

**UNDER WATER: LIFE STRATEGIES OF PROFESSIONAL  
SWIMMERS IN BELARUS**

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## ABSTRACT

Throughout the history of sport of high achievements the countries members of USSR such as Russia, Belarus and Ukraine were considered as “grand sport states”. Despite the processes of restructuring and transformations of the whole social and economic spheres which lead to big economic recession, countries experience up to day, these states continue occupy the leading sport position at the international arena. The question is how with the reduction of sources directed to the sphere of sport the performance of the athletes still proceed impress the world? To answer this question we have to understand both experience of professional athletes and objective conditions of training in this region.

Based on deep interviews with professional athletes, analysis of legislative, statistical and protocol documents the paper presents the socio-analysis of the current state of the sphere of sport of high achievement in Belarus. Swimming was selected as particular and representative case of sport for reconstructing this sphere of social relationship in post-soviet social conditions. Using the methodology and theory of fields elaborated by P. Bourdieu, the author tries to show the specificity of social and structural conditioning of sport and post-sport personal life experience and strategies of professional and semi-professional swimmers in Belarus. The paper tries to contribute both in ontological and epistemological directions, firstly, to better understanding of the processes and trends which take place in the sphere of professional sport in given region and, secondly, to show how the field analysis developed in the context of western societies could be applicable in post-soviet social context to complex analysis of such issue as sport, which found little attention in works of P. Bourdieu.

To achieve these purposes the peculiar characteristics of social structure of the field of swimming was articulated based on analysis of the main capitals and its unequal dispersion between social agents in the field. The positions of the swimmers in this structure determine the main sport and post-sport life strategies and trajectories. The author analyses the reasons

of sport retirement, specific mechanisms of capital conversions and further life strategies in regard to different positions in sport field. The further elaboration and specification of such notions as sport, swimming, bodily and time capital is given. The claim of the paper is that despite the absence of appropriate state and private material support of the “large” sport and limited possibilities of the utilization of the sport capitals and building post-sport trajectories out of the sphere of sport the athletes are still motivated go in for sport (for profits of non-economic nature) and evaluate their engagement in professional sport as positive.

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## TABLE OF CONTENT

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SHORT LITERATURE REVIEW.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1. SWIMMING FIELD IN BELARUS AS OBJECTIVE STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
1.1 Sport and swimming as fields. Sport capital. Peculiar traits of sport as field of practices: theoretical framework.....	14
1.2 Historical genesis of sport field and swimming field in Belarus and its modern state.....	20
1.3 Basic structure of the Belarusian swimming field, its level of autonomy and relationships with other fields.....	25
<b>CHAPTER 2. SWIMMING FIELD AS SUBJECTIVE STRUCTURE .....</b>	<b>33</b>
2.1 The specifics of sport doxa. Getting into the game: mechanisms of possessing swimming illusion.....	33
2.2. The specifics of swimmers perception of the time and “time capital” .....	41
<b>CHAPTER 3. EXIT FROM THE FIELD AND LIFE TRAJECTORIES OF BELARUSIAN SWIMMERS ....</b>	<b>46</b>
3.1. Life trajectories. Structure, amount and dynamics of the capitals before the retirement .....	46
3.2. Exit from the field. The operation in alternative fields and the possibility of conversion of capitals.....	53
3.3. Bodily capital of swimmers and the possibilities of its conversion in Belarus .....	62
<b>CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>68</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>71</b>

## LIST OF TABLES AND DIAGRAMS

Table 1. The basic criteria and characteristics of the sample .....	10
Table 2. Theoretical construction of sport subfield .....	17
Diagram 1., Diagram 2.....	27
Diagram 3. Simplified structure of swimming field in Belarus.....	29
Diagram 4. Trajectory of “old”, Diagram 5. Trajectory of “newcomers” .....	47
Diagram 6. Homology of space structure in educational and sport fields and conversion strategies ....	58
Diagram 7. Professional and sport fields and conversion strategies .....	60

## INTRODUCTION

*The best swimmers sink much more frequently than others*

Sport is one of the most important social issues both as social institute and inseparable part of politics of the state and as crucial aspect of peoples' everyday practices. The significance of sport in modern society is displayed in the increasing role of the state in development of sport, widening of TV, radio and on-line state-sponsored broadcasting of sport events and place of figure of athlete in public space. Sport is one of the few spheres in which countries from socialistic block didn't lose their high world position in post-soviet times. On the other hand, especially in a post-soviet social context sport as total social fact didn't find a lot reflection in sociological and anthropological literature, especially this concerns the times of national independence of Belarus. It's true, that organization of sport in soviet society was very different from that of western countries, but *which changes happened since the collapse of Soviet Union? What are the trends of developing of professional sport practices and athletes experience in current social conditions?*

Sport, especially professional, is a social field with a very harsh and strict rules of the game. Applause, medals and glory of the winners are on the one side of the sport, which is described in newspapers, journals, on television. But sport has another side – tears, the minutes of despair, injuries and disappointments – that are the possible outcomes of being involved in professional sport. The sport career of professional athletes is short; and in the life path of everyone will be a moment, when he should make the decision to retire. How sport practices organized, what are the experience of the athletes, involved in sport of high achievements? What are the peculiar characteristics and specific of functioning of the Belarussian field of competitive swimming from the perspective of swimmers? What are the specific relationships between bureaucratic, economic, educational and sport fields, which influence athletes' experience?

The main research question: how current social organization and structural conditions of sport swimming practices influences actual experience of the swimmers both during and after their engagement in sport? The paper is going to reflect the main steps and characteristics of swimmers' life trajectories with it connection with macro processes in this subfield. Because of the different social and historical contexts and peculiar type of sport, we make the premises, that the experience and objective social structure of Belarusian swimming is differ from that of athletes in western countries. What motivates Belarusian swimmers to continue training on high level in the absence of appropriate state and private support the sphere of sport of high achievements? How the fact of being involved in the sphere of sport is evaluated by swimmers retrospectively and influences their post-sport life strategies?

To answer this set of questions we will use the methodological framework which provides theoretical synthesis of basic sociological oppositions such as structure-agency, micro-macro, theory-practice, body-mind and other. To my mind, the theory which could provide us with such instruments of thinking and vision is the conception of social fields, elaborated by P. Bourdieu. The methodology of “*genetic structuralism*” is an attempt to overcome the cognitive possibilities of objectivism and subjectivism: “With the help of structuralism I want to say, that in the same social world, but not only in language, myth objective structures exist, independent from consciousness and will of the agent, which is able to direct and suppress their practices and impressions. With the help of constructivism I want to show, that there is a social genesis, from the one hand, of the schemas of perception, thinking and actions, what is the constitutive part, of what I call habitus, on the other hand, social structures, or what I call fields...”(Bourdieu 1993, p. 181—182). The P. Bourdieu's conception of double structuring of reality allows us to reconstruct the objective conditions - social relationships which are reified in distribution of different forms of the capitals; secondly imaginations of agents about this relationships which influence the first structuring. The conceptual arsenal of P. Bourdieu

includes such notions as capitals, strategies and trajectories which will help us to analyze the specificity of sport and post-sport practices and its reflections in narratives. This framework gives the possibility to analyze the between-fields homological relationships, which reflect the possibilities of conversion of one form of the capital into another. We will try to understand, how bodily, cultural and social competence acquired during the years in sport could be utilized after the exit from the field. The hypothesis is that during the last years athletes received more possibilities of gaining educational capital extracted from sport, but still the possibilities of alternative (non-sport) professional realization is highly restricted in this context.

So we will try to receive the complex representation of swimming field in Belarus via life experience of the athletes in post soviet social conditions. It's interesting to see how social structure and mechanisms works through particular life fates of the swimmers. Through the reconstruction of the field of social relationships within the sphere of professional sport and its influence on personal experience we will try to articulate the specificity and peculiarities of Belarusian and post-soviet sport environment. This task tangles the absence of socioanalytical works, dedicated to analysis of such sport as swimming in given context and, on the other hand, the lack of systematic and complex application of P. Bourdieu's theory to such issue as sport.

P. Bourdieu describes the procedure of "participant objectification" as necessary element of social research. In my particular case the practice of "participant objectification" could be implemented in life fully. For a long time I was involved in sport training and after making the decision to retire I experienced the process of role and identity transition. Now there is an ideal time for researching, as I had an immediate personal experience, was involved in a process of training and competition. The process of transition had passed, and I clearly understand and can objectify the distance of objectification and my own social position toward and within the field of Belarusian sport.



I don't support the methodological approach, which dominates in most of the current research, when researcher "choose a "subject" (a theme) and gather around it two or three sciences". It's not a true interdisciplinary, which in words of R. Barthes, "consists in creating a new object that belongs to no one" (Barthes 1972). In my research I prefer to think about social situation in the sphere of sport in Belarus along with the works of P. Bourdieu, because of my close acquaintance with his methodology and way of thinking and because his theoretical conception nicely suit to analysis of sport and related issues. Using this theoretical framework helps us consider sport at different levels and explicate the specifics of sport practices in given social context.

## **METHODOLOGY**

On the level of practical methodology I used a variety of methods. First of all, this the informal analysis of different types of literature – journal articles and monographs, as well as web resources dedicated to the issues of law in the sphere of sport, governmental and statistical organizations of Belarus and Russia, sites of international swimming organizations (FINA) and specialized resources for swimmers and people, interested in swimming, analysis of protocols of the Republic competitions during the period 2005-2010 years, the roll of the members of the national team and reserve team during adequate period.

Secondly, I conducted 15 in-depth narrative interviews with professional and "semi-professional" swimmers accompanied with the formalized translated, adopted to social context Sports Career termination Questionnaire II, which has been satisfactorily used in the past by Marthinus (2007). The questionnaire used to receive some standard and quantifiable information about athletes, their career and educational path, general life context, in order not to focus on the facts during the deep interview. The search and selection of respondents was made on basis of personal excess to social sport networks and implement by the method of snowball. The basic characteristics of the selected cases presented in Table 1.

**Table 1. The basic criteria and characteristics of the sample**

Criteria of selection cases	The meaning of variable	Number of cases
Olympic type of sport	Swimming	15
Sport qualification of respondents	“Master of Sport of The International Level”	5
	Master of Sport of the Republic of Belarus	10
Gender	Female	9
	Male	6
Age	20-23	9
	25-35	6
Years of involvement in sport	8-10	7
	11-13	4
	15-22	4
The period after retirement, years	0.5-2	7
	3-5	8
Total number of cases:		15

## SHORT LITERATURE REVIEW

The whole body of literature, related to the topic of the research could be divided in several subtopics according to the structure of the paper. There are different philosophical and theoretical perspectives, which determine the whole understanding and place of sport in society.

Within sociology there are early acknowledgments of sport as a legitimate object of sociological analysis and approaches could be divided into 2 groups: “neutral” and “critical”. The representatives of “neutral” approach considered sport on a macro level as social institution or special symbolic form, which frames the vision and practices of the agents, the role and function of sport practices in society. Even on the dawn of institutionalization of social science, sport found its reflection in works of H. Spencer (1861) in his elaboration on “physical education”. G. Simmel exemplified "sociation" through play and saw sport as struggle displaying the unifying elements in conflict (1996 [1908]). G. H. Mead addressed the problem of role-taking in the games of children and the team as generalized other (1934). Florian Znaniecki(1930) made strong claims about sport's educational function. Orte-

ga Y. Gasset evaluated sport as activity of high cultural potential, because it is one of the form of play activity along with art, which save modern human “from seriousness of life and awake the juvenility” (Ortega Y. Gasset, 1950, p. 411-413).

Among more or less recent research, S. Birrell (1981) tries to show, how more neutral sociological conceptions could work in application to sport such as E. Durkheim and E. Goffman theories of social ritual. In this case sport is considered as an important societal phenomenon because of its ritualistic character. Theoretical support is derived by a synthesis of Durkheim's social theory of religion and Goffman's theory of interaction ritual. Sociologists concerned with understanding the social significance of sport have proposed many theses. These have included explanations based on sport as an important socializing impact; as an space of social control; as an institution of assimilation; and as a provider of controlled excitement in relatively unexciting societies (Elias and Dunning 1986).

Basically the neutral approach considers sport as specific form of social action. For example there were some efforts to define sport on the basis either of types of games (Caillois 1958) or of structural features (Loy 1978). Others approach considers this system by means of concepts of play, work (Giddens 1964) or of a continuum between the two (Luschen 1967). Despite the fact that large amounts of money are being exchanged over sport it is considered as based substantially on a symbolic activity (Elias 1971).

There is another, critical stand in social theory with its negative evaluation of competitions and sport, with its exclusion from the world of culture. Yet O. Spengler related sport to paradigms of civilization, but no culture (1993[1918]). I. Huizinga had a similar critical position in evaluation of modern sport, “which stands outside ...cultural process”, and that modern sport lost everything from its symbolic play content, “this is an absolute fruitless skills, which don't enrich the soul” (Huizinga 1997 [1938]). As an examples of critical paradigms we could consider sociological approaches of structural and cultural Marxism. A Marxian

theory of sport has two major dimensions: a political economy in which one evaluate the degree to which sports serve the accumulation problems of advanced capital and a cultural Marxist dimension in which the ways in which sports solve the problems of legitimacy and help produce alienated consciousness of self and society are examined (Young 1986).

In continuation of Marxists' critical approach to sport it's also important to mention the representatives of Frankfurt school with its critique of enlightenment discourse and modern mass culture, in which sport could play a clear statement in different forms of human alienation. As T. Adorno once observed, "...if one were to summarize the most important trends of present-day culture, one could hardly find a more pregnant category than that of sports" (Adorno 1982).

It's necessary to mention the radical and feminist writings on sport. The radical critique argues that sport is authoritarian, excessively competitive and exclusionary. The feminist critique holds that sport is male-dominated and masculine in orientation. The critiques overlap in their emphases on social inequalities (Shari L. Dworkin & Michael A. Messner 2002; Theberge 1981 and others).

