

doesn't mean only one aspect of life, such as ownership of capital, but he believes that such social stratification is made taking into account the different areas of life, for instance, a group of people of the similar interests, professional groups, a group of people that adhere to the same philosophy, etc.² This means that people from different social classes can belong to a given social stratum. The concept of social class and social stratum can be defined in a multiple way. To our mind, the most reasonable definition is that access to certain goods is an evidence of a social status, as it creates opportunities for development³. In other words, the ownership of a capital and how much a man earns, the level of a person's education will enable the life on the desired standard of living, because only in this situation the man will be able to ensure these goods, among them is also participation in the physical education or sport.

Inequalities in social structures. What is a social structure? This is certainly a sociological concept, because it refers to the term of society. Social structure is the set of elements defining the roles and positions in a given group that is characterized by a certain level of culture. These connected elements form the unity that can be called as a social structure⁴. The concept of social inequality is an integral part of the social structure concept. Differences and inequalities can be divided into two categories. The first category are the differences and inequalities of the genetic predispositions, those, which we inherit, namely, short height, eye colour, talents, one person has a predisposition to play sports, and the other – doesn't, one person is gifted in mathematics, the other one in humanities – these are so-called bodily and mental inequalities. On the other hand, the second category are social inequalities, such as, from which family a person comes from; in what environment he or she grew up; what education, values and views has the person acquired. In theory it is stated that bodily features, such as appearance, should not have impact on social positions, but it is

often not implemented in practice. Thus, personal charm, age, skin colour, gender play a huge role in access to various goods, for example in applying for a job⁵. It's a simple psychological mechanism that first impression, namely what we see visually recognizing a new person, is very important and at the initial phase we don't concern, what the person is and what skills and intellect the person has.

Social inequalities arise primarily from the fact that not everyone has equal access and opportunities to resources such as money, power, recognition or education. It should be mentioned that all these elements do not always appear together, because a rich person does not always have a good reputation or prestige, and a high-educated person does not always earn a lot⁶. However, these social differences have a reasonable sense and are justified. The world is a complex and interrelated system and there must be a balance in it: wealthy people exist, because there are poor people and vice versa. Someone has the power to rule others. It is very easy to use these social conditions concerning physical activity and access to sport.

The division into classes and layers was very constant in the past, it was impossible to move from one class to another. Thus, the social class a man was born in determined social status of a person till the end of his life. For example, if a person belonged to the peasant class, despite of his or her great intelligence or talent, was still in his or her native class with no chance for the development or class mobility. As time goes on, the situation has been changed, we could see the movement of people from lower classes to higher classes and vice versa. This phenomenon is called social mobility or in some cases social degradation⁷. The way of thinking has been changed; people became more open, they understood that living in the closed social groups inhibits the development of many areas of life, such as culture, industrial development, and economic sustainable development of the country; people understood that much more can be achieved by combining forces together. Nowadays, the stratification into classes due to the

²https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warstwa_spo%C5%82eczna, 17.12.2015 r.

³ Z. Dziubiński, Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia kultury fizycznej*, Warszawa 2011, wyd. AWF Józefa Piłsudskiego, s. 268

⁴https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Struktura_spo%C5%82eczna, 12.01.2017r.

⁵ Z. Dziubiński, Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia kultury fizycznej*, wyd. cyt., ..., s., p. 267

⁶ The same source, p. 268

⁷ Z. Dziubiński, Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia kultury fizycznej*, wyd. cyt., ..., s. 270

people's origin has almost completely disappeared. It is not important who are you and in what family you were born, much more important the person's professional position, knowledge, skills, power, money and prestige.

