During the past two decades, studies on teachers' interpersonal style have increasingly been conducted from the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT, Ryan & Deci, 2000). In an attempt to better understand possible negative motivational processes in the context of physical education (PE), the present study starts from SDT, to investigate how a controlling teaching style thwarts students' needs for autonomy (i.e. to be the initiator of and truly endorse an action or behavior), competence (i.e. to feel effective in dealing with important challenges), and relatedness (i.e. to feel connected and loved by important others) so that negative undesired outcomes are more likely to emerge (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Based on structural equation modelling and multilevel regression analyses in a sample of 499 secondary school students (44% boys, mean age mean age 15.77 + 1.16) out of 30 different classes, we found that perceived controlling teaching (i.e. the use of pressuring tactics) was related to more need frustration ($\beta$=.69, $p < .001$), and less optimal motivational outcomes, such as controlled motivation ($\beta$=.68, $p<.001$), amotivation ($\beta$=.52, $p<.001$), and defiance ($\beta$=.67, $p<.001$). When students reported that their teacher was more controlling, they were also more likely to feel pressured (autonomy frustration), to start to doubt their capabilities to perform well (competence frustration), and to get the idea that the teacher disliked them (relatedness frustration). Students reporting high levels of need frustration were, in turn, not only more likely to see the lesson as a waste of time (amotivation), they also reported having put effort into the lesson only to meet externally or internally pressuring demands (controlled motivation). Analyses further revealed that students who scored higher on controlled motivation were less engaged ($\beta$=-.07, $p<.05$), while students with high levels of amotivation showed more discontentment ($\beta$=.28, $p<.001$).

Next students' defiance, that is, students' tendency to bluntly reject or resist against teachers' requests, displayed a direct relationship with controlling teaching ($\beta$=.67, $p<.001$) that was not mediated through need frustration, suggesting that students tended to straightforwardly defy the pressuring requests and expectations of controlling teachers. Moreover, defiance yielded negative educational outcomes, because students scoring high on defiance were less engaged ($\beta$=-.11, $p<.001$) and showed higher levels of discontentment ($\beta$=.43, $p<.001$).

One obvious practical recommendation following from current findings is to raise awareness among teachers about the motivational risks associated with controlling practices and to discourage them from engaging in such practices.