The sociologists of this wing stresses such antihumanistic events in sport as deep specialization, hypertrophied physical development, readiness to use any means for achieving the victory, intensive and dangerous use of the potential of young athletes and other. Given the complexity of modern societies and the difficulty of definition, empirical studies that go beyond the listing of participation rates are rare. In a few cases specific societies are examined generally with insufficient data and theoretical basis concerning such issues as sport and the culture (Lushen 1980).

The peculiar traits of P. Bourdieu theory is that it represents the complex approach to sport with the elements of structuralism, phenomenology, game theory, it's methodology tries to overcome the contradictions and limitations of previous ideas in sociology and provide a

complex synthetic view on such a social institution as sport. The P. Bourdieu's analysis of sport practices was related with legitimate definitions of use of the body which is the struggle, which takes place in space of social classes (Bourdieu 1978, p. 827). As there class structure of western and post-soviet societies is very different, there is lack of research which investigate sport field from this point of view.

On the other hand, it's necessary to mention one-sided characteristic of the approaches, which try to utilize P. Bourdieu concept in regard to sport, and doesn't show the complex essence of the analyzed phenomena. There are publications, which use some aspects of the field theory framework, such notions as physical and bodily capital (Wacquant 1995b, Wacquant, L. 1995a, Shilling 1993, Shilling 2004, Schildkrout 2004, Paradis 2007), sport doxa (Dyck 2004; McGillivray, Fearn and McIntosh 2005), but there is no systematic and comprehensive use of these categories. In my research I will operate also with such notions as cultural, economic and social capitals. The concept of cultural capital mostly found its representation in such works of P. Bourdieu as "Distinction. A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste" 1984 [1979]. Other types of the capital were shortly and systematically elaborated in the article "The Forms of Capital" (1986). Further notions such as strategies were used in "The Logic of Practice" (2001 [1980]) and article "From Rules to Strategies" (1994); trajectories also were elaborated by P. Bourdieu in "Distinction" (1984[1979]) and "The Biographical Illusion" (2000). Basically, the work will be build round the main categories of P. Bourdieu. As part of further development of field theory and investigation of the possibilities of its application to sport such notions as sport, swimming, physical and time capital will be elaborated and mechanisms of its conversion will be specified in regard to process of sport career termination. So, the research will also fill the gaps in systematic and complex studies of sport-career relationships and retirement, which refer to the sphere of Belarusian sport.

## CHAPTER 1. SWIMMING FIELD IN BELARUS AS OBJECTIVE STRUCTURE

### 1.1 Sport and swimming as fields. Sport capital. Peculiar traits of sport as field of practices: theoretical framework

Before to start investigate the current situation in sphere of sport in Belarus, it's necessary to define key terms of analysis. Among a variety of approaches P. Bourdieu's theory of the fields was selected as one of those gives the possibility to reconstruct analyzed issues in its complexity, grasping the specifics of social phenomena at different levels. It's interesting to mention the evolution of the notion field as the trial to apply theoretical hypothesis developed in the context traditional Algeria to modern French society. In the "Outline of the theory of practice" – there is no even one use of the term field (Bourdieu 1977), in "The Logic of Practice" – some (Bourdieu 2001[1980], p. 112, 129, 257), in "Distinction" – the concept is used widely, but doesn't receive such conceptualization, as in later works (Bourdieu 1984 [1979]). The conception of field changed from reduction of the field to structure of dispersion of different forms of capitals, objective space of positions and hierarchies as the general macro structural context of actions and strategies of agents to understanding of field as respectively closed space of play, organized in accordance with the definite invisible logic and rules of the game (doxa) which direct the practices.

The working notion of field is *relatively autonomous sphere of social space, the place of forces within which agents have certain positions* (according to the multidimensional system of coordinates: the size of the relevant capital, general amount of the capital and its combination and time changes in the amounts) and *these positions statistically defines their views on that field and practices, which is directed either on preservation of the existed position either on changing of the structure of the force relationships, which organize the field* (Bourdieu 1994 [1991], p. 109).

Fields or social institutes despite their differences possess invariant mechanisms and tendencies of functioning and constituted as a result of progressive social diversification of practices. Any field is defined according to the *stakes and specific interests*, which couldn't be reduced to interests and stakes valuable in other fields. Structure of the field is the state of the force relationships between agents and institutions, which are involved in the struggle for distribution of the specific type of capital (Bourdieu 1976).

What is important in our analysis, that the notion of field in the theory of P. Bourdieu is objective-subjective structure. I consider the notion of field as sociologization of the notion of symbolic form, introduced by E. Cassirer (2000 [1927]). P. Bourdieu saved the constitutive characteristics of the symbolic forms in application to fields: the notion of field grasps the specific form of world view, vision and understanding of the world; every of the fields are unique and cannot be reduced to others - each is concrete way of spiritual perception of the world. As in the theory of E. Cassirer, all symbolic forms have definite logical structure, they construct union not substantial, but functional, and this is expressed in P. Bourdieu's notion of homology of space structures.

Another relevant notion is capital, which could exist in different forms: in incorporated state (in form of cultural dispositions), in objectified state (in form of cultural goods, which is materialized form of meanings and senses alienated by agents; in institutionalized form (Bourdieu 1986, p. 243). Bourdieusian definition of capitals doesn't coincide with the Marxian, although some characteristics are similar: limitation of the resource; the possibility to accumulate, liquidity; the possibility to turn in economic form; value, which brings new, additional value (Radaev 2002, p. 23). The general equivalent of different forms of the capital is time, spent on its possession. The possession of the capital gives to agent special possibilities and guarantees, consequently the structure of unequal distribution of capital between agents creates the system of distinctions, what is basis for arising of social relationships

(Bourdieu 1984 [1979]). The principle of unequal division of the capitals is the basis for constructing the spaces of forces and struggle, strategies and practices of agents.

### *Sport and swimming as social fields*

There are not so many research, which investigate the possibilities of application of social field framework to such social issue as sport, most of the empirical papers deal with separate notions of the theory. Also, there is little elaboration on such notions as sport capital, which is the main constitutive source in this field.

And as the field of art and culture were analyzed by P. Bourdieu with the separation of special subfield of mass production, avant-garde and experimental art, the field of sport also doesn't represent the holistic social aggregate. The division is made on the basis of a special type of the stakes which is valuable in the field, this also concerns sphere of sport. The analysis of sport on theoretical level is impossible without its division on subfields of mass sport, sport of high achievements and professional sport (Zholdak and Korotaeva 2000). This distinction of different sport practices is not the only one possible, but one of the dominated and widespread in Soviet and Post-Soviet literature and was constituted historically and has definite reasons behind. The differentiation of sport in sport of high achievements and professional sport means the constitution of autonomous logics or nomos and capitals which are the main stakes in the field.

This traditional (and highly theoretical and simplistic) division of different subfields tries to explicate the different types of the capital, doxas and level of autonomies of the different type of bodily practices. Analysis of literature shows, that we have to outline at least theoretical differentiation between this widespread fields, based on the main type of capital of the game. The theoretical division of subfields is presented in the table 2.



**Table 2. Theoretical construction of sport subfield**

Sport fields		Major field stakes, particular forms of sport capital
type	subfields	
Mass sport	Junior, Student and others	Self-affirmation among nearest social milieu, development of physical culture and health <i>Physical or bodily capital</i>
Sport of high achievements	Uncommercial	Self-affirmation on a world level <i>Symbolic capital</i>
	Commercial (professional)	Achievement maximal high level of payments, self-affirmation of on high level <i>Economical capital</i>

Although, the bounds between these subfields in reality vague, the table represent the ideal types, we will try to reconstruct the bounds of the fields in particular case of Belarusian swimming.

#### *Sport capital and sport practices*

The specificity of sport capital (in different forms) is that bodily or physical capital is at the root of its action. Sport field is the field of immediate bodily practices. Sport is a pure type of practice, which most of others involve cultural and biological origins. That is why, sport as social practice is considered as border and adjacent, in the sense, that it all the time on the border between culture and nature, biological and social, conjoint, integrate this two principally undividable subspaces. The measurement of sport capital could be done based on different criteria: as the possibility of the person to operate in the space, phenotypical abilities, kinesthetic and hexis. Body is considered as medium, instrument, natural substrate, which is always in between culture and nature, mind and world and unites them, what was stressed by M. Merleau-Ponty (2006[1964]). The sportsman is his body, “the template and epicenter of their life” (Wacquant, 1995a, p. 66). The bodily capital is the possibility to perform successfully in different types of the sport disciplines.

Among other peculiarities of sport field is face-to-face type of struggle which is bound by immediacy of time and space, here and now. Sport cannot lose its ontological dimension, couldn't be extruded in the “virtual” space or replaced by simulacrum, as this ontological and

performative dimension, “reality of first order” is still remain leading. These human in-born and developed ontological skills are the main stake in the field, in opposition to such fields as science, journalism, art, where struggle in its modern state has more symbolic nature, could be postponed in space and time.

*Sport could be considered as the “purest” form of the field*, as struggle in form of the competition is articulated in the most open and legalized way. Sport as the space of struggle and competition, the place where the desire of the primacy and perfection is core. I don’t know another form of activity which was driven by the logic of competition (which transcend the sense of the practice out of the ways of doing to the final result) as sport.

*Mechanisms of possession of sport capital is also specific*. Sport has no as result objectified material values, alienated from the body such as writing, painting, physical labor. The body is an object of investment and cultivation, where the main stake is *adaptive* possibilities of the organism, which is the essence of training. This special form of bodily capital requires great investment of time (30-35 hours a week, 1500-2000 hours in a year). Moreover it has natural limits and temporal nature as needs to be always supported, and as most other specific capitals cannot be directly converted into other forms of the capital.

Following previous characteristics of the sport, the notion of the sport strategy are also relevant in this discussions, as sport is one of the social institutions which is straightforwardly compared with the game, with *official “rules”* and *strict and definite* time “rounds”, “sets”, “championships” which characterize the objective conditions (in some other fields agents have no such strict limitations in “time”), this even expressed in language – football strategy, strategy of preparation, coach strategy and strategy of passing the distance.

*According to the level of sport field autonomy*, ideally, the sport field is the field of struggle in which the dominated and dominating is determined by within field factors – rules of the game and amount of sport capital. Sport is one of the fields, in which non sport factors

and the logic of other fields (such as politics, economy, state) play less role in defining field structure, according to Olympic slogan: “*Citius, altius, fortius!*” Although, especially with the internationalization and increasing the professional level of the sport the non-sport related factors start play important role too, but still the basic characteristic of the field is *high level of autonomy* on supporting of which such agencies as international jury commissions, anti-doping agencies are directed.

Within the sport field swimming has a special role as one of the oldest type of sport practices (National Olympic Commission of Kazakhstan 2011 ), the success of the performance is determined by individual qualities (not team) and by quantitative absolute measure like time in opposition to gymnastics and combat sports. It is based on human physiological abilities in opposition to external like rally. Swimming, on the one hand, if to consider the mass field of sport is one of the most popular in the world, as it doesn't require big financial investments in form of buying expensive equipment, less traumatic and developing of health and physical conditions (Novosti Ukrainy 2007), on the other hand swimming rarely get to the list of the most spectacle sports and gather a lot attention among audience, like such sports as football, hockey, boxing.

So, considering sport as field of social practices allows us to reconstruct it as the field of struggle for the main capitals which valuable in the field. Historically, the development of sport field leads to shaping such substructures as mass sport, sport of high achievement, professional sport which is the categories useful in analysis of current Belarusian state of sport environment.

## 1.2 Historical genesis of sport field and swimming field in Belarus and its modern state

*“I like sport a lot – this is the best of my qualities”  
A.Lukashenko, President of the Republic of Belarus*

In this chapter I will try to show the main macro and structural characteristics of Soviet and Post-Soviet sport field and their possible influence on training practice and sport strategies of the athletes. As analysis of literature shows, soviet and post-soviet sport is a special social phenomenon. The events and trends took place in Soviet society lead to the shaping of sport and swimming stakes, as they exist in current Belarusian sport field. Here the analysis of objective symbolic form will be given via analysis of evolution of legitimate and official definitions of sport and governmental politics, the points of arising of official competitions, techniques, rules, classifications and system of standards as signs of distinction and exclusion (special documents and badges). Another axis is constitution and shaping of sport agents, such as autonomous sport organizations, management organs, system of judging and, of course, and changes in athletes' status. How athletes became the fetish and how everyday physical exercises turned into sport as a separate life world in socialist society?

On the basis of analysis of sport literature (Piloyan 1997; Skorochodov , Sinelnikov 1996 and other), we could introduce the combined classification of main periods in development of sport movement in Russia and USSR, the early periods are characterized with the connection of sport with war issues, its role in militarization of country, inclination of the development of physical culture of mass population in opposition to trends of deep sport specialization and close connection of policies of industrialization and other.

What is really important that the development of sport and sport politics keeps steps with the general politics of the state, had strong ideological implications. State has the prerogative in determining the direction of the development of practice and “philosophy” of sport. The specific of the process of constitution of sport field and its peculiarities in Soviet region is following in regard to connection with *bureaucratic, state and economic fields* are: firstly,

leading role of the state in opposition to scant attention, paid to sport as a political or social phenomenon in Western countries (Riordan 1979 [1976]); yearly formation of state governmental bodies of management of physical culture and sport, with the consequent centralization of this system (Zuev 2002, Pyloyan 1997, Riordan 1991) and domination of administrative approach, over the primacy of law as ruling principle. It's also necessary to mention, that this was the time of constituting managerial vertical chain of governance with 5 or 6 chains of power.

*Concerning state sport ideology and educational politics:*

1. The dominant communist philosophy stresses the primacy of sport in affecting politics and the potential of sport as medium of social change (Riordan 1991);
2. The philosophy of sport could be described in following statement: "Health spirit in health body", what even finds its illustration in current laws, and strong opposition to specialization and professionalization in sport, what was considered as an element of bourgeois ideology and style of life (Ermak and Piloyan 1997). Therefore there are difficulties in separation of mass sport and sport of high achievements on different levels.
3. The program of development of physical culture and sport considered as inseparable part of everyday, industrial and educational activity of the person in opposition of western separation of academic and physical activity (Skorochodov and Synelnikov 1996);
4. Later understanding of sport not only as mean of social change on within-country level, as well as realization of symbolic role of the sport on the international arena.

