

Intellectual mediators and the internationalization of knowledge: Kumlien and the Swedish gymnastics (1895 - 1921)^{1 2 3 4}

Intelectuais mediadores e a internacionalização de saberes: Kumlien e a ginástica sueca (1895 - 1921)

Intelectuales mediadores y la internacionalización de los saberes: Kumlien y la gimnástica sueca (1895-1921)

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Resumo

Entre os séculos XIX e XX, um intenso movimento de internacionalização tomou lugar no Instituto Central de Ginástica de Estocolmo (GCI), apostando, entre outras ações, no trânsito de sujeitos da Suécia para outros países. Ludvig Gideon Kumlien (1874-1934), sueco, se mudou para Paris e realizou diferentes ações para divulgar a ginástica sueca. Objetiva-se aqui, mobilizando a noção de intelectuais mediadores, analisar as estratégias de divulgação empreendidas por Kumlien na França entre os anos de 1895 e 1921. Como fontes, recorreu-se a jornais franceses e manuais de ginástica. Concluiu-se que Kumlien, no encontro com uma nova cultura, traçou estratégias para driblar as resistências, mas não abandonou o *modus operandi* dos sujeitos formados no GCI.

Palavras-chave: ginástica sueca, Kumlien, História da Educação, História da Educação Física, educação do corpo

Abstract

Between the 19th and 20th centuries, a strong movement of internationalization took place at the Stockholm Central Institute of Gymnastics (GCI), relying, among other actions, on the mobility of individuals from Sweden to other countries. Ludvig Gideon Kumlien (1874-1934) moved from Sweden to Paris and developed different actions to promote Swedish gymnastics. By mobilizing the notion of mediating intellectuals, our objective was to analyze the dissemination strategies undertaken by Kumlien in France between 1895 and 1921, using French newspapers and gymnastics manuals as sources. We conclude that Kumlien, in his encounter with a new culture, designed strategies to overcome the resistance against the Swedish gymnastics; however, he did not abandon the modus operandi of the individuals trained by the GCI.

Keywords: Swedish Gymnastics, Kumlien, History of Education, History of Physical Education, Body Education

Resumen

Entre los siglos XIX y XX, un intenso movimiento de internacionalización sucedió en el Instituto Central de Gimnástica de Estocolmo (GCI) que invirtió, entre otras acciones, en el traslado de ciudadanos suecos a otros países. Ludvig Gideon Kumlien (1874-1934), sueco, se trasladó a Paris y realizó diferentes acciones para la divulgación de la gimnástica sueca. Objetivamos, trayendo a la luz la noción de intelectuales mediadores, analizar las estrategias de divulgación empleadas por Kumlien en Francia entre los años de 1895 y 1921. Como fuentes, utilizamos los periódicos franceses y manuales de gimnástica. Concluimos que Kumlien, cuando se ha encontrado con una nueva cultura, ha trazado estrategias para escapar de las resistencias; pero no ha abandonado el modus operandi de los sujetos formados en el GCI.

Palabras clave: Gimnasia Sueca, Kumlien, Historia de la Educación, Historia de la Educación Física, Educación del Cuerpo

Introduction

People of deep and excellent intellectual and educational formation, who profess their art with a sort of fanaticism, who consider themselves apostles, holders of a certain truth, for the triumph they are willing to submit themselves to all tribulations⁵. (Roux, 1899, p. 1)

This short excerpt was taken from an article entitled *Gymnastique*, published in the first page of the French newspaper *Le Figaro* in July 1899, written by French journalist Hugues Le Roux. On it, Le Roux reports the national gymnastics competition at *Jardin des Tuileries*, in Paris. Considering the context of the establishment of national territories in Europe, the article surprises, when celebrating the first participation of a foreign gymnastics, stating that the French should practice (and teach) it⁶. It was an exhibition of gymnastics guided by Ludvig Kumlien.

Ludvig Kumlien (1874-1934), responsible for the exhibition celebrated by Hugues Le Roux, was a *medical-gymnastics* and they both met at Stockholm, Sweden, in the summer of 1893, as we will see. Two years after this meeting, in 1895, Kumlien moved to Paris, where he spent most of his life, dedicating himself to various actions to disseminate Swedish gymnastics in France (Bonifácio, 2019). In the newspaper *Le Figaro*, Kumlien was described as a “disseminator and tireless apostle of gymnastics” (Bernardini, 1908, p. 1).

The people to whom Hugues Le Roux refers in the excerpt in the beginning of the article, are the physicians-gymnasts who, as Kumlien, were professionals that graduated in the Stockholm Gymnastics Central Institute (GCI) and were apt to teach Swedish gymnastics. However, more than this, they were fervent defenders, as described by Le Roux. Different authors talked about the missionary characteristic of the Institute, Ling’s “apostles”, his writings, and his proposed gymnastics (Ljunggren, 2011; Moreno, 2015; Pereira, n.d.; Posse, 1891). In this same perspective, other actors credited to physician-gymnasts with the broad circulation of Swedish gymnastics around the world (Bazoge et al., 2011; Pfister, 2003).

