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Geographic Development of Sport Phenomenon : Ruralization of Practices or Urbanization of Countrysides ? The Alsatian Sport Movement Between 1920 and 1940

Benoît Caritey

Abstract

The diffusion of sports in the geographic space cannot be considered as having no incidence on their history. A study of the geographic development of the associative sports movement in Alsace between 1920 and 1940 reveals the variety of development modalities of the different sporting practices. As the sporting practice establishes itself in new (by their characteristics) local configurations of the geosystem, unprecedented ways of considering this practice appear.

Introduction

If it is commonly accepted that, during its history, the sports phenomenon develops itself in the geographic space, the modalities and consequences of this space appropriation remain obscure.

The chronological description of the diffusion of sporting practices fails to recognize the possible consequences of the appropriation of practices by new populations. In his study of the sports diffusion process, Bale (1989) makes a point of bringing out the modalities of diffusion of sporting practices ; but he eludes all that the diffusion process implies in the very definition of practices (folk games are transformed into modern sports and organized under the tutelage of national and international federations). The diffusion of the sports phenomenon covers (and may hide if one is careless) different processes, the consequences of which must be taken into account in the context of a comprehensible analysis of the development of sporting practices and of the organizations in charge of them.

The diffusion and generalization of the sports model of physical exercise practice (which may either replace folk-games, serve as a reference for their transformation, or invest in virgin spaces where no ludic or festive corporal practices exist) is a questioning issue. The present spatial distribution of the different practices is far from being homogeneous, as has been shown in particular in the mapping works done in France by D. Mathieu and J. Praicheux (1987). To apprehend and to understand the geographic distribution of sporting practices is an important step when considering the spatial patterns in sociology of sports.

The study of local realities of the inscription of sports in the geographic space enables us to

account of the variability of practices intensities and the variability of the centrality of practices in the local social life (J.-P. Augustin and A. Garrigou, 1985 ; J. Dumas, 1987), from one city to the next (J.-P. Callède, 1983), from one neighborhood the next (A. Haumont, 1983 ; M. Pinçon-Charlot and P. Rendu, 1983). But these analyses do not take into account the possible variations in the definition of practices.

Between sporting practices arise differences, beyond the variety of game rules and movements they develop, which result from the legitimate modes of bringing the body into play, the representations surrounding them, the social purposes which they serve¹ or in one word, from the problematizations² developed around them by the participants, the managers and their audiences. It is supposed here that these problematizations can be understood, partly at least, if put in relation with the different implantation modalities in the geographic space of the sporting associations which organize practice : each commune constitutes a local configuration of the geosystem, partly irreducible to other local configurations, and is defined on the one hand by its position in the geosystem, more or less central or peripheral, and on the other hand by the accumulation of social groups and the concentration of economic, social or cultural activities (among which the sports activities).

A socio-geographical analysis of the sports phenomenon's diffusion enables us to consider the incidence of the local configuration's properties on the problematizations of the sporting practice development and, inversely, the incidence of this development on the dynamics of the local configuration.

Alsace, a borderline region between France and Germany, constitutes a rich field for the analysis of the sports phenomenon's geographic development on a regional scale. Because of its historical context and of its geosystem properties, it enables us to study the modalities and consequences of the sporting practice diffusion from the cities (where the oldest sporting associations are established) towards the countryside.

In 1871, Alsace (Haut-Rhin and Bas-Rhin departments) was annexed to Germany together with the Moselle department ; following the First World War, these three departments were re-annexed to France. In 1920, the Alsace region is rather enclosed : communications with France are poorly developed, hindered to the West by the Vosgien massif ; after fifty years under German tutelage, the Alsatian industry meets numerous difficulties while trying to take back its place on the French interior market. From an economic point of view, as well as from a cultural point of view,

¹ See the works done by C. Pociello and al. (1982) particularly, although they keep to the social differentiation of sporting practices in the continuity of the works of P. Bourdieu (1979 and 1980), never the less attest the irreducibility of sporting practices between them.

Alsace shows a certain autonomy in comparison with the national unities who pretend having assimilated it : Germany from 1871 to 1919 ; France from 1919 to 1940.

The annexation of the Alsace-Lorraine region by the Reich in 1871 created a vast emigration movement and a number of Alsatians opted for the French nationality. Those who emigrated in 1871-1872 constituted the elite of the province. "Until then, Alsace had been partially run by city notables, jointly with the catholic clergy ; following their option and emigration the people massively turned to the clergy ; decapitated and kind of bewildered, the cities gave way to the priest guided rural masses" (Wahl, 1974, 215)³.

During the annexation, the Catholic Church supported the consolidation of a certain nationalism⁴, which did not build itself on an urban civilization basis, a process described for France by E. Weber (1983) for the same period, but rather on the basis of a rural culture. Between 1871 and 1919, cities in Alsace are mostly Protestant and German, and the dominational division between Catholics and Protestants, even though it tends to fade away with time, shows the opposition between the rural universe and the urban universe.

