

Cultural aspects of Traditional Sports and Games

Michael Groll, Malgorzata Bronikowska & Jorma Savola

General introduction - Content and goal of article

This article highlights the links between sociological and cultural models and concepts on the one hand and Traditional Sports and Games (TSG) and their characteristics on the other hand. Furthermore, it contributes to the general discourse about the role of sport for society. After short explanations of those main concepts, which are important regarding TSG, examples that help to clarify the cultural importance of TSG will be offered. The focus lies on Finnish Baseball, pesäpallo, but other examples are given as well. Pesäpallo is one of the so-called vital TSG. These are sports and games that are still popular and play a dominant role in their respective societies. Those vital TSG have not much in common with other traditional games, plays or dances except that they are all quite old. This article gives some hints, why some TSG are still very popular, whereas other TSG are forgotten.

Most of the sociological and cultural concepts have ties to what is called collective identity, which spans from local to national identity. Collective identity is not only a complex issue, but also an issue which is discussed controversially. Hence, this approach could not be considered in this article to a bigger extent.

Traditional Sports and Games from different perspectives relating to cultural sciences

The field of sport and culture “refers to the values, ceremonies and way of life characteristics of a given group and the place of sport within that way of life. Like the concept of society, the notion of culture is widely used in the sociological, anthropological and historical study of sport. It encourages the researcher and student to consider the meanings, symbols, rituals and power relations at play within any particular cultural setting” (Jarvie, 2006, p. 5).

Traditional sports and games as a specific part of the global sport system may engender the notion of old, exotic and endangered cultural manifestations, but to some extent that is only the outsider’s view on an extremely widespread and interesting sub-group of sports, which can be analysed from different perspectives relating to sociological, anthropological or cultural sciences. These perspectives, shortly described below, are either a bigger area of research as cultural studies or anthropology of sports, or they are particular concepts and models like *habitus*, *collective memory* or *sites of memory*. These approaches, and the traditional games and sports themselves, can be easily linked with identity processes, which seem to be the main point regarding the role of TSG on personal, local, regional or even national level.

Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field of research that looks at the ways how culture is created and what roles culture has for example regarding to power and politics.

Cultural studies is a combination of social sciences and humanities, and it refers to methods and theories from literary studies, sociology, communications studies, media sciences, history, cultural anthropology, and economics. According to Hargreaves & McDonald (2000, 48) cultural studies “is concerned with the social significance and systematic analysis of cultural practices, experiences and institutions.” There is no doubt that sport and the sport system, with its global popularity, are a perfect subject to research in the field of cultural studies. Key issues in the work of sociologists referring to cultural studies are the concepts of sport, power and ideology, and the sport-media-complex. Specific work has been done regarding sport and feminism, sport and hooliganism or ethnographic studies on sports as leisure time activities. Hargreaves & McDonald (2000, 57) state, that cultural studies “has made a major contribution to our understanding of the complex relationships between culture (sport) and power, and about the activeness of culture.”

Pesäpallo or Finnish Baseball is not only a traditional sport from Finland, but also a modern sport. It is not only played in schools, but also in a championship league called Superpesis. Pesäpallo has its own stadiums and a strong organization dealing with all aspects, a modern sport federation has to deal with. In case of Finnish Baseball, the relationship between culture and politics is typical. Pesäpallo is one of the three most popular sports in Finland, only hockey and football attract more viewers. Pesäpallo is also a traditional sport, which comprises elements of traditional batting games with elements of American baseball. The man behind pesäpallo is Lauri Pihkala, an athlete, writer, coach and philosopher. After competing in the Olympic games of Stockholm in 1912, he worked as a coach in Finnish sport. His academic articles “often dealt with subjects like the ideal of the Olympics, youth education, national defense, the essence of sports and the promotion of public health via physical education” (Niinimäki, 2004, web).

According to LAITINEN (1983), Finland was in the 1910’s still under Russian rule and oppression. “Therefore nationalism was emphasized in Pihkala’s ideas: in his opinion, sports was a means for Finland in its struggle for independence. Sports were supposed to improve people’s physical condition, and thus their ability to defend their country at a time when Finland did not yet have its own army. Sports would also unify the Finnish people and boost national self-esteem” (Niinimäki 2004, web).