⁵ *Gens de culture intellectuelle profonde, d'éducation excellente qui professent leur art avec une espèce de fanatisme, qui se considèrent comme des apôtres, en possession d'une vérité certaine, pour le triomphe de laquelle ils sont disposés à subir toutes les tribulations.*

⁶ Since the end of the 18th century in Europe, different proposals to educate the body were established and, mostly, were called gymnastics – among them Swedish and French gymnastics (Soares, 1998). Their names, connected to the territories where they were produced, reveal the context of their propositions, marked by nationalisms, by territorial conflicts, and their formative objectives, which were not restricted to civilians, but spread to soldiers able to fight to defend their nations (Andrieu, 1999). This body should be educated from a scientific perspective and, therefore, were denied elements connected to pleasure and entertainment (Cabral, 2016). Over time, the different systematizations disputed in the attempt to choose which would be the most adequate for the formation of bodies.

Since its foundation, in 1813, GCI has focused on this education. With time, especially after the death of Pier Henrik Ling (1776-1839) – precursor of the method –, different initiatives to disseminate this gymnastics were undertaken. The main strategy was the circulation of subjects (Moreno & Baía, 2019). Foreigners sought GCI to educate themselves and make courses, while Swedish people moved to other territories to teach and disseminate this type of gymnastics. In numerical terms, Moreno and Baía (2019) say that, in 1900, GCI received around 60 foreigners and, in 1913, this number went up to 142.

Hugues Le Roux got in contact with the institution in 1893, when he traveled to Stockholm, under the invitation of the King of Sweden and Norway, Oscar II, aiming to “produce information on Ling’s gymnastics and its admirable results for physical regeneration and the moral culture of the race⁷” (Roux, 1901, p. 5)⁸. It was in this occasion that Le Roux met Ludvig Kumlien, and returned convinced that this was the most adequate gymnastics to be developed in France and undertook different actions together with the Swedish man to propagate it.

In France, Kumlien disseminated Swedish gymnastics, mainly, through three actions: gymnastics exhibitions, teaching activities, and publications. The publication of manuals stand out when compared to the other initiatives, due to the circulation possibilities in different territories– Argentina, Brazil, Spain, Italy, Mexico, and Portugal – and the fact that it could be translated into different languages⁹. From French, it was translated into, at least, three languages: Spanish, Portuguese, and Italian. Xavier Flix and Javier Betrán (2012) classified one of L. G. Kumlien’s manuals of as one of the 100 works that most helped to legitimize and institutionalize Physical Education in the academic, social, and professional circles in Spain. It was categorized by them among the works that had an important contribution beyond the academic environment, but also in the popular sphere, for private or domestic use.

⁷ *une enquête sur la gymnastique de Ling, et sur les admirables résultats que cette méthode a produits au double point de vue de la régénération physique et de la culture morale de la race.*

⁸ A trip resulting from an invitation by the King of Sweden and Norway, Oscar II, to the ministries of foreign business and public instruction in France. These gave Le Roux the mission to go to Sweden to learn about Ling’s gymnastics and prove the results of this method (Roux, 1901).

⁹ In France, Ludvig Kumlien published the manuals: *La Gymnastique Suédoise* (1901), *La Gymnastique pour tous* (1906), and *Cour Complet d’éducation physique* (1909).

It is no coincidence that Kumlien chose France to carry out his action. In that country, there was an effervescent debate on the ways through which physical education¹⁰ would take place in schools between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. The discussion was not only about the method to be used – if a national method would be created or a foreign proposal would be used –, but also who would be connected to physical education – to the army or to the civil sphere (medicine, scientists, and school) (Andrieu, 1999; Bazoge et al., 2011; Pereira, n.d.; Sarremejane, 2006).

This article aims to analyze the strategies of dissemination of Swedish gymnastics enacted by Ludvig Kumlien. To do so, we investigated French newspapers, manuals of gymnastics written by Ludvig Kumlien, with partners or alone, and a book from the Kumlien family. The papers were found in the digital platform of the *Bibliothèque nationale de France* (Gallica)¹¹. The gymnastic manuals were also found in this digital archive and the physical archives of *Biblioteca Nacional do Desporto* (Lisbon/Portugal), *Biblioteca da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais* (UFMG/Brazil) and the *Kungliga Biblioteket* (National Library of Sweden) (Stockholm)¹². In the later, we also found a book written by a member of the Kumlien family that describes its genealogy since the 18th century¹³.

This research is situated between 1895, when Ludvig Kumlien moved to Paris, and 1921, the year in which we located an action (which might have been the last), to disseminate/teach Swedish gymnastic: the publication of a last edition of his manuals.