And even if, as shown by R. Schwab, "in the last decades of the past century, the linear type of system composed of juxtaposed spatial units and constituting the basis of the Alsatian space division gives way to a double system of spatial units strongly associated by intense interdependence relationships and controlled by a hierarchized urban network" (Schwab, 1983, 478)⁵, a concrete neighborhood space, characteristic of the ancient rural world, continues to exist at the periphery of the modern regional network spaces run by cities where industries are concentrated⁶.

When looked at in relation with those regional characteristics, the geographic development of sporting practices in Alsace is a questioning issue : should we interpret it in terms of a modernization of the rural world, in which case the emergence of a sports association gives evidence of the transformation of the local configuration's characteristics ? Or should we interpret it in terms of a ruralization of practices, which is an appropriation of the practices by rural culture

² See Foucault (1984).

³ « Jusque-là, l'Alsace avait été dirigée partiellement par les notables des villes, conjointement avec le clergé catholique ; au lendemain de l'option et de l'émigration la population se tourna en masse vers le clergé ; décapitées et comme désemparées, les villes cédaient la place aux masses rurales guidées par les prêtres" (Wahl, 1974, 215).

⁴ « Les Allemands avaient fait de l'Alsace une nation consciente d'elle-même, attentive à sa position unique et soucieuse de garder un contact culturel avec ses deux voisins. » (Zeldin, 1980, 91).

⁵ « Dans les dernières décennies du Siècle passé, le type de système linéaire composé d'ensembles spatiaux juxtaposés qui constitue la base du découpage de l'espace alsacien fait place à une forme d'organisation comportant un double système d'ensembles spatiaux solidement associés par d'intenses relations d'interdépendance commandée par un réseau urbain hiérarchisé. » (Schwab, 1983, 478)

⁶ On the basis of the 1975 inventory results, R. Kleinschmager (1979) shows that this process has not reached its end and that the neighborhood space persists, dominating in some peripheral sections of the regional space.

impregnated populations and having as a consequence a mutation in the problematizations of these practices ?

First, an overview of the development of sports in the geographic space, will serve to demonstrate the differentiation of sporting associations' implantation properties, and bring to light the relations between geographic development of sports and diffusion of modernity

Secondly, three case studies will show us how geographic development of sporting associations can explain the transformation of sports problematizations : the sportization of gymnastics, the differentiation of modalities of hiking, the transformations of problematizations of the skittle game, are examples of the diffusion influence in the history of sports

The Development of Sports in the Geographic Space

a- Methods and Trends

The first step of the study consists in an inventory of sporting associations existing in 1922, 1930 and 1939, from such sources as the "Annuaire de l'industrie et du commerce", and the registers of associations kept by each cantonal law court. Complementary information is obtained by a survey of the participation of sporting associations in competitions which have an echo in the sports press, in the publications of sports federations, and in the sports columns of regional and cantonal newspapers.

This inventory brings to light an important increase in the number of sporting associations, from 477 in 1922 to 804 in 1939. The sports phenomenon spreads in the geographic space and touches an increasing number of communes : of the 946 communes in the Bas-Rhin and Haut-Rhin departments, 184 communes in 1922 have one or more sports associations, 212 communes in 1930 and 284 communes in 1939. These associations are distributed all over the regional territory, composing a dense network that follows the main communication channels (main roads and railroads), and reach maximum concentrations around urban centers, as can be seen on the development maps established from the sports associations inventory.

The second step in the study consists of identifying what are the properties of the communes in which sporting practice develops : economic activities (agricultural or industrial) ; public or private services ; commune's equipment in the matters of health, education, public protection, etc.⁷. The outcome of this second step takes the form of a statistical analysis which stresses the great

⁷ The difficulties encountered in the gathering of necessary information for this statistical task must be stressed : it was not possible to get other informations on the social structure of the local configurations of the geosystem apart from the ones used to define the communes orientation in the third statistical analysis. These difficulties forced us to take into account sources that were more difficult to manipulate because they delivered raw data; they have made the work more

diversity of modalities involved in the geographic development of the sports associative movement.

In spite of its obvious diffusion in the geographic space, the sports phenomenon remains mainly an urban phenomenon : in 1922, 69.6% of the sporting associations surveyed are established in a commune of more than 2 000 inhabitants attached to the main built-up area of the commune⁸ ; this proportion is sensibly the same for 1930 (68.6%) and 1939 (65.9%). The number of associations established in the three region's large cities (Strasbourg, Colmar, Mulhouse and their suburbs) increases between 1922 (158 associations surveyed) and 1930 (218 associations) and stabilizes between 1930 and 1939 (214 associations) ; during its development, the sports phenomenon goes beyond the limits of the early urban universe, and thus, the proportion of associations established in the three regional capital cities is reduced from 33.1% in 1922 to 26.5% in 1939.