Habitus and cultural capital

Sports and sporting behavior have complex links to the lifestyles of people and to personal dispositions regarding participation and consumption of sports. With his concept of Habitus (including the other key words of capital and field), Pierre Bourdieu (1978) explains, in which way those preferences derive from one’s class and social position. A field is a specific and autonomous area of social practice, which is influenced by and influencing the rest of society. “A field exists because actors agree on the value of the field-specific capital, and see it worth struggling for. The field of sport exists, because actors consider victory in sport competitions worth struggling for” (Skille & Solbakken, 2014, 27). Individual preferences of social practices are built on elements, which stem from social and cultural capital dispositions. “Bourdieu refers to this as habitus, a theoretical concept which describes the magnitude and types of social and cultural capital which structure – but which do not determine – an individual’s preferences for social practice.

The habitus is the interconnection between ‘macro’ (the group’s culture) and ‘micro’ (the individual’s incorporation of this culture) [...]. Participation in sport during adolescence, or any physical activity in adulthood, can be considered as the outcome of the relation between demand and supply, or between what Bourdieu calls the individual’s habitus and the field [...] (Skille & Solbakken, 2014, 27f.)”.

Lavega (2007, 2) reminds us of the idea, that, according to Mauss (1935), each society has body techniques. “These are not natural ones because they have been acquired through “habitus”, that is to say, symbolic creations close to the norms and values of the society to which they belong.” Lavega (2007, S. 2) explains the cultural role of playing, citing Parlebas (2001, 2005). In games we are expressing ourselves culturally, and cultural characteristics correspond with playful originalities. “The ‘I’ of each culture is shown in its games”. When people of any traditional game are playing, they are also living symbols, signs and codes for the representative cultural characteristics of their society (ibid).

Social capital

Putnam (1993, S. 167) described social capital as “features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated action.” Putnam identified three forms of social capital: a) bonding: relations within homogeneous groups, like sport teams or clubs; b) bridging: horizontal relations between social entities like teams in a league; c) linking: ties between different classes of society. Putnam (2000) observed growing of individualism in the US, which has reduced civic engagement and has led to the decline of social capital. Transferred to the field of sports, declining sport participation and less voluntary engagement are signs of declining social capital.

What are the links between social capital and TSG? While playing a traditional game, the player gets in touch with special rules, symbols and relationships, and asks: “Who are my partners? Who are my opponents? Who are the players that I must look for to be successful in this game? Depending on the internal logic of the game, players will be introduced in a kind of micro-society or socio-cultural laboratory, in which actors, thanks to tradition, learn to create bonds” (Lavega, 2007, S. 1).

The behaviors of the player depend on the norms and values of the culture of the social group, from neighborhood to society. “The game is a kind of emblem of a culture, for that reason the deep knowledge of playful practices is an important element to know a society’ (Parlebas, 2005:13, as quoted in Lavega, 2007). “Although play and games have had a universal projection in all the cultures, in the scientific field they have remained hidden, ignored or little recognized... Nevertheless, the traditional game does not appear like a pure frivolity; it participates in a cultural identity in each community. That shows in original playful contexts that they are closed to the local manners, in creating bonds, in the life and its understanding. For this reason it is possible to argue that games are the mirror of their society” (Lavega, 2007, S. 2). To be more concrete, traditional games are not only a mirror of their society, but also a mirror of their communities or even neighborhoods and, of course, of individuals.

What happens to a traditional sport, when the society begins to change? Until the 1950s Finnish baseball pesäpallo was strongly tied to the local village communities in the countryside; the game was primarily about spending time together with friends and other players. “However, at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s the Finnish social structure changed: until then the population had been predominately rural, but already by 1970 half of the Finnish population had moved to the cities. This changed the nature of pesäpallo as well. In urban areas a different approach was needed in order to motivate the city dwellers to play. The game became more goal-oriented, with an emphasis on tactics and technique rather than playing just for enjoyment. Pesäpallo clubs started arranging training courses, and more attention was paid to the development of junior players” (Niinimäki, 2004, web). But, Pesäpallo still has a kind of rural image, as most of the teams in the men's championship league “Superpesis” come from small towns in the rural area.

