

Physical cultural studies (PCS) is a dynamic and rapidly developing field of study. This handbook offers the first definitive account of the state of the art in PCS, showcasing the latest research and methodological approaches. It examines the boundaries, preoccupations, theories and politics of PCS, drawing on transdisciplinary expertise from areas as diverse as sport studies, sociology, history, cultural studies, performance studies and anthropology.

Featuring chapters written by world-leading scholars, this handbook examines the most important themes and issues within PCS, exploring the active body through the lens of class, age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, (dis)ability, medicine, religion, space and culture. Each chapter provides an overview of the state of knowledge in a particular subject area, while also considering possibilities for developing future research.

Representing a landmark contribution to physical cultural studies and allied fields, the *Routledge Handbook of Physical Cultural Studies* is an essential text for any undergraduate or postgraduate course on physical culture, sports studies, leisure studies, the sociology of sport, the body, or sport and social theory.

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PUNISHED CORPORAL BODIES

Aaron L. Miller

Introduction

Few issues may gain more from the perspective of physical cultural studies (PCS) than the issue of corporal punishment, the punishment of the body. Loosely defined as the beating, hitting, or kicking of the body to discipline or punish, by a person in a position of authority relative to a person in a subordinate position, corporal punishment is a social phenomenon common throughout the industrialized world. It is used in homes but also often in educational spaces by educators hoping to 'teach kids a lesson', and it raises important questions about power, violence, and cultural studies.

In Japan, where I have done much of my fieldwork, the linguistic roots of 'discipline' and 'punishment' are closely related to the body. One term for 'discipline' in Japanese, *shitsuke*, literally means 'beautifying' the 'body'. *Taibatsu*, the term for 'corporal punishment', and its Chinese character (*kanji*) ideographs maintain, literally mean the 'punishment' of the 'body'. Even the drawing of the *kanji* 'teach' is composed of three elements: 'parent', 'whip', and 'child'. In common parlance, *taibatsu* implies hitting any part of the body with the fist, palm, whip or bamboo stick, kicking, boxing of the ears, or making someone sit in *seiza* position (sitting on the knees with the legs curled up behind the buttocks). At times, it has also referred to forcing someone to stand holding buckets of water for long periods of time, starving someone of food or depriving them of the right to be in the classroom.

In this chapter, I will attempt to show why corporal punishment in Japan illustrates the pressing need for a sophisticated scholarly field such as physical cultural studies to guide us forward. In particular, physical cultural studies' call for 'committed praxis' offers a valuable extension upon Foucauldian theory, which can only help us understand this phenomenon but is limited in guiding us politically. When corporal punishment occurs, especially when it occurs in high-profile high school sports such as baseball and basketball, Foucauldian theory can help us explain why some who receive corporal punishment say they appreciate it and that it was 'good for them'. Foucauldian theory helps us make sense of the mechanism of power that allows corporal punishment to exist, even in a so-called 'civilized' society such as Japan, whose government has long ago banned the practice (Miller, 2013). However, Foucauldian theory is less sufficient in guiding us toward our proper role as scholar/activists. As scholars we need to take a stronger approach for the study of violence, power, and punishment in sport. We need

our approach to be not merely explanatory or interpretive but also empirical, contextual, trans-disciplinary, theoretical, qualitative, self-reflexive, pedagogical, and grounded in praxis, as the editors of this volume suggest. Physical cultural studies holds that promise.

According to Silk and Andrews (2015), PCS developed into a hybrid field drawing on sports sociology, cultural studies, and body studies, as well as 'dialogic learning community' aimed at providing scholars space to better understand their studies as well as impact progressive social change. Pioneers in this field see a 'seemingly unrelenting (bio)scientificization of kinesiology (and the accompanying devaluing of the humanities and social sciences)' and a need for more empirical, contextual, transdisciplinary, theoretical, political, qualitative, self-reflexive, and pedagogical studies. At the same time, there is a sense of radicalism in this scholarship. Giardina and Newman (2011) suggest that the goals of the PCS project are to use political and politicized bodies to engage and interact with human activity, foster an engaged social citizenship, and 'move beyond writing and researching about bodies to writing and researching through bodies as a principal force of the research act' (ibid.: 44). Atkinson similarly labels the movement a 'call to committed praxis' (Atkinson, 2001: 137).