The most important step was the introduction of *symbolic system of distinction* of the athletes, which was the step toward the separation of the sport of high achievements and mass sport is Unified Sports Classification System of the USSR which was established in 1935 and was revised every four years to reflect new standards for the physical training (Riordan 1979[1977]). The document contained test standards, principles and conditions, ne-

cessary for the conferment of sports ranks and titles, for all sports, cultivated in the USSR. Athletes who qualified for the rank were awarded a badge with serial number and a special certificate.

As sport in Belarus didn't receive close attention of social scientist, and analysis provided in official journals, statistical websites and newspapers don't goes further giving praise for success of Belarusian athletes and quantity and quality of the new sport objects in the republic, so we will try to provide another perspective on thing going on in the field. This piece of writing is based on analysis of state legal documents, The law of Budget and state official sites such as of Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Architecture and other official papers.

During the period of "perestroika" and after the receiving independency of the country the government could make some steps toward the democratization and reformation of the system of sport, we could elaborate the path of coexistent of the state-support sector of sport with the developing of Western pattern with its transition from amateur-elitist dominant ethos and institutions to the commercial-professional ethos and institutions, such as independent sports bodies and clubs. In practice the state and bureaucracy dominated system of sport management are preserved. Despite the introduction of new special law in 1993 and "State program of the development of sport" (Pravo, Zaconodatelstvo Republic of Belarus 2011), the status of sport of high achievement and professional sport wasn't specified.

According to the law, the key role in determining the whole state politics in this sphere is played by the President of the Republic, Government and Ministry of Sport and Tourism (National Law Portal of the Republic of Belarus 2011). But the functions and prerogative of high and local organs wasn't defined clearly. Basically the whole structure of organization and special establishment preserved, such as the status of state Child-Junior sport schools, specialized child-junior sport schools of Olympic reserve, Schools of High Sport Mastery, Centers of Olympic Reserves, the activity of which is organized according to the program

adopted by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism (National Law Portal of the Republic of Belarus). This sport establishments are financed from the local state budget, the control numbers of the students and participants are defined by the Ministry of Sport and Tourism (National Law Portal of the Republic of Belarus). The Belarus inherited the unified sport classification, functioning in USSR (National Law Portal of the Republic of Belarus). According to the law, there is a responsibility of the state to create the necessary conditions for sportsmen who achieved high results in sport and contribute to the increasing of the international prestige of the country. The material maintenance of national and combined teams are made from the sources of the republic budget.

*The specific of connections of the field of sport, legal field and bureaucratic field is defined by paternalistic politics of the state in relation to the sport; preservation of USSR-prototype system of sport government with the large system of bureaucratic apparatus, with a difficult system of subordination and controlling and absence of clear-cut bounds in competency between governmental bodies on different level, decentralization of the system; definite role of the high organs of national governing (President, Council of Ministers, Ministry of Sport and Tourism) in determining the politics and activity of the specialized sport establishments on a local level, who plays insufficient role; strong influence of the main political figures to the development of branch as the President of the Republic, A. Lukashenko. In terms of law, the necessity of addressing of a broad experience in legal framing of the sphere of functioning of sport (Kamenkow 2010), especially professional sphere, as lack of the sport organizations and clubs with the status of legal entity.*

In terms of the field we have to state the full fusion of sport, especially sport of high achievements by bureaucratic field, absence of the subsector of private and commercial sport organization which is intended to development of sport of high achievement and professional sport.

*In the sphere of connection of sport field and field of economy* we could state that still national and local state budgets are the prime source of financing the sport field in form of subsidies, and to support this sphere in 2010 – 0,25% of the national budget is given (National Law Portal of the Republic of Belarus 2011); reduction of non-budget sources, such as trade unions and “SportLoto” (Avristova 1999); strong state power (Ministry of Sport and Tourism) in distribution the directions of investment of the financial resources, up to the point of the amount of money spent on paper and pens for juries during the competitions on the local level. The real weight of non-budget sources of financing is not equal to western analogies, the main reason of it the absence of reduction of tax load for private enterprises who are appear as a official sponsor during the sport competitions. If to consider the sphere of property, it’s necessary to mention the domination of state as an owner of existed sport and physical culture infrastructure in the country, therefore lack of competition among sport facilities, schools and organizations and moral and material deterioration of sport objects. All above mentioned structural characteristics lead to the conclusion, that sport sphere experiences the absence of attraction of private capital to financing of its activity and development.

If to try to localize the field of Belarusian swimming in the whole structure of the sport, according to the claims of the participant of interview competitive swimming is not one of the foreground types of sport, government intended to invest money. The first reason for this is the current performances, as Belarusian swimmers during the last 20 years on international competitions weren’t bright, since the first and the last “gold” in 1994 there were no Olympic medals in swimming.

The second reason is the state of infrastructure. From the personal conversation with the swimmers it’s clear, that country experiences the necessity of professional sport “water”. Most of the introduced in exploitation sport complexes are oriented on population needs and don’t equipped for conducting competitions even on a local level, not to say international.



Most of the swimming pools were built during the soviet period and now need capital investment. The limited number of the members of the national team by 15 people and the number of disciplines more than 45 also evidence for the highly restricted amount of sources state could provide for swimmers (Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Belarus 2011).

From the point of economic and law grounds of functioning of sport in Belarus, I would argue, that material infrastructure and level of state and non-state investments in the sphere cannot respond to current standards and trends of development of professional sport in western countries. There material conditions provided by the state aren't insufficient and incomparable with those which exist in "world-swimming" states, such as for example Australia, the USA, Italy and other highly-developed countries. Apart from material base deterioration and lack of adequate financial support, the governmental bodies are intended to preserve the USSR models of government, aren't interested in reformatting and developing of non-state sector of property. In other words, there is no institutional mechanisms of promoting development of professional sport substructure, which influence negatively and reduce the competitive ability of the country in sphere of sport of high achievements.

### **1.3 Basic structure of the Belarusian swimming field, its level of autonomy and relationships with other fields**

The most amazing thing, that during the period of sharp economic crisis and state of the sport in Belarus we described in previous chapter, the Belarusian athletes continue to perform at enough high level on European and world level. How such a things is possible? Now we plunge deeply in world of Belarusian swimming. How the practices of the swimmers are organized?

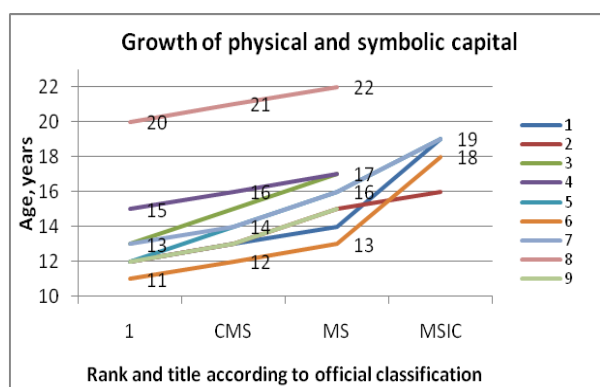
According to previous chapter, substructure of professional sport, as it exists in Western countries, wasn't formed in Belarus. As it comes from the interviews swimming field in Belarus functions in 2 basic modes – mass sport and sport of high achievements. In the absence of strong material support of the swimming from the side of the state, for continuing training non-economic motivation factors should possess hypertrophied nature. For swimmers the main pushing factor to continue training has symbolic nature, in form of recognition in sport environment through successful performance at the competitions, which could both be expressed in rank in Unified swimming classification, significant victories or records. Most of the athletes dreamt about high achievement at the international arena. The basic stakes of struggle in the field was expressed in following way: *“I remember from the school, I always had the desire to win championship of world, Olympic Games. There was no such situation, as you pay me money, and I will swim. I swam because I loved to swim”* (32 years, male). Symbolic sport capital possessed number one in value structure of swimmers, while other types of the capital, like high physical capital, good physical form aren't stakes in itself, but considered as a mean of gaining sport capital. The economic capital, social and educational play also a secondary role as the sources, which contribute to the development of physical conditions, the possibility to have sport gathering on a “large course”, better pharmacology, participation at the international competitions and so on, for example: *“I chose this university because of the possibility to swim it gives”* (24 years, male).

On empirical level the amount of symbolic capital was evaluated in signs of distinction (title, ranks), the number of years the sportsmen has membership in combined teams, the highest level of competitions the swimmer participated in and the performance itself, the subjective evaluation of reputation at the international, republic and local level, and the subjective feeling of the privileged status among peers and adults during sport career. This type of capital plays a leading role in structuring the field. What is interesting that symbolic capital al-

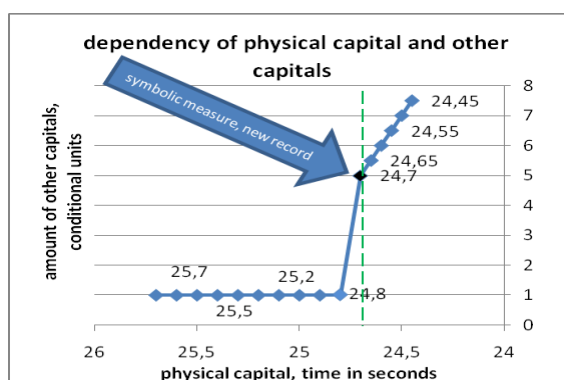
though had superstructure nature still always goes along with bodily, which is the base. The unequal distribution of this types of capital organize the structure of the swimming field.

*Primarily structuration of the field.* Firstly, the most important stage is the “home” or “domestic” accumulation of bodily capital; this is the *long unwarranted investment of time, forces* (5-7 years, or more) till the swimmer possess certain level of physical capital with little possibility of conversion in symbolic and economic. The bodily capital is incorporated form of capital, but its amount could be expressed *in objectified form as objective time*, which is the ground for primary structuring of the field. The athletes accumulate bodily capital in different speed, and the process of conversion into basic symbolic form (ranks and titles) also goes differently. On a Diagram 1 we could see the unequal distribution of bodily and primary symbolic capital among 9 swimmers took part in research in regard to their age.

**Diagram1.**  
The dependence of symbolic capital and age <sup>1</sup>



**Diagram 2.**  
Accumulation of physical and other types of the capital



There is another critical point, when quantity of physical capital reach the measure and converted into another capitals. As example we could consider the performance of the athlete in 50 m free style, the horizontal axis is the swimmers progress in time, which is the objectified mark of the amount of bodily capital. Once the athlete reaches the critical point in his performances, such as establishes new record of the republic or shows the result of Master of Sport of

<sup>1</sup> The abbreviations on diagrams mean: 1 adult rank, Candidate in master of sport, Master of Sport, Master of Sport of International Class.

International Level, his *physical capital, which is accumulated gradually* as increasing adaptive possibilities of the organism converted into *symbolic which is accumulated exponentially*.

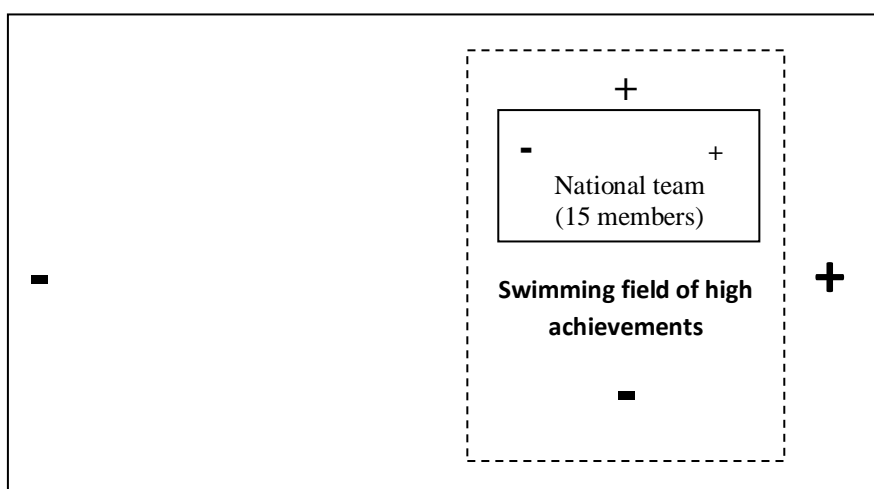
The basic tension in the field is organized round and for this symbolic conversions of capitals, which is the line dividing dominated and dominating in the field: the first group, “new comers” (Master of Sport, took part in National Championship and was a champions or prize-winner, but never being the members in the national team); the “old” (winners of National Championship, records men, members of national team). Getting into this privilege group of 15 members of the national team means the multiplication of all types of the capital, sportsmen receive salary, prize-money, equipment and other support in form of pharmacology, which increases their physical abilities and symbolic capital. The large symbolic profits guarantee the consequent achievement of formal cultural capital. Here the clear tendency of functioning of swimming field, the *capital goes to capital*, or what was expressed by swimmers in following way: “In our country to receive some bonus you have to show the result by your own physical forces, but I don’t know how, no gatherings, no nothing. No results - no support. But how to achieve the result, if there is no support. Closed circle...”, “In our country they want you firstly show the result, and then we will help you, but how to outdistance those, who already receive the support?”

According to some participants, the getting to this enclave – national team is a prestigious and difficult task, which not always depend on official rules and amount of physical capital. And once, you are excepted, it’s sometimes much more difficult to keep the position. Some of the participants mentioned, that they were members, but only for a short period of time, till the first occasion such as illness or first unsuccessful performance. Swimmers, who get in such situations mentioned, if once you get to the team and being excluded, there is practically impossible to recover in status, despite the level of your results, you are “condemned”.

The performance itself isn't critical factor influencing the decision of the coach to admit swimmer in the team. While for some swimmers their "team" biography is short, other members could have serious illness (operation on the heart) or unstable performances during a long time, but still be the members of the team for 6-10 years: "They removed me from the "bread-ticket", and did everything to fright me. But I didn't pay attention and demonstrated once again. I demonstrated, prove, that I can, that I can. I won, I won, but nobody needed this, they didn't recover me in the main staff" and other, "The coaches take to competitions their pupils, who are already experienced. But the first international starts couldn't be successful from psychological point of view. I was in the team for one year and then they throw me overboard".

