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The creation of physical education in France: the challenges of a political and ideological struggle

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Abstract

Physical et Sport Education (PSE) develops access to a rich field of practice, with strong cultural and social involvement, important in the development of the individual's personal and collective life. Throughout schooling, phys. ed. aims to train a lucid, autonomous, physically and socially educated citizen, with a view to living together. It encourages children and adolescents to seek well-being and care for their health. It ensures the inclusion, in the classroom, of pupils with special educational needs or with disabilities. The PSE is an introduction to the pleasure of sports. But in France, PSE is also the result of a long and complex history of political and ideological struggles that this article wants to demonstrate.

Keywords: Physical and sports education, educational policies, history of physical education, didactics, ideological struggle, France.

Introduction

France is one of the European countries that devotes the most time to sports activities: 14% of school time on average, double that of other European countries (Court of Auditors, 2019). In France, PSE is compulsory for all study programmes from the first grade (*Cours préparatoire* in French) to the senior year of high school (*Terminale* in French). According to official instructions (MEN, 2010 ; MEN, 2015), the purpose of PSE is to form, through the practice of physical, sports and artistic activities in schools, a cultured, lucid, autonomous, physically and socially educated citizen. More specifically, PSE must enable each student, first, to develop and mobilize his or her resources to enrich his or her motor skills, make them effective and foster success; second, to know how to manage his or her physical and social life; and third, to access the heritage of physical culture and sport.

Today, for PSE teachers, the challenge is to get students into a series of learning situations that lead them to enjoy, progress and be motivated because they feel that the knowledge they have learned allows them to act and to have a “control” of the physical and social environment that accepts the student as he is, but encourages him to change. In return, the student must create and rebuild his or her knowledge with the group. Through this reconstruction of knowledge, the student is also educated, working in groups, confirming his or her interpersonal skills and personality. This global education through PSE will follow him throughout his future life. Using the different learning situations, the student will have to develop the skills (act, interact and adopt). Through this paper, we want to show how the conception of physical education in schools has evolved over time. Indeed, politicians, educators and trade unionists have led important struggles on French territory over the past two centuries to bring about the discipline as we know it today. The analysis of regulatory texts and political debates concerning PSE has enabled us to draw up a history of it in France since the French Revolution. First, we will come back to the didactics of PSE. Then, in a second step, we try to rewrite the history of the discipline by showing the major turning points and future challenges.

I- Didactics, teacher training programs

I-1. How to teach?

The PSE teacher builds teaching content and proposes tasks (the “training content”) that enable the student to transform himself and learn. Thus, the didactics of the discipline is concerned with three aspects of teaching. First, the knowledge necessary to build competencies, which are themselves linked to the specific skills to be acquired: how to select the knowledge deemed most relevant and in response to which educational needs? This is why we question how to select skills related to previous competencies (and that allow them to be operationalized in action) and in response to specific needs. In a second step, it is necessary to take into account the conditions of appropriation and development of the content of PSE teaching. Thirdly, didactics examines the desire for transformation among teachers, a central issue in action research.

Many conceptions of physical education exist. For example, this one based on a "pedagogy of motor behaviour" by Pierre Parlebas (1981) or on a "conative pedagogy" (Mikulovic, Vanlerberghe & Bui-Xuân, 2010) offer as benchmarks the steps of a conative curriculum[1]. Still others (Gendrier, 2004) offer utilitarian and professional physical education (ergomotricity) aimed at controlling gestures and movements in everyday life. Jacques Gleyse (1999) proposes that students should have access to the cultural (physical) heritage of humanity and not only to modern sports through physical education, thus returning to the model of literary culture or artistic or musical education in education. Over time, these concepts have found a strong echo in the profession of French PSE teachers (Bui-Xuân, 1993). But Physical Education as a discipline is a complex institution, a field in the Bourdieusian sense of the term, and therefore cannot, in this sense, be assimilated to a person. The anthropologisms used by many authors about this institutional field personalize this discipline while it is not homogeneous, but is, like all disciplines, the object of conflicts, debates of actors, oppositions and, chronologically, more or less radical transformations (Sarreméjane, 2004). Concepts and pressure groups clash. Some authors have spoken of "war of methods" (Legrand, 1995), others of "crisis of bodily pedagogies" (During, 1981), others, finally, of "battle of didactics" (Gleyse, 2010). This struggle begins with the programmes and the organization of lessons.