Although it has a relatively short history, pesäpallo has become a Finnish institution, largely because it was created by the Fin Lauri Pihkala. It has become so important in Finnish society that it is a regular part of the school elementary physical education curriculum in Finland. All young Finns learn how to play pesäpallo in their early years.

A similar development can be observed in other European countries, for example in Denmark, as HAZELTON et al. (2015) points out. From a historical perspective, TSG dominated the body culture in Denmark until the mid of the 19th century. From that time on, TSG lost ground, while gymnastics became popular for the rural population and the urban population discovered Olympic sports for their leisure time activities. This development increased in the beginning of the twentieth century along with the industrialization and urbanization of the Danish society. TSG first lost influence among adults and youths, later among children. The reasons for this development are manifold and quite similar to what happened to other parts of the old rural culture in Denmark as well as in other European countries. Development proceeded swiftly in Denmark because it has a rather homogeneous culture characterized by consensus and lacks regional and lingual differences due to its small size and stability.

Collective memory and sites of memory

For a larger group, memories are just as important as for individuals: “The social environment, in which an individual human being lives, constitutes the frame for form and content of common memories. Historical interpretations and patterns of perception derive from the interplay between individual and collective memory” (François & Schulze, 2005, p. 7). The individual cannot develop memory without a particular social context, and individual memories can only be understood within the framework of collective memory. “Individual memory is always marked by the social context, by common patterns of thought and interpretation, by a culturally specific reading of the past, which, in concentrated form, make up the collective memory of a group” (Pfister, 2003, p. 303). Every individual is embedded in cultural and social structures, which are internalized by means of language and communication. Collective entities forming their own social context are, for example, family, friends, members of a club, party, social groups, etc. Similarly, a city, a region or even a nation provide a social context that makes a particular kind of collective identity possible.

Within collective memory, symbolic media make up the structure and fundament for long-term, inter-generational cultural communication. Symbolic media are also a useful means to build a sense of community and identity. When asking ourselves who we are and what we identify with, we need tangible images or meaningful events (Scheuble & Wehner, 2006, p. 5). Certain national institutions (e.g. cultural establishments, national galleries, national museums, but also national sports or national sport teams) and cultural symbols (e.g. monuments, flags, hymns, literature, sports events and their insignia) are commonly-used instruments for giving individuals of a particular community their identity and a feeling of togetherness. They satisfy basic social and emotional needs for orientation and identity. Those cultural symbols are in line with Schein's model of organizational culture, which identifies three levels: visible artifacts (later to be called *surface manifestations of culture*), values and basic assumptions (Schein, 2003, p. 3). Future research could combine collective memory semiotics and such management topics from organizational culture in order to analyze cultural changes within vital TSG as Finnish pesäpallo or Gaelic football.

The concept of sites of memory can be traced back to Pierre Nora's study, *Les lieux de mémoire* (1984-1992), which complements conventional historiography with memories from French history. Memory and history are, for Nora, opposite things: "Memory is life itself: It is sustained by groups of living people and evolves continuously; it is open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting [...]. History is the problematic and incomplete reproduction of what no longer is. Memory is always relevant and contemporary, a connection with the eternal present; while history is a representation of the past" (Nora, 1990, p. 12f). In this context, sites of memory are special records within the collective memory, which bring forth associations and emotions in a specific group of people. A site of memory can be any kind of material or immaterial unit of meaning, which has become, by human intent or simply the passing of time, a symbolic part of the memorial legacy of a social community (Konczal, 2011, S. 18). According to Pfister (2003, p. 306), sites of memory represent not only material things, but also common experiences and emotions, triumphs and defeats, joy and sorrow, and the idea of a nation as a whole. The collective memory of a nation creates points of reference for people of the same national background. Sites of memory are 'anchors' of collective memory, which is why they are centrally important for the formation of nations themselves. Collective sites of memory offer key points of continuation and connection over generations for individuals of a particular community. Sites of memory are thus elemental components of collective memory, which, in turn, can constitute essential characteristics of national identity.

