2024)

Prof. dr hab. Zbigniew Krawczyk należy do grona najwybitniejszych postaci polskiej, europejskiej i światowej nauki, a z pewnością zasługuje na miano protagonisty i luminarza humanistycznych i społecznych nauk o sporcie, zwłaszcza filozofii i socjologii. W swoim pięknym życiu udało mu się połączyć cechy wspaniałego naukowca, wymagającego dydaktyka, doskonałego organizatora życia akademickiego i życzliwego człowieka, przyjaźnie usposobionego i niezwykle wrażliwego na potrzeby innych.

Zbigniew Krawczyk urodził się w Dębiniu 25 czerwca 1930 roku. Renomowane Liceum Pedagogiczne im. Mikołaja Kopernika w Krośnie ukończył z wyróżnieniem w 1951 roku. Tytuł magistra filologii polskiej uzyskał na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim w 1955 roku oraz magistra filozofii na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim w 1958 roku. W 1963 roku na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim uzyskał stopień doktora nauk humanistycznych, natomiast w 1970 roku stopień doktora habilitowanego nauk humanistycznych w zakresie filozofii i socjologii kultury fizycznej.

W 1978 roku nadano mu tytuł profesora nadzwyczajnego nauk humanistycznych, a w 1986 roku tytuł profesora zwyczajnego nauk humanistycznych.

Pracę zawodową rozpoczął na Uniwersytecie Jagiellońskim na stanowisku asystenta w 1953 roku, natomiast w 1958 roku w Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Warszawie, w której przeszedł wszystkie szczeble kariery akademickiej, od starszego asystenta, adiunkta i docenta, do profesora nadzwyczajnego i profesora zwyczajnego. Zajmował wiele stanowisk administracyjnych w Uczelni, był bowiem w latach 1971–1993 kierownikiem Zakładu Filozofii i Socjologii, w latach 1971–1974 dyrektorem Instytutu Nauk Humanistycznych, w latach 1993–2001 kierownikiem Zakładu Socjologii, a w latach 1990–1999 kierownikiem Katedry Nauk Społecznych. Zwieńczeniem kariery zawodowej było sprawowanie w latach 1981–1987 funkcji prorektora ds. Nauki, a w latach 1990–1996 przez dwie kadencje funkcji rektora Akademii.

Pracował także w różnych okresach swej kariery akademickiej na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim, Uniwersytecie Rzeszowskim, w Wyższej Szkole Pedagogicznej w Rzeszowie, Wyższej Szkole Ekonomicznej w Warszawie oraz Wyższej Szkole Ekonomiczno-Technicznej w Legionowie.

Jego wyjątkową pozycję w świecie nauki potwierdzają liczne zaproszenia z kraju i zagranicy do uczestnictwa w prestiżowych gremiach naukowych. Był między innymi członkiem honorowym International Sociology of Sport Association, European Association for the Sociology of Sport, American Academy of Physical Education, członkiem Prezydium Międzynarodowego Komitetu Socjologii Sportu, przewodniczącym Komitetu Nauk o Kulturze Fizycznej Polskiej Akademii Nauk, członkiem Centralnej Komisji Kwalifikacyjnej ds. Kadr Naukowych, członkiem Komisji ds. Tytułu Naukowego i Stopni Naukowych, członkiem Polskiej Akademii Olimpijskiej Polskiego Komitetu Olimpijskiego, a także zastępcą redaktora naczelnego prestiżowego kwartalnika „International Review for the Sociology of Sport”.

Profesor Krawczyk w sposób niezwykle owocny i efektywny uczestniczył w kształceniu i doskonaleniu kadr naukowych. Potwierdzeniem tego jest wypromowanie ponad 300 magistrów, blisko 30 doktorów w dziedzinie nauk o kulturze fizycznej, opieka nad blisko 10 zakończonymi przewodami habilitacyjnymi w dziedzinie nauk o kulturze fizycznej.

W trakcie swej wieloletniej i owocnej kariery naukowej współpracował z wieloma polskimi i zagranicznymi ośrodkami badawczymi i dydaktyczno-badawczymi w zakresie wspólnych badań, konferencji i kongresów, publikacji i wykładów. Współpraca ta dotyczyła ośrodków polskich, w tym między innymi Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, Instytutu Filozofii i Socjologii PAN oraz Akademii Wychowania Fizycznego w Gdańsku, Krakowie i Poznaniu, ale także uniwersytetów w Moskwie, Tallinie, Sofii, Osnabrück, Budapeszcie, Hamburgu, Pradze, Amherst, Brockport, Waterloo i Columbia.