I-2. The organization of teaching

I-2.1. In primary school

In primary school, learning takes place through different modules. The achievement of maximum measurable performance at a given time frame is achieved through athletic activities and swimming. Adaptation to various varied and uncertain environments is organised around, for example, orienteering, climbing, rolling and sliding, horse riding and water sports. Then, individual or collective confrontation activities can take the form of wrestling games, rackets or collective games (traditional or sports). Finally, activities with an artistic, aesthetic or expressive aim take shape in artistic or rhythmic gymnastics, circus arts or synchronized swimming. About 108 hours per year are devoted to physical and sporting activities, with an average of 3 hours per week. Any school can decide, as part of its project, to increase this weekly schedule by one hour. It is school teachers or qualified external teachers who teach PES in primary schools.

[1] Conation is an effort, a tendency, a desire, an impulse directed towards a moving into action.

I.2.2. In middle school and high school

It is the PSE teachers (CAPEPS[2]) who teach the subject at the secondary level (middle and high school). In 2018-2019, they constituted a corps of more than 27,367 teachers, 57.1% of whom were male (MENJ, 2019).

In the middle school, the programmes (MEN, 2015) are based on four main objectives. First, it is about achieving a maximum measurable motor performance within a given time frame. Then, students must adapt to varied and uncertain environments such as choosing a route in a natural environment, engaging in safety and respect for the environment. Then, the PSE advocates the realization of an artistic or acrobatic performance (imagining, producing and mastering a creation in front of an audience). Finally, the conduct and control of an individual or collective confrontation (making decisions with respect for opponents, partners, referee) is the final objective of the program. These objectives are based on physical and sporting activities, classified into eight groups: athletics, swimming, outdoor activities, gymnastics, artistic activities, team sports, racket and combat sports. Depending on the grade level, the mandatory weekly PSE hourly volume varies: it is 4 hours in the sixth grade, 3 hours for the other grades (Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10).

Sports activities are still as varied in high school as in middle school. In the general secondary school and vocational school programmes, the specific competence n°5 targets the teaching of PES on the development and maintenance of oneself through physical sports and artistic activities such as weight training, long swimming or stepping (MEN, 2010). High school students only have 2 hours of PSE classes per week. Once in the first year of the baccalaureate, students have the opportunity to create their own menus, in groups of 3 sports disciplines already set up in advance. For example, a menu can consist of 3 activities such as swimming, football and dancing. Throughout the year, students practice and are evaluated on their subjects with the aim that in Terminale, the average of the 3 marks obtained in each sport constitutes the score of the PSE test at the baccalaureate level (high school diploma). The mark has a coefficient of 2. Before continuing, it seems necessary to briefly review teacher training.

I-3. Teacher training

The decree of February 3, 1869 created the 1st diploma that allows to teach physical education : the certificate of teaching ability in gymnastics (CAEG). For 15 years, only 2876 CAEGs will be awarded and only for men. Indeed, the army slows down the arrival of women and also allows its managers to experience the teaching of gymnastics by limiting the number of CAEGs. Secondary and higher education PSE teachers must pass the Certificate of Fitness for Teaching Physical Education and Sport (CAPEPS), named since 1943 and held in Vichy every year. This competition is therefore not a secondary-school teaching diploma (CAPES), which is why, unlike other CAPES, it requires a specific Master 2 “Science and Technology of Physical and Sports Activities (STAPS)”.

The PSE also has an external aggregation competition since 1982 (first aggregation competition in 1983) which now requires a Master 2. There is also an internal aggregation competition that has been promoting certified teachers since 1989.

In 2002, an PSE department was created within the *École normale supérieure de Cachan*. In 2008, the head of the department decided, after consultation, to change the name of the department in Sport Sciences and Physical Education (2SEP) to better reflect the diversity of the courses offered there. Over the years, the training time has increased. After a Master's degree, students prepare a national competition to become teachers. Since September 2019, at the university, the INSPÉ (ex-IUFM and example-ESPÉ) has been in charge of training PSE teachers.

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[2] To teach physical education and sport in a public school or college, it is mandatory to obtain the CAPEPS exam, a certificate of aptitude for teaching physical education and sport.