The national team is the island of *professional sport* in Belarus, financed by the state, as it allows to go in for swimming as main occupation, which brings income. Nothing, in terms of P. Bourdieu increases such the newcomers' capital, as turning over the whole structure of the field, that is *the juniors winning of those who are in national team or establishing new record*. This is uneasy task, not only because of the physical superiority, but mostly for the symbolic domination of "olds", who seems to be from the sphere of sacred: "When I was little girl, the stars of the swimming were Kopachenya, Koptur... For that moment it was even psychological, I was afraid, when I saw them before the start, for me little, they were stars, stars, Chochlova, Herasimenya. I'm here, before the start I have already capitulated". On a diagram we could see the basic oppositions structuring the Belarusian field, the measures of the subfields is float and build upon in our case on symbolic measures of the capital, we presented above, the analysis could be specified further in terms of concrete agents operating in the field.

**Diagram 3. Simplified structure of swimming field in Belarus**



### *The autonomy of the Belarusian swimming field and external effects*

According to P. Bourdieu field influences players in a way of collective amnesia of genesis of the rules of the game, which are arbitrary and cultural despotism in its roots. “This *arbitrariness* of the field is *pure nomos*, the basis of the autonomy of the field” (Bourdieu 2003[1989]). The *nomos* is inclined to be seemed as something natural and inherited in the nature of the things. To say, that the fields are autonomous is to say, that participants obey the law of the field, which is the struggle for the main stakes, physical capital and symbolic capital.

In terms of autonomy, theoretically, sport of high achievements, especially such as swimming could be described as one of the purest, as the rules of struggle and bodily practices objectified and universalized in official documents. Concerning the Belarusian case and described struggle for the place in national team is also prescribed in official documents such as “Statement about the shaping of national teams” (Pravo. Zaonodatelstvo Republic of Belarus 2011), which determines the rules and conditions of setting the contract with the athletes. But what was mentioned by swimmers, that other non-sport related factors influence the process of determining leaders.

I discovered during interview the cases of evident intrusion of social logic and inter-coach network of relationships into the decision of state funded support of athlete in form of scholarships, membership in the national team. Especially social relationships influential on decision to go for international competitions: “Those people participate in competitions, who have prestige coach, who have links”, “The deal is not in results, but the deal is in the coach”, “Before the championship, there was a conflict between my coach and the main, so I didn’t get to World Championship in 2002”. The participants described several examples, when even the person who decided to participate in international competitions and used his own sources, received the refusal in the airport without any sufficient reason or explanations. Other swimmers expressed doubts about their possibility to get to international competitions such as Olympic

Games, because of their previous unsuccessful experience of selection to the international competitions, such as Junior European Championship, connected with the social factors, such as the place of origin (periphery): “About Olympic Games...probably it was in my dreams, but it’s necessary to work hard and I felt, that I would not be selected in any case... Because I’m from another city, they’d better select somebody from Minsk or even from Grodno. Who takes me? Who will stand for me?”

Other athletes stressed that the factors which determines the politics of the national coach is also vague, as there could be the situation, when not the people with the potential go to an international competitions: “I received the state scholarship for one year, probably one time I got ill or something like that, and immediately I was expelled. But on the other hand there are girls there, who could receive the scholarship during 4 and more years, without showing stable results at the competition. I don’t know what influence this...” Some athletes connect this with the unreasonable politics of the general coach of the team – there is no support of young perspective swimmers, only experienced old generation participates in competitions. The situation which was described by participant somewhat characterize the conditions of 3-5 years old.

The analysis of current situation in membership of the team is following: the team is quiet young in age (with the middle age is 20 years (man) and 23 (woman), modal and median age is 21); reserve team is even younger (middle and median age is 19). Comparative analysis of members of list of membership and protocols of the main competitions of 2010-2011 shows the absence of rude infraction in process of selecting of the best swimmers based on sport merit. On the other hand, so widespread mentioning of such facts in past, means that it could take place. Basically, a very important role in this process plays the general strategy of the national coach, who has monopoly of power.

The athletes and the main coach (who are the second after the national) propose the strategy of the parallel preparation of the team, where young swimmers perform along with the old,

experienced members. The main coach is strongly against “dispersion” of the team, as there is an international experience of conjoint participation in international competitions of “old” and “new” staff. The main coach in the interview outlined as the problem is the organization of management of the sport, the problem with the preparation of sport reserve, absence of possibility for young sportsmen have training with the main staff of the team, there is a separation in the field, no coherence and interest in developing of “swimming future”. The coach stressed the influence of bureaucracy and administrative press, the process of turning the coaches in functionary and instrument who protect the interest of “ideological state apparatus”, “we needs hero, but not the person who follows the system” (Klimova 2010). Secondly, now situation with the selection of the swimmers to competition changed, as qualification normatives are determined by FINA, so the influence of social factor is reduced to minimum, on the other hand the team will be reduced even more, what is the lack of experience for the athletes (Versotsky 2011). Basically the main problem of the team of coaches is the lack of international experience and cooperation, sharing the information with the colleagues abroad.

What comes from this chapter is that in comparison with highly developed countries the “material” basis of the sport in Belarus is not on a high level. In the absence of shaping the professional field of swimming in Belarus, the sport functions in the USSR modus of sport of high achievements, with the leading role of symbolic and sport stakes at the field. The main sport strategies of the agents are directed by the accumulation of symbolic capital, while other types of the capitals plays subordinated nature and considered as potential for getting further sport symbolic capital. Apart from the struggle on the basic or primary level for achieving symbolic sport capital, the struggle is also going on for additional sources of the capitals which provide the potential for further symbolic growth, what is expressed in National team membership. In this subspace of fight we could divide 2 main strategic lines – strategies of saving and strategies of disrupting the status quo. What is interesting in Belarusian case, the poor “economic substrate”



of professional sport subsector in Belarus, the situation is aggravated by influence of non-within field affects on the results of sport struggle as presence of clannish relationships, unjustified politics of the coaches, preserving of old-fashioned patterns of sport politics and absence of sharing of international experience, what also decline the general level of “potential and competitive qualities of the institution” (Bourdieu 2001[1996]).

## CHAPTER 2. SWIMMING FIELD AS SUBJECTIVE STRUCTURE

### 2.1 The specifics of sport doxa. Getting into the game: mechanisms of possessing

#### swimming illusion

*“The being is transcending or “Dasein” is access to the being? And does human possess the being, but not being – human?”*

M. Merleau-Ponty, *Le visible et l’invisible*

In previous chapter we gave the general characteristic of organization of sport and swimming in Belarus, one of the peculiar traits of which is domination of the symbolic and sport stakes with the highly limited economic stimulation of engaging in sport practices. In this chapter I will try to understand how this special “pure” swimmers’ point of view on the field is shaped and reproduced in this particular social context.

To achieve this goals we will operate with the notion of swimming “doxa”. By the term “doxa”, P. Bourdieu understands a certain form of belief: “Doxa... is the attitude of fundamental immediate agreement with the social world” (Bourdieu 1996). What is crucial in this notion, that it provides the link between objective and subjective structure, as sociologist asks the questions about social grounds and preconditions of the doxa, which is the co-existence of immediate and deep agreement between mental and objective structures. On the one hand this is the special state of mind, the vision of the field and attributing to its rules and practices certain meanings, on the other hand this is objective category, as doxic experience could be supported and reproduced in space and time collectively.

What so special in sportsman perception of the world? *They are not owners and creators of the rules of the game, as in most of the fields.* At least in Belarus, the battle is going on for the values and within symbolic margins established longer before, which started to institutionalize with the arising of official organizations such as FINA. The process of constitution and reproduction of social order has historical nature and implemented by the process of officialization and legitimation, which have by its result the world of common sense or doxa (Bourdieu 2001[1980], p. 112).

The fanaticism borders with masochism, the belief is so strong and totalizing, that sportsman are ready to live with a constant experience of the pain: “I’m tired, the arms fell off, and the legs fell off, but all the same you are going to training, you can’t, you know, that all the same you will cry, sob, will argue with coach, but all the same you go”. This is like closed circle, labyrinth from which it is very difficult to find the exit. The doxa possess athletes on different level, symbolic and physical, the agent needs constant repetition, series, regimes, again and again the same exercises: “we made it (training) because of the habit, we did it during the long time and we continued to do it *because of the habit*”, “*I so used to sport, this as to clean the teeth every day*, I go to swim to nourish, this like booster charge”. The history and past influence strategies of agents: “How? I so many years spent in the swimming pool, to capitulate now? No, without the title Master of Sport I will never give up...”

Involvement in the sphere of sport shapes unified world view, subordinates other experience and practices and places leading position in life: “Sport for me was above all”. During the sport career, most (12 of 15) athletes stated, that thought and referred to themselves as to sportsman and think, that other (12 out of 15) people also perceive and referred to them as to sportsman. For all of the athletes sport played the major value and the most important life goals were connected with sport. Why people are so self-dedicated to the sphere of sport, that they are ready to get up at 4:30 and swim sometimes even 30 km every day? The motivation of the

swimmers changed during their sport career. I could describe the main steps in the development of the sport life path, which lead to the fully grasping and obsession of the athletes by sport: “I was a fan of the sport. I collected all the information about sport, newspapers articles, journals. I was sitting in the class at school and think not about studies, but how to fill in my sport diary...”

***Getting into the game: mechanisms of possessing sport swimming doxa***

So the agents, who currently involved in the field, at least in Belarus is not a prime creator of the structure, the athletes only support and reproduce existent training and competition practices. Doxa or set of sport dispositions is a special form of cultural capital, the mechanism of transmitting of which in diffuse and implicated conditions by the immediate learning and imitation, according to the principle, do as other people do (Bourdieu 1984[1979], p. 121). It's also true, that sport field is quiet protected from the radical critique, comes from outside (parents, science, mass media, former athletes) and from inside (coaches, official organizations such as federations and of course, from athletes). The “heretic” critique is reduced with the increase of the influence of doxic experience. In this section we will try to understand the steps and special mechanism of possession swimming doxa in post soviet context.

***1. Azure water, bobbers and soggy slip***

How people get to swimming pool? The ways are different, while one get to the swimming occasionally through the process of selection of the coach who made new set, other had long sport family traditions and parents intentionally searched for coach and swimming school.

There are two categories of the beginners: those who adore sport and swimming and the second category, those who aren't so sportive and competitive. The early stage of sport engagement always described enthusiastically and with humor. Swimmers stressed their personal interest and keenness in sport practice itself, in beautiful clean water, swimming pool, another motivating factor was the possibility to learn how to swim, the desire to overcome the “fear of water”. Most of the participant stresses that, they were very active in childhood, and parents

direct them to sport, “just to reveal energy in a good direction”, “I always was a sport person”, other mentioned that had an aversion to training and sometimes played hookey, just brought home slip and towels wet in the street pool and mentioned the role of their parents in pushing to training.

For some people the desire to participate in competitive swimming was related with the health problems, and people start doing sport in opposition to prohibitions of doctors: “I had bad health, weak heart, the doctors prohibited the engagement in “large” sport. But I had the character. No, I want to go in for sport, at that moment it was interesting”, “I had contraindication to serious sport – chronic disease of liver. But ordinary Russian human, it’s was not interesting for me. I started to go in for sport. Boldly started to go in swimming pool”.

*At this first stage the interest and purpose of the participating in sport was immanent to the practice and activity itself.* The people posses field, but not field captured them. Sportsman at that time didn’t take sport seriously and “control the situation”, could play truant and didn’t go for training for groundless reason. At this stage the role of coach is tremendous to make children interested in this activity.

## ***2. The first taste of victory***

One of the most important factors is the experience of first competitions, the winning of first prizes and diploma’s: “I with pleasure went to swimming pool, with big ardor. The first competitions, the first diploma, more and more interest, ardor, a lot of gladness, I would like to achieve more and more, I would like to train more and more...” The winning of diplomas, that certified the place and results, sport success expressed in signs of distinction was very important for children, even *more that material reward. The desire to be the first, to dominate among peers* pushed children to continue their training. At this stage training became the part of the preparation of the athletes to competitions, they started to understand why do they train. Here some

athletes could experience crises such as the transition from amateur involvement in sport to sport of competitions achievements.

### 3. *“I wanted to be a Master”*

The peculiar trait of post-soviet sport – the unified system of ranks of results, which plays important role in shaping of swimming doxa. The logic of the classification form the desire to receive a title which correspond to certain level of certified result, expressed in objective time, eclipses the desire of winning. To show certain result, on certain discipline means further specialization and development of peculiar type of bodily capital. The strong desire to have certain rank, which starts to form on a 2-3 years of engaging in swimming means the direction by sport logic sport practices. Nominations are very important on the first level of the career, when the main goal of the person is to receive the title of the Candidate in Master of Sport and Master of Sport. For most of the athletes the title of Master of Sport was the main reason, why they were ready to suffer constant physical load and strict sport regimes:

*“My purpose was to achieve the title of Master of Sport. When I swam up at that competitions, I saw – Master. Smile was the whole day at my face, I was very happy and called home. My mum was crying in handset. They were pleased for me, that it was not for nothing that I went from home at 5 a.m. and come back at 7 p.m. But now I’m thinking – what does it mean Master? But all the same I don’t regret about it” (female, 21).*

Master of Sport means a certain level of results and prestige in sport environment. The training activity acquires transcendent content, and the more it was difficult for swimmers to receive the title, the more value it had: “It was interesting to cope with the difficulties, I didn’t like easy tasks and exercise, which require the mobilization of all the forces. I liked to get up at 5 a.m., because I felt, that I’m doing the things, other people couldn’t do. Yes, it’s possible to earn money by lying at the sofa, but it’s also possible to do it in another way. People didn’t understand me and my motivation”.