The different sporting practices contribute in various ways to the sports diffusion process from the cities towards the countryside, as shown by the three factorial planes, each one representing a single moment in the spatial development of sporting associations.

b- The Space of Sporting Associations in the Geosystem : a Factorial Analysis

The space of the Alsatian sporting associations, as unveiled by the three factorial planes, is built on a first axis which represents the opposition between important communes (demographically speaking) and the communes with limited population, and the opposition between the accumulation of equipment for education, health, transportation or means of entertainment, and their absence...

The second axis of the factorial plane takes us back to the opposition between a neighborhood space, a juxtaposition of territorial units occupied by more or less self-sufficient communities between which exchanges are irregular and informal, and a network space in which exchanges are regular and organized. On this axis are opposed the totally isolated communes (with no place of worship, no school, no commerce or industry and which are located at some distance of any transportation mean) and the communes located at the center of a network where intense exchanges take place, because on the one hand they provide for the needs of the less equipped communes (which is shown by the domination of the non-daily trades over the daily ones and the accumulation of artisanal establishments) and on the other hand because the economic activity that develops in these network centers (wholesale trade or industry) implies exchange relationships.

Following this axis a double opposition appears which breaks the urban-rural continuum. On the one hand, the smallest and most deprived communes are opposed to the small urban units which

time consuming and laborious and have lessened the demonstrative capacity of the statistical treatment.

⁸ The studies produced by the Statistique de la France for the period of time studied considers as urban the communes of 2 000 inhabitants or more attached to the main built-up area of the commune, independently of the number of residents

are the final links in the regional network, and on the other hand, those communes are opposed to the large regional centers : Strasbourg, Mulhouse and Colmar.

On the lower part of the graphs appear the properties that the communes owe essentially to modernity. On the top part are regrouped the properties of the communes whose modernity cannot completely erase the traditional structures and equilibrium, and the rural communes that modernity has not yet touched and remolded. There, the absence of equipment, the counting of which in the yearbooks as well as in the statistical reports is an ode to modernity, does not mean destitution, but rather the persistence of other practices or consumers habits in matters of health, equipment (property, goods, possessions), or even public order and protection.

Taking into account the agricultural activity in the survey of 1930 (exploitation size and land use) does not modify the structure of the factorial representation. Taking into account, in the 1939 survey, the commune's orientation on the basis of the proportion of its population that lives off industry, commerce or agriculture, directly (for the people working for a wage) or indirectly (for those who are dependent : *Erwerbspersonen*), gives a new definition of the double opposition which seems to structure the geosystem : at one end stands the "agriculture oriented commune" modality [O1] (rural communes of the neighborhood space) and at the other end stands the "commerce oriented commune" modality [O3] (urban communes) ; these two are in opposition with the "industry oriented commune" modality [O5] (network space communes) on which the double opposition is articulated. If the "industry and commerce oriented commune" [O4] and the "industry and agriculture oriented commune" [O6] modalities take an intermediate position, the "agriculture and commerce oriented commune" modality [O2] is positioned in such a way as to be opposed to the "agriculture oriented commune" modality.

In 1922 and 1930, the space of the sporting associations rested on a two level network space ; in 1939, it rests on a three level network space.

In 1922, the geographic development of the sports movement reaches all center-towns of the network space, which (as shown on the spatial development map of sporting associations), count more than 20 associations, the satellite-towns, where in most cases 6 to 10 sporting associations are implanted, and the center-villages, located at the periphery of the network space. Most practices and federal instances develop themselves inside this structure of exchanges. Only gymnastics, football (soccer) and cycling go beyond their limits and develop within communes classified among the most deprived. It must be noted although that these practices appeared in a privileged way in communes where help services (public protection and mutual relief ; coops ; savings societies,

mutual credit or provident societies ; fire and livestock insurances ; etc.) and associative social activities (singing, music and fishing societies ; denominational, pleasure or philanthropic societies ; etc.) exist.

Between 1922 and 1930, the development of the associative sports movement concerned the increase in the number of associations in the regional metropolis, their nearby communes and the satellite-towns, as well as the appearance of associations in communes of the Alsatian countryside. The fact that the implantation properties of sporting associations do not modify themselves in any significant manner, in relation with the increasing number of communes touched by the diffusion of sporting practice, invites us to think of this development as part of a modernization process of the countryside. At the extreme end of this development, football and cycling grow within communes that have properties which place them at the periphery of this modernization process of the geosystem. At the very most, these communes distinguish themselves by their development of an agricultural activity characteristic of market economy (in opposition to the subsistence economy of the neighborhood space).

Between 1930 and 1939, the associative sports movement has grown in the regional space to such an extent that in 1939 there are very few untouched territories. The geosystem's transformations imply that the implantation characteristics of sporting associations do not fundamentally modify themselves, even though football, cycling and, at a lesser degree, civic practices⁹ continue their development in rural communes.