¹⁰ This term appears in the sources, however they were not used to refer to physical education as we understand today, but as the education of the body, the education of the physical.

¹¹ We searched in Gallica using the term “Kumlien” and “Kunliem” resulting in 142 folders (104 of newspapers or magazines; 38 of books). Each of them had a certain number of files that varied significantly. They were all read, aiming to identify if they referred or not to Ludvig Gideon Kumlien. In general, we found French newspapers that reported the actions of Kumlien in Paris, mentions of his presence in events, as well as articles about him– his actions in his Institute, working as a teacher, among others. Besides this, we found different books that, mostly, used the manuals of Kumlien as a reference or announced the publication of Kumlien ‘s manuals. These were also found in this archive.

¹² In total, we located 13 manuals in the different archives. In general, these are publications in French by Ludvig Kumlien in the years 1901, 1906, and 1909, and its respective editions and/or translations to Spanish and Portuguese. Though we have not cited all these works in the text, they have helped us to understand the actions carried out by Ludvig Kumlien to disseminate Swedish gymnastics.

¹³ The book *The Kumlien Family* (1983) was written by Wendell Clarke Kumlien, son of the paternal cousin of Ludvig Gideon Kumlien, and draws on the genealogy of the Kumlien family. This written material is available at the National Library of Sweden.

The mediations of *medical-gymnastics*: a field in expansion

The gymnastics proposed by Ling at the Stockholm Gymnastics Central Institute (GCI) gradually consolidated itself from Sweden to different territories closer or more distant. In this process, the Institute took upon itself the responsibility to study, continue, and disseminate Ling's method, becoming the epicenter of Swedish gymnastics in the world (Moreno, 2015; Moreno & Baía, 2019). Slowly, a process of internationalization of this gymnastic method established itself, mainly betting on the mobility of Swedish and foreign men and women who graduated at GCI (Baía et al., 2020).

Ludvig Kumlien was part of this movement of internationalization, having moved to Paris and, there, carried out several teaching actions and dissemination strategies of Swedish gymnastics. But he was not the only one. Many other men and women, trained at GCI, moved to other countries and also enacted movements to promote Ling's gymnastics (Bolling & Yttergren, 2015). Considering the common formation of GCI students, would there be a pattern in the actions enacted by these subjects?

To do so, we raise parallels between the initiatives of dissemination enacted by Ludvig Kumlien and those of other subjects, previous to him and his contemporaries, who also did the same. They are: August Georgii and Martina Bergman-Osterberg¹⁴.

Georgii was one of Ling's disciples, who, after his death, was responsible for the classes in the Institute. According to Sarremejane (2006), Georgii would have been sent, in the 1840s, by the Swedish government to disseminate Swedish gymnastics in Europe and to "study in the most active centers of civilization, the state of sciences" (p. 819). He visited Paris and London, where he carried out the dissemination actions we will discuss. After him, in the 1880s, Martina Bergman-Osterberg moved to London, where, based on Swedish gymnastics, she advocated physical training for women guaranteeing to them a new profession and opportunities (Bloomfield, 2005).

Common to all was the foundation of an Institute in the places they moved. The first was Georgii who, having lived in London, founded an institute in 1850 (Quin, 2014). In the same city, Osterberg created a school in 1885 (Bloomfield, 2005). Later, in France, Kumlien started the activities of his institute in 1899 (Roux, 1901). The main activity of the Kumlien

¹⁴ We should consider the specificities of the time and places each subject lived.

Institute was to offer gym sections and/or massages; in addition to the sections, Osterberg also used the space to train gym teachers.

Besides their own institutes, Martina and Kumlien worked in Teaching Institutions and/or schools. Martina Osterberg, in 1881, participated in the School Council of London, allowing her to introduce Swedish gymnastics in 300 schools and train 100 teachers to act with this type of gymnastic (Bloomfield, 2005). Ludvig Kumlien, on his turn, acted as a gymnastic teacher at *École des Roches*¹⁵ in Paris between 1913 and 1924. One of the exercise sessions prescribed by him was adopted in Parisian schools.

Georgii, in his trip to European countries to disseminate Swedish gymnastics, published a manual in Paris (1847) and two in London, one in 1850 and another in 1852. Due to its close connection with medical gymnastics, the manuals were more concerned with this type of intervention (Andrieu, 1999; Quin, 2014; Sarremejane, 2006). Also in London, Osterberg published a “simple and direct” manual in 1887, besides publishing other non-published manuscripts. She used the manual for the training of gymnastic teachers in her institute and in other non-school spaces. Simplicity is one of the characteristics of her work (Bloomfield, 2005). Kumlien, on his turn, published three manuals in France: the first in 1901, the second in 1906, and the third in 1909.