Nora's concept of sites of memory was adopted by a number of other scholars, with certain modifications, and applied to other nations. By now, there are publications on thematically specific sites of memory in Italy, Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Luxemburg and Russia (see Konczal, 2011). However, the approach of the respective groups of researchers, and their ideas of how a site of memory should be defined, are, in some cases, widely divergent. Almost every project supervisor included historians and other experts in the discussion on which specific sites of memory should be taken into account and how they should be defined. The Austrian group, on the other hand, decided to hold a popular survey, in order to avoid academic preconceptions.

In the Netherlands, sites of memory were defined as purely topographical points, which had advantages for the presentation in the media, but which prevented more abstract elements from being included (Konczal, 2011, p. 31).

Table 1: Sites of memory in sports as described in the secondary literature

Sites of memory	Country	Source
Olympic Games Sydney 2000	Australia	Pfister (2003)
Football World Cup 1978 (Cordoba)	Austria	Spitaler & Lechnitz (1998)
Football World Cup 1974 (Sparwassers Goal)	GDR	Dieckmann (2009)
Gymnastics Movement	Germany	Pfister (2001)
Bundesliga	Germany	Gebauer (2001)
Rambling	Germany	Mrozek (2009)
Giro d'Italia	Italy	Pivato (1997)
Tour de France	France	Ozouf (1984)
Olympic Games Los Angeles 1932 (Swimming)	Japan	Niehaus (2011)
Olympic Games Tokyo 1964 (Design)	Japan	Traganou (2011)
Olympic Games Tokyo 1964 (Volleyball f.)	Japan	Tagsold (2011)
Football World Cup 2002 Japan & South Korea	Japan (local)	Takahashi (2011)
Rikidozan (Sumo Wrestling)	Japan	Thompson (2011)
Kōshien Stadium (Baseball)	Japan	Kelly (2011)
Supo-kon Manga (Sport Comic)	Japan	Abe (2011)

There is no set of criteria that researchers generally agree upon in order to define sites of memory. The arguments put forward for certain sites of memory are, in some cases, more convincing than others. Nevertheless, even a superficial analysis of these locations proves rewarding. Ten of the sixteen sites of memory refer to sports events, either specific matches or sports competitions as an institution. The rest is difficult to categorise. Within the sports-related sites of memory, the success of a particular teams is usually important, or the contribution of a particular sportsman, such as the two goals of Austrian forward Hans Krankl at the Football World Cup 1978 in Cordoba, or the goal of Jürgen Sparwasser in the GDR's victory over Western Germany at the Football World Cup 1974 in West Germany. In some cases, the site of the match (Cordoba Stadium) is emphasised.

