

## **Physical Activity Education in France from the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: the Progressive Construction of a Discipline in University, from Physical Education Teacher Education to Sports Sciences**

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### **ABSTRACT :**

My paper offers a historical analysis of the evolution of physical activity education in France since the end of the 19th century. It deals first with PETE (Physical Education Teacher Education) and then broadens its focus to sports teaching education as a whole. The three main points developed are the progressive unification and integration into university structures, the implementation of scientific research within the structures of PETE, and the creation of a specific corporate body of teachers and academics. Over the years, physical activity education has been torn between various social groups —the military, doctors, sportsmen, teachers, researchers. Physical activity education was thus built over tensions that still endure. When it became the Sports sciences field in the 1980s, it showed a new face, that of a university discipline with marked scientific ambitions breaking with the origins of PE teaching. Sports academic research widely broadened its scope in the middle of the 1990s, dealing with all sectors connected to sport and physical activity (tourism, health, competition...). This change developed in a specific context of professionalization in French leisure education and loss in the educational value of today's leisure. The analysis endeavors to bring precise knowledge of the evolution of sports leisure education in France. It also underlines the scientific questions that developed there and that can be compared with other countries' characteristics on the same theme.

**Key words :** sports leisure education, tension, scientific research, university integration.

### **Introduction: The French System of Physical Education Teachers Education: origins, development and issues**

Since the 1850s, France has tried to organize physical education (PE) at school. With the first law of March 14, 1850, PE became optional in primary schools<sup>1</sup>, and the teachers then came from the military school of Joinville<sup>2</sup>. A circular from the Minister of Public Instruction dated July 12, 1869 made gymnastics compulsory in every middle school and every high school<sup>3</sup>. The January 27, 1880 Act made gymnastics compulsory in every boys primary school. The Act was extended to girls schools in 1882. From that point, the question of how to educate the persons in charge of teaching gymnastics was asked. Organizing education began with the creation of a competitive

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1. French primary schools teach 6 to 10-year-old children.
  2. This school (école militaire de Joinville) is a military school. It was created in 1852 (Arnaud, 1982) to train soldiers in gymnastics. Indeed after the civilian and military gymnasium of Grenelle was closed down in 1838, the French army no longer had a gymnastics school.
  3. The French lycées (high schools) and *collèges* (middle schools) teach children aged 11 to 17.

examination (*concours*) to recruit teachers. It took many decades to organize the structures of PE teachers education (PETE). During that process, some issues specific to France appeared:

- The educational structures gradually unified around universities: throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, PETE, was first in charge of various institutions — unlike many other countries which were very early organized exclusively within universities — and then gradually unified around universities<sup>4</sup>.
- Education was then gradually integrated to university structures: the issue was eventually to offer an education similar to that of other disciplines taught at school. Hence came the necessity to be part of universities and to develop research activities within the structure of PETE. The desire to integrate universities implied starting research programs, which were the way for the discipline to gain recognition.
- A specific body of teachers needed to be created: it meant forming a specific body of teachers that would not be under any military nor medical influence, nor under the influence of persons involved in the world of sports, all grouped after 1936 in the structures of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (*Ministère de la Jeunesse et des Sports*).

These three points provided the framework for the evolution of PE teachers education in France. Yet, it was not completed without tensions. Education was torn between different interests: outside, between the military, the doctors and the education specialists who all claimed authority over it; inside, because of the hard conciliation of educational and scientific requirements. Relying on the studies conducted on PETE by Kirk (1997, 1999, 2000), Kirk, Macdonald and Tinning (1997), Kirk and Macdonald (2001) on PETE in Australia, or Newell (1990a, 1990b, 1990c, 1990d), Locke (1990), Siedentop (1990), Fernandez-Balboa's (1997) for other countries, our study will show that the history of physical education as a discipline was peppered by many scholarly debates (sometimes very acrimonious, and yet unconcluded) on the nature of the knowledge to be produced and taught within PETE. The perspective we chose for the present analysis is theoretically similar to that of Goodson (1993), the historian of the curriculum, when he demonstrated that fields of knowledge or disciplines in educational institutions were socially constructed. He argued more precisely that curriculum change proceeds through processes of contest and struggle over discursive and material resources, rather than through quiet evolution. Therefore our theoretical stance in the field of PE is that of Lawson (1991), who proposed that specialization and fragmentation were built into the process of reconstructing the physical activity field in higher education, and that conflict appeared to be endemic to that process. Thus, following Kirk and Macdonald (2001, op. cit., p. 441), we will consider that “the normal state of affairs in the curriculum world is far from rational, planned, and consensual. Changing the curriculum is a value-laden process. Power places are ever present. We are all, to varying degrees, involved in these processes”.