Ludvig Kumlien often used the strategy of exhibitions to promote gymnastics. We found exhibitions from 1897, two years after his arrival in Paris, until 1904¹⁶. They took place within the institute and other private spaces, as the ballroom of the newspaper *Le Figaro*, and open public spaces. According to Bloomfield (2005), Martina Osterberg also used this strategy. The author reports on an exhibition held by her in the Hygiene Exhibition of *South Kensington* in 1882. The exhibitions of both subjects had the participation of members from the governments of the respective countries. Establishing contact with governmental authorities and others connected with the schools and the medical field, among other spaces, was a strategy of both.

Besides the exhibitions, we have identified the participation of these subjects in international congresses of Physical Education – events that took place with a certain regularity

¹⁵ *École des Roches* was a prototype of *École Nouvelle* in France and aimed to form the French elites. For more information see Duval, 2006.

¹⁶ The first record located is on the preface of his manual *La Gymnastique Suédoise* (The Swedish Gymnastics) and the last refers to the news in French newspapers available in the digital archive of the National Library of France (Gallica).

in the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century in Europe (Park, 2008). Martina Osterberg, for example, participated in two editions of the International Congress of Physical Education held in Paris in 1900 and 1913. In this period, Ludvig Kumlien already lived in the French capital, but we could not locate sources that allowed us to establish his participation in the events. Bonifácio (2019) affirms that Kumlien was very critical of the discussion held in the 1913 congress, which might indicate his participation. Martina Osterberg also participated in the International Congress of Women in 1899, where she spoke about the role of women as physical educators (Bloomfield, 2005).

Therefore, we can notice that these subjects considered the teaching and the practice of Swedish gymnastics as a profession and were committed to its dissemination, as a commitment. The common action to all of them, the foundation of an institute – a place of practice as well as to train new teachers- reveals this commitment. To found an institute in another territory was, even, symbolic from the perspective of establishing a place dedicated to the practice and, in some measure, inspired by GCI. In these spaces, they referenced the Institute, Ling, and other principles broadly connected to gymnastics – rationality, scientificity, care with the excess, the need to have a formation to teach gymnastics, among others.

When enacting several interventions – exhibitions, offer of classes, foundation of institutes, among others- it was common to have the presence of a GCI representative or else they, themselves, would represent the Stockholm Institute.

With that said, there was a type of *modus operandi* among the graduates in GCI, when undertaking actions of teaching and disseminating Swedish gymnastics. Were these types of dissemination taught during the training offered by GCI? Or were these the methods at time available at the time? Though we still have no elements to answer such questions, we indicate a training strongly targeting the dissemination of this gymnastic method.

Though the *physician-gymnasts*, when propagating the Swedish gymnastics, were convinced of the need to disseminate it around the world and having taking this responsibility, other elements could have also been motivators for these actions. Even if the students of the Institute have taken on themselves the mission to disseminate the gymnastics they had learnt, the profitability of these actions allowed them to work in different places in the world, considering that to move to other countries demanded a certain financial investment, as explained by Bolling and Yttergren (2015):

It was initially above all medical gymnastics that aroused people's interest and gave the RCIG graduate the opportunity to make a living both in Sweden and abroad. Physiotherapy institutes of various kinds were set up in towns and in seaside resorts and spas. An important reason for many people devoting themselves to physiotherapy was financial. Physiotherapy could be profitable business (p. 1440)

Bolling and Yttergren (2015) show how a great number of female students who graduated at GCI, moved to other countries. Lydie Bergroth is an example. After graduation, she returned to Finland, but a little later, moved to Paris, where she worked with medical gymnastics in bathhouses and spas, living there for 39 years. There, in 1937, she was awarded with the French Legion of Honor for her work as a physical therapist (Bolling & Yttergren, 2015). Still, according to the authors, at least 146 women, between 1893 and 1911, moved to different countries in the world, after graduating at GCI.

Besides the financial factor, the few formal obstacles to travel between the countries also might have been factors, if not of motivation, at least of facilitation. In the 19th century, the development of communications by train and steam power allowed a better and freer circulation of people in different territories. In 1860, for example, the obligation of Swedish travelers, and those from other countries, to carry a passport was removed (Bolling & Yttergren, 2015).

We, then, indicate other motivations that might have influenced the mobility enacted by these different subjects, though we are convinced of this “missionary” character present at GCI. This bet on the mobility of subjects (Swedish and foreigners) allowed the circulation of Swedish gymnastics in different parts of the world. Despite the fact that we only discuss here subjects that circulated in Europe, it does not mean that this circulation was restricted to this territory¹⁷.

Furthermore, *medical-gymnastics* in their different dissemination actions, directly or indirectly connected to social interventions, established themselves as subjects of communication of ideas and production of knowledge about Swedish gymnastics where they were. In other words, the *medical-gymnastics* were a type of *intellectual mediators* (Gomes & Hansen, 2016) of the Swedish method in the world.

