

**Title of a PhD thesis: A social world of able-bodied and disabled athletes
and its legalisation.**

Summary

An inspiration to undertake research in sport sociology was a substantial increase in popularity of physical activity within the society. The popularity was connected with civilisation changes, that influenced a change in sport in successive phases of industrialisation, urbanisation and technologisation, which became the way the individuals survive constant ethical and moral changes. A human living in a more and more secluded, anonymous society began looking for creating bonds with other people, that he could create both as a passive observer of a sports competition, as well as by active participation in physical activities. Moreover, a change from physical to intellectual work has caused that spending leisure time in a passive way did not bring desired effects. Physical activity allows not only to relax mentally but also improves body shape and appearance.

The aim of the following doctoral dissertation was to recognise a subjective view on a social world of able-bodied and disabled athletes and its legalisation. Subjective observations of players were tested using a biographic research method with the use of narrative interviews. The analysis was performed according to the Fritz Schütze concept.

For the purpose of the test an individual who has been practising a sport regularly for a period of 4 years at least, has been taking part in national competitions at the minimum or is a member of a sports club which participates in league games in podkarpackie voivodeship was considered a professional athlete. This individual is also a player who seeks competition and reaching the highest scores.

The research area was podkarpackie voivodeship, and a time period from June 2015 to May 2016 can be assumed as the time of collecting research material. 56 professional athletes took part in the research, who were chosen using the nonprobability sampling based on three criteria: physical fitness (able-bodied and disabled athletes), sport discipline performed (an individual or a team sport) and a stage in a career (active and former athletes). Such sampling allowed a wide insight into the issue undertaken, what resulted in the analysis carried out.

As it results from the research conducted, it is the degree of professionalisation of a given sport discipline that determines the player's opportunities and schemes of action he is

going to undertake. Players doing sport of the highest professionalisation degree were able-bodied players who practised team sports. Subjects tested the most often indicated they are professional athletes receiving remuneration for their skills. Those athletes were provided with everything by their clubs, starting with a coach and a place to practise to consultations with physiotherapists, sport equipment and participation in sports competition. The able-bodied players doing individual sports have also indicated to the sports professionalisation degree, however less frequently than it was the case in the previous category, because, despite achieving success, they had to provide themselves with equipment and financial means to be able to take part in competitions or sports camps more often. At times, they were granted sports scholarships by local governments, nevertheless, they were not sufficient to allow them to pay for equipment or costs connected with participation in sports competitions, or to pay people providing services for athletes, such as sport psychologists, physiotherapists, masseurs. Players doing individual disciplines could get financial means needed for their professional career development from sponsors, though they were not always successful. Acquiring sponsors is difficult as they want to support players doing the most popular sport disciplines, that is, first and foremost, able-bodied players playing team sports. Individual players have smaller chances to acquire a sponsor due to the fact they do less popular sports. The disabled players, who most frequently are non-professional athletes as a result of lack of financial means, are found in the most disadvantageous position. Consequently, they have to share their time between training sessions and work and families. Lack of financial means is repeatedly a cause to lack of possibilities for development of those players, who are characterised by the same dedication and enthusiasm for practising and playing as able-bodied players, nonetheless, due to lack of opportunities to acquire financial means from sport, they cannot develop in the same degree.

Thus, professional sports career of athletes depends, to a large extent, on popularity of the sport they do. The more popular the sport, the greater its commercialisation. This has led to forming a stratification 'ladder', specific to the athletes' social world, which diversifies actions taken by athletes and the course of their professional career to the greatest degree.

The following thesis is interdisciplinary in its character. Apart from sociologist practising sports sociology mainly, it can also attract the attention of representatives of such sciences as physical education, social work, psychology, pedagogy, physiotherapy or rehabilitation therapy. The dissertation should be, particularly dedicated to people who are thinking about starting a sports career, are already involved or have already ended their sports career, as well as to individuals connected with professional sport, that is coaches, activists,

judges, sports reporters, fans, but also people responsible for shaping national politics concerning physical activity and supporting the disabled.

Key words: sport, physical activity, career, disability, rehabilitation.