GAMES OF PHYSICAL SKILL
FROM THE TUNISIAN SAHARA AND MOROCCO
ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND
PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR PEACE

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GAMES OF PHYSICAL SKILL FROM THE TUNISIAN SAHARA AND MOROCCO:
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this analysis is to offer teachers of physical education some theoretical reflections and, especially, several concrete examples of play activities and toys based on my research in the Tunisian Sahara and in Morocco. The idea behind all this is that they possibly can serve in the context of their efforts to use physical education for promoting intercultural understanding and peace.

After a few introductory notes on my research and the research methods used in it, I give an overview of the games of physical skill of the children from the Tunisian Sahara and from several rural and urban Moroccan communities. These play activities and the toys used in them belong to the following categories: games of physical skill played with and by the little ones, games of dexterity, of aiming, of equilibrium, of strength and fighting, of speed, of self-control, teasing and daring, of games using a ball. Finally, I propose some games of physical skill related to the natural elements.

In a third section, "anthropological research on games of physical skill and physical education for peace", some reflections are offered on the cooperative aspects in games of physical skill from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco, the influence of gender on these games of physical skill, the topic of tradition and change in games of physical skill, and the possible role of games of physical skill in intercultural and peace education. This study is illustrated with 64 photographs.
1. INTRODUCTION

This text is based on my research among the seminomadic Ghrib from the Tunisian Sahara and in different rural areas and popular urban quarters in Morocco (1). When starting fieldwork among the Ghrib my purpose was to study children's upbringing and socialization in general. However, during the first of three fieldtrips between 1975 and 1977, I experienced the advantage and the usefulness of participating in children's playgroups and so I decided to concentrate myself on play activities and toys in the first place. Due to changes in my professional life, especially ten years of work in the social service for Turkish and North African migrants of the city of Ghent, I could not continue my research among the Ghrib. Meanwhile, I looked in the concerned bibliography for data on Saharan and North African games and toys, and analized in the Musée de l'Homme in Paris an important collection of toys from these regions that I found there in the reserves. Another change in my professional life gave me the opportunity to conduct yearly research periods in Morocco since 1992.

The results of these 25 years of play and toy research (2) are published on the Internet (http://www.sanatoyplay.org, see publications: books/articles) in the more general book Toys, Play, Culture and Society. An Anthropological Approach with reference to North Africa and the Sahara (2003, 139 ill.) and in the descriptive series Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures (also available in French) with three published volumes: Commented Bibliography on Play, Games and Toys (2003), Children's Dolls and Doll Play (2003, 157 ill.) and The Animal in Play, Games and Toys (2003, 103 ill.). Three other volumes are planned: The Domestic Life in Play, Games and Toys (published in 2008), Technical activities in Play, Games and Toys (published in 2013) and Games of Skill.

Trained first as a social worker and then as an Africanist, my research methods belong first to the ethnographic research tradition based on participant observation in children's playgroups, free observation, informal talks, open interviews, use of informants and interpreters, making slides and doing some ethnographic filming. Additionally a few human ethological methods were used in the Tunisian Sahara, especially the minute to minute recording of longer observation periods and indirect filming.

In this presentation, I shall try to link my information on play activities of physical skill, as found in the Tunisian Sahara and in Morocco, with the aims of physical education, intercultural education and peace education.
2. GAMES OF PHYSICAL SKILL IN THE TUNISIAN SAHARA AND MOROCCO

In this section, I discuss examples of play activities of physical skill without toys - or more correctly with the body as only toy - and games of physical skill with toys (3). A few of these toys are just objects taken from the natural and domestic environment, but in most cases they are made by the children themselves with natural and waste material. It certainly is necessary to stress that the distinction made in this section between different games of skill is quite arbitrary as several skills are often needed in one and the same play activity.

Using these play activities of physical skill with and without rules as examples, I want to highlight some topics proposed for this congress and linked to the themes stressed by the movement Educación Física para la Paz (Physical Education for Peace):

- cooperative games of physical skill in a natural environment;
- cooperative use of natural and waste material with and without transformation;
- cooperative activities stimulating complementary functions of skill development;
- socializing aspects of these play activities: learning to cooperate, learning to know oneself and the others, autonomy and responsibility for decisions;
- cooperation and competition in play activities and in making toys, 'playful competition' versus 'aggressive confrontation';
- gender and generations in games of physical skill;
- tradition and change in games of physical skill.

The given examples all belong to the sphere of non-formal education, of the unintentional and sometimes intentional socialization of children. However and above all, these activities are playful activities executed by the participants for their own and others enjoyment. They certainly are not tasks imposed by adults to promote children's physical development and their integration into the community.

2.1. Games of physical skill of and with tots and toddlers

Older siblings and adults spontaneously develop the physical skills of little children through play activities some of which human ethologists considered universal human behavior (Sbrzesny, 1976). Well known among these are the lifting up of a small child putting one's feet under its belly (photo 1), putting it high above one's head by grasping the little one under the arms, tickling several parts of the child's body, and playing finger games (4). These games between little children and older family members, in which the body or parts of the body become a 'toy', not only develop several body skills but, as they often are
accompanied by little rhymes or songs, they also stimulate verbal and musical development and not in the least affective relationships. Sometimes a mother or a father but more often in the Tunisian Sahara and in Morocco an older sibling, make a toy for the little child (photo 2, 3). Yet, the little children also develop their skills without intervention from others. Their curiosity pushes them to explore the immediate environment, manipulating sand, water, vegetal material, domestic objects or adult tools (photo 4).