II- A piece of history of physical education

Physical education is a compulsory school discipline in secondary schools, under the name of "gymnastics", since the decree of February 3th 1869 signed by Victor Duruy. As this decree was not very widely applied, Jules Ferry recalled, by the George Act of January 27th 1880, that gymnastics was compulsory in all public boy schools. In the same year, by the circular of May 20th (Camille Sée), the obligation was extended to all types of education, primary and secondary, for boys and girls. Physical education has often changed ministries, proof that it has been debated since at least the end of the 19th century: Instruction publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultes (1880), Instruction publique et des Beaux-Arts (1905), Guerre (1910), *ministère de l'hygiène et de la prévoyance sociale* (1920), *ministère de l'Instruction Publique* (1922), *ministère de l'Instruction Publique* (1927), Santé publique (1932), Santé (1936), Éducation Nationale (1937), Commissariat Général à l'Éducation Générale et Sportive (1940), *Éducation Nationale* (1958), *Jeunesse et Sports* (1963), *Qualité de la vie* (1974), *Jeunesse et Sports* (1978) and *Éducation nationale* since the decree of May 28th 1981 (Vigot, 2004, p. 44-317). It is therefore essential to review the history of physical education in France in order to assess its evolution in relation to both social and political factors.

II-1. The Third Republic and Gymnastics (1870-1940)

According to Pierre Arnaud (1985), the beginning of the Third Republic favoured the emergence of a gymnastics system that would become more and more school-based as school became compulsory (1881). The objectives are multiple, but are concentrated around 4 poles. First of all, it is a question of training soldiers: the gymnastic military exercises from the end of the 20th century until the First World War had the ambition of training patriotic individuals, strong in the sense of belonging to a nation with the determination to defend it. At the same time, it was a question of training individuals who were able to work, in other words, to build them a physical condition. In this same perspective, gymnastics aimed to achieve good health with the leitmotif of acting on mental health in order to fight against diseases, overwork and degeneration of the race. The concept of degeneration is part of the more general framework of the decadence of France, the race (French population) and the family. Theory makes it possible to interpret, explain and unify the fight against social scourges (Pinell and Lecourt, 2004, pp. 312-313). Body education was justified by the degeneration of the individual to reduce mortality. Man was assimilated to the animal. The church, which had a great importance in education at that time, refused physical education to straighten the bodies of children who were victims of deformities, for example by developing their strength (Vigarello, 1988). Finally, a political goal, that of training citizens in the emerging republic by building a new social order through the establishment of a new mental order. This educational project was based on the values of secularism, tolerance and relativism. At the end of the 19th century, the birth of physiology supplanted anatomy. It uses the thermodynamic model of the steam engine. G. Demenÿ (1900) advocates a physical education function that develops the body's vital functions (breathing, circulation). In 1882 the first sports club (Racing club of France) was created. Other unions will follow, such as the *Union des Sociétés Françaises de Sport Athlétique* (USFSA), which organizes school championships.

Jacques Gleyse (2004) identifies this transition to an exercise ideology for the greatest number and weakest as a key moment that will soon become Physical Education. Paschal Grousset (1844-1909), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Paris Commune, was at the origin of this ideology of exercise for the weakest, what some would call "a mystic of the left (*une mystique de gauche*)" (Onfray, 1999). He wishes to value the weakest and most disadvantaged as well as the largest number of practitioners, unlike the sports model which values the champion and the smallest number. He is one of the main architects of the introduction of football in France (Grousset, 1892). This minister wants physical health education on the same level as intellectual

education, in accordance with his position as a communard, for all children. He advocates for compulsory schooling that would contain the three aspects of physical, intellectual and moral education for the greatest number of people. We are going to talk about free, secular and compulsory education. At least that is what he tries to promote during the few weeks that the insurrectional *Commune of Paris* will last, in the spring of 1871[3]. He promoted this vision against sporting ideology, which he saw as a game of bullies, without morals but exacerbating narcissism (Grousset, 1888). His book also proposes the creation of Olympic Games very different from those that a few years later will defend Pierre de Coubertin where the main thing will be to win the competition. The games promoted by Paschal Grousset, whose social perspective is obvious, aim to bring out the best in order to educate the weakest and not in order to gain glory for oneself. Sport at school was all the more legitimate in 1891 with the publication of a "Manual of gymnastic exercises and school games (*Manuel des exercices gymniques et de jeux scolaires*)" (MIP, 1891). In fact, according to Gilles Bui-Xuân and Jacques Gleyse (2001), the emergence of physical education became possible thanks to two men: Georges Demenÿ (1850-1917) and Georges Hébert (1875-1957) just as the fatherhood of modern sport, beyond the first French clubs (in 1871 the *Havre Athlétic Club* was created), can be attributed to Georges de Saint Clair and Baron Pierre de Coubertin. Unlike physical health education for all, the ideology that Jacques Gleyse characterized as " a mystic of the right (*une mystic de droite*)" will take the form of a practice that has long been antagonistic in terms of values: sport. Ce sport ne fusionnera avec l'Éducation physique qu'après la naissance de la Cinquième République et l'arrivée au pouvoir de Charles de Gaulle en 1958 ainsi que l'intégration des enseignants d'Éducation Physique au Haut-commissariat à la Jeunesse et aux Sports dirigé alors par Maurice Herzog. This sport merged with Physical Education after the birth of the Fifth Republic and the election of Charles de Gaulle in 1958, as well as the integration of Physical Education teachers into the *Haut-commissariat à la Jeunesse et aux Sports* (High Commission for Youth and Sport), then headed by Maurice Herzog.