The present paper intends to provide a chronological account of the evolution of PETE in France, so as to show how it structured itself around the fundamental points afore-mentioned, and how it reacted to the various tensions.

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4. See *Quest* n° 42, 1990: the periodical presents many articles dealing with the construction of PETE.

## From the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to the End of World War II: the early stages of Physical Education Teachers Education in France.

From the desire to develop gymnastics at school and from the observations brought up by the Hillairet report, the first competitive examination to recruit PE teachers was organized in 1869<sup>5</sup>, and was called *Certificat d'Aptitude à l'Enseignement de la Gymnastique* (CAEG: Certificate of Ability to Teach Gymnastics). The majority of first CAEG candidates had an initial military education, but things gradually evolved thanks to Georges Démeny<sup>6</sup>. His scientific innovations helped to create some essential central institutions: the laboratory of PE-applied physiology at the gymnastics school of Joinville military school (*Ecole Normale de gymnastique militaire de Joinville*)<sup>7</sup> and the circle of rational gymnastics.

However, the educational structures were still disparate. Indeed, besides the classes taught by the Circle of Rational Gymnastics, some professional schools appeared, such as the college of athletes of Reims, created and directed by Georges Hébert<sup>8</sup> in 1912, a school educating its own PE instructors<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, the military still controlled the education of military instructors who taught civilians through the School of Joinville, the action of which was reinforced by World War I. Hence, 21 regional physical instruction centers (CRIP, *Centres Régionaux d'Instruction Physique*) were created, as branches of the military school of Joinville (Simonet, 1998, op. cit.). Yet the military and the Ministry of War did not keep the monopoly on PE. Doctors gained more and more importance from a social point of view, because of the health problems caused by the war. Physical education offered a good means to stay healthy, and thus became a priority in terms of health and hygiene. The medical monopoly followed the military monopoly.

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5. Duruy decree (*Décret Duruy*), 1869.
  6. Georges Démeny (1850-1917) was a physiologist. He worked with J.E. Marey, of whom he was the assistant from 1880 to 1894 at the physiological station of the *Parc des Princes*. With E. Corra he founded the Circle of Rational Gymnastics (*Cercle de Gymnastique Rationnelle*) in 1880, which was a place for thought on physical education and for PE education. He was nominated reporter for the Commission on the reform of gymnastics at the Ministry of Public Instruction in 1888, and he wrote the *Handbook of Gymnastics and School Games* (*Manuel de gymnastique et de jeux scolaires*) in 1889, a book published in 1891.
  7. Thanks to the impulse of General André, then Minister of War, (Simonet, 1998, p. 40) a laboratory of physiology was created in the Joinville school. Démeny became director, and shared his time between teaching and research. He was fired in 1909 for strange reasons, namely his opposition to the Swedish method that was fervently defended by the school director of the time, Commander Coste.
  8. Georges Hébert (1875-1957) was a military who taught physical exercise in the school of marines in Lorient. He created a PE method, the so-called "natural method", publicly shown in 1913. After World War I, he founded gymnastics colleges (the "Palestres"), to provide PE for women and children. He also was the publisher of *Education physique*, a review created in 1902. His method spread throughout schools, and through many companies.
  9. In 1912, thanks to the support of the Marquis De Polignac, Hébert founded the college of athletes of Reims, the aim of which was to prepare athletes for international competitions. The college also educated teachers to the natural method, but it did not last long, for the school was destroyed during World War I (Hébert, 1912).