2.2. Games of dexterity

The finger games mentioned above are games of dexterity played without using any object. For other games of dexterity some material, a self-made toy or one bought in a market or a shop is used. A game of dexterity and at the same time a game of insight, known in many countries and played with just a string, necessitates a good cooperation between two players in order to create the figures becoming more and more complicated (photo 5). Lifting up five matches placed on the side of a matchbox, and this with the corresponding fingers of both hands is a difficult exercise of dexterity and synchronization enjoyed by older Ghrib children (photo 6, 7). In the Tunisian Sahara and in Morocco, the spinning wheel - also called buzzer toy or humming disc - frequently is a self-made toy, the disk being made with gypsum or a flattened bottle cap. This game easily becomes a game of teasing when a player touches the skin or the hair of another child with the quickly spinning wheel. Moroccan children can also buy a sweet that serves the same purpose (photo 8).

These games of dexterity do not contain an element of competition but other games of dexterity such as knucklebones, playing marbles (photo 9), throwing tops (5) - with a self-made top consisting of a pomegranate apple and a thorn (photo 10) or with a machine made top (photo 11) - are typically games of 'playful competition'. Ghrib and Moroccan playgroups, consisting of siblings, neighbors and schoolmates, normally dislike that this playful opposition with one winner and some losers is disturbed by aggressive reactions. Solidarity among peers is more important than manifestations of exaggerated superiority when winning or bad feelings when loosing. Possibilities for showing ones skills and for improving them when playing with others are prevalent. Because chance plays a role in these games, because older children playing with younger ones tend to help these to perform better, and because peers foster cooperation more than competition, the disturbing aspects of competition seem easier to overcome. However, this is not to say that rivalry, anger and aggressive behavior do not exist, but the members of the playgroup try to resolve conflicts among themselves and rarely look for help from an outsider, and especially from an adult.
2.3. Games of aiming

These games, primarily based on good hand-eye coordination, have sometimes a very practical function in the rural regions where I did fieldwork. With a slingshot or a catapult (photo 12) children, and especially boys, first learn to play and once they master the technique they can try to catch small eatable animals. Yet, they also must chase birds away from the fields with these toy-weapons when necessary. Other games of aiming are stick tossing, throwing down a little object from the top of a stick with a flick of a finger while keeping one eye closed (photo 13), and throwing something on a line or in a little hole made on the ground at a given distance. Both these games contain a playful competition. When in the second game pieces of money of very small value are used, the winner has the right to take them from the losers.

2.4. Games of equilibrium

Just as most children all over the world do, children from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco run on a barrel, roll down from slopes, go on a swing, walk on stilts, etc. These stilts can just be a strong forked branch taken from the pile of wood for baking bread, as seen in a Central Moroccan village (6), or made with a tin filled with gypsum in which a stick is fixed (photo 14). Different kinds of swings and seesaws are used for this kind of play activities. In a popular quarter of Kenitra, a Moroccan coastal town, I saw at the aid el fitr, the feast at the end of the fasting month Ramadan, several ropes attached to the trees to offer the children a swing (photo 15), this way maybe referring to old playful agricultural rituals in relation to the changing of seasons, just as in the case of traditional ball games. Nevertheless, self-made swings and seesaws (photo 16) are used by many children in rural areas and possibly also in urban areas, this as well by girls as by boys. Some games of equilibrium necessitate at the same time a lot of suppleness and strength, games such as picking up with the mouth a small object from the floor while remaining in a squatting position (photo 17), or getting right up after having placed ones hands on ones back and the forehead on the knees of a playmate lying on the ground (photo 18). In some cases the child must keep an object, for example a stick, in equilibrium on the hand, the foot or even another part of the body. A specific kind of drawing is needed for the game of hopscotch that although being more often a girls’ game eventually also is played by boys (photo 19). Most of the games mentioned in this section can be played alone or in a group, for the fun of the exercise or to show ones skill, and only occasionally they become competitive games.
2.5. Games of strength and fighting

Several games typically develop children's strength. Some examples from the regions discussed here, are lifting up heavy objects, a small child (photo 20) or a playmate (photo 21), and transporting someone in different ways without any material (photo 22, 23, 24). Fighting games among others enable children to develop and measure their strength. Yet, it is not always the strongest one who wins as other skills are involved in fighting. Although most fighting only is for playing (photo 25), it sometimes runs out of hand and becomes threatening or even real aggression (photo 26). A typical fighting game of the Ghrib boys of the 1970s is called 'the buried one'. A boy has his legs up to his knees fixed into the dune sand. Some other boys are running around him and try to hit him while he is defending himself by waving his arms about quickly (photo 27). When the 'buried one' becomes tired or gives up his role, one of the other boys can take his place. The goal of the game is that as well the 'buried one' as the other players can show their strength, their agility and ability for quick reaction, and their endurance of discomfort and even of some pain.