Social status as a condition for the development of physical culture and participation in sport in the past. Nowadays it is usual that everyone regardless of possessing appropriate goods or not, can go in for sports, sport is popular among people of different social classes and layers. It should be also mentioned that physical education and culture is an integral part of general secondary education obligatory for all schools. At present, there is a phenomenon of increasing interest in sport, which results from higher awareness of the body, the desire to be beautiful, slim and trendy. However, this was not always the case. Recently, at the beginning of the 19th century going in for sport was considered either whim or the form of work. In the first case, people from wealthy classes were interested in sport, as it was a way to fill their free time, to kill boredom; they did not have to worry about money in comparison with poor people. Often different kinds of sports required a large financial contribution, so poorer people simply could not afford such cravings, besides their social situation would not allow even such entertainment. These were often people who worked from morning to evening to support their families, so they did not have time for recreation. At the beginning of the 19th century, education and compulsory physical education became popular, and sport became an essential value. Initially, secondary education was obligatory only for the high and middle social classes, but with time a compulsory education was implemented for all children. However, the sport was understood as an instrument to maintain discipline among children from the lower classes, to subordinate them, and served as a kind of drill. Nobody talked about the impact of sports on health at that time. Recreation was therefore used to delineate barriers between classes and statuses. There were different approaches to practicing sports. American scholar Thorsten Veblen considered that practicing sports is an expression of vanity and waste of time, he even called such groups of people as "vanity

classes"⁸. In his opinion, devoting free time to this type of entertainment was aimed only at pointing even more inequalities and barriers between people.

The breakthrough in physical education and culture occurred only after the Second World War as a result of economic changes. People, who lost all their property, suddenly became equal to those of the lower classes, so, the division into classes and layers began to gradually disappear. A mass culture has also contributed to these changes; more and more people engaged in sports and spent their free time exercising sports. In particular, these phenomena could be observed in socialist countries, which functioned according to the principle that everything should be common. Sport was to ensure equality, where the origin, religion or colour of the skin was not to be taken into account, but the skills and abilities were important.

What is the situation today? Slogans regarding equality in sport were not always reflected in reality and the situation is quite the same today. It is known that there are sports that need small investments, as well as those that will require more investments, and thus the social inequality returns. It is obvious that a person earning the lowest national salary can't afford to buy, for example, horse riding lessons, or pay for a personal trainer. However, the situation is different from the cultural point of view and the availability of physical activity in general. Formerly poor people had no chance to go in for sport not only for financial reasons, but also for cultural, ideological reasons, they didn't want to spend their free time on this type of entertainment, because it was considered as wasting time, however, nobody forbade running or walking and it did not require money. Poor people didn't pay much attention to the appearance and health care. Nowadays, sport is not only a form of taking care of body and health, but it is also trendy⁹, moreover local authorities are trying to create various types of sport spaces with exercise equipment within housing estates, build numerous bike paths, gaming fields in order to ensure healthy lifestyle for everyone.

⁸Z. Dziubiński, Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia kultury fizycznej*, wyd. cyt., ..., s. 273

⁹A. Kołodziej, *O potencjale kierunkach rozwoju socjologii sportu*, s.6, file:///C:/Users/daria/Downloads/Kolodziej.pdf

However, according to surveys conducted by CBOS, practicing sports is still the domain and sphere of well-educated and affluent people¹⁰. This is certainly because educated people are more aware of their body, have more knowledge about physical health and wealthy people can afford to buy expensive equipment or pay for lessons. According to the survey, the most popular sport is cycling and swimming, i.e. sports requiring some money (purchase of a bicycle, paying for a swimming pool, etc.), and a decidedly smaller percentage of people choose such form of activity as running or hiking¹¹. Inequalities in practicing sports are manifested not only in the financial situation, education or age; very often the colour of skin and race are also important. Namely, there are sport disciplines that are more common for the black communities, for instance, athletics or box; the reasons may be different and vary from the history aspects and tradition of this sport in a given culture, etc. We can also observe the differentiation by gender; there are sports in which the leaders are men, and those in which women are more successful, although currently these boundaries are becoming blurred. More and more women are training in such disciplines as boxing, weightlifting or bodybuilding. Recently researches show that men are more physically active because they are more likely to play sports in general¹².

As it was mentioned before, there is division between disciplines, which are more common for people with higher social status, and for those who “belong” to the world of people from the lower classes. This is, of course, a socially accepted, contractual division and is not regulated legally. Therefore, there is a thought that rich and well-educated people prefer sports, which do not require direct physical contact with the opponent, sports, in which there is no need to “get dirty”, but instead is required a significant financial contribution, among others

are: sailing, ground tennis, golf, cricket. They are considered to be the sports in which one has to show greater intelligence, familiarity, personal culture and spiritualization. Lower social classes, however, were supposed to exercise more physical sports, such as boxing, football, motor sports, which are considered more primitive¹³. Higher social classes rarely show interest in such forms of physical activity due to their social prestige. However, it should be emphasized that such divisions may be different depending on countries and parts of the world, therefore not all sports that are considered less prestigious in a given country, must be considered in same way in another country. It depends on the culture and tradition of the given place. For instance, bowling and rodeo, which are considered to be lower-class sports in North America, are of much higher prestige in Poland.