The intellectual, who acts as a cultural mediator produces, him/herself, new meaning, when appropriating texts, ideas, knowledge, which are seen as preexistent (...), what the intellectual has “mediated” in fact becomes “another product”: a singular cultural good [original highlight]. (p. 18)

¹⁷ Bolling and Yttergren (2015) list at least 20 different countries where female *medical-gymnastics* have worked. Moreno and Baía (2019) also talk about this circulation, mainly in Brazil, but also in other parts of the world.

Explaining the subjects allow us to understand the cultural and political transformations of the objects and, in this case, the ideas and practices of Swedish gymnastics. In this sense, Angela de Castro Gomes (1993), inspired by Jacques Julliard, points out that the ideas do not circulate, themselves, through the streets, but are carried by subjects and/or social groups.

Therefore, we highlight our wish for other studies to be conducted in this sense, analyzing the formative aspects of GCI or even other trajectories that are revealing of this process, aiming to broaden the knowledge related to the historical processes of physical education conformation in Brazil and the world.

Mobility: the starting point and Ludvig Kumlien's first contacts with gymnastics

Ludvig Gideon Kumlien (1874-1934) was Swedish, from Eskilstuna, the third amongst the seven children of Georg Viktor (1831-1902) and Anna Gustava Alfrida Mellin (1846-1924) (Kumlien, 1983). His father was an accountant of a weapons industry in Eskilstuna, where, since the end of the 18th century, was concentrated the processing of iron and steel to produce locks, scissors, swords, and other utensils. Later, based on the fabrication of weapons, mainly percussion firearms, an industrial city developed, throughout the 19th century, which, gradually, received other industries, more specialization, work division, and great investment in machinery¹⁸.

At the same time, different movements – popular, workers, revival – emerged; together with the associative life, at the end of the 19th century the first associations of gymnastics and other practices were created. In this first moment, gymnastics was pioneer, but gradually shared space with other practices, having members of the “middle class” as its first athletes (Carlberg, 2017). Besides associative spaces, Posse (1891) affirms that in university and schools, the practice of gymnastics was obligatory.

¹⁸ All the information on the history of Eskilstuna were retrieved from the *site* of the city: <https://www.eskilstuna.se/uppleva-och-gora/bibliotek-arkiv-och-lokalhistoria/lokalhistoria---eskilskallan/sok-i-arkiv/eskilstunas-historia/fristaden-och-eskilstunas-utveckling-till-en-industristad.html>. All these writings are based on the sources used by them.

The fifth sister of L. G. Kumlien, Anna Svea Augusta Kumlien (1879-1970) is presented in the family books as a *gymnast* (Kumlien, 1983). This information points to the participation, or the access of the family as a whole to these associative spaces, as well as a certain involvement and/or investment of the family and of Anna Kumlien with this corporal practice.

Therefore, we believe that this nucleus of the family Kumlien could have had an approximation with the practice of gymnastics due to their social and economic conditions which allowed them, at least, access to these spaces. This possible contact with gymnastics, in schools and in associative spaces, could have been important to motivate, inspire, and influence Anna Kumlien to become a gymnast and Ludvig Gideon Kumlien to become a *medical-gymnastics*.

Graduating as a *medical-gymnastics* forced L. G. Kumlien to create his own path. Thus, he moved from Eskilstuna to Stockholm, where the training was offered. Hans Bolling and Leif Yttergren (2015) affirm that those interested to enter the Institute had to be approved in exams that proved certain knowledge, such as: Christianity, History, Geography, Arithmetic, French, German, English, and Sciences. Posse (1891) said that, beyond the exams, there was the possibility of presenting a “certificate of maturity” expedited by schools/high schools¹⁹.

The title granted to the students of the Stockholm Institute was *gymnastik-direktor*, *master of gymnastica* or, most commonly, *sjukgymnast* or *medical-gymnastics*. They studied the complete theory of gymnastics, anatomy (with dissection), physiology, hygiene, kinesiology, pathology, among others (Posse, 1891). Three formations were offered: military gymnastics (at the end of the first year), pedagogical gymnastics (at the end of the second year), and medical gymnastics (at the end of the third year)²⁰. Men had the right to follow only one of the formations or to halt the course during the three years; on the other hand, women could follow a two-year course, which did not include military gymnastics, and were instructed to graduate in two years with no interruptions. In all formations, the students had to do a type of internship in the space of the Institute (Bolling & Yttergren, 2015; Posse, 1891).

¹⁹ Hans Bolling and Leif Yttergren (2015) do not consider the possibility of admission in the Institute with a certificate of maturity.

²⁰ This formation structure changed over time (reforms in 1864, 1887, and 1934). The formation we believe Kumlien took was defined in 1887, and separated the formation in the institute into military, pedagogical and medical tracks (Pereira, n.d., p. 508).