2.6. Games of speed

A lot of these games are played without toys, games such as running on hands and feet, running and jumping over obstacles, escaping and pursuing, hide-and-seek, spinning around by two children (photo 28). It happens that games of this type are combined with storytelling or singing and sometimes they refer to specific social situations, attitudes and roles. This is the case in a game of hide and seek of the Ghrib children, a game during which they make reference to the particular role of the maternal uncles (where one is going to hide), the punishments of misdeeds by God (if the one who has to close the eyes would cheat) and the protection by a circle of goods left behind (the camp one needs to attain and where he cannot be touched). For other games of speed objects like a hoop (photo 29) or self-made toys like kites, so-called bicycles (photo 30), motors (photo 31) and cars (photo 32) are needed. Actually these self-made toys tend to be replaced in towns by plastic toy-cars and toy-trucks and possibly also by a tricycle as I saw in Sidi Ifni (photo 33), a southern Moroccan coastal town.

2.7. Ball games

Ball games require many skills, not only physical ones but also skills of insight and strategy. The traditional ball game of Northern Africa and the Sahara is the one played by striking a wooden, leather, hair or rag ball (photo 34) with a crooked stick (photo 35). The ball is thrown from one camp to another camp, not necessarily into a goal, by two opposing teams of adolescents or adults, male and sometimes female but not mixed. This game is the national sport of Mauritania. Among some populations, this game was a ritual related to spring
and the demand for rain. Among the Ghrib however it was played in the 1970s by older boys without any ritual or magical reference. The children have replaced this hockey-like game by football played in whatever place suitable, for example on a threshing floor in the High Atlas (photo 36) or at the beach (photo 37).

2.8. Games of self-control, teasing and daring

In most games of skill the child must be able to control itself, not only the movements of its body but also its behavior in relation to other players, for example by refraining anger or cheating. Two widespread games of self-control are keeping a straight face when provoked to laugh and following up visual or verbal commands in the correct way. In my collection of Ghrib games, I classified some ten games in this category of self-control. They vary from a game to provoke a fight, over a small pit into which one's foot should get in, to games of ridicule. Some of these games are based on the well-known counting rhymes (photo 38, 39, 40). In many places an enthusiastic audience follows mocking dialogues between two protagonists. Games of daring, such as rolling down from slopes (photo 41), climbing high trees (photo 42) and jumping into the sea from a high place (photo 43), also belong to this category of games of self-control because they learn children to overcome fear and frustration, and to refrain from aggressive reactions when other children mock at them if they do not succeed to execute the exercise.

2.9. Games of physical skill and the natural elements

This category has no other purpose than to group several games of skill in which earth, water, wind and fire is an important factor and is used separately or in combination. Playing with these four elements is so common that probably every child learns to know its environment and exercises its skill in this way. Playing in the sand by making for example open air small houses (photo 44) or creating a telephone line (photo 45, 46), and by playing with mud (photo 47) or clay (photo 48) offer excellent opportunities to do so.

Even if there is a shortage of water, it still is possible to try to have a forbidden swim in the irrigation system as shown by a desert boy (photo 49). But how much more fun is it to have a sea at ones disposal (photo 50). A game directly linked to the specific environment of a North African mountain region is the running away before the downhill streaming water in a dry riverbed after heavy rains (photo 51).

With different kinds of self-made windmills and kites (photo 52) children learn not only to make use of the wind but also to acquire the necessary skills to make
these toys work efficiently. In Central Morocco, the boys make a specific type of windmill (photo 53, 54) as part of the celebration for the birthday of the Prophet Mohammed (7). In order to make the sail of their windmill turning quickly, the boys, and more rarely a girl, run with it very fast.

About the element fire as part of children's play activities I can only refer to lighting fires, making an oil lamp with waste material (photo 55), running with a motor-ramadan for which candles are used (photo 31), and running with burning plastic tubes serving as torches. In North Africa the custom of jumping over a fire existed in relation to agricultural rituals.

3. ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON GAMES OF PHYSICAL SKILL AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR PEACE

In this section I shall try to offer some reflections, linking my information on games of physical skill from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco to themes proposed for the congress on cooperative physical activities and to topics of interest of the movement Physical Education for Peace. These reflections, however, should not be seen as facts but as possibilities for discussion. First of all, because my information on games and toys needs to be completed, verified and corrected by other researchers, especially North African researchers. Secondly, because it is the first time I encounter this physical education for peace as a field of thought and action.

3.1. Cooperative aspects in games of physical skill

Although some of the games described in the foregoing section can be played by just one child, they normally are played by two or more children. These playgroups are composed of siblings, relatives and neighbors, and among school going or older children also of schoolmates and other friends not belonging to the first three categories. From the age of about seven years, the playgroups of boys and those of girls are clearly separated. A playgroup of girls quite regularly has small children, as well boys as girls, under its supervision, something that only rarely is the case with playgroups of boys.

Children from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco play in natural environments, as well physical environments as human environments. Adult organized environments such as schools, youth houses or children's workshops, and 'artificial' environments such as recreation grounds, playgrounds or playrooms are non-existing environments when talking about the play activities of physical skill described here. In these regions, play at school is seldom tolerated, the school system being based on the authority of the teacher and passive learning by the pupils. So, all these games of physical skill are outdoor games played in the countryside or in popular quarters of towns.