Finally, the success of the requirement of the 1880 law that makes physical education compulsory for boys aged 6 to 13 has three main reasons. First, hygienic concern is present to fight tuberculosis through better health of individuals. Second, an economic reason is the increase in workers' productivity through physical education (and thus useful to the nation's economy). The law of March 28th 1882 made school compulsory from 6 to 13 years old, which protects children from overexploitation at an early age. Finally, the last reason is military: it's necessary to prepare for revenge (war) and ensure the transition between school and the army. General Chanzy announced: "Make us men, we will make them soldiers" in 1882. Thus, school battalions were to be formed where the Ministry of Public Instruction offered the Minister of War the possibility of distributing guns in schools (Instruction publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultes, 1881). The constitution of its battalions developed in a context of rising nationalism with a vengeful character (take over Alsace-Lorraine). At that time, girls were not yet involved in physical education, which was relegated to a reproductive function. In France, the expression "Éducation physique" thus appears for the first time in the title of an official text in the *Manuel d'Éducation Physique* published on January 21st, 1910 by the Joinville school. However, this expression is already present in many texts well before the French Revolution (Ballexserd, 1780).

[3] The Paris Commune is an insurrectional period in the history of Paris that lasted about two months, from March 18, 1871 to the "Bloody Week" from May 21 to 28, 1871. This insurrection against the government, which emerged from the National Assembly, which had just been elected by universal male suffrage, will lead to an organization close to self-management or a communist system.

II-2. Between the two World Wars: a historic turning point

At the end of the First World War, sport was still symbolically attached to the preparation of the military condition. But France is socially divided between those who support the maintenance of physical education for the military and those who seek to detach themselves from it. Advocates of a sports approach to physical education fail to win for several reasons. It is the National Assembly, composed mainly of WWI French soldiers, that decides on military physical education. However, public opinion believes that physical education should no longer belong to the army. There is no teaching method, so there are difficulties in implementing it in schools. In addition, there is a significant critical movement converging against sport. Specialization, overwork, the dangers of sport for women are denounced.

The 1920s marked a turning point with the arrival of a new generation of politicians who made a cultural rupture. Politicians are becoming aware that sport can become a best example for the country. Gaston Vidal, Director of the Physical Education Department, states, for example, that "Sport has become a matter of State" (Wahl, 2004) in the sense that the athlete becomes an ambassador of the Nations. Public opinion seems to be in favor of modernity and the sports press is becoming the most important in France (creation of the *Lotto* newspaper). The 1924 Olympic Games awarded to Paris as a reward for the war tipped the scales in sportsmen and women's favor. During this period, all military exercises are removed from schools. The official instructions give a new conception of the student: more attention and judgment are required. Girls now participate in physical education, but differently from boys, because all called "dangerous" activities for reproductive functions are prohibited.

At the secondary education, we are witnessing the same reforms led by congressmen Léon Berard and Édouard Herriot. The decree of January 19th 1925 defines the organisation of physical education in secondary schools. The government imposes a half-day outdoor activity (for boys and girls) once a week, to get out of school:

> "[Athletes] contribute to defending the prestige and authority of our country abroad (...). They represent, if we can use this modern term, a kind of "outdoor diplomacy" (statement by E. Herriot, 1929, cited by Callède, 2000).

Students are asking for games and sports. The teachers offer gymnastics during the two hours of physical education. Official instructions are interpreted as intended, resulting in different physical educations. The three pressure groups (doctors, soldiers, teachers) were in conflict to write a synthesis that resulted in the general regulation of physical education in 1925. It is finally the Joinville's school that benefits from the writing of the report (it will take 7 years to write it), but there is a gap between this version and the expectations of teachers and students. This situation created a conflict that occupied the entire inter-war period. Physical education is in crisis and in search of its identity.