Posse (1891) indicates that, in Sweden, the work with gymnastics, in schools or in the institutes, was restricted to GCI graduates, and that possible irregular exercises were inspected. The only exception, according to him, were free schools in the countryside that could not pay for a gymnastics teacher. Those were provided with seminars with the basic course of gymnastics to teachers to apply it “intelligently”; however, they were not considered gymnastics teachers, Posse (1891) also affirms that the physicians, even graduated ones, should seek the Stockholm Institute, if they were interested to teach gymnastics or make massages as specialists. They did not have to go through the whole formative process previously indicated, but at least through the course of medical gymnastics.

Thus, after graduating as a *medical- gymnastics*, Ludvig Kumlien moved in 1895 to Paris, France, where he carried out several different movements to disseminate Swedish gymnastics. Probably his first motivation to move was the visit of Hugues Le Roux to Sweden in 1893, a “practical result”. In this trip, Le Roux met Ludvig Kumlien and, convinced of the benefits promoted by Ling’s gymnastics, saw Ludvig a “preacher” of the mission that King Oscar II gave him at his departure: “Our task needs to have a practical result” (Roux, 1901). Two years later, in 1895, Kumlien moved to Paris.

When Le Roux visited Sweden, Ludvig Kumlien was 19 years old. He had probably just graduated from GCI and, as he had been admitted, had some knowledge of French. The only record of his marriage dates from 1902, when he was already in France, at 23 years old, with the gymnastics teacher Gunhild Elisabeth Follin (1878-1968) (Kumlien, 1983). The move, only two years after Le Roux’s visit, might have been due the time needed to finish his formation at the Stockholm Institute. Being young, single, and a student of the Institute might have been characteristics that contributed for him to be seen by Le Roux as a potential “preacher” of his mission.

However, there are still doubts that Kumlien’s move to Paris had been only the result of Le Roux’s visit to Sweden who, convinced of the gymnastics benefits, wanted to take someone to disseminate it in France. This narrative seems to be very convenient to figure in the preface of one of his works, considering that one of the aims of this writing material was to convince readers to practice the lessons of Swedish gymnastics presented in it. This builds the

narrative that the writer of the manual, confident on the effectiveness of this practice decided to leave his country propelled by the mission to disseminate such an efficient gymnastics to other places.

Therefore, we do not disregard that the contact of these men might have had an important influence on Ludvig Kumlien's move to Paris, whether by raising this idea or by triggering this action. But what were the other factors that might have contributed?

According to Bonifácio (2019), having relatives from the Kumlien in France might also have influenced his move, being an important support to do so. Besides his relatives, Bonifácio (2019) also points out the interests of GCI to disseminate Swedish gymnastics in France. An indication of this was Hugues Le Roux's trip as the result of an invitation by the Stockholm Institute to the French government to visit GCI and its gymnastics.

Finally, different factors motivated Ludvig Kumlien's move. Besides those which influenced other *medical-gymnastics* (work profitability, easiness of mobility), there were personal interests (financial, profession, and personal), as well as the interests of GCI to disseminate its gymnastic and its practice in different countries.

The mediations of Ludvig Kumlien

In France, we identified in our searches, three main initiatives to disseminate Swedish gymnastics enacted by Ludvig Kumlien: gymnastics exhibitions, the writing of manuals, and the teaching of gymnastics in institutions (the foundation of his own gymnastics Institute and being a school teacher). All those were reported and/or announced in French newspapers.

When arriving in Paris, Ludvig G. Kumlien was faced by an intense debate on the ways French physical education should take place. This debate involved many institutions and subjects, French and foreign, based on the systematizations they believed to be the most adequate ones and which they intended to make official. The French government, aiming to solve the discussion, mainly through the ministries of Public Instruction and of War, proposed several commissions that wrote reports, sent subjects in missions to other countries (Andrieu,

1999; Pereira, n.d.; Sarremejane, 2006), and hosted countless international congresses, some of which where the issue of physical education was debated (Park, 2008).

To be part of the discussion in defense of Swedish gymnastics, L. G. Kumlien undertook different actions to disseminate it, having Hugues Le Roux as his main partner. Both formed, little by little, an important network of partners, composed by physicians, people involved in sports, scientists, editors, journalists, politicians, members of the *École de Joinville*²¹, among others (Bonifácio, 2019), aiming to disseminate and defend Swedish gymnastics. With each of them, Kumlien and Le Roux established a certain degree of partnership. The physician Dr. Michaux, for example, was involved in exhibitions, as well as journalist Emile André who also wrote about Kumlien in the papers. Similarly, journalist Rauol Fabens and the editor Per Lamm worked with them to write the manuals. Mostly, they established partnerships with journalists (but not only with them), which allowed them Kumlien's broad presence in these written materials. At this moment, the French press was greatly expanding and its circulation was such that it exceeded its own frontiers (Mollier, 2008).