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As far as I could observe this, the playgroups are organized by the children themselves and on their own initiative, but this does not mean that there are no leaders, no girls or boys who take more initiatives than others do when play activities are concerned (8). In general, children's playgroups enjoy a lot of autonomy and freedom, and in most cases adults do not take part in children's play, except when playing occasionally with a tot or a toddler. Intervention in children's play by an adult seems rare and is mostly limited to insisting on taking care of little children, to intervene when a play situations runs out of hand seriously, to ask for help from a child, especially a girl, or to react when the children's play disturbs an activity or a possession of an adult.

It is a commonplace to say that play activities, games and toys play an important role in the development of a child's body and mind, in its socialization as member of a family and community, and in establishing positive and cooperative relationships with others. An important result of playing with siblings, relatives and neighbors is that there exists a close familiarity and much solidarity between players. So, most of the games of physical skill presented here can be classified as cooperative games, the word cooperative being used in its common meaning and in the sense that no real feelings of superiority are easily showed and that achieving the common goal of having fun has the priority. Still, there often are winners and losers. When there are winners and losers in a game I prefer to speak of 'playful competition', a playful competition in which there is not much place for real opposition and still less for aggression. When observing these playgroups, I saw that reactions of sadness, disappointment, anger and aggression do occur, but the members of the playgroup try to mediate these feelings and to avoid direct confrontation between players. As in many of these games there exists a possibility for changing roles, for adapting the difficulty of the game or the game's rules to the age and the skill of the players, these games become less winner-looser oriented. When an older child plays with younger ones leadership comes naturally to the foreground, but when peers play together common decision on what to play and how to play are prevalent. Sanctions for loosing are mostly physical or material, transporting someone on ones back, being mildly hit, giving a small possession, much more than being psychological, such as being ridiculed, mocked, made feel ashamed. Because of the close relationship between players and the joyful atmosphere, the fear for failure in trying out ones skills is certainly tempered.

In his analysis of games of physical skill, Carlos Velázquez Callado uses the following classification: "1. Games with a competitive structure; 2. Games with a non-competitive structure: 2.1. Games with a structure of changing roles, 2.2. Games with a cooperative structure". Games with a cooperative structure are games in which there is no opposition between the players and everybody cooperates to achieve a common goal so that there is no question of winners and
losers (e-mail of April 2001). Using this definition I have been looking for some games with a cooperative structure among the examples given above and I have found four games: the game of playing strings between two players (2.2), playing seesaw or double seesaw played by two or four players (2.4), alternatively lifting another player from the ground with ones back played by two players (2.5) and spinning around while holding each other’s hands played by two players (2.6). Following our discussion on these games with a cooperative structure, I tried to find other examples of this kind of games. Among the about 160 games of the Ghrib children I have documented, I did find three more examples:

- The 'human wheel' (khirtifa) played in the sand by two older boys or two adolescents. One player stands upright and the other player with his head downwards puts his legs on the shoulders of the first one, then he puts his hands on the knees of the player standing upright and this one puts his hands on the knees of the player before him. When starting to turn the 'human wheel' the player standing upright has to put his legs on the shoulders of the other player. Holding grip of each other in this way, the players try to continue their rotating movement as long as possible. This game is especially executed during marriage festivities.

- The 'dead one really is dead' (mayt mât) consists in lifting up an older boy or an adolescent lying stiff on the ground. Four other players will try to lift him up as high as possible by only using their two index fingers placed under the shoulders and the feet of the dead one.

- The 'rain of my maternal aunt' (mt’ar khâlti) is a collective game of the girls of about ten-years-old. It is played outside when there are a lot of clouds and rain is being waited for. The girls give hands and turn around in a circle singing "the rain of my maternal aunt that it falls on my hair, my hair that has been oiled with olive oil".

The cooperative games of physical skill and the self-made toys used for them are directly related to the physical and human environment in which children grow up. Factors such as climate, relief, desert, rural or urban areas, availability or lack of water, kind of vegetation, together with other physical factors, directly influence the possibilities for playing and making toys. And surely one should not neglect the impact of migration, sedentarization and urbanization on all these physical factors. Factors related to the human environment are not less important, among which the customs, norms and beliefs of the given society, the family and community organization, the means of subsistence, the role of age, sex and social group together with social and cultural evolution. The need to study children's development and play activities 'in context', in the environment
in which children grow up, instead of in experimental situations has been recently discussed in a, according to me, pioneer book, Children's Engagement in the World. Sociocultural Perspectives (1999), written by a group of cultural psychologists (9). There is no place here to discuss the role of differences in physical and human environments in toy making activities. The interested reader will find some examples among the photographs accompanying this text and many more in my books published on the Internet. Over the last fifty years, an important evolution in the material used to make toys is due to the availability of a growing variety of waste material and the children's creative use of it. The creativity of the children when making toys, not only with waste objects as such but still more when transforming this waste material so that it fits into their toy design, is sometimes truly astonishing (10).