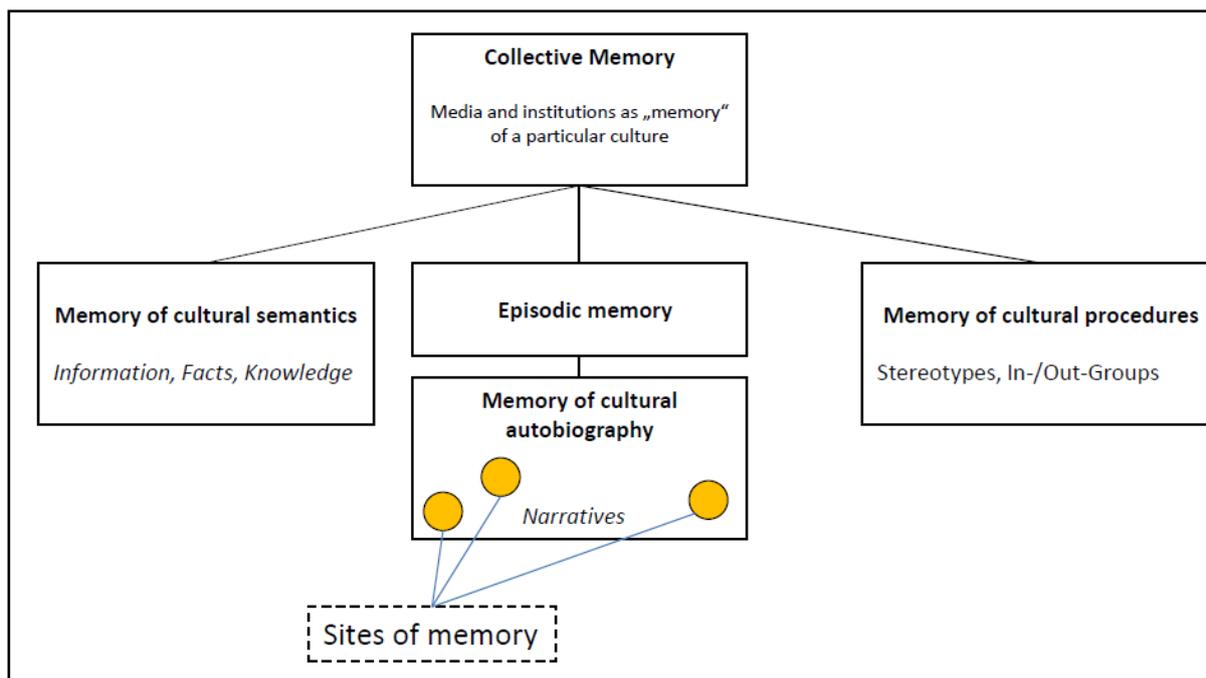


Image 1 Location of sites of memory in the memory model of cultural semiotics
 (Source: own diagram drawing on and deviating from Erll, 2011, p. 121)

Sites of memory are a special part of the collective memory, which includes symbols, media, institutions and rituals that connect society with the past. Sites of memory as the anchors of collective memory can be located within the memory of cultural autobiography, if we assume that collective memory works along the lines of individual memory. This metaphorical notion of memory consists of memory media, which can store, process and access memories. These three functions represent different kinds of memorial media. Storage occurs in oral, written, image or digital form (online) in archives, libraries, museums or other institutions. Mass media is important for the distribution of information. Today, online media revolutionize the methods by which cultural practices of remembering are spread, just as the invention of the printing press did in earlier centuries. Examples for access media are monuments, buildings, public squares or other symbolically concentrated manifestations which have the potential to trigger certain memories.

So far, among the many sites of memory listed in the secondary literature, only thirteen are from the field of sports. This leads us to the question of how sports or a specific sports event becomes so important that it can secure a dominant place not only in the collective memory of sports enthusiasts, but in society as a whole. Naturally, it must be more than the usual basics of popular sports today, which are covered by the mass media and watched by millions who hope for 'their' team's success. The viewers can identify with stars or sports heroes that may arise from these competitions, and can suffer or be exuberant with them. These are fundamental characteristics of a site of memory, but if these traits were sufficient, every single set of Olympic Games and every single World or European Championship would have to be considered a site of memory.

We will argue that the interplay of mass media and the audience's response creates an atmosphere, which reaches beyond the mere enjoyment of a successful sports competition, and its basic components of 'popular sport', 'big event', 'stars', 'mass media coverage' and 'success'.

Within the context of the social reception of a sports event, topics are addressed which have nothing to do with sports, but rather with one's nation. Thanks to the distribution by the mass media, these topics acquire a significance of their own. Dealing with characteristics or distinguishing features of one's country lead to a central idea, which is then connected to the sports event. Take Sydney in 2000: The success of Cathy Freeman brought the strained relations between the white population of Australia and the Aborigines to the fore. In the early 20th century, Aboriginal children were forcefully removed from their parents and given to white foster families. These victims of an inhuman policy were later called the "Stolen Generation". The confiscation of entire territories by white settlers, on which the Aborigines had been living for centuries, was another case in point. The victories of Cathy Freeman, herself a native Aborigine, brought these internal Australian conflicts onto the world stage. When she ran her rounds on the track after her victory, she waved the Aboriginal as well as the Australian flag before the eyes of the world, which was interpreted as a sign of reconciliation. Reconciliation is the powerful guiding idea behind the Olympic Games in Sydney, to which Cathy Freeman made a tremendous contribution. The organizing committee adopted this idea and hired the band Midnight Oil for the closing ceremony. Midnight Oil showed solidarity with the Aborigines with their world hit "Beds are burning", in which they called for the white population to accept responsibility for the past: „The time has come, To say fair's fair, To pay the rent, To pay our share“ .