Although differences in the activity of different social groups are still noticeable, the boundaries in participating in sports are more and more blurring due to the greater social awareness, changes in the perception of sport as something unusual, and an increase in the number of public and private sports facilities and, above all, changes in the human mentality. People do not identify sport with something expensive, shameful and unnecessary, but they see the potential of sports participation in gaining the recognition, beautiful appearance and well-being and good humour.

Health education. Health education is implementation of activities, principles and policy aimed at taking care of your own and others' health and safety, deepening knowledge on healthy lifestyle, principles of healthy eating, observing personal hygiene, learning what to do to feel good in order to attain good health. Nowadays modern society provides universal access to health education, including in schools, mass media, unfortunately it was not always the case. In ancient times and medieval period it was believed that only clergy had access to the knowledge in the field of medicine, and the people trusted them immeasurably and unscrupulously agreed to participate in various rituals. Knowledge in this field wasn't sufficient and people believed that the refusal to follow such

¹⁰ *Aktywność fizyczna Polaków*, Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa, wrzesień 2013,

http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_129_13.PDF

¹¹ *Aktywność fizyczna Polaków*, Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa, wrzesień 2013,

http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_129_13.PDF

¹² *Aktywność fizyczna Polaków*, Centrum Badań Opinii Społecznej, Warszawa, wrzesień 2013,

http://www.cbos.pl/SPISKOM.POL/2013/K_129_13.PDF

¹³ Z. Dziubiński, Z. Krawczyk, *Socjologia kultury fizycznej*, wyd. cit., ..., s. 279

religious ceremonies may result in the wrath and revenge of the gods¹⁴. In the Middle Ages the situation was even worse, as the worldview of this period negated everything that was related to the human body, the body was considered as insignificant, because only the soul was important. At those times it was normal to mortify and feel physical pain, so body diseases were often not treated at all. People lived in extremely unhygienic conditions and they were told that all kinds of diseases are sent by God as punishment for their sins, and the only remedy is prayer. In the nineteenth century health became the object for scientific studies.

We should also study the dependence of access to health education on the level of life and social status. Social inequalities play a significant role in all areas of life, including healthcare. The level of education, knowledge and experience of parents and tutors and school education level very often determines the public awareness in the field of health protection. These institutions are the first teachers and this interrelated system is considered as a model. If the parents themselves do not have knowledge about certain subjects, it is obvious that they will not be able to transmit and transfer knowledge to their children or transmit it incorrectly or in a distorted way. It is more common for the small communities, mostly from rural areas, or so-called working classes, where the main focus is made on physical fitness, but not necessarily intellectual. It is more characteristic for the elderly and insufficiently educated people. Fortunately, this phenomenon is disappearing mainly due to mass and universal access to the media, and above all to the Internet. However, we should be very cautious, because Internet alongside the relevant information contains unconfirmed or false information as well.

Certainly, property status is also important in pro-health education. People with high earnings can participate in various types of paid trainings on the related topics; money can ensure education at the highest level for them. Early child-

hood healthy mental development is of great value today, but we don't realize, how important health is in our life, for our well-being, for what we achieve. However, often people pay attention to their health only when they lose it¹⁵. In Polish schools health education is not enough promoted, resulting in among others, numerous exemptions from physical education lessons among children and adolescents. In most cases parents are responsible for this as they allow their children exemptions from the exercises. This negative tendency is related to the parents' low awareness of healthy lifestyle, but as the first teachers they should encourage children to participate in physical education classes. It is also a fact that in schools there is an obligation to implement the core curriculum in the field of health education and every child has access to it to a greater or lesser extent. However, in the countries of the so-called "third world" young people have no access to any education at all, because there is no money for schools. Social inequalities in those countries are more obvious. It is manifested in the non-compliance with the rules of personal hygiene and harsh living conditions, which are not always the result of a bad financial situation, but also because of lack of awareness in the field of healthcare education. For many years, the population of these countries did not have access to the education and a large portion of the population has been marginalized.