A brief look at the factorial planes gives a measure of the transformations touching the inscription of each practice in the geosystem. For the years 1922, 1930 and 1939, some of the modalities, notably the touring practices (motoring and aeronautic practices, with the exception of mountain sports), the academic practices (fencing, riding, dance, game of billiards), the athletic practices (weightlifting, wrestling), and rowing, take similar positions on the factorial planes. This shows the stability of their implantation properties, even though the number of associations in which these activities are practiced varies from one survey to the other. Most often, a small increase in number corresponds to the confinement of the practices in their urban universe of origin. Although, the increase in the number of cycling societies and of football clubs in the geographic space is noticed by the emergence of associations in some of the most reclosed and deprived rural agriculture oriented communes. The position of modalities such as cycling, football and folk-games (skittle game) evolves considerably, attesting of the diffusion towards news areas. For if the Alsatian sports movement develops by devoting itself to numerous practices, it must be admitted

⁹ Civic practices (*pratiques conscriptives*, P. Arnaud, 1986) are physical and sporting practices with paramilitary finalities, developed in France at the end of the 19th Century in relationship with nationalism and republican ideology.

that in the rural environment, sport is limited to gymnastics until the twenties, and to the practice of football and cycling in the thirties.

Between these two extremes, some of the modalities taken into account in the factorial analysis move, between 1922 and 1939, from a position close to the properties that characterize the large urban centers, towards properties characteristic of satellite-towns in the network space : mountain sports (the Club vosgien mainly, whereas the position of the Club alpin français remains unchanged) and other sports (Rugby, basket, track and field, tennis, golf, etc.).

Thus, it appears that each practice (or group of practices) is differentiated from the others on the basis of their implantation modalities in the geographic space. Between those practices which are confined to the large urban centers, those which diffuse only in the direction of the satellite-towns of the network space and those which contribute to the development of sporting practice in the rural communes, even touching the neighborhood space, appear differences which may well account for part of their history.

Finally, the plurality of the development modalities of the sporting associations' space shows the variety of the associative bases specific to each of the different federal instances. In most cases, the reality integrated by a federal instance is plural, as shown by the intermediate position taken on the three factorial planes by the federations' modalities. The description of the implantation properties of the associative reality shows the problematic character of its link with the federal structure.

c- Geographic Development of Sports and the Diffusion of Modernity

It seems difficult although to distinguish in this description what results from the dynamics of the sporting practices space and what results from the dynamics of the geosystem.

The statistical method used, a classic one for sociology, poses in the framework of the present study certain interpretation difficulties, as the analysis takes into account properties of sporting associations which correspond to the characteristics of the places where these associations are implanted : this distinctive feature of the analysis forbids us to make any relation between the communes properties ; such a task would require a statistical analysis where the observed and counted unit would be the commune rather than the sporting association, and it would have to be done from an exhaustive, or at least representative, sample of the communes of Alsace, rather than from the communes having sporting associations only.

Each variable must then be examined separately in relation with the intrinsic properties of the sporting associations (practice, affiliations). These relations must be examined one by one to avoid a serious misinterpretation, that is to describe one reality from the counting of a radically

different reality.

The statistical analyses, of which a brief review has been given earlier, attests of the transformation of the sporting associations implantation properties, which are different depending on the type of practices they organize and on the federal instances to which they are affiliated. They also express the transformation of certain properties of the implantation communes particularly through the evolution of the categories taken into account in the analysis (grouping/ungrouping of classes).

Between 1922 and 1930, a few modifications have accrued concerning, among other things, the appearance of bus services and the changes in the distribution of craftsmanship trades. The development of bus transportation lines during the twenties and the thirties, contributes to making the most isolated communes become less isolated, whether by offering an commuting service between the commune and the nearest station, or by organizing regular transportation lines towards Alsatian cities or the Vosges department. The receding of traditional trades (blacksmith, well digger, miller, etc.) jointly with the development of new trades (mechanic, sanitary and electricity technicians, etc.) and the appearance in the countryside of complementary women's work (seamstress, laundress, etc.), expresses the privileged implantation of the sports associations in communes where perennial and modern craftsmanship dominate.

The position on the factorial planes of the different types of commune has been totally modified during the thirties, expressing on a regional scale a closing in of the characteristics of the center-towns and satellite-towns in the network space. They are replaced in their intermediate position by the center-villages that have developed services activities (especially noticeable for drugstores).

In some cases although, it seems that the sporting practice is the only form of modernization of the countryside, particularly in communes where traditional craftsmanship still dominates, even though everywhere else it is dying out or giving way to modern trades.

Geographic Development and Sporting Practice Problematizations

The analysis of the sports phenomenon geographic development has demonstrated that the history of sporting practices is also a process of differentiation of the local configurations of the geosystem serving as an implantation starting point for sporting instances. The analysis of the associations development properties in the geosystem attests of a differentiated diffusion of the practices from the cities towards the countryside, in the multiplication of both the places and the types of places where sporting practice grows : on the one hand, this process does not concern the

whole of sporting practices ; on the other hand, sports whose practice extends to the rural world (mainly gymnastics, football, cycling, hiking and the skittle game) develop in their own special way.