Pesäpallo is not a single sport event, it is a popular national sport. What was said about the guiding idea behind a specific event cannot be applied to a single sport in general. Pesäpallo is for many Fins an important part of their daily lives, but it maybe doesn't have that *one* meaning which goes beyond pesäpallo. But Pesäpallo has of course a dominant place in the collective memory, due to its tradition and due to its mastermind Lauri Pihkala. Pihkala himself was honoured with a postage stamp from 1988 commemorating the 100th anniversary of his birth. Furthermore a memorial in Helsinki is dedicated to Pihkala, unveiled in 1988. Putting it all together what we have said about pesäpallo, we have to state, that Finnish baseball has gained its very important role in the collective memory of the Fins. It is traditional, a Fin invented it, Lauri Pihkala is the "star" behind pesäpallo with more stories that can be told about him and it is still vital and very popular. It has a significant place in the daily lives of Finnish population.

Other traditional sports and games can be analyzed in the same way: does the national game belong to the collective or cultural memory of the respective society? Is the game in some way part of the national heritage? Does it promote or strengthen the local, regional, national or even European identity? Are there national myths in which the traditional game plays a specific role? Can we identify national legends or coherent narratives which could be a sign for national importance? In general, the approach of collective memory fits perfectly to traditional sports and games, and it would be a well appreciated effort, when researchers start to do research in these areas.

Anthropology and ethnography of sport

“Recreational activities have been classic ethnographic concerns, and sophisticated questions about the distributions of games were asked early in the history of anthropology. Still, the science has yet to produce a general theory which deals with such anthropological problems as the description and explanation of the historical development of games, their world distribution, and their functional significance in various societies. This paper suggests a line of inquiry which might lead to the construction of such a theory” (Roberts, Arth & Bush, 1959). These are the first lines of an article, which is characterized by Blanchard (2000, 146) as remarkable “first effort by anthropologists to deal with the issue of games from a strictly theoretical perspective.” Even more important than that is the fact that this article “brought attention to games and sports as important cultural phenomena and as legitimate subjects for anthropologists” (Blanchard, 2000, 147). Blanchard (2000, 151) concludes, that although the “literature on sports culture, sport in small-scale society, sport in early history and prehistory, traditional sport, ethnic sport and folk sports is expanding rapidly, there is a need for description and preservation of that sport culture in order to prevent the record of sporting diversity around the world from being lost as a result of the homogenizing influence of globalism.”

Originating in anthropology, ethnographic researchers spend time living within a culture in order to gather insight into everyday lives of the people. Methods include observations, written and video diaries, qualitative interviews and analysis of texts, products or other artefacts. Ethnography “may be defined as both a qualitative research process and method (one conducts an ethnography) and product (the outcome of this process is an ethnography) whose aim is cultural interpretation. The ethnographer goes beyond reporting events and details of experience” (Hoey, 2014, 1). Main objective of ethnography is to attempt to explain the cultural constructions of the people observed. An ethnographic approach to pesäpallo described the standing of Finnish baseball in smaller villages and the impact of the noise, the home crowd is making on the opponent team. “The male pesäpallo team Vimpelin Veto from the small village of Vimpeli in rural Finland has a very active crowd, with a high know-how of the sport. The village has only a little over 3200 inhabitants but had an average of 2087 spectators/game during the 2012 season” (Ahlsved 2013). The strategic noisemaking aims to violate the visiting team’s communication: “Veto’s player Mikko Rantalahti reveals that when the crowd is making lots of noise the visiting players’ tactical “wrong”-shouts (“väärä” in Finnish), like when a pitched ball is too low, can’t be heard by the field players of the visiting team. The audiences’ collective shouting makes the soundscape more lo-fi and the visiting team’s communication difficult” (ibid).

Ludodiversity, sportisation and creolisation

The concept of ludodiversity (“ludus”, Latin for play) stands for the wide diversity in games, sports, plays, physical exercises, dances and acrobatics. Similar to the biodiversity, the term ludodiversity is connotated with the apprehension that traditional sports and games are endangered species which are seriously threatened by modernisation, (neo)colonisation and globalisation (Renson, 2004). These processes influence ludodiversity in two ways: We “are witnessing a process of greater homogeneity that is reducing the existing diversity and, as far as ludodiversity is concerned, decreasing movement cultures and movement expressions” (Digennaro, 2008, 18).

