

**MARIUSZ FINKIELSZTEIN**

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF BALLROOM DANCING: BETWEEN  
SPORT AND SERIOUS LEISURE**

There is a considerable discussion whether ballroom dancing is a sport or an art, resulting in the formal division between two world dancing federations (World DanceSport Federation and World Dance Council). This split has become more influential in recent years, leading to visible differences in dancing style and organization of training and competitions. What is more interesting, both federations have a division between amateurs and professionals – and what is more surprising many so-called “amateurs” are at a higher level than many “professionals.” These make us question the definition of sport ballroom dancing and the differences between sport and non-sport dancing activity. Similar dilemmas can be raised in the case of senior dancers (over 35 years).

The presentation will show differences between two federations (in philosophy and practice), between amateurs and professionals, and its curiosities. Senior dancing movement will be discussed separately to provide a more incisive picture of sport and hobby division dilemmas. For that purpose, the theory of *serious leisure* pursued by Canadian sociologist Robert Stebbins will be used. These issues can be shown and analyzed by using federations’ own rules, recordings of dancing performances, qualitative data from field research on ballroom dancers (amateurs and senior), and speaker’s own, long-lasting dancing experience as a competitor (international level, class “S”).