In 1927, PETE was further structured, with the creation of the IREP<sup>10</sup> (*Instituts Régionaux d'Éducation Physique*, Regional Institutes of Physical Education) related to Medical Schools. It was the first college education structure offered to PE teachers. The *baccalauréat* (i.e. high school diploma necessary for university entrance) was required to take those classes. In 1930, Dr Chailley-Bert created a yearlong full-time proficiency course. The latter was transformed into a Normal School of Physical Education<sup>11</sup> (ENEP, *Ecole Normale d'Éducation Physique*, a teachers' training college) in 1933. The school was first directed by Chailley-Bert, and then by a teacher, E. Loisel. Like the IREP, the ENEP educated PE teachers, but it selected its students with a competitive examination taken at the end of a year's preparation in the IREP.

Thus, in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, two major institutions of PETE can be singled out: the IREP, branches of Medical Schools in which the medical monopoly was strongly felt, and the ENEP for the elite, in which a new corporate body of PE teachers began to claim its specificity. From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, various types of persons in charge of PETE appeared throughout the history of its construction. The military influence was replaced by a medical influence, but, as early as the 1930s, two essential groups can be noted: on the one hand, teachers (PE teachers, not very numerous as a corporate body by then), and on the other hand, doctors or physiologists. These two groups formed two professional worlds that stood apart and then became competitive.

#### **The situation after 1945: a multiplicity of PETE structures and the difficult start of research**

Under the Vichy regime<sup>12</sup>, many specialized professional schools appeared: the national college of instructors and athletes of Antibes, and regional centers of physical education<sup>13</sup>. The latter became the CREPS (*Centres Régionaux d'Éducation Physique et Sportive*, Sports and Physical Education Regional Centers) in 1945. These centers educate PE teachers in two years, instead of three at the ENSEP<sup>14</sup> and the IREPS<sup>15</sup>. The CREPS are also in charge of training "sports

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10. The first one was in Bordeaux, through the impetus of Dr Philippe Tissié (1852-1935), (Tissié, 1931).

11. Its localization was not settled at that date, so the structure wandered from one Parisian location to another.

12. The so-called government of Vichy established itself after the French surrender to Germany during World War II. It was directed by Marshall Pétain. On the actions of this government on PE, see the study by J. L. Gay-Lescot (1991).

13. To compensate for the lack of teachers, the Vichy government created a diploma for PE instructors in 1942. Some regional centers, such as the CREGS (*Centre régionaux d'éducation générale et sportive*, General and Physical Education Regional Centers), and a national center, the CNMA (*Centre national de moniteurs et d'athlètes*, Instructors and Athletes National Center) in Antibes, prepared for the diploma and played other roles, such as the preparation for sports competitions, organization of school teachers' training courses. Instructors became masters in PE in 1946, and assistant teachers in 1974. The recruiting process stopped in 1981, and the last class was recruited in 1984.

14. The ENEP became the ENEPS on March, 21 1941, and then the ENSEP in 1945. On December 31, 1942 the CAPEPS (*Certificat d'Aptitude au Professorat d'EPS*, Certificate of Ability to Teach Sports and Physical Education) was created.

15. The IREP were renamed IREPS after World War II. The "S" is for the adjective "*sportive*" ("sports"). A similar addition can be noticed in all the institutions dealing with physical education. It corresponds to the gradual development of sports over prewar traditional gymnastics. The change parallels a dynamics similar to the one described by Kirk and Macdonald (2001, op. cit., who evoke

educators” (*éducateurs sportifs*), who work within organizations that have popular education<sup>16</sup> purposes, and that organize physical activity for leisure and competition. It will be shown that PE teachers, as a profession attached to the Ministry of National Education from 1981<sup>17</sup>, sought to be distinguished from the former educators and the type of education they give.