3.2. Gender and games of physical skill

Above the age of about seven years, boys from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco are more engaged in games of physical skill than girls and most examples of games of equilibrium, strength, fighting, speed and of ball games given in the previous section are boys' games. This observation seems to reflect reality even if it must be said that for a male researcher it is easier to get information on boys' games than on girls' games. One of the reasons for this strong representation of boys' playgroups can be found in the separation of playgroups of girls and playgroups of boys, this in combination with the fact that girls clearly have less time to play than boys do, especially from the age of about eight years onwards. A striking example of this early integration of girls in the household tasks is exemplified by an observation session of one and a half hour carried out in a small valley serving among others as play area and situated next to a popular quarter of Midelt. One morning in August 1999 and during the time of the observation, I noted three playgroups made up by some boys and lasting between fifteen and thirty minutes. During the same observation time, I found no girls playing, neither alone nor in a group. Instead, I saw one six-year-old girl cleaning the space before her house, another somewhat older girl passing by with a plate of biscuits on her head taking them to the oven and two girls doing errands. A fifth girl of about ten years was taking care of a group of little girls and boys. The freedom of movement of the somewhat older girls and boys is also strikingly different. Normally, one finds the girls' playgroups nearby their homes. Boys' playgroups however can be found further away, the distance broadening as the boys become older as in the case of a Moroccan group of boys playing in the sea at two hours walking from their village (photo 50).

As in other circumstances, one should always be careful with generalizing statements such as the strict separation of older boys and girls in play because there are indications that this separation is not insurmountable as the observation
of play situations sometimes shows. Moreover, a few of my Moroccan female informants also stressed that as a child they liked to play together with their brothers, cousins and other boys from the neighborhood, for example football or climbing trees. This makes it clear that the cultural norms of these regions are not the only determining factor in children's play activities and that the personality and the wishes of the players also have to be taken into account.

3.3. Tradition and change in games of physical skill

Looking at my information on children's games of physical skill from the Tunisian Sahara and Moroccan rural and urban areas, and neglecting the replacement of the traditional ball games by playing football, it strikes me that most games of skill still belong to the traditional play heritage. Moreover, the material, the designs, as for hopscotch or hopping, and the toys, such as tops, knucklebones, marbles, spinning wheels, swings, windmills and stilts, used for these games, still resemble those of former generations.

Yet, I want to stress again that also in the sphere of games of physical skill, the environmental, economic, social and cultural evolution of the communities in which the children grow up should never be neglected when studying their games and toys. In an article "Changing Toys and Play in a Changing African Childhood" (11) I had the opportunity to discuss this topic more thoroughly. The factors of change taken into account in this article are schooling, gender differentiation, adult interference, television, emigration, tourism, industrialization and consumptive society. The examples of the evolution of games and toys mentioned in this article mostly refer to dolls and doll play, and to toys and games related to means of transport and technology. Here I shall try to give some examples of change in play activities of physical skill and in the toys used for them.

Trying to define changes in games of physical skill, the first aspect that attracted my attention is the impression that the physical activity itself, like running after someone else (photo 56) or running with a barrel (photo 57), often remains as it has been for ages but that the context in which the activity takes place or the signification that is given to the action has been modernized. In the first example of running after someone, no explanation is needed as it is clear that these two young Ghrib boys identify themselves as well with the fast going car as with the driver of that car. In the second example, of running a barrel over a sinuous path delimited by stones, the context of the game changes this exercise into a driving-test, a driving-test that when successful is honored with a driving-license written on a piece of paper by the boy playing the role of driving-instructor.
When the children from these regions make toys - an extremely important activity for the development of their skills of dexterity - changes in traditional toy making occur most of the time by two ways:

- by using local material and techniques to create toys referring to new items, for example the telephone of the Ghrib boys (photo 45, 46) or a tractor of cactus pieces, little branches and waste material made by a Moroccan boy (photo 58), and

- by using new material and techniques to produce toys referring to local themes, for example a cardboard box to make a doll's house (photo 59) or a plastic bottle, bottle stopper and a straw to make a traditional hobo-like flute (photo 60).

The influence of the commercial amusement and toy industry brings about important changes in the play activities of especially teenage boys from urban areas. Even in small Moroccan towns, one finds today several playrooms, organized in a garage or a small café, offering for some money games such as billiards, table football (photo 61) and pinball. And when such play material or the money to play with is lacking, it still is possible to create oneself for example a table football (photo 62). As mentioned, cheap plastic toys, regularly of questionable quality, slowly but surely invade Morocco's popular town quarters and villages even in quite remote areas (photo 63). Moreover, a new skill of dexterity finds a possible development in the availability of simple and relatively cheap electronic toys. Such electronic toys were sold in Midelt for about 50 MAD (5 EUR) in September 1999. In a popular quarter of that town, I witnessed the craze of three twelve-year-old boys for a simple electronic toy with twelve game possibilities (photo 64). This electronic toy had already been handed over between two or three friends before it came into the hands of the actual owner and it was certainly to be given to other boys of the peer group when the boy using it has tried it out. One should also take into account the influence of the emigrants visiting their family in Morocco, an influence that can be observed in the case of children's toys also. When these emigrants return to visit their family they do not bring with them useful presents only but also prestige presents, among which dolls, toy-animals, toy-weapons, electronic toys, bicycles, etc.