The late 1920s and early 1930s were characterised by the end of the military's monopoly on physical education in favour of doctors, as the context was more favourable to them at the end of the war. Physical education fights scourges (diseases) by preventing and treating them. After the War, France had one pub for every 83 residents. The speech is more or less: "Instead of going to the bistro, go to the stadium". Doctors are sensitizing the Ministry of Education and convincing it of the benefits of physical education to "put the race upright". In 1927, doctors even obtained the right to train physical education teachers. Schools are created to train them, such as the Regional Institute of Physical Education (IREP). They are taught medical and scientific physical education. The first IREP was created in Bordeaux in 1927, then in Paris, Lille, Nancy and Lyon, all attached to the faculty of medecine. Pour la première fois, c'est une formation universitaire.

At the head of the IREPs were the most influential doctors of the time: Philippe Tissié (Bordeaux), André Latarjet (Lyon) and Paul-André Chailley-Bert (Paris). IREPs are created

from the different faculties of medicine in France, so the teachers are increasingly competent. They're taking seats for the students of the Joinville Military Gymnastics School. Doctors play an increasingly important role through the IREPs, they act on the diplomas and they make the 1869 CAEG evolve. In 1931, the CAEG became a "Certificate of Aptitude for Teaching Physical Education" (*Certificat d'Aptitude à l'Enseignement de l'Enseignement physique*) (CAEP). In 1933, the higher CAEP became the "Certificate of Aptitude for Physical Education Professorship" (*Certificat d'Aptitude au professorat d'éducation physique*) (CAPEP). Physical education is being transformed into a field of experimentation for doctors.

II-3. From the Popular Front to the Fourth Republic (1936-1959)

In 1936, politicians became aware of the backwardness of physical education. The Popular Front tried to rehabilitate physical education in schools. Spectacle sport is rejected for its "perverse" effects (money, professionalism). The Popular Front promotes another model: sport for everyone. They create two undersecretaries of state: P. Dezarnaulds (doctor) and Léo Lagrange who are attached to the Ministry of Public Health. The importance of the school was such that on 9 September 1936, the government decided to extend obligatory schooling until the age of 14 (MEN, 1936). The aim of this operation is to allow people to learn a trade, to manage their rest time and to reduce the unemployment rate. It is a child protection policy. The State then takes over responsibility for teachers (MEN, 1937): they are therefore covered in the exercise of their duties. The Popular Front is a key period in the integration of physical education in schools. This political party is notably distinguished by the creation of the Brevet Sportif Populaire (1937), by the increase in the timetable (from 2 to 5 hours) and by the imposition of physical education as a test in a school exam (1938). The policies pursued by the government during this period have an impact outside the school. French men and women discover the benefits of physical education (youth hostels, travel, etc.). Under the Popular Front, school sport is organized such as the Office for School and University Sport (OSSU). Néanmoins, pour les hommes politiques du Front Populaire, le bilan est mitigé. In concrete terms, there is still a long way to go according to Jean Zay. The latter explains the reasons for the "failures" by the global financial crisis affecting France at this time and the lack of time to carry out reforms.

II-4. 1940: The second break-up

Within the framework of the National Revolution, Physical Education underwent during the German occupation of France, a real expansion, especially structural. It even became an affair of the State, whose hold on it will not slacken any more. On 7 August 1940, the *Commissariat d'Education Générale et Sportive* (CEGS) was created, headed by Jean Borotra. Its mission is to rebuild French youth. The sports charter of 20 December 1940 provoked the beginning of state control in the organisation of sport. In order to be subsidised, all clubs must now implement Marshal Pétain's policy. The official instructions of 1 June 1941 defined what physical education should be at school and changed its name to General and Sports Education (GSE). The motto of these official instructions is: "Be strong to serve better" (Marshal Pétain). Jérôme Carcopino (director of the *École normale supérieure*, historian) gives Borotra carte blanche to introduce the GSE into the school and to straighten out the youth of France: it is an eugenic education which aims at "the development of the race and the transformation of youth". On 6 July 1942, Pétain created a short course (training of gymnastics teachers in 6 months). Their training was done in the regional centres of the GSE (CREGS).

The IREPs lead to the CAPEPS (created in 1943) which allows teaching in secondary schools. The CREGS play the role of a *stopgap* because of the lack of teachers in relation to these new needs linked to the War. There are therefore two professional statuses. In a few months, the number of teachers is multiplied by 4. The *Brevet sportif populaire* (BSP), created by the Front

populaire in 1938, was replaced by the *Brevet sportif national* (BSN). A PSE test based on the BSN and optional was introduced in the baccalaureate during the 1941-1942 school year. This test will be compulsory in 1952.
After the liberation in 1944, Physical Education was attached to the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sport. It was still hesitating between general physical education and attempted incursions into some sports.