This partnership network established by Kumlien allowed them to design and execute different strategies in this dissemination initiative. As soon as he arrived in Paris, his actions were more concerned with presenting and showing gymnastics to the different subjects involved with French physical education. Therefore, we believe exhibitions were his main bet (Baía et al., 2019). Though they were the initial bet, we found records of gymnastics exhibitions in French newspapers still up to approximately 1904, this last one stood out in the press because of its “elite audience” (Figure 1).

²¹ Founded in 1852, a *École de Gymnastique de Joinville Le Pont* aimed to form monitors able to teach military gymnastics. In 1872, the term “normal” was added to the name, meaning that the goal of the formation became training gymnastic instructors and not only to prepare soldiers. Another alteration was the insertion of Fencing, besides the teaching of gymnastics (Lanoux, 2015).

Figure 1: Article about L. G. Kumlien at *Armée et marine: revue hebdomadaire illustrée des armées de terre et de mer*



Source: Manoury (1904).

In other papers, this exhibition was reported in *Armée et marine: revue hebdomadaire illustrée des armées de terre et de mer*, a seminar that published contents that interested the French army and navy²². It calls our attention in this publication not only due to the size of the articles, but also the photo of Ludvig Kumlien. We believe that this might sign the possible dialogue established between Kumlien and the subjects involved with the navy and the army regarding gymnastics and the importance of that exhibition.

This exhibition took place in the ballroom of French newspaper *Le Figaro* and gathered important subjects— from sports, medicine, and the army—, involved in the debate on French

²² Magazine *Armée et marine: revue hebdomadaire illustrée des armées de terre et de mer* was created by Jules-Marie-Armand (1834-192), known as Jules de Cuverville, an official of the French navy. He founded the magazine in 1899, when he became the Chief of State of the French Navy and, in 1901, he became a senator. About the magazine, we have no further information besides the fact that it was a weekly illustrated magazine, targeting the French army and navy.

physical education (Manoury, 1904). We also highlight the participation of correspondents from Swedish newspapers, the General Consul of Sweden and Norway, the inspector of physical education of Parisian schools, the director of *École de Joinville Le Pont*, among others; as well as his partners in the dissemination of Swedish gymnastics: Dr. Michaux, Hugues Le Roux, Emile André. Besides this, the exhibition was opened by Professor Poirer, from the Medicine School of Paris.

Still aiming to reach different subjects, the Institute founded four years after his arrival, he offered the different practices of Swedish gymnastics, not only those connected to schools, but also those interests in medical gymnastics, and with no restrictions of public (Bonifácio, 2019). Both strategies presented themselves as a type of business card for Kumlien and the gymnastics he intended to disseminate. These actions gradually allowed his entrance in different spaces.

An example of this is the publication of G. de Lafreté at the *La vie au grand air*, in November 19, 1899 (Figure 2), whose continuation was published in January 28, 1900²³. Both present different images of what we believe to be GCI. In the article, the author reports that his first contact with Swedish gymnastics was at the Kumlien Institute and that he was surprised with its difference to French gymnastics. Lafreté (1899) reports on the structure of Kumlien Institute, his conviction in Swedish gymnastics, and constructs its defense. Such as him, Colonel Dérué²⁴, Hugues Le Roux, and Phillipe Tissié²⁵ were also convinced by the efficiency of Ling's gymnastics.

²³ *La Vie au grand air* was an illustrated magazine of sport current affairs directed by Pierre Lafitte (1872-1938). Created in 1898, with bimonthly editions, it became weekly in 1899, with new publications every Saturday. The images, the photos, or compositions were the main focus of this printed material, which had around 70% of the editions illustrated, that is, out of the 16 pages, 10 to 14 were illustrated (Gervais, 2007).

²⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel François Jules Dérué was involved with the practice of fencing and the publication of works on gymnastics, army, and fencing. He worked as an Inspector of physical education in Parisian schools.

²⁵ Philippe Tissié (1852-1935) was a physician and deepened his studies on Swedish gymnastics, becoming one of its defenders in France (Bazoge et al., 2011; Soares, 1998, p. 134).

Figure 2: Article about L. G. Kumlien at La Vie au grand air



Source: Lafreté (1899).

In the continuation of this publication, Lafreté (1900) highlights the organization of the Institute created by Kumlien and the possibility of women and children to practice Swedish gymnastics in this space. Besides this publication, the announcements and articles found in French newspapers revealed different publics contemplated by the activities offered and, it seems, Kumlien earned a significant clientele, considering the work on the two units of the Institute, since 1900, the following year of its foundation.

After a certain moment, the manuals became a strategy, considering that these printed materials earned an important place in French schools. In a way, the works published by Kumlien were also symptomatic of the pathways taken by the debate on French Physical Education. When Swedish gymnastics gained a certain prestige, the manual published was entitled *La Gymnastique Suédoise* in 1901.

