JEAN-PIERRE ROSSIE

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR A CROSSCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF
PLAY ACTIVITIES, GAMES AND TOYS

1. INTRODUCTION

I made my first steps in the field of socialization and the relationship between child and society when working on a dissertation towards the licentiate degree in African History and Philology in 1967 on the topic of traditional attitudes towards children in different societies of Zaire. After a stay in Senegal and two years working in Ghent in an institution for youngsters as chief-educator of a group of fifteen adolescent boys, I was accepted into the Belgian National Fund for Scientific Research in view of the preparation of a doctor's degree. I qualified as doctor in African History and Philology in 1973 with a thesis in Dutch on "Child and Society. A Study of the Process of Socialization in Patrilineal Central Africa".

In 1975 and 1977 I had the possibility through grants from the above mentioned fund, to do research on children among the Ghib, a sedentarizing population from the north-west Tunisian Sahara. Quite soon it became clear to me that the best way to become acquainted with the world of the Ghib children was through observing their games and by playing with them. So doing I collected and described some 180 games with the corresponding toys.

While working in Ghent as an anthropologist and social worker for migrants from 1980 on, I started to analyse the collection of toys from the Sahara and North Africa of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. At the same time I collected all the bibliographical data on games and toys in these regions. Meanwhile the terminological difficulties and the problems of classification urged me to work out a classification system.

From 1984 on I have used this material more and more in a cross-cultural, social and pedagogical way, stimulated towards this by the Unit for Co-operation with UNICEF and World Food Program of the Unesco, the Belgian Committee for UNICEF and the Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

As the result of a study visit in April 1987 at the Institute of Psychology of the University of Belgrade, a protocol of collaboration with the Belgrade-OMEP Traditional Games Project was elaborated with prof. dr. Ivan Ivić and his collaborators.
I started to analyse terminologies and classifications concerning games and toys for a practical reason, not out of theoretical endeavour. As I wanted to make my research on Saharan and North African games and toys available and useful for educationalists, psychologists, sociologists and other specialists not acquainted with the use of ethnological research, I got the idea of mentioning after each game or toy the category or categories to which it belonged. Quite soon however I realized that there was a lot of confusion and overlapping. In order to overcome this situation, I tried some years ago to develop a unified classification based on the comparison of an important number of classifications and terminologies published in Dutch, English, French and German.

In view of the elaboration of a classification system for the Belgrade-OMEP Traditional Games Project, I recently made a comparative analysis between my own classification system, the classification of play, games and toys elaborated by Denise Garon for the ESAR-system (1985), the protocols proposed by Aleksandra Marjanović published in "Traditional Games Project and Children of Today" (1986) and the remarks made by Ivan Ivić and others in the same book.

The classification proposed hereafter has been discussed during the OMEP Seminar "Play and Culture: The Child between the World of Yesterday and the World of Tomorrow" (Oslo, 30–31 July 1987), the symposium "Research on Traditional Games" of the 2e Colloque "Recherche Interculturelle" organized by the Association pour la Recherche Interculturelle (Fribourg, 7–9 October 1987) and the 16th Congress "Toys and the Development of Personality" of the International Council for Children's Play (Suhl/DDR, 12–16 October 1987).

Contacts with especially German and Italian scholars during the two conferences in October, provided me with some new classifications. However, these have not been integrated into the comparative analysis.

2. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SOME RECENT CLASSIFICATIONS

The comparison between the classification of Denise Garon, the terminological and classificatory items found in "Traditional Games and Children of Today" and my own classification system led to the following remarks:

1. Marjanović (p. 141, 152) asks special attention for the geographic, social and cultural context. This aspect
is only very briefly mentioned in her protocols and is lacking in the Esar system. In my own system the geographic, social and cultural context has been fully developed.

2. Marjanović (p. 152) argues that it is necessary to mention the attitude of adults towards the games of children. In order to integrate this topic, I have introduced at the end of my classification an item on the "Adult's Attitude" towards the game in question.