Still to be demonstrated is the fact that the problematizations of sporting practice, as they appear at the local level or the federal level, are defined in relation with the properties of the geosystem's local configurations in which they appear and develop, and that the extension of the sports phenomenon to new (by their characteristics) local configurations, or the transformation of the local configurations characteristics in which it inscribes itself, correspond to the appearance of new problematizations and/or to the transformation of the existing ones.

a- Nearness Result : the Sportization of Gymnastics

The gymnastics movement is based on a tradition existing before the emergence of the sports movement, represented in France until 1919 by the USFSA, and has been opposed to it for many years. Only belatedly during the period studied will it integrate the space of sporting practices, and it will still keep some of its own characteristics.

The history of the *Fédération des sociétés de gymnastique d'Alsace* (FSGA), between 1920 and 1940, illustrates the gymnastics' sportization process which results both from the evolution of the gymnastics position in relation to the sports phenomenon and to the evolution of the symbolic and motor characteristics of practice.

The transformation of the gymnastics problematization must be understood in relation with the evolution of the implantation properties of the gymnastics societies which must compose more and more, on a local scale, with other sporting associations.

At the beginning of the twenties, the gymnastics societies were more numerous than the cycling societies and the football clubs put together (in the countryside, 48.4% were gymnastics societies, 15.7% cycling societies and 22.0% football clubs), whereas in 1939 cycling societies and football clubs are respectively more numerous than the gymnastics societies (22.2% cycling societies and 28.4% football clubs for 21.5% gymnastics societies). This mutation is mainly the result of the evolution that touches the communes of less than 1 000 inhabitants where the gymnastics societies do not represent more than 12.5% of associations. In communes of 1 000 to 2 000 inhabitants, gymnastics societies represent 30.4% of the sporting associations surveyed.

The FSGA affiliated gymnastics societies are implanted in rural communes but prefer to get established in communes where non-daily trades dominate, communes where a medical staff is in place, communes with hotels, and communes where an industrial activity is developing. Underrepresented in 1939 in the agriculture oriented communes, they are mainly implanted in

industry oriented communes (62.5%). The evolution of the Federation's foundation consists in a decrease in the number (and proportion) of societies located away from the railroad : 20.0% in 1922; 14.8% in 1930 ; 11.3% in 1939.

Moving from a situation of control to one of competition, the gymnastics movement, initially fiercely opposed to sporting practices, progressively merges into the space of sporting practices in which it was trying to take a distinctive place. The success and diffusion of sporting practices, especially through football and cycling, come in competition with gymnastics in villages, cause any radical decision taking unbearable. The study of the geographic development of sporting practices shows, in this particular case, the development of proximity relationships between practices which have an influence on one another.

b- Differentiation of Implantations and Differentiation of Practice Modalities : Hiking

Among touring practices, hiking in Alsace holds an important place and numerous groups of varied origins take interest in it. The *Club vosgien* is the most specific of the Alsatian touring groups since it is mainly active in the Vosgien massif. The *Club alpin français* establishes itself in Alsace with the creation of branches in Strasbourg and Mulhouse as soon as 1919, and regroups, in addition to its members, associations which are affiliated to them, including numerous ski clubs.

The main activity of the *Club vosgien* during the twenties and thirties consists in the creation, the beaconing and the maintenance of hiking trails. One does not join the *Club vosgien* to walk, but rather to contribute to the development and the fitting out of a network of roads and trails allowing people to travel through the mountains and the surrounding areas. Progressively, hiking organized by the *Club vosgien* become visits of the local treasures and heritage, giving evidence of the people's attachment to the region and of their cultural good will. Thus, the visited areas lose some of their mystery and anonymity, and gain such density that the hikers become intimate friends. Each place is known for its past or the characteristics that make it unique : each ancient tree, each rock, each cross is progressively identified and visited. Hiking, as it has developed with the *Club vosgien*, becomes a pilgrimage with many rendezvous.

The activities developed by the Alsatian branches of the *Club alpin français* are relatively different from those of the *Club vosgien*. The creation of an infrastructure allowing the practice of mountain sports (construction and maintenance of shelters, diffusion of hiking itineraries, etc.) is also a subject of preoccupation and investment, although remaining secondary in importance. These

branches are encouragement societies in the first place, and thus are interested in all forms of mountain sporting practices : mountain races, but also long expeditions (to the Hoggar or the Himalayas), and climbing or speleology. To encourage in this case means to take interest in the sporting feats of climbers and skiers, to counsel the participants and to favor the practice in some cases with a grant, a sponsorship or the installation of equipment. The branches main activity towards its members consists in organizing conferences, projections, artistic and musical gatherings, dinner dances and parties. When organized in the name of the association, collective practice appears more like an informal social gathering, announced as if it were a reception (the program as well as the personalities attending) and talked about as such in the columns of *La vie en Alsace*.

