

Ethnosport: Concept, Theory and Development

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Abstract

This article examines the definitions of the concept of “ethnosport” presented in the scientific literature, as well as its theoretical foundations and the role of ethnosport in modern processes of globalization, its role in the processes of preserving ethnic identity is updated. In addition, information is provided on international organizations and projects that make a significant contribution to the popularization of types of ethnosport.

Keywords: Sport, ethnosport, sportization, theory, UNESCO, ethnomovement, traditional games, events, organization, world ethnosport, Challenge, World Nomad Games, confederation.

Introduction

In the context of globalization, the encouragement of cultural differences between peoples is perceived as an integral part of environmental programs for the support and preservation of historically established socio-cultural systems conditioned by the environment. At the same time, mechanisms for protecting authentic types of physical activity have not yet been developed, and they are under constant threat of oblivion due to the refusal of national governments to recognize them as sports of the Anglo-Saxon model, which legitimately has the exclusive right to funding in most states. In modern society, sport is perceived much more broadly than is prescribed in the law on sports or interpreted in the sports environment. Modern sport is constantly being updated with more and more new types of sports. Various types of physical activity have undergone sportization, along with those that owe their origin to the technologies of the industrial era, and some traditional types of physical activity that have existed throughout human history have also become sports.

However, not all traditional types of physical activity (primordial fun) lend themselves to the procedure of sportization – transformation into sports. For example, it is impossible to even imagine the names of sports federations for running with a spoon in your mouth with an egg on it; or running with buckets on the yoke filled with water; or round dance games. The carnival nature of these games, their rootedness in the festive culture, make them unsuitable for sports activities focused on demonstrating the highest achievements (note, not obvious to everyone, which explains the obscurity of most champions).

The difficulty of sportifying traditional pastimes is also evident in the fact that most of them are organized for pleasure, and not with the goal of identifying a winner. For example, authentic lapta and stick play have nothing in common with the sports “lapta” and “bandy”. This is illustrated even more clearly by playing with a ball and badminton during rest, when the ball and shuttlecock are served in such a way that this serve will certainly be accepted. We even get upset when the opponent cannot accept the serve. And this is the main contradiction between traditional games and sports; in sports, you must serve in such a way that the opponent can under no circumstances accept your serve [4].

Ethnosport is aimed at preserving the gaming heritage of humanity, at solving the problems of encouraging and developing traditional types of physical activity that form the basis of traditional games. Ethnosports classes develop ethnomotor skills, which are possessed only by those who lead a traditional lifestyle. In the conditions of urbanization - the urban type of development of rural areas, many traditional skills, such as rowing, throwing a lasso or an ax, require mastering anew. Those who decide to prepare to participate in traditional games should have the opportunity to acquire the ethno-movement skills of their ancestors. Such a desire is enshrined in one of the fundamental rights of peoples to cultural differences and originality [13].

Ethnosport is a system for restoring ethnomobility skills inherent in the traditional way of life and lost in urbanization. The theory of ethnosport is a response to the challenges of cultural localization, it is developed from the standpoint of practical cultural studies, taking into account the inevitable change in the institutions of modern sports, its structure and the expansion of the conceptual apparatus used in the interests of preserving and encouraging the cultural diversity of the globalizing world. One of the objectives of the theory is to describe the activities of organizing traditional games and methods for their revival. Based on this basic position, ethnosport (the object of the theory) can be defined as an institutional form of a unified sociocultural space for organizations involved in the development of traditional types of physical activity [10].

In terms of its purpose, the theory of ethnosport is a methodological basis for designing and forecasting the processes of formation and functioning of sociocultural systems in the conditions of the growing processes of ethnocultural representations in sports. Against the background of growing tensions regarding the social benefits of sport, the theory of ethnosport makes significant adjustments to the understanding of this socio-cultural phenomenon with the allocation of the ethnosphere. The fact is that any form, any manifestation of human culture is always associated with an ethnos, because there is no culture outside a person, outside his creativity, traditions, values and norms, and a person, according to Yu.V. Chernyavskaya, is always and feels like a member of one or another ethnic group – an ethnicist (ethnophor) [11: 168].