3. Following a suggestion of Marjanović, I also introduced the topic of "Variation(s)" and innovations in a game.

4. Because of certain remarks and suggestions put forward in the book on the Belgrade-OHEP Traditional Games Project, I have here and there added an item to my classification, especially concerning the topic "Materials" (Marjanović p. 144, Ivić, a.o.).

5. The references concerning the informants and the researchers or collectors are indispensable. Therefore these items have been mentioned at the end of the classification. However, I think it would be better to mention these informations in a separate protocol. This way all this has not to be repeated for each game or toy. Referring to a code designing a given informant, collector or researcher would be sufficient.

6. The same could be done for most of the geographic, social and cultural aspects.

7. Following remarks of Elly Basić (p. 129-134) one should mention the method of collecting. This could also be done in a separate protocol and through a code of reference.

8. I think it might be better to take over the classification used in the ESAR system for the category B "conduites cognitives" and the category C "habiletés fonctionnelles". Eventually one could add something or slightly change the succession of the items. This way the categories "Caillois-Winnykamen" and "Development of Exploration" of my own classification could be integrated in a more suitable way.

9. As mentioned by Denise Garon herself (p. 34) the aspects of the expression of feelings and of linguistic abilities need to be integrated in the ESAR System. For these topics I refer to my categories of "Development of Feelings", "Idiom", "Verbal" and "Verbmotor". But as a colleague of Denise Garon told me during the Congress of the International Council for Children's Play in Suhl
(12-16.10.1987) that these items have been added to the ESAR classification, a comparison will be necessary.

10. In the ESAR system the aspect of social interaction is limited to the social activities. For this category I refer to the "Development of Social Aspects" of my classification. A fusion with the category D "activités sociales" of ESAR is possible.

11. The categories "Development of Magico-Religious Aspects" and "Development of Aesthetical Aspects" are peculiar to my classification.

12. In response to the lecture given by Sarah Kalúa Lober-Kutta from Cameroun at the OMEP Seminar in Oslo, I introduced a new category on the "Development of Sexuality".

13. As has done Denise Garon for the ESAR system, it will be necessary to provide definitions for the different classificatory items.

14. As proved by the different classificatory items used for games and toys in the publication on the Belgrade-OMEP Traditional Games Project (p. 17-19, 62-63, 81-82, 102-106, 108-109) and by different other terminological lists I have collected, it seems indispensable to develop, next to protocols for describing play activities, games and toys and a generally agreed upon classification system, a comparative list of terms. This alphabetical and multilingual list should point out the terms that refer to the same or similar categories.
3. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR A CROSSCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF
PLAY ACTIVITIES, GAMES AND TOYS
JEAN-PIERRE ROSSIE

CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR A CROSSCULTURAL ANALYSIS OF
PLAY ACTIVITIES, GAMES AND TOYS

NAME OF THE GAME
Name
Transcription
Translation

ETHNIC GROUP AND LOCATION
Continent
Africa
America
Asia
Australia
Europe
Geographical system
state
region
settlement
hamlet
village
small town
big town
old settlement
recent settlement
new settlement

Ethnic group
Ecological system
plain
hill
mountain
desert
forest
waterside
countryside
urban area
other

Economic system
hunting-gathering
herding
agriculture
fishing
industry
trade
crafts
other

Residential system
virilocal
usurilocal
bilocal
neolocal
nomadic
seali-nomadic
sedentary

Social system
bilineal
matrilineal
patrilineal
traditional
in transition
modern
other

Family structure
household/nuclear family
extended family
other

Pedagogical system
no pedagogical institutions
pedagogical institutions
pre-school
primary school
secondary school
high school
age-group
initiation society
other
youth movement
other

Political system
egalitarian society
rank society
stratified society
state society
other

Ideological system
magical
religious
philosophical

comments

comments

comments

comments

comments
### ORIGIN OF THE GAME
- Indigenous
- Foreign
- Mixed
- Invention
- Ancient
- Recent
- New
- Comments