A very important factor that has impact on the access to health education is a lifestyle or the environment in which a person lives. If the person is open and social, uses the Internet, is among the literate people his chances to gain a broader knowledge in this field certainly increase. At present, an increase in average life expectancy in Poland is undoubtedly associated with an increase in people's consciousness¹⁶, who know what to do to feel healthier and enjoy the life. In the past in order to get medical advice or seek treatment, a person had to go to a specialist, today in the Internet age doctors are

¹⁴ J. Malinowska, *Profilaktyka i edukacja zdrowotna w szkole*, Materiały pomocnicze dla nauczycieli edukacji zdrowotnej Leszno- Kalisz październik 2014, Leszno 2014, wyd. Centrum doskonalenia nauczycieli w Lesznie, s. 3, http://cdn.leszno.pl/files/wiecej/materialy-do-pobrania/Wychowanie/Profilaktyka_i_edukacja_zdrowotna_w_szkole_-_2014.pdf

¹⁵ E. Syrek, *Zdrowie i wychowanie a jakość życia*, Perspektywy i humanistyczne orientacje poznawcze, Katowice 2008, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, s. 41

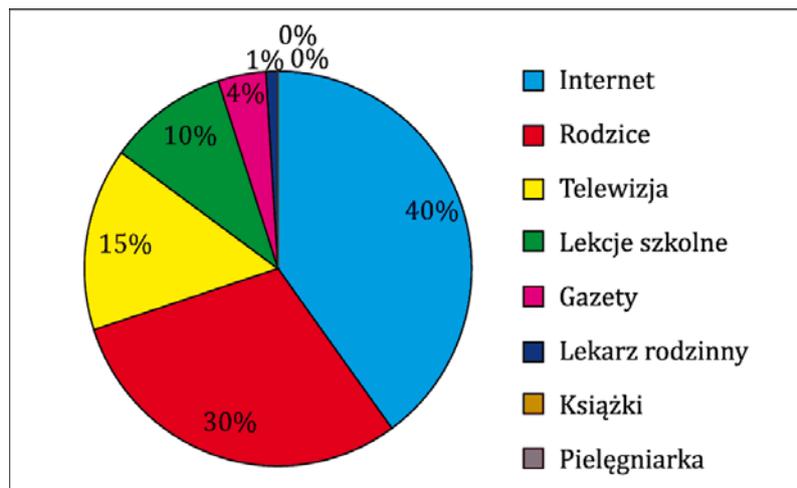
¹⁶ E. Nojszewska, *Spoleczno-ekonomiczne czynniki determinujące status zdrowotny społeczeństwa na przykładzie Polski*, s. 67, 10.11.2017 r. http://ochronazdrowia.sgh.waw.pl/files/1/12/ekonomia_i_prawo_1-2016_04_ewelina_nojszewska.pdf

no longer held in such high esteem as they were decades ago. On the Web, you can find information about any topic you desire; of course, you should take consultation with a specialist, but nevertheless it increases the awareness, consciousness and general picture of the situation.

Thus, health-related education should be implemented in every period of human development, however, the most favourable period is

childhood and adolescence because of the most significant changes that happen inside and outside the child's body. According to the held researches, the most common sources of knowledge about health education among young people is the Internet, parents and television, and school is only in the fourth place.

Chart 1. The most common sources of health knowledge in the students' opinion



Source: <http://www.czytelniamedyczna.pl/5834,rola-pielegniarki-szkolnej-w-promowaniu-zdrowego-stylu-zycia-uczniow.html>

Summary. To sum up, we should emphasize the importance of promoting health, healthy lifestyle and active participation in physical activities. Health is the highest good and value, health ensures everyday activity, allows achieving goals and aims, so we should make every effort to take care about our health as early as possible, preferably at the pre-school stage. It should be strived to alleviate the inequalities in access to education, especially health education,

or to participate in sports. The increased funding from various authorities, as well as the ever-changing worldview guaranteed the access to various sports facilities to a great number of people. However, the dominant good of our times is Internet, which offered a lot of information and opportunities. It is used to achieve additional skills and knowledge in the field of health education, to broaden horizons, and to eliminate existing social inequalities.

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