Nevertheless, this supply and demand of commercial games and toys has not destroyed the Moroccan children's creativity in finding playful applications for new waste material such as tin cans that become so-called Chinese shoes or the packaging of a freezed lolly that is used for a little teasing game (12).
3.4. Games of physical skill and intercultural or peace education

Due to editorial limitations, this section will only offer a synthesis. However, the reader will find a lot more information on the use of children's games and toys from developing countries for intercultural or peace education in one of my first publications on games and toys from Northern Africa, *Games and Toys: Anthropological Research on their Practical Contribution to Child Development* published by the Unit for Co-operation With UNICEF and WFP of the UNESCO in 1984 (re-edited in 2003 by SITREC and available on its website http:www.sitrec.kth.se, see publications: books/articles). In this publication I developed among others, the topic of "Play as a source of insight into the child and its society" (p. 19-24). About this aspect I only want to stress that because games and toys are related to the cultural values, worldviews and magic-religious beliefs of a given population, they should never be neglected as a source of knowledge. It certainly is useful to find out how games contribute to preserve a people's cultural identity and patrimony, and in which way they foster and mold the cultural identity of each individual. Such a research becomes more urgent if one bears in mind that many populations all over the world claim their cultural identity against the strong acculturation they are submitted to.

A second topic developed in the mentioned UNESCO publication and relevant to intercultural or peace education, is to be found in the chapter "Play, education and child welfare" (p. 24-32). Games and toy making activities can be effectively used in intercultural and peace education as they put children into contact with children from different sociocultural backgrounds. Moreover, the resemblance of games and toys all over the world, on the one hand, and the differences between them, on the other hand, make a cross-cultural approach to play and toys particularly suited to promote intercultural comprehension and to combat a worldwide uniformization based on a notion of universality by suppressing cultural differences.

Yet, if the integration of children's play activities based on culture-bound games and toys is necessary, it will not be enough to preach the good word, but concrete actions should be taken in the sphere of education. In this context, the efforts of the teachers grouped in the movement 'Physical Education for Peace' in using physical education for the promotion of intercultural understanding and peace certainly is an exceptional contribution. Myself, I have organized some experiences in the field of intercultural education in the last year of the preschool and in the primary school using my documentation on children's games and toys from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco (13). What I found very stimulating and useful in these playful approaches to intercultural education is, next to the stimulation of the creativity and personal effort of the Ghent children, the promotion of a more positive image of Third World children, an image that
until then was unilaterally negative and based on images of sick, miserable or from hunger dying children, images one regularly sees on television, as if this is the only reality of Third World children. The results of these pedagogical actions have convinced me of the certainly limited but creative possibility to use play activities and toy making activities for an intercultural purpose. By doing this it may be feasible to prepare young children to become adolescents and adults less prejudiced towards the social, cultural or ethnic minorities living with them, on the one hand, and towards peoples and societies of foreign countries on the other hand. But already in 1989, the Workgroup for the Encounter of Cultures of the Division of Education of the Council for Cultural Cooperation of the European Council included in its recommendations for intercultural pedagogical activities the theme of play and toys (p. 9-10).

In an article Carlos Velázquez Callado discussed the role of games and dances of the world in an intercultural physical education. He stressed the possibility of bringing Spanish pupils into contact not only with other ways of playing but also with other ways of thinking and behaving. I wholeheartedly endorse this statement and I hope that teachers of physical education may find some useful ideas and playful physical exercises in the games of physical skill from the Tunisian Sahara and Morocco. I also hope that these teachers will be able to link my examples of games of physical skill and of the toys used in them to the sociocultural contexts in which they are played and made (14).

LIST OF PHOTOS

Cover photo: driving a self-made skateboard, Sidi Ifni, Morocco, 2005, photo by the author.

1. A young man lifting up his little brother, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

2. Mother offering her little boy a toy made gypsum, Ghrib, 1975, photo Gilbert J.M. Claus.

3. Little boy playing with the toy made by his mother, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

4. Little girl trying to play with a big pestle, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.


6-7. Lifting up five matches with the fingers of both hands, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

8. A sweet as spinning wheel, Midelt, Morocco, 1999, photo by the author.


12. Seven-year-old boy with his catapult, Midelt, Morocco, 1997, photo by the author.

13. Throwing down an object from the top of a stick with a flick of a finger while keeping one eye closed, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.


16. Three boys and a girl on a double seesaw, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

17. Picking up an object from the flour while being in a squatting position, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

18. Getting right up after having placed ones hands on ones back and the forehead on the knees of a playmate lying on the ground, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.


20. Lifting up a small child, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

21. Lifting up a playmate, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

22. Transporting someone without any material, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

23. Transporting someone without any material, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

24. Transporting someone without any material, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.


27. The buried one, a playful fight, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

28. Two girls spinning around, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.


30. Two types of so-called bicycles, one made with a wheel of some twenty sardine tins, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

31. Boys run with these motors when it is dark, Ksar Assaka, Midelt region, Morocco, 1995, photo by the author.

32. Car with floaters of fishing-net as wheels, region Tiznit, Morocco, 1994, photo by author.

34. Wooden, leather, hair and rag balls for traditional ball games, Chaouia, Aurès, Algeria - Moors, Mauritania, 1930s, Collection of the Musée de l'Homme, photo by the author.