### PLAYER(S)
- Sex
  - female
  - male
  - joint (both sexes)
  - separate (both sexes but)
  - comments
- Age
  - youngest
  - oldest
  - -1 year
  - 1-5 years
  - 6-12 years
  - adolescence
  - adult
  - joint
  - comments
- Schooling
  - nursery school
  - primary school
  - secondary school
  - high school
  - comments
- Number
  - alone
  - two
  - three
  - collective
  - team
  - comments
- Co-participation
  - age
  - family
  - vicinity
  - friendship
  - hazard
  - spontaneous agreement
  - method (e.g., counting off)
  - other
  - comments

### Structure of the play group
- nuclear family
- extended family
- vicinity
- non-vicinity
- without leader(s)
- informal leader(s)
- formal leader(s)
- other
- comments

### SPATIO-TEMPORAL
- Place
  - indoors
  - outdoors
  - playground
  - plain
  - hill
  - mountain
  - oasis
  - dunes
  - field
  - forest
  - waterside
  - other
  - comments
- Year
  - spring
  - summer
  - autumn
  - winter
  - whole year
  - rainy season
  - dry season
  - celebration or festivity
  - other
  - comments
- Time
  - day
  - dusk
  - night
  - comments
- Duration
  - short
  - long
  - time of duration
  - comments
- Frequency
  - rare
  - common
  - comments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IDIOM</th>
<th>Function of object(s) in game</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-narrative</td>
<td>fixed function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narrative</td>
<td>versatile function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corporal expression</td>
<td>indispensible</td>
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<tr>
<td>verbal expression</td>
<td>replaceable</td>
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<tr>
<td>riddle</td>
<td>ommissible</td>
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<tr>
<td>proverb</td>
<td>comments</td>
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<td>story</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>drama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musical expression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>singing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| MATERIALS           |                                                                                            |
|---------------------|                                                                                            |
| Without object(s)   |                                                                                            |
| With object(s)      |                                                                                            |
| local origin        |                                                                                            |
| foreign origin      |                                                                                            |
| mixed origin        |                                                                                            |
| comments             |                                                                                            |
| Toy(s)              |                                                                                            |
| local origin        |                                                                                            |
| foreign origin      |                                                                                            |
| comments             |                                                                                            |
| Doll(s)              |                                                                                            |
| local origin        |                                                                                            |
| foreign origin      |                                                                                            |
| female               |                                                                                            |
| male                 |                                                                                            |
| child                |                                                                                            |
| adult                |                                                                                            |
| comments             |                                                                                            |
| Name of object(s)    |                                                                                            |
| transcription        |                                                                                            |
| construction         |                                                                                            |
| imitation            |                                                                                            |
| innovation           |                                                                                            |
| invention            |                                                                                            |
| comments             |                                                                                            |
| Manufacture          |                                                                                            |
| child made           |                                                                                            |
| adult made           |                                                                                            |
| artisinal            |                                                                                            |
| industrial           |                                                                                            |
| comments             |                                                                                            |
| Raw material(s) used |                                                                                            |
| origin               |                                                                                            |
| kind                 |                                                                                            |

| MOTIVE FOR PLAYING   |                                                                                            |
|----------------------|                                                                                            |
| Spontaneous play     |                                                                                            |
| Incited play         |                                                                                            |
| Organized play       |                                                                                            |
| Ritualized play      |                                                                                            |
| Other                |                                                                                            |
| Comments             |                                                                                            |

| RULES                |                                                                                            |
|----------------------|                                                                                            |
| Unstructured play    |                                                                                            |
| Structured play      |                                                                                            |
| Without rules        |                                                                                            |
| With rules           |                                                                                            |
| simple rules         |                                                                                            |
| complex rules        |                                                                                            |
| strict rules         |                                                                                            |
| variable rules       |                                                                                            |
| Formalized beginning |                                                                                            |
| Formalized ending    |                                                                                            |
| Without stake        |                                                                                            |
| With gain/reward     |                                                                                            |
| material             |                                                                                            |
| psychological        |                                                                                            |
| social               |                                                                                            |
| With penalty/sanction|                                                                                            |
| material             |                                                                                            |
| physical             |                                                                                            |
| psychological        |                                                                                            |
| social               |                                                                                            |
| Comments             |                                                                                            |