**4. *“Do you know, why most of the swimmers continue to swim? Because they cannot do anything else”***

As soon as person achieves the status and title of the master of sport, the purpose of further training is to perfect the results and to successfully participate in competitions, to get into national team. The receiving the further titles, like Master of Sport of International Class is considered as less important and correlated with the performance. The participation in international competitions, such as Olympic games or World Championship is also one of the major factors for continuation of the training. Economic capital is considered more as the possibility and condition to achieve physical and symbolic capitals, rather than purpose and stake for itself: “I didn’t train for something, not because of the money, I simply, I wanted to be the best”, “Nobody knows, that I 15 years grafted, - “you don’t receive money for that!” – people say, all the same, that I didn’t receive money, but I received something different, I received pleasure. Here is experience, emotions, people don’t understand”.

So this is the general outline of the development of the sport swimming doxa, when finally athletes think, that swimming are “meat and drink” to them. Athletes mentioned, that they were compelled to ignoring or pay attention to other aspects of the life, on the other hand, swimming gave and meant for people so much, that they didn’t feel, that miss some other opportunities in life. Such strong involvement lead to personal difficulties, when athletes realized, that sport is the temporary occupation: “It was difficult to belief, that soon everything will end. This is like when you standing at the high-board before jumping, and when you jump, it’s not dreadfully”.

***“When God gifted people with the knowledge, sportsmen were at the training”: or the role of sport school in unequal dispersion of cultural capital and supporting swimming doxa***

One of the most important meaningful turning points in the decision of the athletes to take sport seriously and possibility to do it professionally is the organization of specialized

educational establishments and sport swimming classes. 13 out of 15 swimmers studied in such classes and establishments like Minsk Regional School of Olympic Reserve or Republic School of Olympic Reserve. The system of such establishments and sport classes are the peculiarity of soviet system of sport and have little analogs in other countries. The class is created by the initiative of the coach and has a special status in school, special schedule, allowing pupils twice training a day and participating in competitions and sport gatherings. Schools of Olympic reserve provide students additionally with accommodation, feeding and equipment. Another side is the organization of the system of summer sport camps, where children even during the summer continue their training.

Many of athletes described the choice between specialized subject classes and sport classes as turning point in their life, where they made preference between sport and education. This choice is described as a difficult one, in which parents and coach played the largest role.

The special educational environment recreated in the classes and schools supports pupils' displacement the value of education and its eclipse by sport. Swimmers mentioned that from the point they get to specialized classes, sport received number one in their value structure. Educational level of the specialized schools are much lower: "Previously I studied in an ordinary school. When I came to the RUOR in 9<sup>th</sup> class, I watch at them and think, how still they are stupid here. She goes to the blackboard and couldn't solve elementary equitation, but after one year of studies I became the same..." or "When I studied, I had no time for school at all. I came home, did some writing exercises, didn't open literature at all. I shifted books from one place to another and that's all, I went to bed – tomorrow once again to the training. Nothing was interesting for me".

The sportsmen felt, that teachers made indulgence for them: "You are from training, so sit, have a rest, relax. Some teachers understood, that we have another occupation, there is no time for preparation and no forces", "In "Parnat" it's nothing costs to study, and moreover it

doesn't disturb the training". Basically, the organization of the studies at school is also organized in a way, which limit the athletes cultural development and horizon. And athletes were quiet happy about such studying conditions, as they could do nothing.

The organization of the training process also plays important role in developing and possession of sport doxa. According to the results of the research, athletes mentioned, that in 1/3 cases coaches didn't pay attention to the non-sport life of their pupils, in other cases coach plays the role of the friend and mentor, organized developing conversations, went on the parents meetings at school, communicated with the teacher and during sport competitions and gathering, was initiator of the trips to local museums, theatres. But still, the actions of the coach is mostly directed to the development of physical capital of the pupil, encouraging loyalty to sport. In situations when pupils did the choice between sport and higher education coaches tried to inclined swimmers to continue the swimming and sometimes swimmers came across with chantage. So gradually sport acquires monopoly in framing and directing personal experience and whole life-style of the person.

The possession of swimming doxa is a gradual, long-lasting process. What influences athletes addiction to sport changed during the sport career: from personal interest and enjoyment of the process of swimming at the beginning to creation of strong habits, when athletes continue to go in for swimming just because he couldn't stop and give up. What unique for this social context is the great role of unified sport classification system, which contributes a lot to the formation of swimming doxa and has no analogs in sport organization of western countries. Another structural aspect which strongly influences swimmers attitudes is the system of sport secondary education which preserved the tradition of USSR and highly limits the swimmers formal cultural capital.



## **2.2. The specifics of swimmers perception of the time and “time capital”**

In previous subchapter we discussed the process of athletes engagement in the “game” and particular for post-soviet system of sport factors which contribute to the process, such as classifications and school education. Such attitudes to sport are created and create a special life situation and experience, which influence further life path of the athletes. On the other hand the doxic experience is also reproduced by the legitimate way of organization of sport training and competition practices and general context of athletes life style, which is connected with a certain time organization of everyday life events and routine, peculiar to the sphere of sport and strange for “ordinary” people.

During the conversations, swimmers referred to a special ability, mental subjective matrix of perceptions of time, what we could call this context “time capital” in formation of which they associated with the special style/way of life. This form of mental capital is highly valued by swimmers as one of their peculiar dispositions could be operating in non-sport contexts. A special relationship to time is considered as a characteristic of swimming doxa. The task is to find the connection between larger social and sport context, sport practices and how these contexts are build are embedded in time.

The first peculiarity of those who are captured by the competitive game is the close relationship and fluency of life along with “objective time” and “social time”. In history of sport and swimming, we could search the development of the means of measuring time along with the progress and increasing of competition in sport practices itself. The struggles goes not for a second, and not on 1/10 of the second, but 1/100, for example currently the problem of determining the winner and prizewinners, as 3 or 4 people could show the same results, some propose to introduce the measurement systems 1/1000 sec accuracy. The leading coach of the Republic E. Klimova stated: “There is type of sport without world records, without fractions

of seconds, which is necessary to improve, but only places. Swimming is a sport of another kind” (Klimova 2010).

As the turning and the most important event in the life of athletes is competitions and preparation to them, the life of the athletes is organized round these events and this was expressed in narratives. In this case it’s interesting to analyze the organization of time in two main directions: the duration, frequency and sequence of the large social time circles in a format 24/7/365 and small circles – the organization of the one particular training and swimming practices.

***The basic contradiction of the large “circles”: rigidity of sequence vs. instability***

The structure of competitions seasons officially determined and the calendar of events adopted at least for one year in advance by international swimming organizations like FINA. There is fixed beginning of the sport season, the competitions is organized according to its rankings from local, regional, republic, which include 2 National Championships and Cup of the Republic, the sport gatherings are also a part of the national calendar of competitions and have a stable duration such as 18 or 21 day. Coach before the starting sport season is planning the main results and sport contract also predetermines the organization of year of the athletes: main results, places, medals, sport gatherings. Considering this large circle, sportsman and coach should thoroughly plan the preparation – the summons of the largest physical download and the periods of relaxation before the competitions. On the one hand, this unification brings stability and “observable” future, the good possibility for planning and preparation, on the other hand the *republic calendar of sport events previously was in discrepancy with international* what created additional difficulties for swimmers, plus in Belarus *there was no unified system of selection for the athletes for international competitions*. Unstable in criteria selection process brings some instability and lack of possibilities to plan the preparation for athletes, therefore considered as depressive: “The process of selection for Olympic games was

very harsh, and lasted almost for 2 years, Istanbul, Anthverpen, Helsinki, inner Championships, that time they f\*ed us with these selections”.

***Duration and frequency: regime produces machine***

The second objective time frame is 7-day circle. The working week for swimmers is organized in a following way – 6 working days. The physical pressure during the week is also distributed in a certain way, according the concrete methodic of the coach. The week could start from a general physical preparation and end with the development of sprint abilities or control start. The sportsmen is also always conscious of the strategy coach uses.

The day regime of the athletes is a very interesting thing to analyze. As an example of how it sometimes could be organized I could provide a particular example from my personal life.

Day starts at 4:30  
5:05 exit from home  
5:45-7:35 the first swimming training  
8:00- 14:00 school lessons  
14:30-16:00 physical exercises on “dry land”  
16:00-18:00 second swimming  
19:00-21:00 school home preparation  
21:00 – sleeping

Every day is scheduled by every minute and everyday is similar to previous one, there is no diversity and new experience, no freedom and spontaneity which could interrupt the routine, schedule, standardized and official timing. The athletes is so involved in the training regime, that turn in robots, to go for a training is like habit, and “You plow, plow, other people – “I’m ill, I’m ill”, but you even cannot get ill, to have some rest from physical load for 2-3 days. You get up at 5 for training, open the eyes, and think that training still didn’t end. You closed and opened the eyes, and feeling, is that you didn’t sleep at all”. The sportsmen are so grasped and constrained even in their daily routine, that some of them consider their retirement as revelation: “During the first year, everything was in pink colors, you don’t get up at 6

with a thought, that 12 kilometers are waiting for you, you are free, you get up at the time you want, you do whatever you want...”.

### ***Training: elapsing vs. collapsing***

The training also has serial and regime nature, connected with the *speed, dynamic and rhythms*. Every coach use its own methodic, but the common exercises in swimming is regime, swimming with the certain speed, swimming on certain level of pulse. So the sportsmen have to control his own speed and should feel the time, *which is the main competitor*. The experience of the athletes is strongly framed with the time bounds of the physical pressure, the bodily activity could have the same objective duration, when he works in time regime and subjective duration in regard to temp or intension. Sometime 50 meters could seems so dense or difficult, for example, when the coach uses the anaerobic swimming with the delaying of breathing, it could last the eternity. The fluency of subjective time is also connected with the fluency of bodily practice, which is also highly prescriptive – the number of inhalation or paddles every 50 meters, the number of pulse per 10 seconds, the movements are brought to automatism.

### ***Present vs. Future: life as anticipation***

In sport of high achievements, when practice acquiring transcendent sense and value, the basic life strategies is organized by such time frames as “*present for future*” and “*future in the present*”. In the main categories the life of the professional athletes is directed in future, as present everyday training routine brings pain and constant physical stress. Sportsmen don’t used to live by present, they always compel themselves and think of the future events, competitions. For example, sometimes even count weeks and days which left before: “I agree to train, but I didn’t want to train in summer. It was very difficult to train in summer, my family went with me to the swimming pool. Only one month stayed, and then you will go to your Brazil. I compel myself to train, I was thinking, that so little time stayed, I have to suffer a

little more. I even counted the days...” The working days pass quickly, as they very similar to each other, on the other hand, the whole day is lived and organized by anticipation of the next training, exercise pain. The psychological feeling and anticipation of the future pain organizes day conception, it’s even stated in the unofficial law book of swimmers: “The main enemy of the athletes is not a pain, but the fear of forthcoming pain”. The athletes give attention to "future possibilities" in current or anticipated circumstances, and are ready to sacrifice present for future indefinite profits, believe in success and build strategies for a long period of time.

### ***“Time capital”***

Sportsmen training experience is framed and bind by objective conditions, circles and sequence of events, more than that of the ordinary people. The people used to plan and know the value of the minute and seconds, as they live in a constant shortage of time. They used to be organized and business-like, as there is no other possibility in dealing with such a daily regime. One of the category, which came from the field and could be named as “time capital” is the proud of the most of the swimmers and considered as big achievement and profit, they received from being engaged in swimming. This “time capital” in simple words is mental ability to feel the time, “organize my own time”, the possibility to be focused and recollect. This specific vision of the life as a line of sequences are deeply inherited in athletes habitus and plays big role in post-sport life. Swimmers, who know the cost of the time, could organize it in a affective way: “Everyday I make the schedule for the whole day. I try to follow my schedule, I cannot come home after classes and lie on the bed, I cannot sit at one place. We were occupied, we had no free minute. We shouldn’t lie in the bed and do nothing”, “I even would like to come back the time, when the was a rush, there was a big charge and you have to do more in a less time”.

To sum up the main claims made in this chapter it's necessary to state, that the symbolic and physical necessity of swimmers to continue training on high level constructed during long period of time. All of the athletes on the early stage of their career experienced the situation of the choice between swimming and deep education, the choice in favor of sport leads to *conscious* reduction of formal cultural capitals which is reproduced within the system of sport education in the republic, peculiar to countries of former USSR. Another aspect of the reproduction of swimming doxa is pressing rules of the sport game, where system of training and competitions frames the whole life style of the swimmers and allows less personal freedom and choice which expressed in special time organization and perception. This special mental resource is highly evaluated by swimmers as universal source which could be utilized in planning of further post-sport life strategies.

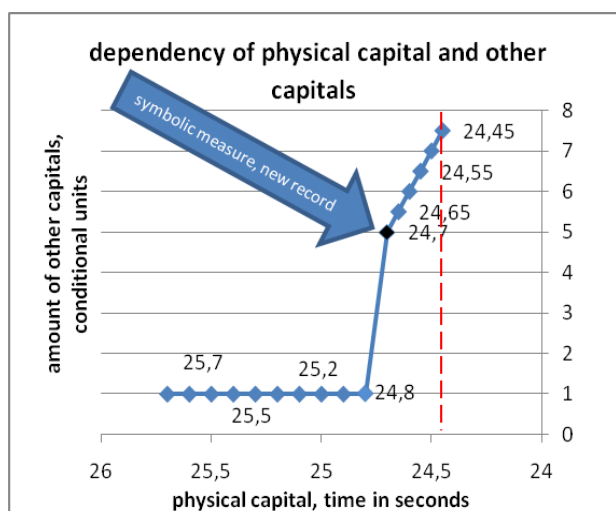
### **CHAPTER 3. EXIT FROM THE FIELD AND LIFE TRAJECTORIES OF BELARUSIAN SWIMMERS**

#### **3.1. Life trajectories. Structure, amount and dynamics of the capitals before the retirement**

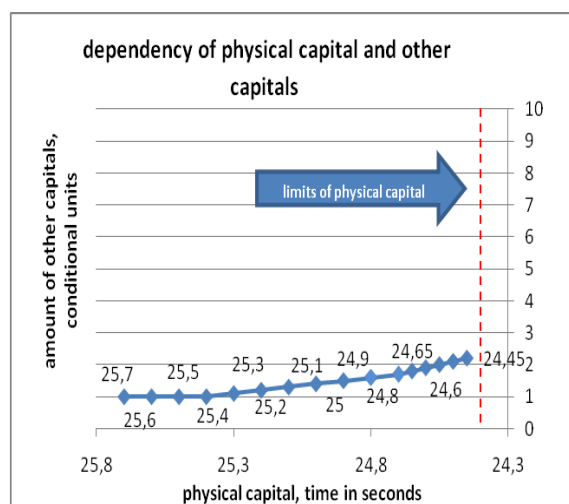
In previous chapters the structure of swimming field in Belarus and hierarchy of the capitals were discussed. Now I will try to figure out the structure of the capital possession of the swimmers before the retirement and social and personal conditions, which lead to the decision to exit from the field. The task is based on analysis of concrete life histories formulate some general trends in life trajectories and capital conversion strategies in Belarusian swimming field and evaluate the chances of success. To understand life trajectories of the swimmers we have to evaluate the relative value and size of the different capitals and the dynamic of its amount in time.