35. Crooked stick for traditional ball games, Chaouia, Aurès, Algeria, 1930s, Collection of the Musée de l'Homme, photo by the author.


37. Boys playing football on the beach, Mehdia, Kenitra region, Morocco, 1993, photo by the author.

38-40. Game of teasing based on a counting rhyme, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

41. Tumble down from a dune with the head forward, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

42. Boys climbing a palm tree as high as possible, Marrakech, Morocco, 1993, photo by the author.

43. Boys jumping in the sea from the harbor quay, Essaouira, Morocco, 1994, photo by the author.

44. Girls in their open-air small houses, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

45-46. Creating a telephone line in the sand, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

47. Two girls playing with mud, Kenitra, Morocco, 1993, photo by the author.


49. Thirteen-year-old boy trying to swim in the irrigation system, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.


51. Running before the coming water in a dry river bed, Amellago, Middle Atlas, Morocco, 1999, photo by the author.

52. Running in the wind with a self-made kite, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

53-54. Windmills made by boys for the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, Midelt, 1999, photo by the author.

55. Oil lamp made with waste material, Ghrib, 1977, photo by the author.

56. The living car, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.

57. The driving-test, Ghrib, 1975, photo by the author.
58. Tractor of cactus pieces, little branches and waste material, Ighern, Morocco, 1996, photo by the author.

59. Doll play with cardboard box as doll's house, Zaïda, Morocco, 1999, photo by the author.

60. Traditional hobo-like flute made with plastic material, Midelt, Morocco, 1999, photo by the author.


62. Table football made by the boys playing it, Goulmima, Morocco, 1994, photo by the author.


64. Boy playing with an electronic toy, Midelt, Morocco, 1999, photo by the author.

NOTES

1. Information on the mentioned populations and places can be found in the introduction and the maps of the volumes in the series Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures.

2. From 1975 until 1992, my research has been subventioned by the Belgian National Foundation for Scientific Research, Brussels.

3. The games of skill mentioned here will be described in detail in the planned volume Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. Games of Skill.

4. Among the Ghrib I saw the following specific finger game: one has to put the fingers of both hands one above the other, starting by putting the ring-finger on the little finger, followed by putting the middle finger on the ring-finger and then the fore-finger on the middle finger, once this is done and without changing the position of the fingers of the first hand the same must be done with the fingers of the other hand. During this finger exercise a finger rhyme is recited and on the last word both hands suddenly open making the little one laugh exuberantly. Then the child also wants to try this out, possibly helped by the one who played this game with it.

5. A simple way to make a top, as I saw children from the High Atlas do it in 1999, consists of piercing a little pointed stick through the center of a plastic bottle stopper. In making such a top, children used to industrial toys will learn that it takes some time and effort to make an efficient top of this type, that it is possible to use waste material for having fun and that they need to exercise their skill of dexterity before being able to play well with it.

6. I have seen another method to make stilts in a popular quarter of Kenitra in September 1993. Some boys of about eleven years have each taken two tin cans of about 10 cm in
diameter and with a lid on one side. In this lid a hole is made. Through the hole a ribbon or a rope of about two meters is passed and fixed at the other side of the lid by attaching it to a piece of wood or metal. The boy now places each foot on one tin, placing the ribbon or the rope between his big toe and the next toe. When pulling the ribbon up to the height of his bellow and by moving forward one foot after the other the boy can walk on these stilts.

7. An iron wire serving as axle pierces the top of a reed of about 60 cm length but with a variable diameter. To fix this iron wire the end sticking out at the back of the reed is bended and reintroduced into the reed a bit lower. At the front side of the reed the iron wire sticks out for about 6 cm. To make the windmills sail, one takes the half of a reed of 10 to 20 cm length cut lengthways, and then makes a little hole in in its center. At both sides of the hole a more or less rectangular piece of paper is attached by turning a side of the paper once or twice around the reed. Then this piece of paper is glued with glue prepared from fig trees sap, dates, flour, but today adhesive tape or glue bought in a local shop are more often used. Normally, the paper leaves are decorated with geometric designs. One or two sails should now be put on the axle through the little hole in the center of the sail. To keep the sail in such a position that it will turn really fast, a small piece of hollow reed with a very small diameter is inserted on the axle before and after the sail. A small rectangular and flat piece of reed with a hole in its center or a small plastic tube can be used instead. To keep everything in place, the end of the iron wire sticking out in front of the sail must be folded back. A man of about sixty years stressed that until some thirty years ago long thorns were often served as axle. For a discussion of the role of rituals and festivities in play activities and toys see chapter 8 "Toys, play, rituals and festivities" in my book Toys, Play, Culture and Society.

8. On the photographs one sometimes sees a Ghrib boy of about fifteen years possibly playing with younger children. Although this could happen, it is in the case of my photographs due to the fact that the boy in question served as my assistant.

9. This book, edited by Artin Göncü, tries to overcome the cleavage between a 'community based' and an 'individual based' approach of children's development, socialization and play. The proposed "Activity Setting Method" seems really interesting because it clearly structures and interrelates different kinds of research methods such as observation, questioning, visual documentation, and use of results of earlier studies. Moreover, it confronts various information on the individual level with information about the family, social group and community in which the individual develops, taking into account the specific contexts. There also is a promising potential for meaningful cross-cultural comparison.