The interest for peregrination, and for historical or natural sights, common to all hikers, is expressed differently whether they are a *Club vosgien* member or a *Club alpin français* member. The *Club vosgien* members prefer to think of the touristic resources of the region as a regional heritage instead of an asset. They are not the visitors or the trustees of these resources, but consider themselves in a certain way as the owners. This differentiation of the way in which the touristic heritage is considered seems to correspond to the differences that appear in the spatial distribution of the various mountain associations.

The associations affiliated to the *Club alpin français* (mountain and ski clubs) are regrouped in the large cities of the region, where as the *Club vosgien* branches are distributed all around the Vosgien massif and establish themselves mainly in the small urban communes and in the rural communes, especially where a primary school exists. They are strongly overrepresented in the communes where agriculture has an important place and where fields, pastures and vineyards predominate.

c- Transformation of the Sporting Associations Implantation Modalities and Transformations of the Problematizations : the Case of the Skittle Game

If we refer to the results of the sporting associations' inventory, the development of an associative practice of the skittle game only begins in the twenties. Before that, in Alsace, the skittle game is played during village fairs or in cafés where a skittle alley is made accessible to the clients. On this basis develops the associative practice, which shares its practice places with the unorganized practice : alleys located in cafés most of the time ; seldom does a society equip itself with its own skittle game. Although, the discourse held by the federal unions distinguishes "Kegelspiel" (literally : skittle game) and "Kegelsport" : the sportive forms of the skittle game are characterized by their associative and federal organization and by the quality of their alleys which

differentiates them from the common game.

The creation of federal instances, departmental to begin with, then regional, and finally with an international vocation, corresponds to a desire to standardize the practice conditions, through information diffused by federal publications and concerning the different game modalities and alley designs, to promote confrontations between affiliated associations.

The appearance of federal instances corresponds to the transformation of the skittle game practice problematizations. With the merging of the two departmental unions appears preoccupations that seem to be sufficiently new to give rise to a discourse about practice which contrasts with the ordinary chronical of confrontations : skittle game newspapers are a tribune where leaders in search of a new sports identity, similar to the one claimed by other sporting groups, express themselves. The goal is to get rid of a trivial image of the practice in order to assert its sportive value.

If the *Union des clubs de quilles de France* and then the *Fédération française de quilles* promote a sportive conception of the practice of the skittle game, they do not success in imposing it. The Union, created by the leaders of the *Unterelsässische Kegel Bundes*, fails in its undertaking : in the Haut-Rhin department (35 clubs in 1934 at the time of the unification), the traditional St-Gall game rules are still preferred, whereas in the Bas-Rhin department (14 clubs in 1934), a game following the international rules of Bowling develops, under the pressure of the Union. In June 1936, this situation comes to a schism between the *Fédération des sociétés de quilles du Haut-Rhin* and the Union which becomes the *Fédération française de quilles* (and only covers the Bas-Rhin department).

The relation between the implantation characteristics of the skittle game practice and the transformation of the game, which takes place in the twenties and ends in 1934 with the foundation of the *Union des clubs de quilles de France*, should be stressed. During the twenties, folk games give rise to the creation of associations in urban areas mainly : 71.1% of these associations are established in a city of more than 5 000 inhabitants, 55.5% are established in Strasbourg, Mulhouse or Colmar and their suburbs.

In 1939, only 44.4% of the societies organizing the folk games are established in the large regional cities. The development of the skittle societies goes beyond the framework of the regional cities to also touch the communes of less than 2 000 inhabitants (where 33.3% of them are surveyed against 13.3% in 1930). The tendency reversal that took place between 1930 and 1939 in the implantation modalities of the skittle societies seem to correspond to the disagreement appearing during the thirties between the *Unterelsässische Kegelbundes* and the *Fédération des sociétés de*

quilles du Haut-Rhin. The Haut-Rhin societies resist to the standardization of the practice under the international stipulations of the IBA (*International Bowling Association*), and defend the St-Gall game ; the development of the skittle game associative practice in the rural communes (mainly in the Haut-Rhin department), on the basis of the St-Gall game, expresses a will to participate in inter-associative confrontations following the game's traditional rules rather than the imported rules.

Conclusions

The study of the modalities and consequences of the spatial development of the Alsatian sports movement shows that the geographic aspect of the sports phenomenon's development is a determining element to understand its history : the diffusion process of sporting practice in the geographic space cannot be considered as having no incidence on the practice ; just as the modalities of practice are transformed when appropriated by a social group having new characteristics, they cannot help but undergo similar transformations when they diffuse from the urban world towards the rural world. The case of gymnastics, dethroned by other sporting practices, the case of hiking which develops along different modalities whether it is affiliated to one federal instance or another, and lastly, the case of the skittle game for which the sportization process is hindered by a reversal of tendencies in the development of an associative practice under federal tutelage, all attest of the existence of a correspondence between the properties of the place where the practice develops and the problematizations put forth by the people involved in the practice. Other cases could be presented. All would confirm that sporting practices are looked at by the people involved in them through their own schemes of perception and action, schemes built and put to use in specific social conditions that constitute the different geosystem's local configurations. The study of the Alsatian sports movement brings to light the importance of taking into account the properties of the practice place in the understanding of the social phenomenon which develop in them.