Physical or bodily capital is in roots of the functioning of the field and one of the basic possessions of the athletes. There are two main forms of physical capital, first of all, real, the possibilities and abilities of the body – physical form and health, on the one hand, physical capital objectified in time, which could be converted into symbolic form. Competitions is the only possibility of conversion of capitals, as different factors influence the performance, even high level of bodily capital not always could be converted in signs of distinction, sometimes bodily capital stays unrecognized. There are two categories of the athletes, who take part in the research according to the level of the physical and symbolic capital, what we called in the first chapter – “old” and “newcomers”. These two groups of the athletes *had quiet different sport trajectories*: those who were successful in converting swimming capital in symbolic – professional athletes, who possess the title of Master of Sport of International Class, members of national team from 3-11 years, participated in international competitions such as Olympic Games, Championships of World and Europe. These swimmers are the records men of the Republic or regions and feel that they were very famous on the level of Republic and somewhat at the international arena. The other group of the swimmers was less successful in converting their physical capital in form of symbolic goods. *The main interest is how the differences in sport life trajectories influence the post-sport trajectories of the swimmers and their chances for successful position in other fields*. So we could represent two possible sport trajectories of the swimmers in Belarus schematically.

**Diagram 4. Trajectory of “old”**



**Diagram 5. Trajectory of “newcomers”**



On the diagrams the accumulation of physical capital and symbolic are represented schematically and dependence of its amount of other capitals. Some athletes during the inter-

view mentioned the biological limits of their bodily capital objectified in time, and described it as “stoppage of result”. Basically there were two groups of the athletes, who reached this limit and those, who didn’t because of the lack of appropriate social conditions. So, this symbolic separation between professional and semi-professional swimmers plays crucial role in distribution of other types of the capital, such as economic, cultural, social which influence further life strategies.

As subfield of professional sport are present in Belarus only in form of the national team, which receives its funding from the state, according to the informants, *economic capital* is not the main stake at the field, but still considered as crucial resource in gaining of sport capital. During their sport career most of the swimmers (both professional and “semi-professional”) received some financial support and gaining from their involvement in sport in form of scholarship, prize-money, bonuses, of presents from sport organizations, feeding and equipment. With the increase of sport performance and getting into professional subfield means the *increasing of the dependency of sportsmen from the incomes in the sphere of sport*, what is also important factor in post-career life. Most of the athletes (13 out of 15) despite the level of the performances, mentioned, that *gaining from sport were not sufficient for leading respectable way of life during sport career*. Other athletes had difficulties in answering this question. Most of the athletes asked for help their parents, who “invested a lot” in their engagement in sport. The rewards for sportsmen is paid in stable form like the junior scholarship, regional scholarship, salary, the amount of money which is giving to athletes on food, equipment, and this is fixed in state budget and official documents. But as athletes mentioned the salary is equivalent of 80 euro per month, the regional scholarship is 50 euro per month, the local scholarship is 15 euro, according to the narrative of the participants the money isn’t considered as worthy payment for the training.



Considering the level of formal cultural capital, which we concerned in previous section, the peculiarity of the sportsman socialization is that most of the “cultural codes” and competencies are obtained through real life experience and involvement, less time spent on theoretical and scholastic education.

Swimmers are restricted in ways other people possess *cultural capital*, such as self-education which requires personal investment of time, on the other hand, swimmers have another specific canals of cultururation. Cultural competence of swimmers is reduced in a way, that they had less time for studies at schools and universities, organization of education is a chain in reproduction of this unequal distribution of cultural dispositions among swimmers and “ordinary” people.

Most of the athletes told, that never had a special eager to studies, especially at school: “Now I could read a book, to learn something, and it’s interesting. But at that time I simply didn’t need it, this like at school, where you never want to study”, or “I had no desire to study from the same childhood, I had no draw to studies. I didn’t study, I didn’t want to study, it was impossible to compel me study...”, so the personal absence of interest is supported by sport-related factors.

Swimmers, describing the competency, used widely the term *practice*, in opposition to theoretical studies. Another interesting aspect is the possession of a specific type of capital, which could be reached only through *immediate bodily experience, observation and involvement*. This knowledge is also one aspect of sport capital, and strongly connected by swimmers with *life experience, practical knowledge in sphere of sport, technique, training, competition, “practice of massage”, “practical psychological knowledge”, knowledge of their own body*. Swimmers stresses the importance of this type of special knowledge, general involvement in the sphere of sport, because of the lack of alternative occupation in that time. This knowledge is equal to bodily competence, as everything the sportsmen do were possessed in hidden unre-

cognized way of learning. This one of the most valuable capitals: “All my knowledge was obtained during the practice, rather than during formal education”, “I everything cover during the practice by myself”, some called this competence simply “*the swimming pool qualification*”.

Necessary to mention, that professional swimmers have another canals of receiving knowledge, highly restricted in Belarus. While only 3 swimmers had hobbies and personal interest outside sport during serious engagement, athletes have unique for country opportunity to travel abroad for a competitions: “You are not only performed at the swimming pool, but you visited another country, you get some information about history, culture of the place...”, “I visited a half of the Earth, while my peers haven’t see anything further the 6<sup>th</sup> kilometers of Minsk, we did our favorite business plus saw the world...”

Concerning the formal level of athletes education, all of them received secondary school education, specialized secondary education, 3 of the participant has already higher education and all of them are enrolled in higher educational establishment (2-5 courses of studies). Some are receiving second higher education and some received additional education in form of foreign language course, accounting, massage. The first level of education in most cases connected with *physical culture and sport*, other spheres of specialization are pedagogy, law, economics, accounting, building, among those who receives second higher education are such spheres as psychology and banking. Only few (3) of the participants are full-time students. The reason of selection of part-time form of education is connected with the desire to continue training, the cost of education and desire to start work. It’s necessary to stress the devaluation of the thoughtful side of the educational process, most consider university education as formality, as a way of getting symbolic means of distinction. Only few mentioned their interest in studies and any use of the information gained in university, especially among those who study in the specialized University of Physical Culture and Sport: “The knowledge is ob-

tain more during the practice, rather during the process of studying, because I studied part-time, secondly, the methodic of swimming have changed, “In the university we have indulgences, in secondary school I had some subjects, for example Logics, so I come and say, that I’ve already passed, and they transfer the marks”.

The athletes endow with great importance *social links and friends, they possessed in sport*: “I got acquainted with many people, there were a lot of contacts. Now I really happy, that acquainted with L., because we became the best friends”. There are three major types of the relationships: between peers, pupil-coach and between swimmers and officials.

The swimmers are proud of the strength of the relationships between their friends and team; they didn’t feel the shortage in communication, as had enough friends, most of which were from sport. On the other hand, some mentioned the limitations in communication with the classmates and only for 2 of 15 swimmers social contacts and links are the most valuable obtaining from sport. Concerning male-female relationships, engagement in sport was an obstacle for some in building interpersonal contacts outside sport environment, some of the participants mentioned lack of time and desire to have personal relationship, some came across with misunderstanding, which lead to break up. Swimmers prefer to communicate with sportsmen, because of the similarity of the interests, active position, closed attitudes. And in some interviews, it was stated that sport classes in school is always characterized with the higher level of friendship and support between pupils. With the lack of shortage of communication we have to state the closeness and cliquishness of the contacts within swimming field. Additionally, the breakdown of the team, loneliness was one of the reasons to give up training in some cases.

The *relationships pupil-coach* can be historically compared with the type of link traditionally existed between guru and progeny. The coach and the athlete intentionally develop a relationships. In modern sport the role of coach has increased significantly, and the success of

sportsman or team especially on the early stages of preparation crucially depends on the work and activity of the coaches. During 2-3 trainings coach spends with the athletes 6-7 hours a day throughout 8-10 years, so there is a precondition of construction of stable and strong social links and connections. Coach in the sphere of sport sometimes become the primary source of knowledge, experience and the main agent of socialization for young athletes. Coach could thoroughly learn and understand his\her pupils, understand the nuances of the character and “psychology”, could influence sportsmen through social and psychological mechanisms. The conflicts, struggle, aggression in relationships between coach and athlete are not a rare thing, the most strong display of disagreement or negative aspects of which is the situation, when athlete splits up the relationships with his coach. This split can lead to follow consequences: to dropping out from of sport and continuing sport performance with the coordination of another coach. All of the athletes during their sport career worked not with one coach, the system is that there was first coach who gave the bases of swimming and the second coach who developed the high sport mastery skills. In most of the cases the coach is considered as friend and teacher not only in swimming, but as “tutor of life”: “Really we all the time discussed what we will do farther, generally I was very lucky with the coach, i.e. she is the best friend of mine, helps all the time and in everything”. The relationship coach-athletes will be discussed in detail in next subchapter. Only in one case the relationships with the coach was one of the main reason, why athlete decided to give up swimming.

The swimmer-federation relations are less studied and discussed sphere of social contacts. This sphere of relationships depends on the results which the sportsmen obtained, on the one hand, on the other the coaches reputation in the swimming field. The unsatisfactory relationships and problems with federation and national coach was one of the main factors of retirement in 5 cases, what is representative. The athletes mentioned the arising of some conflicts between coaches and the main coach of republic, the problems with signing the sport

contract. Only in one case federation was considered as source of employment for retired athletes.

So in this chapter we discussed the capital structure of two groups of swimmers, dominating and dominated in the field. The distribution of the capitals among different categories of the swimmers is organized according to the principle of *capital goes to capital*. The whole structure and amount of the agents' capitals mostly depend on their amount of bodily capital and involvement in the sphere of sport. While athletes are limited in some capitals such as formal school knowledge, amplitude of social links, material wealth due to involvement in the sphere of sport, they have an excess to unique type of resources, unavailable for non-sportsmen. The deeply swimmer "plunge into the water" the higher level of specific, field-related capitals and, how paradoxically it could be the amount of amount of capitals disconnected with sphere of sport in his possession (such as economic, cultural and social).

### **3.2. Exit from the field. The operation in alternative fields and the possibility of conversion of capitals**

Sport career, although connected with storm of emotions and unrepeatable life experience is supposed to be temporary. The question is how former athletes build their further life trajectories after losing the status of professional sportsman. How athletes leave big sport and plan their post-sport life, how the experience of being involved in sport influence their life perception and practices after retirement? Furthermore the task of this chapter is to understand the difference of post-sport life strategies of "newcomers" ("semi-professional") and "old" (professionals) in terms of capitals.

It's interesting, that after the retirement athletes have enthusiastic and positive estimation of their experience of being professional swimmers. Almost all of the swimmers weather I was asking directly or not, told, that if they would have another possibility in life, they re-

peat their sport career without any thinking. According to swimmers, sport influence their life in a positive way, especially on shaping the general attitude to life, peculiar state of mind and character. Some swimmers told their main life achievement is that they related their life with sport.

For semi-professional swimmers the main reason of ending the sport career is the absence of necessary conditions (economic capital) to continue the investment in their physical capital, such as the lack of financial, economic support and support from administrative institutions. Most of the swimmers are ready to continue their training, but have no such possibilities. The field of sport is a closed field, and the person couldn't operate in alternative fields at the same time – person always has to do the choice – between educational, economic (professional) fields. The “new comers” didn't exhausted their physical and bodily capital and feel the unrealized potential by the time of career retirement and were going to continue the training with the providing of satisfied conditions, recognitions of them as sportsmen and “normal” attitude from the side of federation.

The second group of the athletes is athletes who decided to give up because achieved the main sport goals and didn't see the sense in further training, who get tired from sport lifestyle and decided to change the activity and dedicate themselves for study or work and received alternative propositions outside sport. The second pattern of retirement was more voluntarily, connected with the desire to give up sport or with understanding of alternative possibilities outside swimming pool, which appeared more nice-looking. The process of retirement, of course much more difficult and involve different situation and factors, which of course simplified here.

What is important in the process of retirement, as most of the swimmers mentioned, is that “it's very important to stick to new sphere, somewhere, somehow...”, “it was necessary to exit somewhere at once...” The specifics of the field logic is that those who are at the top,

who are the most successful and dedicated player, are the most bind by the sport logic and doxa, has more difficulties in leaving the field, as the logic of the game fully possess them.

According to P. Bourdieu, the conversion of the capital in social space is organized according to the principle of conservation of energy: capitals received in one space while transited into another field also have their own value (Bourdieu 1986, p. 251), what is the currency of conversion in Belarusian case? With the conversion of one type of the capital into another the general volume of the capital stays the same, what changes is the structure. The universal equivalent of the different capitals is the working time, time spent on the possession of the capital, and also time spent on the necessary transformation of one type of capital into another.

As we mentioned in previous chapters, the operations within field goes next way: *physical capital* → *symbolic* → *economic, educational, cultural, social and others*. As all of the athletes, who took part in the research are not active players of the game, it's interesting to analyze the positions in other social fields of those who possessed dominated and dominating positions. Our task now is to describe which alternative field our swimmers went into, and what positions do they have there, or in other terms, how capitals possessed in sport field could be converted in capitals which are at stake in alternative fields.