10. The important aspect of safety in industrial toys is, as far as I know, lacking in the discussion on non-western self-made toys. I have tried to give a few comments on the safety aspect of self-made toys from the Sahara and North Africa in chapter 2.4 "Toy design and safety" in my book Toys, Play, Culture and Society.

11. I wrote this article when invited to the congress "Changing Childhood in the World and in Turkey" organized by the Center for Research on Child Culture, director Prof. Dr. Onur Bekir, Faculty of Educational Sciences, Ankara University, 16-18.10.2000. A reworked version is found in chapter 9 of my book Toys, Play, Culture and Society.

12. Since the Moroccan groceries sell lemonade in tin cans, the children push their heel into the empty tin can so that it flattens and the edges fold back around the heel. This way the children imitate the 'sabat sîn', the Chinese shoes as they watch them on television. The plastic
packaging of this in Morocco made Yamuzar lolly is about 19 cm long and 3.5 cm wide. Once the lolly has been eaten, the packaging is used for a teasing game. The child blows up the packaging, rolls it up starting with the open end, keeps it rolled up in his hand with the rolled part between thumb and index, and then suddenly releases the rolled part near the cheek of another child. If done by surprise and in the correct way, the viewed child jumps up and everybody starts to laugh. The fun of the game is to be able to do it by surprise to someone as the children all keep this packaging with them.

13. These experiences have been described in the chapter "Using North African and Saharan toy and play culture" of my book Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures. Children's Dolls and Doll Play, together with a few photographs illustrating these experiences.

14. Information on the Ghrib and on Moroccan populations can be found in the introduction of my books Children's Dolls and Doll Play and The Animal in Play, Games and Toys of the series Saharan and North African Toy and Play Cultures.

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**LIST WITH THE LOCAL NAMES OF GAMES AND TOYS**

Three idioms can be mentioned here: the Arabic spoken by the Ghrib from the Tunisian Sahara, indicated as (G), Dèrija, the Moroccan Arabic, indicated as (D), and Tamazight, the Berber spoken in the Middle Atlas, and in the region of Goulmima and Midelt, the given terminology referring to the Tamazight from the Midelt region and indicated as (T). The writing of the words tries to offer a more or less correct way of pronunciation and is not to be seen as a linguistically correct transposition. Some special consonants and vowels have been transcribed as follows: th = th in think - j = j in French je - h' = frictioned h - kh = ch in Scottish loch or German ach - dh = th in this - sh = sh in ship - ç = emphatic s - d' = emphatic d - t' = emphatic t - z' = emphatic dh - gh = guttural not rolled r - q = guttural k - ° glottal stop (as in English when a word begins with a strongly emphasized vowel as in °absolutely) - u = as in you - è = as in west - é = as in French été - e = as in French je, soft e - â = long vowel.

Lifting up a little one with ones feet: er-rag er-rag (G)

Kind of sling given to a toddler and used by it to throw it up: es-sarukh (G), recent name meaning a rocket.
Game of strings: el-khurt'êf (G).

Spinning wheel: el-khudrûf (G), têsbêrrêyt (T), laºab ü kul (D) refers to the used sweet and meaning literally play and eat.

Knucklebones: el krîd (G), tiqulla (T).

Marbles: el but'shî (G), èlbi (T).

Tops: duwâma (G), trumbia (D), trimbu (T).

Slingshot and catapult: maqla (D), èldî (T).

Throwing down a little object from the top of a stick with a flick of a finger while keeping one eye closed: el-ugîda (G).

Running on a barrel: el-bêttiyya (G).

Roll down from a dune: durkub (G).

Swing: dërjîh'a (G), bèjallêllu (T).

Stilts: el-mashâshî (G), laºakakez (D), Tiºakazîn (T).

Hopscotch: el-jista (G), shrêta (D), lamaré (T).

Game of the buried one: el-mêdfên (G).

Hide and seek: el-hêlîla (G), cache-cache (D), tikniufra (T).

Spinning around of two children: illî illî (G), tikshbila (T).

Hoop: ed-dèrgil (G), janta (T).

Kites: et-tayyâra (G) meaning airplane.

Self-made 'bicycle': el-bisiklêt (G).

The living car: el-krahèb (G).

Self-made car: es-siyâra (G), tomobil (T).

Ball game with sticks: el-maºgâf (G), according to Charles Béart (1955: 376) the Moors call this game monghraf, el kazz and also kora korêi.

Ball game without stick or football: el-kura (G), el-kura (D), taghurt (T).

Counting game with teasing: h'dig mdig (G), the first words of the counting rhyme.
Covered pit for being stuck with foot: yâ brêma bum bum (G).

Small house: dâr eth-thra (G) meaning house of sand, dâr el-ârûsa (D) meaning bride’s house, taddert n tislit (T) meaning bride’s house, tismèrrit (T) meaning dinner play and its small house.

Toy-telephone: et-télèfûn (G), téléfûn (T).

Windmill: fèrfara (D), fèrwadi (T).

Toy-oil lamp: el-gèza (G).

Running with a barrel along a sinuous path: el-bèrmi (G), from the French permis de conduire.

Hobo like flute: tèbja (T).