Ethnosport is a new institutional form that unites culture and sport, it is aimed at encouraging festive and ritual culture and the trouble-free operation of the mechanisms for the inheritance of traditional games. The theory of ethnosport was first published in the article “Ethnocultural diversity of sport” in the UNESCO/EOLSS Encyclopedia. Thus, we can conclude that the theory of ethnosport reveals the real status of modern sport, which is described as it is, and not as it was prescribed to be in the social space in the 19th–20th centuries, when the formation of this sociocultural phenomenon was just underway.

The theory of ethnosport was developed and published in 2012 by Russian culturologist Alexei Kylasov. The author introduced into scientific circulation a new concept of “ethnosport”, which

has become widespread in the scientific literature (mentioned in 419 scientific publications according to Google Scholar and in 338 scientific publications according to the RSCI), as well as in documents of government bodies and media publications (73,000 mentions according to Google). He put forward and substantiated the theory of an inevitable change in the paradigm of sports, correlating it with the concept of “cultural relativism” and the principles of equality of cultures of all peoples [3]. The researcher notes that the origins of ethnosport are in the cultural practices of traditional games of various nations. Despite the fact that their play range is significantly narrowing, one can observe an increase in the number of different holidays with primordial amusements, “continuing the traditions of their ancestors in order to preserve national isolation” [6: 7]. The theory of ethnosport clearly reveals the “survival state of traditions” (A. van Gennep), contributes to the emergence of a new cultural sport – its “absent structure” (U. Eco) – its folklore component.

One of the key themes of the theory of ethnosport was the development of the provisions of the theory of ethnomotority (2003) by the French sociologist Pierre Parlebas, who identified differences in the motor activity of different peoples, examining them in the ethnological and geographical dimensions. Differences in motor activity concern not only the motor skills of the movements themselves, but also bodily behavior (gestures, postures, manners of walking, running, swimming, etc.). To designate such a plurality of ethnocultural manifestations, Pierre Parlebas proposed the definition of "ethnomotority".

The specificity of the institutionalization of the theory of ethnosport as a scientific and university discipline is that these processes – the formation of a new scientific direction and the development of educational programs on this subject - are happening simultaneously today, although there is usually a time lag separating the process of developing a new theory and the phase of its adaptation within the educational process. One of the reasons for the "accelerated institutionalization" is the increased public interest in the problem of preserving ethnocultural diversity. This interest is noticeably increasing in the conditions of total socio-cultural unification, commodity fetishism and commercialization of the gaming traditions of peoples, as well as the ever-increasing criticism of these trends from the expert community.

The concept of “ethnosport” has an interdisciplinary nature, which is formed in the field of sports, anthropology, history, cultural studies, sociology, pedagogy, psychology and economics. The very concept of “ethnosport” is used as a synonym for national sports [8: 107]. It can be argued that ethnosport is a transspecific feature of sport with pronounced features of ethnic identity. At the present stage, the development of ethnosport is happening in two directions. The first is the development of a universal model of Anglo-Saxon sports, the modernization of traditional sports competitions using elements of folk fun and games. An example is belt wrestling, popular in the countries of Central Asia, curling in the Scandinavian countries, etc.

According to the second direction, a search for new forms (“non-Western” in origin) of local cultures is being carried out, their promotion, and the creation of regional ethnocultural sports centers. This direction presupposes the mandatory use of national costumes and transcribed vocabulary in competitions and in communication between participants [7].

Ethnosport is a search for new institutional norms for encouraging and preserving the game traditions of peoples within the framework of the transformation of the existing sports infrastructure, and these transformations themselves serve to increase the cultural potential of the

globalizing world and the formation of a global ecumene, taking into account the cultural, religious and civilizational characteristics of peoples and ethnic groups [4: 10]. It was ethnomotorism that gave the decisive impetus to the origin and further evolution of primordial amusements, which became not only the cultural basis of modern sport, but also a means of its permanent transformation, expressed in the process of creating more and more new federations for ethnocultural types of competitions [4: 25].

Ethnosport integrates those sports events, the program of which is formed from traditional games and competitions. In order to achieve authenticity of perception, ethno-sports events are organized according to the rules and using the equipment of local traditional games, sports infrastructure with the involvement of athletes from similar sports. An example is the participation of athletes of freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, judo, jiu-jitsu and others in traditional wrestling tournaments.