#### *Educational strategies*

What follows from the interviews, 12 of 15 athletes received or receive professional sport education. The sport-related education was selected as the easiest access to higher education because of the *low cultural threshold on entrance to this field* (scores of tests) and *existing of fixed in law indulgences for athletes*. Thirdly, athletes wanted to support their “swimming pool qualification” with the official document and, finally, studies at this university didn't interrupt further training. So the selection of sport education was not more a result of free choice and desire, rather than the “objective” necessity. Students who received sport-

related higher education in pedagogical university selected it because administration created the possibilities for further training and availability of the social links: “I was admitted to that university thanks to invitation, as current champion”. The education and specialization of the coach is considered as not prestigious in general social space, because of restricted labor market and state sector of economy.

Another group of swimmers who intentionally built their strategies on possibilities to utilize sport capital before application. They tried to obtain information of what privileges and help are provided in non-sport educational establishment. And universities were selected on the basis of reduction the educational payment and secondly prestige of the establishment and profession in general social space. The swimming considered more as a mean of receiving education. This group of the swimmers support their physical capital during last one of the reason is to get higher education, as sport capital is highly valued in some universities, and selection of the university was based on the possibility to convert achieved sport capital into educational.

The forth group of students receive second higher education or had dropped the studies at Sport University and currently studied at other universities such as BSU and BSEU. The possibility to receive alternative education is also connected with the strategy of conversion physical capital into educational and professional. Such conversion is possible for those, who had privilege symbolic status in swimming field. Swimmers could be admitted to any department at BSU, according to the unofficial “rules” and policies of the university. The desire to change university, receive additional education is connected with the digressive trajectory of the athletes who had leading position in swimming: “I studied at University of Physical culture, and I had the depression, probably something went wrong in sport. And I thought, if something go wrong in sport, I should self-affirm in another sphere. I decided to



transmit to another, more prestigious university. If I get to another university, my self-esteem will increase, that I did something in this life...”

The easiest way to transfer the physical and symbolic capital is to study at special educational establishment. The higher the level of performance in sport field, the easier the conversion, on the other hand, in general educational field the symbolic status of this university is low, the such strategies are not “profitable” for swimmers. Students negatively evaluate the level of education at this educational establishment: “The institutional education doesn’t play such important factor, because there is no specialization in teaching methodic...”, “If to compare education, when I came to BSU, I could say, that Sport University is not university. You came there, and teachers consider you as nothing, you are stupid sportsman. All teachers are angry, unsatisfied, its unpleasant to come there, all the time something negative is emanated on you...”, “When people understood, that athletes could study and swim at the same time, they start to appeal in BSU, BSEU. Only the most stupid goes to University of Physical Culture, who have at least some brains goes to another universities”.

The rank of universities is following (Economica BY 2011; Information Agency “Interfax-West” 2011): Belarusian State University, Belarusian State Economic University, Belarusian State Pedagogic University, Belarusian National Technical University, Vitebsk State University. The Belarusian State University of Physical Culture and Education has much lower positions and prestige among other universities.

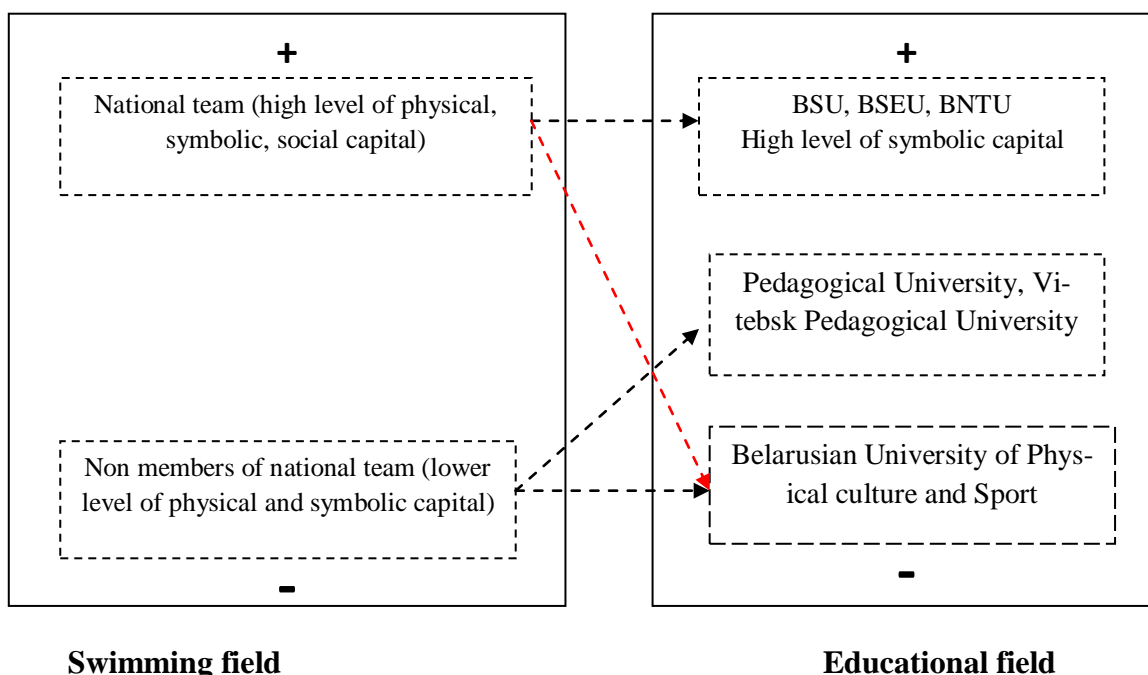
Basically, we could state the existence of homological relationships between fields:

1. Those who possess high symbolic status in the swimming field (members of national team) could easily convert this capital in educational both Sport Education or non-sport education, these swimmers have higher level of maneuver choosing their further life strategies, because of the sport and social capital. The transition from high positions in sport field to low symbolic position in educational field is considered as undesirable, al-

though previously it was the main strategies of conversion, it is shown on the Diagram 6 by red line;

2. Those who had dominated position in sport field has low currency rate of exchange, they had to rely on other types of capital, such as cultural and social.

**Diagram 6. Homology of space structure in educational and sport fields and conversion strategies**



*Professional and economic strategies*

Considering current employment status of the athletes we have to mention, that 13 of 15 swimmers have permanent occupation. Most of the swimmers occupy the position of the specialist, clerk without governing functions without higher education (8), specialist with higher education without governing functions (3), one worker and 2 full-time students without employment status. Almost all swimmers have the status of students (11) of part-time form of education. 9 swimmers work in the sphere of sport, 6 of which as professional coaches in swimming, 2 as instructors and 1 person works in federation as methodist. Other work in a sphere of building, industry and tourism. Among those, who are working outside sphere of sport some are going to connect their future occupation with the work of a coach. Among

those who work as coach, half is going to change their occupation to sphere of private business, computer programming and became instructors in aerobics. Basically, all swimmers are satisfied with the current career, especially those who work in the sphere of sport, as they still stayed in the same field.

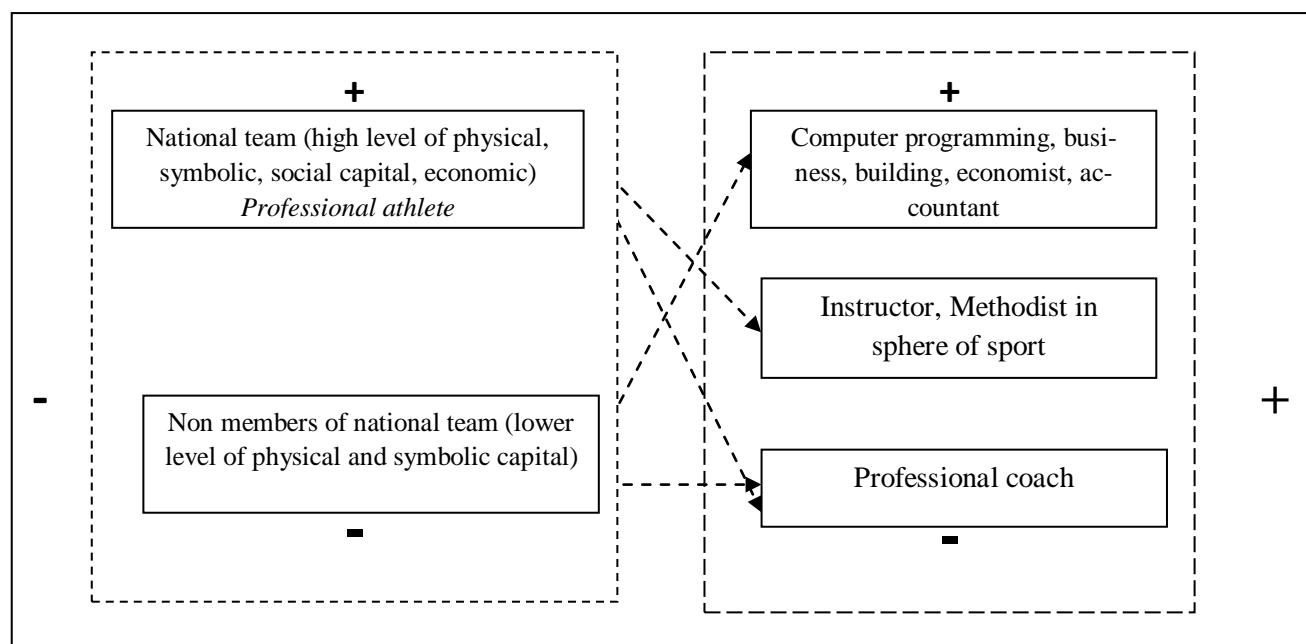
The work of coach or instructor are interesting and appealing for most of the athletes, as this is the substitution of the swimming: “It’s not so painful to change swimming on the work of the coach. I found the substitution of swimming by the work of the coach”. The change of the sport for the profession of coach was not so difficult for athletes, as they stayed to work in the same field, and do not need to acquire additional competencies. Much more difficult transition goes for those, who chose to work in alternative professional fields, such as industry or building: “Naturally, it was very difficult. It was very frightfully to go, new collective, where you don’t know anybody and don’t know what you should do...”

Most of the people would like to work in the sphere of sport or physical culture, many don’t want to lose their “swimming pool qualifications”: “I understand, how much I invest in swimming, I’m professional in swimming and know everything about it. And I understand how little I know in this ministry work and even in psychology. The awareness that I have to acquire everything once again, and in swimming I lost everything in contrast. This is the most difficult thing for me...” The coaching is the real possibility to utilize cultural capitals, which were acquired during the years of training, and which could be easily supported by books, consultations with former coach or finding information in the internet.

As the field of swimming in Belarus is quiet closed and undeveloped, the role of social links in searching the work of instructor or coach, considering the amount of swimming pools and sport schools, is crucial. Most of the swimmers get their job thanks to connection with a coach and received a personal invitation for work, *there is no free labor market.*

The work of coach is considered as interesting and more challenging and creative, as coach you could realize unimplemented potential in your pupils. But most of them aren't sure about the continuing to work as coach in future due to financial reasons, as this sphere is financed from state budget: "It's necessary to live, but not survive. It's necessary to find the possibilities of good payment. No such possibilities in sport. When the question about of maintaining the family will arise. What is difficult to leave your favorite work? It's pleasant to do your favorite business, but there will be other questions..." Most of the people rely on receiving additional non-sport education in planning their professional future.

**Diagram 7. Professional and sport fields and conversion strategies**



Some athletes mentioned, that for them it was somehow difficult to change their "heroic" status in sport field to middlebrow and ordinary person, as they used to be the center of attention, to feel their necessity and important status in that environment, they had big goals and did their best in achieving it.

The changing of status from professional and, especially, semiprofessional swimmers and find employment status was connected with the financial reasons, that is why the subfield

of sportsmen as a type of occupation is an opposition to other types of occupations in general economic space. And changing of the status of sportsman is considered with the movement of field with higher level of economic capital.

### *Social capital after retirement*

For most of the athletes (8) the problem of losing contacts and feeling of being in team is very pressing. Some of the swimmers mentioned: “When everything was decided, that I gave up, I was sitting at home and thinking. All people are preparing for the competitions, but I’m not preparing any more. Then all people left, and I’m alone. I’m working, they pay me the same salary as if I was training, but I don’t need to go anywhere. It was really terrible”, “Now there is more free time. My occupation is control panel and sofa. Where could I go? All my friends swim till 6 p.m., or now they are at sport gatherings. Now of course I have friends from student environment, but it’s quiet difficult, because the circle of sportsman and circle of students is the different notions. Students are not so explosive and more lazy”.

After retirement it’s more difficult to support contacts, the swimmers could communicate only after training or week-ends. Most of the athletes memorize the days, when they were the member of the team, went together to the competitions. Some, who work as coaches, feel the necessity of communication with peers. On the other hand, the circle of acquaintance became much larger, because swimmers have more free time and additional activities: “You sit all the time in class, and even don’t know anybody at school, because you stupidly have no forces to take a walk along with the corridor”.

In the sphere of pupil-coach relationships, the relationships get between-colleague character. Most of the swimmers saved positive relationships with the coach, who is considered as source of support, important information and guide in adult environment. Swimmers stressed the role and support of the coach in finding new job and educational opportunities.

The unsatisfactory relationships and problems with federation and national coach was one of the main factors of retirement in 5 cases, as we stated previously. Only in one case federation was considered as source of employment for retired athletes, other stress the lack of support of any kind and respect of former members of the team, both in material and symbolic terms.

To sum up, it's necessary to state, that athletes evaluate their current life position as satisfactory from economic and psychological point of view and evaluate positively their experience of being involved in sphere of sport. On the one hand the exit from the field of those who possessed higher status is easier, as there is more possibilities in using symbolic capital accumulated in sport environment, on the other hand, the strong dependence of athletes from sport occupation is obvious in economic, physical and mental terms. If to evaluate the educational strategies of the former swimmers, there is a difference between "old" and "new-comers" who have different possibilities of capital conversion. The current positions of professionals and "semi-professional" swimmers doesn't differ in economic and professional field, as most of the athletes tries to use the competencies they acquire during the long involvement in sport.