The IREPS did not change until the end of the 1960s. It is mainly on medical science and physiology that education was based. PE teachers education (for primary or secondary schools) was then multiple. It was organized around fundamental subjects mainly focusing on the technical and methodological aspects —knowledge of PE and sports methods— as well as on the teaching aspects. As far as science was concerned, medical science —especially biology— was predominant, especially in the IREPS.

The ENSEPS used a competitive examination to recruit the best students and prepare them for the CAPEPS<sup>18</sup>. As the ENSEPS were not related to universities, they aimed at resembling university education. Consequently it appeared that research was an unavoidable necessity. As early as the 1950s, many attempts were made to create a superior education in PE, that would be paired with research activities in related biology, psychology and teaching theory. As many writers demonstrated —Siedentop, 1990, op. cit.; Lawson, 1998, focusing on the construction of PETE around the world— teaching theory is a field historically characterized by its being considered a subject just as researchable as any other science enabling to better understand PE.

The aim was to endow with university legitimacy a profession whose delimitations were ill-defined and whose credibility was tenuous (see Attali, Levet-Labry, 2003, p. 53). However, the ENSEPS was fundamentally organized around PETE. Education was given by PE teachers in majority<sup>19</sup> and by some university professors<sup>20</sup>. A note dating from 1957 indeed commented on the difficulties met by the ENSEPS to respect the official requirements of the other ENS (*Ecoles*

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the debates revealed by research conducted on the field of PETE. Kirk and Macdonald show that, for the past thirty years, the debates have especially focused upon the adequate term that should be used to refer to physical activity at a university level. Some consider it should be “sport”, others “gymnastics”, or “physical activity”, or “human motivity”...

16. “Popular education” is a form of education not taught at school. It began between World War I and World War II. It is a political project induced by the Communist Party, and more generally by the labor movement.
17. After being attached to the Ministry of War and Health in the early 20th century, French PE was then transferred to the governmental structures for youth and sports (secretaryship of state, and then ministry) when they were created. It is only later that PE finally joined the other disciplines taught at school, within the Ministry of National Education. The measure was largely called for by the corporate body of PE teachers, who saw it as a recognition of their status.
18. The CAPEPS (*Certificat d’Aptitude au Professorat d’EPS*, Certificate of Ability to Teach Sports and Physical Education) replaced the CAEG (*Certificat d’Aptitude à l’Enseignement de la Gymnastique*, Certificate of Ability to Teach Gymnastics) and the CAEP (*Certificat d’Aptitude à l’Enseignement de l’Education Physique*, Certificate of Ability to Teach Physical Education) in 1945.
19. The fact that PETE was strongly structured gave birth to a true and specific corporate body, despite the diversification of the structures.
20. Order (*arrêté*) of September 29, 1955, article 1.

*Normales Supérieures*, Normal Superior School) because of the absence of *agrégation* and doctorate degree in PE<sup>21</sup> (Attali, Levet-Labry, op. cit.).

### **The 1970s as a turning point in the gradual “academicizing” of PETE**

In 1969, a new ENSEPS was created (decree 69-536, June 5, 1969), uniting the two former ones and organizing the school in various departments: training, studies, and research. The new ENSEPS was meant for teachers that had already passed the CAPEPS and wished to acquire further knowledge by writing a research thesis in two years. In that context, research developed in two directions, as showed by the first scientific committee in sports research, which met on June 28, 1974: medical research was reserved for doctors, while humanities and teaching theory was for specialists, who all were professors at the ENSEPS. Hence PE teachers from the ENSEPS mainly were in charge of humanities and social science.

In 1973, the organization of the research department was clearer. Its mission was to develop medical, technical and educational research<sup>22</sup> in relation to sports and physical education. The ENSEPS laboratory continued to work on themes linked to humanities and social science, while psychology and biomechanics in relation to sports performances belonged more specifically to the medicine department. The sociological, philosophical or historical studies of sports that voiced more or less harsh criticism were all the more sensational as they were published in the post-May 1968 context. Such a process illustrates a dynamics that has been observed in various other countries. For instance, Locke (1990, op. cit.) or Siedentop (1990, op. cit.) demonstrated that the history of PE field revealed that the production of some forms of scientific knowledge appeared, disappeared, grew stronger or weaker throughout the development of PE as a discipline. Moreover, as the French case indicates, Newel (1990a, op. cit.) also showed that the social space of PE is in fact structured around the tensions between the groups of people that each defend one of these scientific forms of knowledge: each one wants the form of knowledge he produces to be the dominant one on the syllabuses.