I was trained as a socio-cultural anthropologist, so these aims all resonate deeply with me, and reassure me that like-minded scholars abound across departments different from my own. Socio-cultural anthropology has a long history of reflexivity and personal engagement in professional research, which echoes the passion of the leaders of this new field. Some anthropologists stop short of offering their two cents about their research, but I am not among them. To me, punished corporal bodies clearly generate and solidify power relations in Japan because bodies are not produced by society, they are also 'bodies about society'. That is to say, they tell us much about our political inequalities and call on us as privileged researchers to affect meaningful change (Giardina and Newman, 2011: 54). The very punishment of these bodies is a political act, and it serves to reproduce existing power relations.

We live in a present of plurality. There is no such thing as *the* Japanese physical culture. While some Japanese view their sporting bodies as unique and similar only to each other, not all Japanese sporting bodies are the same. While some Japanese athletes see their athletic bodies as inferior to those of Western (or Chinese) athletes, not all do (Miller, 2015). Similarly, the transition from 'sports for education' to 'sports for health' (Miller, 2011) and the transition from a reliance on samurai spirit to a reliance on sports science and sports medicine (Miller, 2009), are challenging 'traditional' views of the Japanese sporting body. Finally, the globalization of traditional Japanese 'sports' such as sumo and judo are challenging what used to be considered dominant and acceptable body postures, attitudes, and social graces in Japan. We cannot say there is only one Japanese physical culture; rather, there are many, and they vary across time, region, sport, gender, and class.

Japanese sports as physical culture

The moving body has increasingly become a key subject of academic inquiry in social science and humanities literature in recent years, including among scholars of sport, physical education, and the martial arts in the East (see e.g. Brownell, 1995; Sugimoto, 1995; Horne, 2000; Noguchi, 2004; Kelly, 2007; Otomo, 2007). Many scholars of Japanese sport have also taken a close look at the 'physical culture' or 'body culture' of Japan (e.g. Sugimoto, 1995; Ben-Ari, 1997; Horne, 2000; Spielvogel, 2003; McDonald and Hallinan, 2005: 198; Kelly and Sugimoto, 2007; Kelly, 2007; Light, 2008). But how might a PCS approach offer us a better understanding of Japanese physical culture? A major premise lurking behind much writing on 'Japanese physical cultural activities' – that is, martial arts, physical education, 'Western' sports, recreation,

and dance – has been that there is something unique about the Japanese body and Japan's physical culture (see e.g. Nakamura, 1981, 2002; Ozawa, 2002; Otsuki, 1989, 2002; Murasaki, 2002; Kuraishi, 2005; Hayashi and Kuzuoka, 2004; Noguchi, 2004). These works assume that the ways in which Japanese people move their bodies in these physical cultural activities are 'uniquely Japanese'.

Part of the problem with this logic, however, as Kelly (2007: 13) notes, is that it is difficult to reconcile the sleek and well-trained physiques found in Tokyo fitness clubs (Spielvogel, 2003), with the corpulent bodies of Japan's sumo wrestlers (Whang, 2007). Can either of these bodies represent *the* Japanese sporting body? Given the rather different expectations of the bodies of high-performance athletes, dancers and fighters, and recreational exercisers involved in a wide array of physical cultural activities, how can anyone assert that there is such a thing as a single national physical culture of Japan? We must unpack the meanings of Japanese sports and the Japanese sporting body, and contextualize them in their political worlds.