| CALLLOTS-WINNETTEN   |                                                                                            |
|----------------------|                                                                                            |
| Chance               |                                                                                            |
| Competition          |                                                                                            |
| Misery               |                                                                                            |
| Vertigo              |                                                                                            |
| Symbolic             |                                                                                            |
| Comments             |                                                                                            |
DEVELOPMENT OF EXPLORATION
Perceptual
visual
auditory
tactile
 gustatory
olfactory
 comments
Sensori-motor
 static
 dynamic
 rhythmic
 precision
 other
 comments
Technological
 comments
Verbal
 training speech organs
 linguistic training
 comments
 Verbo-motor
 carrying out instructions
 describing actions
 comments
 Other
 Comments

DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLECT
Procedural (structured rules)
 Logical
 Strategic
 Mathematical
 Other
 Comments

DEVELOPMENT OF SEXUALITY
 Sexual
 Erotic
 Other
 Comments

DEVELOPMENT OF FEELINGS
 Sympathy
 Aversion
 Empathy
 Compassion
 Tolerance
 Chivalry
 Antipathy
 Impassiveness
 Intolerance
 Mocking
 Teasing
 Aggression
 Anxiety
 Boldness
 Timidity
 Insolence
 Self-control
 Dependency
 Indepedency
 Other
 Comments

DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIAL ASPECTS
 Identification
 Internalization
 Representation
 Communication
 Conformation
 Assimilation
 Individualization
 Differentiation
 Rejection
 Submission
 Domination
 Co-operation
 Competition
 Conflict
 Patience
 Impatience
 Role immutability
 Role variability
 Other
 Comments

DEVELOPMENT OF MAGICO-RELIGIOUS ASPECTS
 Initiation
 Ritual
 Transgression
 Ghost
 Other
 Comments

DEVELOPMENT OF AESTHETICAL ASPECTS
 Verbal art
 Theatrical art
 Plastic art
 Musical art
 Dancing
 Other
 Comments

ADULT ATTITUDE TOWARDS GAME
 Indifferent
 comments
 Positive
 accepting
 encouraging
 stimulating
 rewarding
 other
 comments
 Negative
 disapproving
 discouraging
 rejecting
 penalizing
 other
 comments

AUDIO-VISUAL ILLUSTRATION
 Design
 Photo
 Slide
 Film
 Video
 Sound recording
 Other
 Comments
 References

VARIATION(S) OF THE GAME
 DATE OF COLLECTING THE GAME
 METHOD OF COLLECTING THE GAME
 REFERENCES ON INFORMANT(S)
 REFERENCES ON COLLECTOR(S)
 REFERENCES ON RESEARCHER(S)
4. CONCLUSION

A classification system for the crosscultural analysis of play activities, games and toys must be an open system in which new items can easily be introduced.

It should also be noticed that the proposed classification still is a theoretical model as it has not been tested in practice up to now. Nevertheless it can serve as a solid basis for discussion in view of the elaboration of a computerized processing system for the information gathered by the Belgrade-OMEP Traditional Games Project.

The creation of a databank on children's play activities, games and toys from all over the world can serve several aims. A short overview of some possibilities will underline its utility as well for theorists as for practitioners and as well in a given sociocultural milieu as in a crosscultural perspective:
- research on the development of children;
- research on the relations between children and between children and adults;
- research on socialization and education;
- research on social, economic, technological, artistic or other aspects of sociocultural systems;
- elaboration of tests, pedagogical games and toys or methods for special education adapted to local situations and based upon the ludic heritage;
- promotion of the cultural identity of migrant children and of the interest of migrant parents in the transmission to their children of an important cultural asset vehiculating an indispensable child development strategy.
- elaboration of a positive and playful approach towards the crosscultural, multicultural societies and peace education.
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY


GARON Denise, 1985, "La classification des jeux et des jouets : le système ESAR", Documentor, La Pocatière, Quebec, 104 p., bibl.