As the diploma issued by the ENSEPS was not recognized as a third-cycle diploma<sup>23</sup> by universities, the school was obliged to sign agreements with some universities (Orsay, Paris 7, Pau, Caen). Each recruiting session defined a field of research in which every ENSEPS session teacher<sup>24</sup> had to write a thesis. Some of these session teachers were on a PhD program in one of

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21. The *agrégation* is a diploma superior to the CAPES (*Certificat d'aptitude à l'enseignement secondaire*, Certificate of Ability to Teach Secondary School). It is obtained through a very selective competitive examination that ensures a promotion to the laureates and favors their teaching in the highest structures of secondary education (*lycées, classes préparatoires*, i.e. classes preparing entrance exam for the ENS and other prestigious schools). The doctorate degree (*doctorat*, PhD.) is the highest university degree. It is obtained after the defense of a thesis, the requirements of which have changed throughout the years.

22. Decree 73-359 March 26, 1973, art. 9.

23. The third (and final) cycle of university education was taken after a *maîtrise* (4<sup>th</sup> year of studies) and was composed of a DEA (*Diplôme d'Etudes Approfondies*, “diploma for further studies”; it used to be called *Thèse de troisième cycle*, third cycle thesis) and a Doctorate (obtained after the defense of a thesis so-called *Nouveau régime*, “new regime”, replacing the former *Thèse d'Etat*, State thesis). Nowadays, university studies are divided in three cycles: *Licence* (3 years), *Master* (2 years), and *Doctorat* (3 years).

24. Following application, many PE teachers who often came from the already mentioned PETE institutions, were selected and admitted into the various sessions of the new ENSEPS. The

the related universities. That was the way the first teachers-researchers were recruited for STAPS<sup>25</sup> (*Sciences et Techniques des Activités Physiques et Sportives*, Science and techniques for sports and physical activities) from the 1980s.

The Edgar Faure Act dated November 12, 1968, transformed the IREPS into the UER EPS (*Unité d'Enseignement et de Recherche en EPS*, Unit of Education and Research in PE), whose missions consisted in preparing candidates for the recruiting competitive examinations, providing continuing PE teachers education, organizing PE studies and research in PE, PE teaching and sports. Yet, university activity was mainly centered on the development of teaching skills.

The “academicizing” of PE went on throughout the 1970s, with the creation of the DEUG<sup>26</sup> in 1975 and the licence<sup>27</sup> in 1977. The acronym STAPS, which replaced EPS, was chosen by the committee<sup>28</sup> in charge of the UER EPS syllabus. The change reflected a more general move: the gradual receding of professional teacher’s training. This is a process that has touched PETE in other countries. Lawson (1991, op. cit.) and Newel (1990b, op. cit.) thus demonstrated that the shifts described toward specialization and disciplinarity have dislodged PETE from a central to a marginal role in the field. They even show for some countries that in some cases, teacher education has been relocated to another organizational unit in the academy or has ceased to exist. From an epistemic point of view, Macdonald, Kirk and Braiuka (1999) showed that university PE and school PE “form a cyclical relationship” within which the university disciplinary knowledge gradually became central to PETE, thus moving away from educational research discourse. Universities are cultural and scientific structures, hence the change undergone by PE in France justified a new acronym. The scientific and technical terms indicate the double purpose of the professional and scientific education. Yet one now has to question the way scientific and professional knowledge respectively evolved within syllabuses, and ask whether the field of physical activity in French universities followed evolutions similar to the ones observed in other countries.