Jego dorobek naukowy jest imponujący pod względem ilościowym, ale przede wszystkim jakościowym. Jest autorem między innymi 10 książek, w tym: *Socjologia E. Abramowskiego* (1965), *Natura, kultura, sport. Kontrowersje teoretyczne w Polsce* (1970), *Studia z filozofii i socjologii kultury fizycznej* (1978), *Absolwenci uczelni wychowania fizycznego. Socjologiczne studium zawodu* (1978), *O kulturze fizycznej. Studia i szkice* (1983), *Sport, Kultur, Gesellschaft Sozialphilosophische Beiträge* (1984), *Humanistyczne wartości kultury fizycznej* (1986), *Nauka w społeczeństwie amerykańskim* (1990), *Sport w zmieniającym się społeczeństwie* (2000), *O turystyce i rekreacji. Studia i szkice* (2007). Ponadto jest autorem blisko 250 artykułów w czasopiśmie naukowych, 200 rozdziałów w monografiach, autorem haseł w encyklopediach, redaktorem i współautorem 20 monografii zespołowych (w tym m.in. wydanej w 1998 roku pracy *Socjologia w Polsce*, którą współredagował z K. Sową) oraz redaktorem *Encyklopedii kultury polskiej XX wieku. Kultura fizyczna, sport* (1997). Jest także autorem lub współautorem 10 podręczników akademickich z zakresu socjologii i filozofii kultury fizycznej, w tym niezwykle cenionego autorskiego podręcznika *Socjologia kultury fizycznej* (1995).

Profesor Krawczyk kierował wieloma krajowymi i międzynarodowymi projektami badawczymi, zorganizował cztery międzynarodowe konferencje naukowe, liczne konferencje krajowe, w tym był organizatorem zespołu socjologii sportu podczas Kongresu Socjologicznego w Warszawie.

Profesor Krawczyk był osobą wyjątkową. Po pierwsze, był wzorem osobowym dla licznych pokoleń studentów i pracowników naukowo-dydaktycznych. Cechowała go rzadko spotykana kultura osobista, życzliwość w kontaktach z ludźmi, kultura słowa i wypowiedzi, niezwykła rzeczowość i rzetelność. Po drugie, był wspaniałym dydaktykiem, zawsze wzbudzającym zainteresowanie słuchaczy. Jego erudycja i klasyczne wykształcenie współbrzmiały z umiejętnością prowadzenia jasnego i logicznego wywodu, z przekonaniem, że padnie on na podatny grunt i przyniesie owoce w postaci rozwoju intelektualnego i etyczno-społecznego uczniów. Po trzecie, był wybitnym uczonym i znawcą zagadnień kultury fizycznej oraz sportu, którym poświęcił swe naukowo-zawodowe życie. Jego warsztat naukowy jest sam w sobie znakomitym wzorem. Prowadzone przez niego rozważania są zawsze osadzone na precyzyjnie wyłuszczonej założeniach teoretycznych, w oparciu o przyjętą *implicite* bądź *explicite* określoną metodologię, zawsze lokującą się na głównym szlaku rozwoju dyscypliny naukowej, a używana przez Niego terminologia pomaga lepiej zrozumieć wyjaśniane zagadnienie. Wszystko stanowi logiczną całość, napisaną zawsze klarownym językiem z zadbanie o każdy szczegół: ścisłość cytatu, kompletność literatury, stylistyczną płynność i poprawność interpunkcyjną.

W dowód uznania zasług Profesora w działalności naukowej, dydaktycznej i organizacyjnej Węgierski Uniwersytet Kultury Fizycznej w Budapeszcie w 1985 roku oraz Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego Józefa Piłsudskiego w Warszawie

w 2009 roku nadały mu najwyższą godność akademicką, jaką jest tytuł doktora *honoris causa*.

Za wybitne osiągnięcia w działalności społecznej, dydaktycznej i naukowej został wyróżniony wieloma najwyższymi nagrodami i odznaczeniami państwowymi, w tym Złotym Krzyżem Zasługi (1973), Krzyżem Kawalerskim (1979), Krzyżem Oficerskim (1989), Krzyżem Komandorskim Orderu Odrodzenia Polski (2000). Ponadto wyróżniany był odznaczeniami resortowymi ministerstw odpowiedzialnych za edukację, szkolnictwo wyższe, kulturę fizyczną i sport, a także przez władze Warszawy, które przyznały Mu Krzyż za Zasługi dla Warszawy (2000).

Wdzięczni uczniowie
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Jakub Ryszard Stempień, Dominika Byczkowska-Owczarek – On the possibilities of mutual inspirations between sociological subdisciplines. The example of the sociology of the body and the sociology of sport	5
Julia Witkowska, Radosław Kossakowski – Radical socialization? Analysis of the secondary socialization process in the table tennis environment	19
Zuzanna Wiśniewska – The situation of women in professional road cycling in the contexts of media and finance	41
Agnieszka Maj – Diet as a challenge and a strategy: On the phenomenon of diet rationalisation in everyday life	57
Paulina Wesółowska – The image of paralympic athletes in the Polish media on the example of “Przegląd Sportowy”	71
Zbigniew Dziubiński, Michał Lenartowicz – <i>Pro memoria</i> . Śp. Profesor Zbigniew Krawczyk (1930–2024)	91