### **3.3. Bodily capital of swimmers and the possibilities of its conversion in Belarus**

As it was mentioned in first chapter, the specifics of sport is that the prime object of investment is body of the athletes, the prime activity of the athletes could be characterized as developing of specific physical abilities. The result of such an activity couldn't be objectified in material form and this type of the capital is embodied and cannot be separated from the organism. The objectification could go only in form of time results of the athletes performance and then in symbolic form. This impossibility of prime objectification is one of the constraints of further conversion.

Bodily capital is a multidimensional notion and in this chapter we will try to specify its structure, specifics of swimmers capital and mechanisms of its social conversion in post-sport life. Every type of sport as legitimized set of bodily practices has its own signs of distinction, which is imprinted in personal habitus and hexis. The basic structure of the bodily capital could be outlined as:

- in-born physical or phenotypical abilities, such as gender, height, mass – basic constitution of the body;
- health, which is difficult category, but at this contexts will be used as the state of full functional well-being of the organism;
- sport or swimming form, which is the potential to perform at the competitions, the level of training of organism, which is based on adaptable qualities: stimulus (physical load) → reaction (performance in situation of absence of load);
- socially predetermined bodily stereotypes and habits.

#### ***Relation to body and organization of narratives***

As body is the prime object of investment of time and forces, and sport practices have no results objectified outside body or materialized form, swimmers percept and refer to own bodies as to instrument of operation, biological organism and mean. What distinct about swimmers, that they perfectly know their organism, what strategies use in preparation, what stimulus use for achieving maximal affect: “If I don’t train, of course, I don’t swim good. I have such organism. I should have charges”, “For me the rest is the most effective way of preparing to competitions. I had the rest before competitions, sometimes even didn’t go for a week to the swimming pool and better swam. Nobody was worrying, that I’m lying on the sofa at home” or “I didn’t want to swim long distances, but they come out better, that’s why I should do that. It’s better to start, swim 50 meters and go, but in my case it necessary to plough”. This more objectified relationship to body are more evident in male narratives, espe-

cially when swimmers started to discuss the period of their growth, and consequently the results, how they acquire force and power.

The second aspect is that interviews weren't conducted with the focus on body, but athletes concerned this theme, especially the description of pain and metaphoric comparisons. The relations to body and training differs significantly in regard the gender of the swimmers. In some of the interviews, the descriptions of the physical feeling and health appeared at the first minutes of the interview: "It was difficult, sometimes very difficult, that I even simulate the illness, because it was very difficult. I'm ill, I have stomach-ache, throat-ache, OK. I'm ill, one week had a rest, and then started the training again. Nearly 1-2 times a year I made a rest...", "I felt a strong pain in my legs and cannot do anything, they started to give the charge on my hands".

The feel of the pain and traumatic experience is the key topics and axis in organization of discussion: "Before going to Budapest, I had trauma, we didn't know what to do with it. I didn't know, how I get trauma, because of the big charges, I started to feel the pain in my knee. I couldn't do anything. I went to the Championship of Europe with the aching knee...". "Before competitions, I had the trauma of the shoulder, I couldn't do anything. I couldn't do the charge in a full volume, and I didn't show the necessary result". "There was a trauma of the shoulder, when I made the start, the whole right hand was in pain and I couldn't do the paddle in full force". Every narrative had a story, where sportsmen stresses his painful feeling, breaking arms before competition and so on. On the other hand, swimmers see something appealing in the feeling of muscle pain, after retirement "There is no that fatigue, pleasant pain in the body". The discourse of pain is full of metaphors, special for swimmers such as "to stick the flippers", "to wind bowels on the drum", "to flake out", especially a lot of comparisons with the state of death, emptiness: "I'm swimming, hard, hard, hard. I had the feeling, that I'm dying simply, so difficult it was..."



### ***Health vs. physical form***

Swimmers strongly separate the notions of health and physical form. According to narratives good physical form was mentioned by 9 participants as one of the important things sport gave them, athletes at the same time understood and stressed, that “sportsmen are initially ill people, initially”, “physical culture cures, but sport disables”. So the good health is recognized as what comes from the engagement in sport only by 5 swimmers. Some athletes had serious disease before coming to “big sport”, and engagement in sport was prove, that despite prohibitions of doctors, they could go in for sport and achieve great results. On the other hand, swimmers confided, that had serious illness connected with their involvement in sport: scoliosis, survived serious operations on heart, illness, connected with the genital function, dislocation of vertebra and other. The illnesses which is peculiar for swimming is dislocation of joints, flatfoot, complications, connected with undercooling.

The big physical load needed the complex program of rehabilitation of the organism after retirement, what most of the athletes didn't implement, little athletes continued to support their physical conditions after retirement (only 3): “I didn't support the form and even wasn't intended to do so. After my last competitions, the “discharging” of organism began. I didn't want to training further, instead of 6 km I swam 4, maximum 5, I couldn't anymore...”, “I didn't swim at all, I had an aversion to water. I didn't support my physical form. I gave up decisively everything. I didn't want to go to water. And even now I didn't want. Because I'm really fed of that swimming for 10 years. I didn't want to feel the water. I understood, that it's not very good, that it's necessary to swim, but I really couldn't compel myself”.

The swimmers are so fed up with feeling of the water, that even have an aversion to it: “I should have a rest from all this, 20 years in swimming, honestly speaking I couldn't go into water, if I plunge and swim 200 meter, for me it's enough, I don't know what to do further, for me it's not interesting. If I go into water once a month, it will be big feast”, or “I had no

desire even to moisten slightly the legs”. Especially female athletes aren’t interested in supporting the physical form.

Some feel uncomfortable because of it: “I need physical charge, because of my heart, when I had session and during the week I didn’t do anything, I really feel bad in the morning”, “When I started to go less on training, I felt ill at ease”, “My organism recovered possibly only a half of the year ago, to work normally, the sometimes joints ached. It was necessary to support the charge. I had very strong training, 16-17 km, I had gym. When we had exercises at the gym I pushed my own weight, and at that moment I weight, I weighted 65 kg. Just try to push. I didn’t support my organism by pharmacology, probably that is why it was so difficult to give up. It was difficult to give up swimming, I needed 3 years, because I knew, that heart stays ill in any case if to give up abruptly” (female, 23).

Concerning the physical form or the possibility to perform successfully at the competitions, current state of the body, tonus or state of current state of workability is unstable and need to be supported all the time. The athletes really regret about losing their swimming mastery, bodily conditions, the “feeling of water” and possibility to swim fast. On the other hand, the higher the level of mastery and habit of organism to big load, the longer the physical form could be preserved without external supporting, there is the physical limit under which the result of athletes could not fall even for a long period of time after retirement.

Despite the fact, that swimmer are involved in physical exercises, running, the major peculiarity of swimming as sport is the connection of bodily movements and training in *water*. This is the main restriction in using this capital outside sport field: “There was no practical experience of teaching the swimming especially of the adults, it’s important to explain, teach on practice on land, while not being in water the movements, what is quiet difficult to do”

### ***Socially and swimming predetermined bodily capital***

Swimming, as any other type of sport practices shape the standards and “ideals” of what is considered to be beautiful, which is not always coincide with the representations in the contexts outside swimming pool. Different research conducted which analyzes the stereotypes of exclusively female and male types of sport, and what is surprisingly, that swimming with the alternative success receives in one research as female along with gymnastics, tennis, and exclusively male.

Basically, from this point of view, most of the female swimmers are satisfied with the figure and constitution and proud of their figure: “I have a good figure and shouldn’t think how to escape from superfluous kilos”. Other stresses some disproportions of the constitution and excessive masculinization: “Now I’m thinking, that I have wide shoulders, cannot find something for me in sense of cloth”, “I cannot put dress, because feel uncomfortable”, “If concern children, if there will be boy I will direct him in swimming, let him go for training, that he will not be dead. For girls it is better such sport as dancing or in gymnastics to develop, to develop the femininity”. Sometimes the problem with weight could arise: “Of course, I get the weight, so if you all your life plough 15-17 km, everyday, and sometimes during the gathering even 30, everything burnt momentarily. The organism used to work, you reveal it, and it gets how much it needs...”

### ***The possibilities of conversion of capitals***

Physical or bodily capital is difficult to reality utilize, till it doesn’t converted into symbolic form, no direct utilization in post-sport life swimming bodily capital, as the body is used to special technique, special movements which was shaped during the repetitions in water. For example, if swimmer used to swim it’s difficult to restructure in another type of sport such as javelin-throwing, hammer-throwing, discus and so on. The movements are very specific, it really couldn’t be utilized, as this is the very specialized type of embodied knowledge,

which could be converted only through symbolic form, which is more fixed and stable in time, as some of the swimmers: “there is no former athletes”. Secondly this type of the capital is temporarily, and lost much quicker than other and need a lot of time for its support, needs constant time and force investment. In social terms, the bodily capital could be utilized during the work as coach or instructor, but still as we mentioned previously athletes don’t possess the coaching skills in dry land and so on. In general we have to stress little possibilities of prime use of bodily capital in post-sport life outside sphere of sport and inside the sphere.

## CONCLUSIONS

Considering the purposes, set in the beginning of the research, we have to conclude, that the current state of sport as social sphere of analysis especially at the post-soviet space represents interesting social phenomena, so needs further representation and reflection in sociological and anthropological literature.

In regard to results of this research, we introduced the basic socio-analysis of the current situation in the sphere of sport. The use of theoretical framework of P. Bourdieu was justified by the possibility of complex analysis of sport on macro levels such as social conditions and implication of sport practices in Belarus and specificity of life experience of the swimmers. In practical terms, the state of sport field and particular in Belarus is characterized with the continuation of the traditions and trends of development of the sphere which constituted during the Soviet times. In terms of field we have to mention, that the state of the field is defined with its close connection in management and organization with state and bureaucratic fields of Belarus. The field of swimming functions in two modus such as mass sport and sport of high achievements. In opposition to situation in sphere of sport in highly developed countries, the constitution of such substructure as professional swimming field is represented only by small sector of the current field of swimming of high achievements. The situation with

lack of institutional support of the development of professional sport in Belarus strongly restricts the development of material base of sport practices, and therefore expressed in low competitiveness of Belarusian swimmers at the international arena.

As there is no professional sector of practices, the main stakes in the fields are rounded by special sport symbolic capital based on accumulation of bodily, while other capitals such as economic has less role as stake of the prime struggle, but on the other hand, play a great role as the source which allows achieving symbolic profits. The main social tension in the field is organized round this small sector of professional sport – which represented by membership of the national team. Round this status the main strategies of the agents organized – the strategies of preservation and the strategies of disrupting. The big influence on this strategies plays hidden social capital, expressed in social and symbolic status of the coach of the sportsmen, who plays big role in defining the success of the strategies. These hidden social struggle behind the symbolic in the field, sometimes, according to the informant impact negatively on the state of the whole swimming field.

The second question of the paper was to analyze the peculiarity of the possession of this “pure” and “economically uninterested” point of view which is the ground for swimmers’ dedicated involvement in sport. What is peculiar for post-soviet contexts is high evaluation since yearly age of symbolic means of distinction and encouragement which is produced in the field: diplomas on the first stage of sport career and unified official classification on later stages.

Other particular for post-socialist environment mechanisms is strongly connected with the system of secondary and higher educational sport establishments which is officially recognized as a part of the state system of sport and also have no analogs in the world education. Considering the specific of the athletes’ world view and attitudes to life it’s also necessary to mention the role the way of life swimmers lead. Especially important aspect is the relation-

ship to time and special subjective organization of time, which is considered by athletes as a type of mental resources which could be utilized in post-sport life.

If describe the main sport and post-sport strategies we could divide 2 categories of the social agents – dominating and dominated in the field, the distribution of symbolic, economic and physical capitals among them are highly unequal during the involvement in the sport. The main reasons for retirement of these athletes are different, if in case of “professional swimmers” the reasons mostly connected with the search of alternative perspective in life and exhaust of physical capitals, personal reasons, the “semi-professionals” leave sport forcedly, because of the absence of elementary support allowing further training. This is also one of the peculiarities of the state of the field, when athletes are compelled to retire even if the potential for future growth of results isn’t exhausted.

I considered 2 main types of strategies of conversion – conversion of swimming capital into educational and professional (economic). Of course, the dominant agents had more freedom and “currency rate” of the symbolic capital in terms of prestige of education. The agents have more freedom in choosing their post-sport and educational trajectories, than a couple of years before. In terms of professional conversion of capital athletes select the strategies which allow to preserve the cultural and sport capital accumulated during the years of training and stay within the field of swimming. The labor market in swimming field in Belarus are highly restricted and great role plays the possession of social capital, as there is no free market of vacancies. Basically, the athletes are satisfied with current social position, although some are planning their exit from the sport professional field in search of higher economic profits. The conception of bodily capital was elaborated further as specification of in-born, health, sport form and social hexis dispositions of the swimmers. The prime bodily capital has small conversion rate in comparison to its symbolic form. One of the main role in building of post-sport trajectories plays the possession of social capitals, as such capitals as symbolic and,

especially, bodily are restricted in possibilities of utilization. This conclusion comes from the fact, that athletes who possessed different levels of symbolic capital in sport field possess similar positions in professional and economic field, and from the athletes' stressing of social factor as leading.

The main peculiarity of the swimming field and sport at post-soviet social conditions is difficulties in crystallization of subfield of professional sport, connected with institutional and state-related factors. Although acquiring some diversification and level of freedom, the post-sport life trajectories of the sportsman restricted and depend on social capital possessed in the field. The exit from the sport field in most of the cases is not considered as necessary for building further successful professional strategies, because sport and swimming capital in itself has limited possibilities of social and economic conversion in post soviet social conditions. Despite some difficulties, athletes come across during their sport career and after the period of retirement, swimmers have enthusiastic view on their engagement in sport and couldn't imagine alternative life trajectories as sport is unrepeatable and valuable life experience for all of them. In general I have to indicate the necessity of further social research of the sphere of sport in the post-socialist contexts for more deep understanding of this processes as they could have negative influence on the life of concrete people, involved in sport.

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