### **From the 1980s to nowadays: STAPS as a mass phenomenon which need specialization of formations and the specific context of professionalization in French leisure education**

The 1980s were a period of considerable evolution. First, PE was integrated to the Ministry of National Education, while it used to be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Youth and Sports. The PE *agrégation* and PE *maîtrise*<sup>29</sup> were created in 1982, and a STAPS section was added to the National Council of the Universities<sup>30</sup>.

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sessions lasted for two years, and dealt with different themes and scientific fields. For example, session 7 starts in 1972, on the theme “rhythm, movement, expression, creation”.

25. We will explain the creation of the new acronym by detailing the events in the history of PETE.
26. *Diplôme d'Etudes Universitaires Générales*, Diploma for general university studies, which was obtained after two years of college. It corresponds to today's L2.
27. Diploma obtained at the end of the third year of college.
28. In 1975 it was composed of J. Thibault (historian), A. Hébrard (psychologist) and R. Delaubert (general inspector of PE). The three were PE teachers.
29. Diploma obtained after four years of university studies. It is the equivalent of today's first year of Master.
30. Just like the other sections of the CNU (*Conseil National des Universités*, National Council of the Universities), section 74 (i.e. STAPS) deals with the careers of teachers-researchers (assistant professors and professors), especially the qualification process (meaning that the section authorizes

The syllabus of the STAPS *maîtrise* was at the origin of a fierce debate (see Jarnet, 2003) over the specializations it offered. Some, like Pierre Parlebas<sup>31</sup>, refused the unity of the STAPS to be lost in a variety of specializations. Others, like Alain Hébrard<sup>32</sup>, were in favor of the specializations. In the end, many specializations were accepted, in order to diversify career prospects. Nowadays, as EU countries are in the process of harmonizing their respective systems<sup>33</sup>, four specializations are offered: sports management, physical education, health and fitness, and sports coaching.

To complete the cycles, the DEA was created in 1982, and the *doctorat* in 1984. In 1985-1986, there were 90,502 STAPS students. In 1980, STAPS teachers-researchers and PE teachers having passed the *agrégation* did not exist<sup>34</sup>, as all the STAPS teaching staff members were PE teachers who had passed the CAPEPS, except for the rare cases of teachers coming from other disciplines (see Gleyse, 2001). However, in the early 1980s, the conjunction of two factors changed the situation, namely the arrival of ENSEPS teachers who had passed a doctorate, and the creation of a specific STAPS university doctorate. In 1984, there were four university professors, 18 *maîtres assistants* and 10 *assistants*<sup>35</sup> (see Chiflet, 1984). 25 *agrégation*-holders from the first class created and a dozen from the second class have to be added to the previous count. The number of university professors went from 8 in 1988, to 39 in 1995 and over 50 in 2000 (Collinet, Payré, 2003). The *maîtres de conférence* who were 180 in 1995 were over 240 in 2000. Besides, the various doctorates became better and better structured. From 1986 to 1993, 8 doctoral programs were created, and the first STAPS theses were defended. Research laboratories gradually developed. In 1989, 23 STAPS departments out of 30 had a laboratory or research teams (Terral, 2003a). Nowadays, 39 out of the 45 STAPS have one or more research teams.

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or not a researcher to apply for positions offered by universities). When section 74 was created, it had J. Thibault (former PE teacher and historian) for president.

31. Pierre Parlebas is a PE teacher coming from the ENSEPS. He taught at the ENSEPS. After defending his *doctorat* he was given a position in sociology at the University of Paris 5. He is known in France for having created an original science of motor action. He took part in the various think tanks on PE and its contents.
32. Alain Hébrard was a former PE teacher who became a University Professor in the early 1980s. From that day, he was appointed expert on PE questions for the government. As early as 1983, he became the president of the Technical Disciplinary Group (*Groupe Technique Disciplinaire*), who was in charge of making proposals for PE syllabuses. Then, he was called as an expert on the question of the construction of the STAPS. Throughout the 1990s, he also played a central role in the organization of the various round tables gathered to structure the discipline.
33. The AEHESIS project (Aligning a European Higher Education Structure in Sport Science - <http://www.aehesis.com>) corresponds to the harmonizing process. The project is led by various key-persons in sports science from every country, who study the implementation of the Bologna Agreements for PE within the EU.
34. The first teacher-researcher was J. Thibault, who became University Professor in 1979 in contemporary history.
35. These titles correspond to different ranks in university teachers. The highest one is that of university professor. There are only two ranks today: *professeur* and *maître de conférences*. However, other categories of teachers can teach in universities. They are secondary school teachers (CAPEPS or PE *agrégation* holders) authorized to work for universities.