II-5. From Liberation to the fall of the Fourth Republic

The Fourth Republic does not have as a priority the organization of physical education. It is an unstable period of political and social rupture. France is trying to rebuild itself in the midst of a crisis. Those who came to power at the Liberation, including Charles De Gaulle, were logically against Pétain's laws and the EGS. Consequently, on 18 August 1945, the Directorate General of Physical Education and Sport (DGEPS) was created, attached to the Department of National Education. At its head, Jean Sarrailh (a former member of Léo Lagrange's cabinet) who takes up the ideas of the Popular Front. This DGEPS drafts the new Official Instructions of 1945. This text illustrates the influence of the sporting method. In the preamble, the break with the Vichy policy (PSE instead of EGS) is presented. Physical education cannot be reduced to the teaching of a single method. The teacher has the choice between three teaching methods: sports, natural, eclectic (Joinville). Nevertheless, the lack of means is glaring. Marianne Amar makes a catastrophic assessment of the IVth Republic's facilities (1 PSE teacher per 3,000 studentsIn 1953, 52 departments did not have a hygienically adequate swimming pool; 8 departments had none at all; 60% of high school students did not have a teacher (Amar, 1987). In December 1958, the new Assembly elected De Gaulle President. A High Commission for Youth and Sport was then created at the Ministry of Sport, replacing the DGEPS, with Maurice Herzog at its head. He was the promoter of a sporting status on an international level which illustrated De Gaulle's desire to give sport its full importance. Thus, we can read that :

> "If France must shine abroad through its thinkers, scientists and artists, it must also shine through its athletes [...]. A country must be great, above all by the quality of its youth, and one cannot conceive of such youth without a sporting ideal, especially in Coubertin's homeland" (Statement by Minister Haby, December 1959).

In the early 1960s, there was a massive influx of students into middle school (baby boom effects). The government extended compulsory schooling from 14 to 16 years through the Berthoin reform (MEN, 1959). This meant that there were two more years of physical education in school. Herzog had to deal with two factors: on the one hand, the extreme diversity of physical education practices that accompanied the official instructions of 1945, and on the other, the publication of the work of Pierre Seurin, who drew up an inventory of the main methods in order to draw up a synthesis (Prévost, 1989). The official instructions of 20 June 1959 are the consequence of these 2 elements. From now on, introduction to sports enters the lesson: each lesson must contribute to the different aspects of development in a short time. On 29 August 1959, Herzog imposed the PSE as a compulsory examination for the baccalaureate. This situation shows the importance of discipline within the School. Gymnastics, rope climbing, track and field, and swimming are included. Only points above 10 count towards the average. In 1957, a scale common to all establishments was created: the Letessier table. Published for the first time in 1957, the scale very quickly became the indispensable instrument for a major part of the physical education tests in school and civil examinations, thus contributing to the progressive integration of sport, and more particularly athletics, into the school system in the 1950s and 1960s. The scale thus allowed for a subtle compromise between a desire to modernize their teaching content and the need to respond to the characteristics of seriousness and rigour that are essential to any teaching subject that complies with school standards (Fortune and Martin, 2008). The official instructions of 1959 constitute a transition before those of 1962 and

1967, as they recall the principles of 1945 and initiate the integration of sport into physical education.

II-6. Sportivization and the birth of new education (1960-1970)

The State maintains the choice of physical education and sports. It appeals to teachers., J. Comiti's Successor (Secretary of State) decides on a series of measures reducing the number of hours of teaching per week to 3 hours in the first cycle (first year, second year and last year of preschool: children aged 3 to 5 years) and to 2 hours in the elementary school (children aged 6 to 8 years). Its circular of 7 September 1972 abolished the hours of sports association so that they could be dispensed outside school time: the physical education teacher therefore had a timetable deficit and a redistribution of teachers leading to a drop-in recruitment. The *Centres d'animation sportive* (CAS) are created for students who want to play sports outside of school hours, but PES teachers refuse to supervise the CAS's. A conflict then arises between them and the government. The Mazeaud Law (MEN, 1975) aims to make sports education a national priority. It makes it a service and is at the origin of the creation of the National Institutes for the Training of Physical Education Teachers (INSEP), but teachers wish to be trained by the Ministry of National Education (MEN). As a result, the Mazeaud Law led to the creation of a new science and technology concept (STAPS) and the DEUG STAPS (a two-year university degree) in 1975. Training is then provided by the MEN and no longer by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sport. In 1977, the STAPS bachelor's degree (a three-year university degree) was introduced. This law is a considerable step forward with the appearance of a STAPS university course, although the choice of content is focused on sports education. Now we talk about physical education and sports.