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Annexes**Inventories of sporting associations**

Sporting practices	1922	1930	1939
Unidentified		13	11
Cycling	72	114	120
Motoring		10	15
Rowing	11	13	13
Folk-games		45	45
Athletics	28	18	19
Gymnastics	175	167	164
Civic sports	19	36	41
Academic practices		11	15
Winter sports			27
Mountain sports	53	85	81
Football	76	107	144
Other sports	9	12	16
Multiple sports	34	53	85
Feminine sports			8
Sum	477	684	804

Federal instances	1922	1930	1939
Unknown	117	253	275
FSCA	25	31	
FFSCA			13
LASA	10		
FSQHR-UEKB		31	37
FSGA	115	94	88
Club alpin français	6	25	20
Club vosgien	38	53	56
LAFSA	78	98	129
AGR	21	58	81
ACC			49
FST	58	41	
FSGT			56
Other federations	9		
Sum	477	684	804

Space of sporting associations 1922 1930 1939
Legend of factorial planes

Sporting practices

	1930	1939	UNIDENTIFIED
1922	1930	1939	CYCLING (cycleball, artistic cycling, road and track races, cyclotouring)
	1930	1939	MOTORING (motorcycle, automobile)
1922	1930	1939	ROWING
	1930	1939	FOLK-GAMES (skittle game, nautic games)
1922			ATHLETICS (weightlifting, wrestling)
1922	1930	1939	GYMNASTICS
1922	1930	1939	CIVIC SPORTS (physical education, shooting, military preparation)
	1930	1939	ACADEMIC PRACTICES (fencing, horse riding, dance, game of billiards)
1922	1930	1939	MOUNTAIN SPORTS (hiking, and winter sports in 1922 and 1930)
		1939	WINTER SPORTS
1922	1930	1939	FOOTBALL (soccer)
1922	1930	1939	OTHER SPORTS (basket, golf, rugby, tennis, track and field)
1922	1930	1939	MULTIPLE SPORTS (concerns the omnisporting associations)
		1939	FEMININE SPORTS

Federal instances of affiliation

1922	1930	1939	UNKNOWN
1922	1930		FSCA : <i>Fédération des sociétés cyclistes d'Alsace</i> (cycling)
		1939	FFSCA : <i>Fédération française du sport cycliste artistique</i> (artistic cycling), succeed to the FSCA in 1930
	1930	1939	FSQHR-UEKB : <i>Fédération des sociétés de quilles du Haut-Rhin, Unterelsässische Kegelbundes</i> (Skittle game)
1922			LASA : <i>Ligue d'Alsace des sports athlétiques</i> (weightlifting, wrestling)
1922	1930	1939	FSGA : <i>Fédération des sociétés de gymnastique d'Alsace</i> (gymnastics)
1922	1930	1939	CAF : <i>Club alpin français</i> (mountain sports)
1922	1930	1939	C.V. : <i>Club vosgien</i> (hiking)
1922	1930	1939	Lafa : <i>Ligue d'Alsace de football association</i> (football-soccer)
1922	1930	1939	AGR : <i>Avant-garde du Rhin</i> (catholic sporting federation), include the ACC in 1922 and 1930
		1939	ACC : <i>Association des cyclistes chrétiens "La Concorde"</i> (catholic cycling), affiliated to the AGR
1922	1930		FST : <i>Fédération sportive du travail</i> (Communist sporting federation)
		1939	FSGT : <i>Fédération sportive et gymnique du travail</i> (unified communist and socialist sporting federation, born in 1934)
1922			OTHER FED : other federations

Non-sporting societies (A)

1922	1930	1939	A ₀ : absence of non-sporting society
1922	1930	1939	A ₁ : music and singing
1922	1930	1939	A ₂ : other societies : mutual relief, insurance, etc. (1930) ; denominational (1939)
1922	1930	1939	A ₃ : music and other
	1930		A ₄ : denominational society(ies) and other
1922	1930	1939	A ₅ : several non-sporting societies

Wholesale trades (B)

1922	1930	1939	B ₀ : none
1922	1930	1939	B ₁ : horse-cattle dealing, agricult. goods
1922	1930	1939	B ₂ : industrial and commercial goods
1922	1930	1939	B ₃ : several sectors of wholesale trades

Craftmanship trades (C)

1922			C _{1a} : 1 to 5, traditionnal dominant
1922			C _{1b} : 5 to 10, traditionnal dominant
1922			C _{1c} : 10 to 20 traditionnal dominant
1922			C _{1d} : over 20, traditionnal dominant
	1930	1939	C ₁ : traditionnal craftmanship dominant
	1930	1939	C _{2a} : 1 to 5, modern dominant
	1930	1939	C _{2b} : 5 to 10, modern dominant
1922			C ₂ : 1 to 10, modern dominant
1922	1930	1939	C ₃ : 10 to 20, modern dominant
1922	1930		C ₄ : over 20, modern dominant
		1939	C _{4a} : 20 to 50, modern dominant
		1939	C _{4b} : over 50, modern dominant