The second half of the 1990s was a period of deep changes for the STAPS. Rapidly and quite brutally, they had to face a massive influx of students. Though students used to be selected to be admitted to the first year of DEUG STAPS, the universities now had to accept all the students applying for it. The mass phenomenon that occurred came from the suppression of the competitive examination that ruled the selection: the 1984 Act on universities indeed made the process illegal. At the same time, sports became more and more attractive to the general public and, another key-element, going to college became a mass phenomenon. This was due to the voluntarist policy that widely opened the doors of college by making the *baccalauréat* more largely accessible. From that point, the number of STAPS students never stopped to grow: they multiplied by four in 10 years (from 10,445 in 1988-1989 to 45,458 in 1999-2000<sup>36</sup>). The massive influx of students provoked a necessary diversification of education offers, hence ending the privileged status of PETE, which used to be the only focus of the structure. It also obliged to create many teachers' positions. This explains why many teachers-researchers were recruited though they were initially not from the STAPS: the number of STAPS PhD holders and *maîtres de conférence* having passed the HDR<sup>37</sup> indeed was insufficient for the needs. Nevertheless, the STAPS teaching staff remained composed of secondary school PE teachers by two-thirds, and of teachers-researchers by one third. PE teachers had formed the majority of the staff in the structures prior to the UFR STAPS, such as the IREPS, the ENSEPS and then UEREPS). Because of those changes, the STAPS have been characterized by the heterogeneity of their teaching staff (from secondary school to university) and by the multiplicity of its objects and scientific approaches.

We have to notice that this change occurred in a specific context of professionalization in French leisure education for one thing and of a certain loss in the educational values of today's leisure for another thing. More precisely, as Augustin stated (2003, 2006), faced with a decrease in voluntary help, the various leisure education associations have been forced to hire professionals (the French state-supervised employment scheme set up in the middle of the 1990s played a great part in this dynamics). At the same time, we can observe a form of "rationalization" of these structures' organization in order to optimize their efficiency. As Augustin underlined, this movement often went together with an increase in the number of these structures and also with a new definition of their goals. Indeed, the initial educative targets have been giving more and more way to market relations determined by a supply and demand model in the sport and leisure practice field.

### **Conclusion: the tensions around the control of produced and taught knowledge as the dynamics of the history of STAPS**

The history that our analysis endeavored to sketch shows that the construction of the French PETE structures and its related research structures was torn between different poles. One can first note a tension between "internal" and "external" actors. Thus, the still vivid memory of the previous monopolies successively held by the military and doctors, seen as "external" to PE,

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36. Source: information note 01.39 of the MEN (DPD C2) on STAPS, dated August 2001.

37. The HDR (*habilitation à diriger les recherches*, accreditation to supervise research) consists in defending a thesis in which the *maître de conférence* shows how his personal work and research have progressed since their *doctorat*. Once obtained, the HDR allows the *maître de conférence* to apply for being nominated *professeur d'université* (the highest rank in French teachers-researchers) by the CNU STAPS (section 74).

explains why today's PE teachers feel their discipline is "invaded" or even "colonized"<sup>38</sup> by teachers-researchers that do not initially come from the STAPS. Other tensions come from "internal" oppositions due to the difficult satisfaction of educational and scientific objectives, as the present work attempted to underscore.