Achievement of the specific objectives is assessed by quantified measurement of the performance achieved, which in turn is made possible by the increased mastery of codified and regulated sporting techniques. But very soon this vision proves to be unsatisfactory in the educational institution. Indeed, the notion of "mastery of execution" will quickly replace the notion of performance alone, which does not take sufficient account of the pupil's academic progress and makes too much use of "data" and not enough use of what has been learned. Then, in the early 1970s, PES teachers thought that technique, high-level sport and children do not work together. They also believe that receptive methods do not allow the student to discover, invent, create. They want a new education and are interested in active pedagogies. During *Formation Professionnelle Continue* (FPC) courses, particularly in the Montpellier academy, they create tools based on the work of Wallon, Piaget, Mérand, Vygotski, Paillard, Meirieu, and the *Groupe Français d'Éducation Nouvelle*, and analyse, evaluate, and scrutinize each learning situation (Ansari, Deshayes, Dupon-Lahitte and Grolière, 1993, p. 83). They will use, evaluate and understand the contribution of these new pedagogies, creativity, non-directiveness, the different roles of the teacher, pedagogy by objectives, evaluation, project pedagogy, didactics, the learning process, the cybernetic approach. They design a new session and contribute to the creation of new curricula. It is a quasi-consensus among teachers close to this current who accept this evolution of PES. This does not prevent deeper tremors from reappearing and then disappearing: the individual versus the group, motricity versus technique, sport versus PES.

Thus, different points of view, even different ideologies, revive the disputes over the Sport-PES conflict, which are sometimes very violent. But PES teachers close to these currents, to the Unity and Action trend of SNEP, tired of receiving lessons from the "purists of sports education" reject them, and propose an PES for both male and female students. During the same period, many authors such as Jean Le Boulch, Pierre Parlebas, Jean-Marie Brohm, challenge the sporting logic imposed by the government. They propose a playful and artistic motor

education. However, the period of the "Trente Glorieuse" has already come to an end and a new era is taking shape for PES, which has to deal with underperforming at school.

II-7. Underperforming at school in the 1980s and its impact on PSE

From 1981, the presidency of François Mitterrand changed the situation. L'Éducation redevient une priorité nationale. Education is once again becoming a national priority. Unsuccessful schooling must be combated and with it all inequalities. The 1980s (especially from 1986 onwards) are therefore the time for renewal. The management of PES teachers was reintegrated into the national education system and must therefore officially conform to the school, the place of transmission of knowledge par excellence. The P.E. teacher changes his image, he differs from the coach. From now on, physical education can no longer be confused with sport. The increase in the number of sports and artistic physical activities (APSA) also makes it necessary to teach an understanding of motor action so that the student can adapt it to any new situation. Thus, PES continues to evolve based on concepts such as neuro-motricity, learning processes and the notion of brain plasticity. With the contribution of PES didactics and programme writing (since 1983, creation of the vertical PES commission, then of the disciplinary technical group and finally of the group of experts), the discipline has a new step to take: to develop and use the fundamentals of each sporting activity as a reference for the knowledge to be learned. Jean-Pierre Chevènement will reinforce the renovation begun and will be at the origin of new Official Instructions for secondary schools in 1985, including PES. The Jospin Education Orientation Act of 1989 constitutes a new charter for the French education system. It states that "the public service contributes to equality of opportunity. Artistic education and PES contribute directly to the training of all pupils" (MEN, 1989). The idea is to act on the training of pupils and teachers, to associate, with socio-economic desires, a systematic desire will to transform traditional educational frameworks of practice.

After the legal texts from 1985 to 1988, which extended the introduction of sport into PES programming (begun by the instructions of 1962 and 1967), the publication of the 1996-1998 programmes for secondary schools and 1999-2002 for high schools constitutes an important step towards the current state of the official texts which now administratively structure the contents of the PES.

The PES, which is better organized by official texts, is still based on the evolution achieved between 1970 and 1980. Sports and competition are still the backbone of the lessons and programmes. It is still based on the twenty years in which the teachers themselves, through internships, have completely transformed and rebuilt their discipline, rejecting the theory of receptivity of knowledge, to arrive at a PES based on and merging the two theories, constructivist and cognitivist.