Contextualizing Japanese physical cultural bodies

According to Sugimoto, Japanese began to see their sports as part of their 'physical culture' (*shintai bunka*) as early as the 1980s (Sugimoto, 1995: 156). But when sports, which are known as *supōtsu* in Japanese, were first introduced to Japan in the Meiji Period (1868–1912), they were considered modern and Western entities. At the time, the Japanese did not really understand the idea that 'competition' could be 'play'; indeed, the word for 'competition' (*kyōgi*) had yet to be invented (Collins, 2007: 7). In the decades that followed, Japan began to realize that sports were not simply diversionary pursuits or competitions, and that they were powerful ways to integrate with the international community, especially through the Olympic movement. Gradually, sports began to offer the Japanese a way to present their strengths to the world. At the same time, Western sports were gradually localized and ultimately became something 'Japanese', a process that was inherently tied to Japan's desire to at once be part of the world while also unique within it. The sporting body was a key political tool in this process.

Today, sports are an integral part of Japan's physical culture, and, as 'physical cultural activities', they deserve serious scholarly attention. The Japanese sporting body continues to have a role in furthering power or gender hierarchies, media representations help to form ideal body types, and the body is still perceived to be a unique 'ethnic entity' when considered in international comparative context. Yet current views of the Japanese sporting body are the result of particular historical circumstances, and the often traceable interplay between powerful and influential institutions acting throughout modern Japanese history (Kelly, 1998; Horne, 2000). These institutions include the state, the military, the education system, business groups, and advocates of science and medicine. To fully understand today's perceptions of Japanese sporting bodies, we must understand how these institutions have sought to establish their vision(s) of what the Japanese (body) should be.

Japan's modern 'encounter' with Western sports can be characterized by the acceptance of some Western physical, educational, and cultural ideas and techniques, and the adaptation of these ideas and techniques in particularly Japanese ways. This 'negotiation process' has been evident throughout Japanese sports history and has created a hybrid physio-educational sports culture (Miller, 2015). At first, Western sports were seen as subordinate to indigenously Japanese physical cultural activities such as the 'martial arts' (*budō*) or other traditional leisure activities. To Meiji Japanese, sports were perceived as 'Western' entities that must be made 'Japanese', and there were great attempts to localize them as such (Abe, 2006). During these periods of localization, there was often conflict between the so-called 'new Western sports

culture' and 'old Japanese physical culture', the latter a notion that many associated with the martial arts. In the Meiji Period (1868–1912), for example, one writer opined, 'Japanese *bujutsu* (martial arts) is our original exercise, which, down the ages, has ensured numerous feats, rendered good service to the state, and inspired the people' (quoted in Abe and Mangan, 2002: 107). In such articulations, martial arts were seen as powerful and indigenous activities that served the nation-state, so when sports were introduced, people initially denigrated them as 'Western' and 'foreign' and insisted that they required 'Japanization', which often meant 'sanitation'.

Before Japan opened itself to the West, restored the Meiji Emperor to the throne (1868), and embarked on an unprecedented modernization project, its long period of isolation (*sakoku jidai*; roughly mid-sixteenth to mid-eighteenth century) allowed socio-culturally specific ideas of the body to develop. These notions were not immediately compatible with those introduced by Westerners who visited Japan during the Meiji Period, and sports, among other cultural imports, challenged them. After a formal and nationalized education system was established in the late nineteenth century, however, Japanese schools – and school sports – have been a key conduit through which ideas of the Japanese sporting body have been disseminated, challenged, or changed. Educators have since debated how to best teach, guide, instruct, and discipline these bodies when they are young and learning how to 'play' sports. Chief among these educational debates has been the moral debate over corporal punishment.