Later, when a certain resistance towards a foreign proposal is noticed, the focus is given to the fact that it was a gymnastic model that could be executed by all. Thus, the manual was entitled: *La Gymnastique Pour Tous* (Gymnastics to all) (1906). Finally, when other systematizations of corporal practices also gained space, Kumlien proposed the defense of a physical education that contemplated not only gymnastics, calling his manual *Cour Complet d'Éducation Physique* (Complete Course of Physical Education) (1909).

Faced by this, the actions to disseminate Swedish gymnastics undertaken by Ludvig Kumlien allowed him to act as an *intellectual mediator*. That is, when looking for the different movements of gymnastic dissemination enacted by him, we understand that while communicating these ideas, he also produced them in contact with a new culture and new spaces. Given the reach of his interventions, we should say that Ludvig Kumlien acquired an important centrality in the circulation of Swedish gymnastics in France and in other countries.

Besides this, having established a network of contacts allowed Kumlien to take part in different spaces, beyond the newspapers, such as French ministries, publishing companies, in *Joinville*, among others, and earned a certain social recognition, aiming the prizes that he and/or his works received, or even, the references to him in the newspapers, as a well-known teacher (Bonifácio, 2019). Furthermore, this allowed the circulation of gymnastics, through his exhibition, classes, and manuals.

On its turn, the writing of manuals was a key strategy to the broad circulation of Kumlien (Baía et al., 2019), considering the French context of significant expansion in the production of school manuals, obligatorily used by the French population under instruction, since 1890 (Mollier, 2008). The manuals published by Ludvig Kumlien and his partners were translated in other languages – Spanish, Portuguese, Italian – and published in other countries – Spain, Argentina, Brazil, Portugal, Italy. This allowed a large number of people to read newspapers, books, and manuals, Kumlien relied on these written materials.

Thus, France was a fertile ground for dissemination strategies undertaken by Ludvig Kumlien, opening doors for the actions established in the country to circulate in different territories and languages. Similarly, the partnerships established – with journalists, manual writers, politicians, among others– were key to circulate his ideas, the notoriety of social spaces, and the accomplishment of his actions; that is, in his different *mediations*.

Summing up, Kumlien dedicated a great part of his life to the teaching and dissemination of the Swedish method of gymnastics and, in this sense, he undertook different actions to reach his goals, from the establishment of a network of fellows to the diversification of actions, aiming to reach different publics and bypass possible resistances. We believe that, the dissemination strategies emerged when faced by a field in dispute – as the Paris he found –, though greatly inspired by his GCI formation.

Final remarks

Our objective was to analyze the dissemination strategies enacted by Ludvig Kumlien in France between 1895 and 1921. Being a GCI former student inserted Ludvig Kumlien in the movement enacted by the Stockholm Institute to disseminate gymnastics through the mobility of the subjects. If they had a “missionary” characteristic, the formation offered by GCI allowed profitable work for its students in Sweden and in other countries, some actions of the Crown made easier the extraterritorial mobility of these subjects.

Besides this, even after graduating and living in other territories, the Institute kept in contact with its students; the initiatives enacted by them in other places, were similar to those promoted by Ludvig, which points to a common *modus operandi* among them. Despite the “missionary trace” in the formation promoted by GCI, the mobility of these subjects, in general, and the mobility of Kumlien, more specifically, was motivated by different interests: personal, of the Institute, professional, among others.

When arriving in France, Kumlien undertook three main actions: gymnastic exhibitions, teaching activities, and publication of manuals. Establishing a contact network, with subjects belonging from different groups involved in the debate of French physical education, was an important strategy to insert Kumlien in different spaces, so that he and one of his works received

official recognition. Another strategy outlined by this group was the publication of articles, announcements, and notes on French newspapers, targeting different audiences and with a significant circulation in the country.

We conclude that Kumlien, in the meeting with a new culture, drew strategies to bypass resistances, however did not abandon the *modus operandi* of the subjects graduated at GCI. Therefore, when dealing with the role of intellectual mediators in the circulation of Swedish gymnastics, more specifically the role and strategies of Ludvig Kumlien, we believe that the process was not homogeneous or uniform, though the subjects left from the same formative space, GCI. It was, otherwise, a multiple and diverse circulation that encompassed the singularities of the subjects and the territories they circulated. Such particularities typical of each subject started from individual motivations to act as *medical-gymnastics*, until the different contexts found in each territory.

Finally, analyzing him as a mediator intellectual broke away from the dichotomy of creators/original subjects and those of popularizers/disseminators that, in a way, separate the cultural processes correlated and the hierarchy of subjects involved. In other words, it means looking at Swedish gymnastics as a plural and diverse practice depending on mediations and mediators; and not as a unique practice established by an “extraordinary” subject.

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