The reform of François Bayrou's secondary schools in May 1994 put forward 158 proposals to define a "new contract for the school" (MEN, 1994). These measures have only one aim, to increase the efficiency of the education system in the fight against underperforming at school. They revolve around 4 main axes, one of which is to fight against social and cultural inequalities: the emphasis is on the French language, civic education and PES, which obtains a fourth hour in sixth grade. The organisation of the school (and PES) from 1980 to the present day is based on local democracy. The Government delegates its powers to the local authorities. The concept of public establishment was replaced by the concept of Local Public Education Establishment (EPLE in french) placed under the supervision of local authorities (high school and region, middle school and French department, primary school and town hall).

In the 1980s and 1990s, PES seems to have regained some of its true identity. On the one hand, PES is gaining in academic and social legitimacy, and on the other, this institutional recognition comes at a price, that of homomorphism, of a discipline in line with the others. But what about its specificity? The official instructions of 1985 (secondary school) and 1986 (high school) and

their addenda (1987-1988) partly answer this question: "PES is not to be confused with the physical activities it proposes and organises". Didactics and pedagogical reflection have led to considerable progress, but PES still pursues the same goals: learning to act, to control one's emotions, to surpass oneself; health, etc. However, the official instructions of 1985-1986 came up against the problem of content. The officially proposed solution is to provide PES with a national curriculum and a common reference system.

The 1990s will therefore be marked by these debates between the supporters of a strict curriculum and those of an evolving national frame of reference where interpretation is still important. It is a question of assessing skills provided that they have been taught, which is not always the case. Regarding the sixth (1996), fifth and fourth (1997), third (1998) and second (1999) programs, Pierre Bourdieu and François Gros (1989) announced that :

> "the program is not imperative code. It must function as a guide for the teacher and students, who must find in it a clear statement of the objectives and requirements of the level of instruction considered".

From that time on, the appropriation of knowledge (skills) in PES is a necessity in the process of school integration for two reasons. Firstly, knowledge is the guarantee that PES participates in the training of the individual. Secondly, knowledge confers autonomy and responsibility.

II-8. Training Reforms: Current Issues and Concerns

We will retain two important reforms. Firstly, the reform of the baccalauréat introduced at the start of the 2019 school year (MEN, 2018) potentially changes the position of PES in pupils' educational pathways. For the time being, questions remain. The series as we know them today (Literary, Economic and Social Sciences, and Scientific) of the general Baccalaureate have been abolished and replaced by a modular course. Pupils now follow a core curriculum of disciplines and specialisation courses, including two "major" and two "minor" disciplines. It is precisely this question of specialities that worries part of the teachers' unions. The half-day Wednesday previously dedicated to PES is disappearing to make way for all the specialities combined. Another major problem is that all disciplines are in one way or another involved in a speciality, except for PES. There is therefore a real danger that PES will disappear and become a simple option, losing its compulsory nature for all pupils from primary to high school.

Conclusion

In France, PES is a highly structured discipline in schools, both in the départements and at national level. It belongs primarily to the school domain, but it is largely open to the civil sectors, through school sports associations, which organise external gateways, sports meetings and competitions. PSE is also a discipline in identity crisis. If, in terms of intentions, historical analysis allows us to answer that there is indeed a democratisation of the school and therefore of PES in law despite many obstacles, in reality, democratisation is not always synonymous with success.

Taking an interest in the issues at stake in Physical Education and Sport means first of all taking an interest in the missions and functioning of the school in a perspective of democratisation of access to culture and emancipation for each and everyone. Indeed, all school subjects contribute to "developing the knowledge, skills and culture necessary for the exercise of citizenship in contemporary society" (MEN, 2013). The draft Common Base proposed by the Ministry of National Education (2014) states that school provides "access to a living culture" which "promotes physical, cognitive and sensitive development; enables pupils to act, to conquer and thus gradually exercise their freedom and their status as responsible citizens". The challenge is clearly stated: "The acquisition of this culture is indispensable for reducing inequalities and providing access to knowledge for all". Each discipline makes its own specific contribution to this global educational project, with objectives that have evolved over the years in line with the

needs of society. In addition, each one maintains a close relationship with social and cultural practices: French with literature, oral and written communication, theatre, plastic arts with painting, sculpture, photography, technology with architecture, mechanics, computer science, music education with the choir, instrumental practice and, lastly, PES with sports, dance, etc.

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