Foucauldian theory and the punishment of Japanese sporting bodies

When I began researching corporal punishment in Japan, I applied the work of Michel Foucault, especially his ideas of 'power relations', and 'bio-power', because I thought they could help us better understand how sporting bodies have responded when punished physically. Foucault was skeptical of conventional definitions of 'power', insisting that he did not study 'power' per se; rather, he studied the history of 'how humans were made into subjects', or, in another articulation, how a new 'economy of power relations' was necessary (Foucault, 1982: 219). This 'economy', he believed, needed to start not from a study of those 'in power', but those in resistance to it. To Foucault, such 'power relations' were characterized by the 'governing' and 'structuring' of the 'possible field of action of others'; in other words, controlling the possible actions that one could or could not take (ibid.: 221). Such a conceptualization of power relations supposed that people being subjected to power were free and not slaves, and that each individual was 'thoroughly recognized and maintained to the very end as a person' (ibid.: 220). It also meant that subjects were free to decide for themselves whether or not they wanted to do what power demanded. Thus, in some cases, those 'in power' did not need to take any action to keep their subjects in line because subjects would willingly toe the line without coercion. Indeed, coercion was not a key component to Foucault's concept of power. Foucault calls this the 'productive nature of power'. He writes:

If power ... never did anything but say no, do you really think one would be brought to obey it? What makes power good, what makes it accepted, is simply the fact that it doesn't weigh on us as a force that says no, but that it produces and traverses things, it induces pleasure, forms of knowledge, produces discourses. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body, much more than a negative instance whose focus is repression.

(Foucault, 1980: 119)

Such an approach prompts us to ask, what is the 'productive nature' of corporal punishment in Japanese sports? Various surveys suggest that many Japanese approve of physical discipline, even those who receive it themselves. Morita, for example, asserts that 75 percent of Japanese citizens believe that *taibatsu* is necessary for the disciplining of children (Morita, 2003: 21), and Goodman notes that there were surveys in the early 1980s, 'which suggested that the majority of parents (regularly about 70 percent) supported the use of discipline as being good for their children (*kodomo no tame*)' (Goodman, 2000: 167). Iwai's analysis of the 2008 Japan General Social Survey (JGSS) also showed that only a very few Japanese adults *categorically* condemned *taibatsu* by either parents or teachers (Iwai, 2008). Based on a study of approximately 5,600 participants, the JGSS revealed that only 6.3 percent of men and 8.6 percent of women were against *taibatsu* by parents, while 7.3 percent of men and 10.7 percent of women were against *taibatsu* by teachers (Iwai, 2008: 317). These surveys suggest that there has been rather widespread approval for *taibatsu*, and it is not only older Japanese who believe that *taibatsu* is necessary. A few studies that have analyzed the perceptions of young Japanese regarding *taibatsu* also suggest that young Japanese more often than not approve of its use (Ishikawa, 1998; Kobayashi et al., 1997; Imabashi, 1995; Sanuki, 2005).

In the case of corporal punishment in Japan, it seems Foucauldian power relations are useful for explaining why many Japanese have come to accept and even approve of physical discipline. Through its use of corporal punishment, Foucauldian 'power' routinizes behavior and shapes consciousness regarding what forms of behavior are acceptable or unacceptable, thereby 'producing' certain discourses and forms of knowledge, which in turn shape behavior.

Another Foucauldian concept – 'bio-power' – clarifies Foucault's argument. 'Bio-power' represents one of three ways that Foucault believed humans are made into 'subjects.' The first way was by 'dividing practices', in which people are separated into categories (e.g. separating the sane from the insane by putting the latter in mental hospitals). The second way is by objectifying people as subjects in a process called 'scientific classification', which is a process that often involves the physical appearance of the human body. Finally, for Foucault people are made into subjects by their own 'subjectification' of themselves (Rabinow, 1984: 7–11). This is 'bio-power': people apply 'technologies of power' upon themselves that 'power' would have applied had they not done so. This further explains how power produces, rather than only represses, behavior and discourse, and the body is a key part of this equation. 'Bio-power' creates a mechanism that routinizes physical behavior as people who are 'not in positions of power' begin to adapt their behavior and move their bodies in line with what those 'in power' would want. Foucault's theories of 'power relations' and 'bio-power' thus illustrate how Japanese bodies have been made into 'subjects' through the normalization of corporal punishment.