This sporting monoculture with its “rapidly spreading import-export” (Renson, 2004) of modern competitive sport “is dominating ludic body cultures; this process of so-called sportisation has been facilitated by the rapid development of information and communication technologies and by the great appeal that certain kinds of sport can generate in the media” (Digennaro, 2008, 18). On the other hand, a parallel process of creolisation, in which traditional or folk games and sports may survive, is in place. Cultural creolisation “in its fullest sense describes the development of new traditions, aesthetics, and group identities out of combinations of formerly separate people and cultures” (Spitzer, 2003, 58).

The case of Lauri Pihkala and pesäpallo is not a perfect example for creolisation, but it is at least an example of cultural import mixed with Finnish traditions. Pihkala “designed the game on the basis of the traditional ball-batting game, kuningaspallo, which the people were already familiar with” (Niinimäki 2004). After the revision of kuningaspallo he created a new batting game based on kuningaspallo. Pitkäpallo again was changed from time to time to become more competitive. Finally he invented pesäpallo which needs more co-operation, runs and tactics than the variations before, because he “understood that the game needed competitive elements in order to survive among the new sports that were gaining popularity” (Niinimäki 2004). There are many similarities between the development from kuningaspallo to pesäpallo and the development of decktennis played on cruise liners and ringtennis (or tenniquoits) in Germany. A German mayor saw decktennis on a travel to the United States and brought this game to his hometown Karlsruhe. Little by little, decktennis was changed with more competitive elements and these found their way into the game.

Conclusion

Defining and classifying TSG is as difficult as defining sports in general. It ranges from very simple games for children to (semi)-professional team sports with well-organized events and leagues. Some TSG are very popular in their respective region, other wait to be rediscovered again. However, despite of big differences according to popularity, organizational structure and motoric complexity, TSG evoke notions of being something old, geographically specific and worth to be prevented from oblivion. These notions have to do with the cultural aspects of sport in general and of TSG in particular. But what are those cultural aspects? In this paper we present some common models and perspectives from cultural and sociological sciences and analysed, how TSG fit into those.

Cultural studies as interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary field of research can easily contribute to a number of topics regarding TSG. In the case of Pesäpallo, the relation between TSG and politics can be analysed together with methods from political sciences. We have learned that Pesäpallo was seen as an instrument to strengthen the physical condition of the population and to support the Fin’s struggle for independence in the beginning of the 20th century. A deeper analysis of this from the cultural studies perspective could unveil reasons, extents and mechanisms. Habitus, cultural capital and social capital are about building bridges and bonds between individuals in a community. Sport is such a perfect gateway to create strong links between group members.

Sport then is not only a living symbol for cultural characteristics of any given community, but also a source which generates identity on an individual and collective level.

This function of sport and TSG is even more effective if they are part of the memory culture. All TSG have definitely historical aspects, because they are old. Some of them may be forgotten, with only a few players playing these games. But some of them are still vital, like Pesäpallo. Pesäpallo has changed over the years to modern sport, still vital and popular, but at the same time some aspects, like the memorial of Lauri Pihkala in Helsinki, are part of national heritage. Anthropological and ethnographic research aims to attempt to explain the cultural characteristics of the sample which is observed. Especially the almost forgotten European TSG would be a good subject for ethnographic research. Who is playing the game? Why? Where? And of which tone is the interaction?

Ludodiversity, sportisation and creolisation finally shed a light on the scope and the development of sports and TSG. Sometimes, sports were imported from abroad, and then adapted to meet local preferences and characteristics. In the case of pesäpallo, it was successful; the Finnish baseball variation is a national sport. There are so many other things to explore in the world of Traditional Sports and Games. The concepts and perspectives presented here, coming from sociology and cultural sciences, offer a plenty of ways to further analyse TSG and their role concerning building bonds and creating culture and identity in communities.

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This article edited by the German Sport University Cologne and University School of PE Poznan is published as part of project „Recall: Games of the Past – Sports for Today”, co-funded by the European Commission. Project Recall aims to reintroduce Traditional Sports and Games into the daily lives of children and youth, as a means to tackle social challenges of today, including the physical inactivity crisis.

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