"Traditional games" are understood as ethnocultural festivals, the program of which includes traditional amusements, arranged during mass gatherings timed to coincide with calendar holidays or religious rites. Traditional games are declared by UNESCO to be an integral part of the cultural heritage of humanity and serve the reproduction of ethnocultural identity and cultural diversity. One of the areas of activity of the UNESCO Sector for Social and Humanitarian Research is traditional games and competitions [4: 33]. The basis of traditional games are primordial fun or traditional types of physical activity, which from time immemorial could be seen during traditional holidays – mass gatherings timed to coincide with calendar dates, special events or religious ceremonies. Traditional holidays now mean ethnocultural festivals consisting of oral folk art, music, dances, fairs of crafts and crafts, and, of course, traditional games [9].

The undying interest in traditional games, which are the physical and spiritual expression of human adaptation to the natural and cultural environment, serves as a protective mechanism for the reproduction of the identity of an ethnocultural community. It helps to resist the sometimes thoughtless transformation of primordial pastimes into sports. The program of traditional games is developed in accordance with calendar and ethnic status. Competitions can be of two types: 1) without identifying a winner (the so-called games for pleasure) which are historically called "original fun"; 2) with the identification of the winner, which we called "ethnosport". The practice of ethnosports is based on the principles of customary law - historically established methods of assessment based on traditional criteria, which allows us to conclude that they are institutionally contradictory with the so-called national sports, determined in modern law with a predominance of the procedural aspect, expressed in the specific metrics of the adversarial process (awarding points and measuring time) [5: 43].

The generalized concept of "ethnosport" in relation to traditional games was used in their works by Russian scientists V.P. Kochnev [2] and V.I. Prokopenko [8]. This definition, in the context of the challenges of modern society aimed at presenting sport as a set of any forms of physical activity, was used by the author in describing the new sociocultural function of sport to preserve and encourage cultural diversity, identified during research.

Ethnosport events can be of three types:

- traditional games where competitions are held along ethnic lines and are called "Russian ethnosport", "Buryat ethnosport", "Tatar ethnosport", etc.; the program is formed in accordance with the calendar status of folk holidays;

- ethnosport festivals – traditional games of a particular people, which are held 1) outside the places of existence of the gaming tradition, 2) outside the holidays of the national calendar; for example, during presentations of regions and countries at industrial exhibitions, celebrations of memorable dates, and in other cases;
- festivals of traditional types of physical activity – competitions in types of ethnosport - traditional wrestling, kayaking or canoeing, etc.; serve to develop the skills of the participants and prepare them for traditional games.

The first global organization that set one of its goals to develop the traditional games of peoples was the International Association of Sports for All (TAFISA), which since 1992 has been holding the World Games “Sport for All” under the patronage of UNESCO and the IOC. TAFISA is a network organization uniting national associations, clubs and government agencies. The main activity of TAFISA is aimed at developing the Sport for All movement, which is interpreted by its members much more broadly than in the IOC due to the inclusion of traditional types of physical activity and extreme sports. It is generally recognized that these games have made a great contribution to the preservation and discovery of traditional games and national competitions of many nations. The first such Games took place in 1992 in Bonn (Germany), then in 1996 in Bangkok (Thailand), in 2000 in Hanover (Germany) and in 2008 in Busan (South Korea), in 2012 in Siauliai (Lithuania).

The World Ethnosport Society was founded in 2012 in Montreal (Canada) by two organizations - the Ethnosport Society of Canada and the world's first ethnosport organization, created in 2011 - the Federation of Traditional Games and Ethnosport of Russia. In 2018, the headquarters of the World Ethnosport was moved to Riga (Latvia). The president of the organization is the author of the theory of ethnosport, Russian cultural scientist Alexey Kylasov [14].

Ethnosport is a modern folk form of sport that allows one to preserve the authenticity of traditional games and make them relevant to the perception of participants and spectators. The development of ethnosport corresponds to the activities and programs of UNESCO: promoting cultural diversity, dialogue between cultures and preserving intangible cultural heritage for the purpose of sustainable development of society. World ethnosport interacts with various UNESCO projects – the Permanent Advisory Council of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee on Physical Education and Sports (CIGEPS), the UNESCO Interactive Atlas "Silk Road", the UNESCO Open Digital Library on Traditional Games (ODLTG). World ethnosport unites scientists, organizers of traditional games and ethnosport events from 48 countries on all continents.