However, not all Japanese approve of corporal punishment, and more importantly Foucauldian theory does not guide us as scholar/activists toward any kind of meaningful action. Foucauldian theory may explain the societal mechanism by which people come to normalize, accept, and even approve of such 'violations' of individual bodies, but it does not explain who *should* have sovereignty over those bodies. Should it be the child him/herself, their parents, or the teacher or coach under whose charge he/she has been entrusted? Although Foucauldian theory does imply that those in power ought not abuse their power and inflict pain on an individual's body, is that implication enough?

Ultimately, the inability to answer this question indicates the limits of Foucauldian theory and the need for a more pro-active, progressive, and politically engaged approach, as encouraged (though not always easily realized) by many working within physical cultural studies. Rarely do post-modern social theorists who take a relativistic approach make the case for any 'ought' position – that is, recommending policy changes; describing the 'is' – that is, how things

are – is apparently enough. Description is safe; prescription is dangerous, especially so in a hyper-competitive and increasingly impoverished academic landscape. Few wish to go out on a limb to make an 'ought' case, even as the public is crying out for research-based insights.

Yet burgeoning fields such as physical cultural studies promise a different approach and encourage scholars to engage the political, rather than shy away from it. PCS proclaims to value the role of academics as everyday activists or 'public intellectuals', with some impacting positive social change through teaching, policy, media production, and other social contributions. For my part, this means drawing on my research about corporal punishment to give voice to those who consider themselves victims of violence, and showing the errors of educators who continue to use corporal punishment. As Dr Martin Luther King, Jr once said,

The ultimate weakness of violence is that it is a descending spiral, begetting the very thing it seeks to destroy. Instead of diminishing evil, it multiplies it. Through violence you may murder the liar, but you cannot murder the lie, nor establish the truth. Through violence you may murder the hater, but you do not murder hate. In fact, violence merely increases hate.

(King 1967)

Despite Dr King's massive contributions to our understanding of human rights, many continue to beat our own (and others') children in the name of 'education' and 'discipline'. As scholars of physical cultures, we must strive to eliminate this violence to whatever degree possible.

As scholars, we occupy a privileged, yet precarious position. We are rarely directly involved in the violent acts we observe in sporting and movement contexts. Yet we see what happens, and as observers we have the obligation to report. We also have the obligation to tell both sides of the story, since that separates us from profit-minded journalism and gives our work meaning and, hopefully, impact. Telling both sides of the story, however, is not the same thing as resorting to morally relativistic conclusions. Our painstaking research has earned us the right to offer reasoned, empirically based recommendations. Certainly agenda-led research is a patent methodological mistake, and one that would surely doom any research project to failure before it even begins, but who can fault us for having a committed praxis and sharing our opinion after our research is complete?

Mine is certainly not a new position. In 1990, Myles Horton and Paolo Freire argued that scholarly activism could only be developed by those 'who make the road by walking it' (Horton and Freire, 1990), and critical scholars in the sociology and anthropology of physical culture have been walking their own roads for years. Still, it is worth asking ourselves a simple question again: if we as scholars do not help the public think critically about the ethics of our adult actions, especially as they relate to our children's lives, who will? My research on corporal punishment in Japan has led me to conclude that young students and athletes crave both attention and structure, and they want firm but fair, as well as strict but supportive, teachers and coaches. No matter where I speak about this issue, but especially in Japan, I am always asked to share my opinion, and I choose to share it in this way, regardless of whether the prevailing winds of today's academia might try to blow my opinion in another, apolitical and self-muted direction.

While I did not embark upon my research with this activist agenda, as my academic career progresses and I meet with like-minded scholars in fields such as physical cultural studies, I feel it increasingly growing. The 'dialogic learning community' of physical cultural studies has helped bring my professional experiences and political positions into clearer focus, and I can sense my role expanding from that of a myopic researcher to that of researcher and advocate, and in this new multi-dimensional role I charge myself with the task of limiting the amount

of pain and suffering in the world in any way I can. As scholars who are committed to praxis, partiality, and the political, and given the fact that what we say and write may mean a great deal to the people we study, physical cultural studies scholars ought to be similarly committed to helping adults learn how to discipline without corporal punishment.

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PART V

Experiential bodies