Although these tensions can be seen as simple desires to control the institutions, they reveal deep divergences —that kept recurring throughout the history that was presented— over what kind of knowledge should be taught and researched. Over the whole period under study, a constant conflict has thus existed between the advocates of pure science as the educational basis and the supporters of professional education. This tension lay at the heart of the oppositions between doctors and teachers<sup>39</sup> in the past, and is now at the origin of strong frictions within the UFR STAPS, between, on the one hand, PE teachers and some teachers-researchers, who are more interested in "applied" research and whom we call the "professionalizing"<sup>40</sup> ("*professionnalisants*", Terral, 2003b, PhD thesis) and, on the other hand, "academic" teachers-researchers, gathering the vast majority of teachers-researchers non-originating from the STAPS and a large number of teachers-researchers coming from the STAPS, and even some PE teachers engaged in "fundamental" research. The former reproach the latter with "not caring for the usefulness of their research for sports professionals". Conversely, the "academic" think the "professionalizing" "do not produce knowledge that respects scientific criteria". Hence one observes a double conflict: one between PE teachers and "academic" teachers-researchers, and another between "academic" and "professionalizing" teachers-researchers. The latter conflict can be traced in discourse in the classical opposition between "fundamental science" and "applied science", a conflict that can also be found among biologists, psychologists and social science researchers<sup>41</sup>. Behind this conflict lies another one, on the very nature of science. It is reflected in another tension that has structured PETE, the opposition between so-called "hard science" and "soft science", namely, between experimental science and non-experimental science. This tension appeared between World War I and World War II, through the conflict between doctors

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38. Those terms are taken from interviews the authors conducted with PE teachers and teachers-researchers from various French UFR STAPS.

39. Before 1981, all the instructors (PE teachers, assistant PE teachers, sports educators) were under the supervision of the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MJS, *Minsitère de la jeunesse et des sports*). However in the 1970s the instructors were divided, as we already demonstrated (Terral, 2003b, PhD thesis). The gradual autonomy of PE teachers from the MJS was accompanied by a desire to make PE more scientific, against the sports educators thought too "empiricist", by a firm denunciation of the way competitive sports were drifting away, and by the pursuit of an alternative sports model that would be more educative.

40. In 2000, many "professionalizing" decided to create a third academic association called ARIS (*Association pour la Recherche sur l'Intervention dans le Sport*, Association for the Research on Intervention in Sports). The ARIS gathers teachers-researchers and a large part of PE teachers engaged or not in a PhD. program. These various actors do so-called "didactic" research on PE and sports, or work in psychology, anthropology or sociology on teaching, coaching or even management questions.

41. The aim of these researchers is to produce knowledge that will directly help professionals such as sports structures managers. The project is no longer strictly academic and no longer has the scientific description of phenomena for ultimate purpose. It aims at providing solutions to the problems professionals meet and at optimizing their action. Hence were created forms of sociology, economy or law directly destined to give action principles in sports administration (management of a sports club, or of a leisure sports company...).

and teachers, as some of the latter promoted research in humanities and education science, against medical science, which was based on biology.

The history of the French PETE structures illustrates the interdependence between developed knowledge and the social construction of governmental institutions. Besides that, the present study points to another element of the complex construction of PETE structures, which is the joint development of three disciplinary spaces: school, sports practice (MJS) and university. Indeed, the specific nature of the French case seems to originate from the multiplicity of educational structures and disciplinary spaces. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a very progressive unifying process of PETE structures around universities can be observed, although the training of sports educators is still held by the Ministry of Youth and Sports, despite the STAPS' claims. The integration of the different forms of education into universities has created a break that is still strongly felt, as many tensions remain between some staff members of the UFR STAPS and the actors from the MJS. Indeed at the time PE teachers were integrated to the Ministry of Education, the goal was to create a specific corporate body apart from the military, medical and sports (MJS) influences. This integration to the structures of education in the 1970s required to make PE scientific, by demanding the creation of an autonomous university section. The STAPS were born from PE, which itself came from a process of leaving the MJS; yet we saw that nowadays the UFR STAPS tend to move away from the concerns of PE teachers, mainly because of the diversification of career prospects and the massive recruiting of teachers due to the new influx of students, but also because of the various directions towards which research divided itself. Therefore it seems that STAPS, still a young discipline, is now entering a new and unknown phase of its history.

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