World ethnosport implements joint programs with UNESCO category II institutions – the UNESCO International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations (Mongolia) and the UNESCO/Tencent Open Digital Library for Traditional Games (China). World ethnosport interacts with various UNESCO projects on traditional games and sports - the Ad hoc UNESCO Committee of Advisors on Traditional Games and Sports, the Permanent Advisory Council of the Intergovernmental Committee on Physical Education and Sports (CIGEPS) [14].

The main event project of World Ethnosport is the World Series of Ethnosport Challenge tournaments – regular international competitions that are held with the participation of famous athletes according to the rules and equipment of local traditional games in order to preserve and develop the intangible cultural heritage of ethnic groups. Ethnosport Challenge tournaments are aimed primarily at preserving cultural ties along the Silk Road, where traditions of interaction

between peoples have historically developed. The series began in 2018 and four tournaments have already taken place – in Russia, Malaysia, Brazil and Lithuania.

The huge interest in the revival and preservation of ethnic sports, traditional folk competitions and games of nomadic peoples in the modern world is evidenced by events held since 2014 in Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and other countries under the name of the World Nomad Games, in which representatives of not only the peoples of Central Asia, but also Europe and Africa take part. In our opinion, there is a social and scientific need for a new and consistent study and generalization of the theoretical and practical knowledge accumulated by nomadic peoples, and in particular the Kyrgyz, when organizing heroic competitions and outdoor games. The sources in which this experience is reflected today can be works of oral folk art (epics and tales), literary, ethnographic and historical works. The use of methods for organizing and conducting such competitions is important both for the development and improvement of modern ethnosport, and for the spiritual and moral education of the younger generation [12].

The peculiarities of traditional competitions and games of nomadic peoples, their inextricable connection with the history and culture of these countries, their influence on strengthening and maintaining health, prolonging human life, and the methods of using various games and competitions have been studied since ancient times. This is evidenced, in particular, by the “Canon of Medical Science” by Abu Ali ibn Sina [1: 133]. Such modern researchers as representatives of Central Asian countries, such as O. Sholomitsky, M. Tanikeev, Kh. Anarkulov, N. Tursunov, A. Bekiev, etc., also showed interest in this problem.

The World Nomad Games were established in Kyrgyzstan in 2012 to preserve the traditions of nomadic peoples. The objectives of the World Nomad Games are to preserve the cultural heritage of nomadic peoples and strengthen friendship between countries. Games revive ancient traditions and introduce the world to unique cultural phenomena. The main goal is to bring people together through common interests and respect for cultural diversity. Through sporting events such as horse racing and wrestling, participants learn to appreciate the history of nomadic peoples and also inspire youth to preserve their traditions [12].

The World Ethnosport Confederation (WEC) was established in 2015 and is headquartered in Istanbul, Turkey. By supporting traditional sports and games, the confederation seeks to bring them to a more permanent and systematic state. The goal of the organization is to gather traditional sports and games from around the world under a single institutional roof, ensure unity and solidarity between member federations, and expand and improve the understanding of ethnosport. Since 2018, the International Federation "Koresh" has been a member of the World Ethnosport Confederation.

In recent years, a new trend has emerged in the sociocultural design of folk holidays – along with the usual performances of folklore groups, traditional games are increasingly being included in their program. This approach is quite historical, since the competitive gaming tradition initially served as the cultural core of the national holiday. Thus, it becomes obvious that ethnosport is a significant and effective tool not only in the processes of preserving the cultural and historical identity of peoples, but also in their social mobilization. A significant role in this process is played by traditional martial arts and competitions, which have long been the eventful core of folk festivities and holidays. Their originality and innovation contribute to the creation of new trajectories of interaction between subjects participating in the preservation of folk traditions.

Ethnosport brings to modern life not only new communication models, but also an important feeling and awareness of harmonious participation in the history of the Motherland, one's people, and world ethnic groups, which is an important indicator of the quality of life and mental health of any person.

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