Distance to railway station (D)

1922	1930	1939	D ₀ : railway station in the commune
1922	1930	1939	D ₁ : 0 to 2.5 Km
1922	1930	1939	D ₂ : 2.5 to 5 Km
1922	1930	1939	D ₃ : over 5 Km

Scolarity (E)

1922	1930	1939	E ₀ : no school
1922	1930		E _{1a} : primary school
1922	1930		E _{1b} : superior primary school
		1939	E ₁ : primary or superior primary school
1922	1930	1939	E ₂ : college-lycee (secondary school)
1922	1930	1939	E ₃ : university

Hotels and cafés (H)

1922	1930	1939	H ₁ : 0 to 10 cafés
1922	1930	1939	H ₂ : over 10 cafés
1922	1930	1939	H ₃ : 1 to 5 hotels
1922			H ₄ : over 5 hotels
	1930	1939	H _{4a} : 5 to 10 hotels
	1930	1939	H _{4b} : over 10 hotels

Industries (I)

1922	1930	1939	I ₀ : none
1922	1930	1939	I ₁ : local factories
1922	1930	1939	I ₂ : metallurgy-mecanic
1922	1930	1939	I ₃ : textile
1922	1930	939	I ₄ : several industrial activities
	1930	1939	I ₅ : other industrial activities

Agriculture : land use (L)

	1930	1939	L ₁ : ploughings (+ de 80%)
	1930	1939	L ₂ : ploughings (+ de 60%)
	1930	1939	L ₃ : ploughing and pasture land
	1930	1939	L ₄ : pasture land (+ de 50%)
	1930	1939	L ₅ : vineyard (+ de 20%)
	1930		L ₆ : polyculture

 Health (M)

1922	1930	1939	M ₀ : no health services
1922	1930	1939	M ₁ : midwife
1922	1930	1939	M ₂ : doctor
1922	1930	1939	M ₃ : drugist
1922	1930	1939	M ₄ : hospital

Agriculture : number and size of exploitations (N)

Small exploitations (<5 Ha) are dominant

1930	N ₁ : 1 to 100 exploitations
1930	N ₂ : 100 to 200 exploitations
1930	N ₃ : 200 to 400 exploitations
1930	N ₄ : over 400 exploitations

Large exploitations (>5 Ha) are dominant

1930	N ₅ : 1 to 100 exploitations
1930	N ₆ : 100 to 200 exploitations
1930	N ₇ : over 200 exploitations

Communes' orientation (O)

1939	O ₁ : agriculture (over 50% of inhabitants live off agriculture)
1939	O ₂ : agriculture and commerce (over 35% of inhabitants live off agriculture, over 15% off commerce)
1939	O ₃ : commerce (over 25% of inhabitants live off commerce)
1939	O ₄ : commerce and industry (over 35% of inhabitants live off industry, over 15% off commerce)
1939	O ₅ : Industry (over 50% of inhabitants live off industry)
1939	O ₆ : Industry and agriculture (over 35% of inhabitants live off industry, over 35% off agriculture)

Public security (P)

1922	1930	1939	P ₀ : none
1922	1930	1939	P ₁ : fire brigade
1922	1930	1939	P ₂ : country policeman
1922	1930	1939	P ₃ : fire brigade and country policeman
1922	1930	1939	P ₄ : state police force
1922	1930	1939	P ₅ : police

Retail trade (R)

1922	1930	1939	R ₁ : none, or daily trades (butchery, bakery, grocery) incomplete
1922			R ₂ : less of 5, daily dominant
	1930	1939	R ₂₋₃ : less of 10, daily dominant
1922			R ₃₋₄ : from 5 to 20, daily dominant
	1930	1939	R ₄ : from 10 to 20, daily dominant
1922	1930	1939	R ₅ : over 20, daily dominant
1922	1930	1939	R ₆ : less than 20, non-daily (confectionnery, delicatessen, general store, hairdresser-barber) dominant
1922	1930	1939	R ₇ : from 20 to 50, non-daily dominant
1922	1930	1939	R ₈ : over 50, non-daily dominant

 Communes by their population (S)

1922	1930	1939	S ₁ : less than 1 000 inhabitants
1922	1930	1939	S ₂ : between 1 000 and 2 000 inhabitants
1922	1930	1939	S ₃ : between 2 000 and 5 000 inhabitants
1922	1930	1939	S ₄ : over 5 000 inhabitants
1922	1930	1939	S ₅ : agglomeration suburbs (Strasbourg, Colmar, Mulhouse)
1922	1930	1939	S ₆ : agglomerations (Strasbourg, Colmar, Mulhouse)

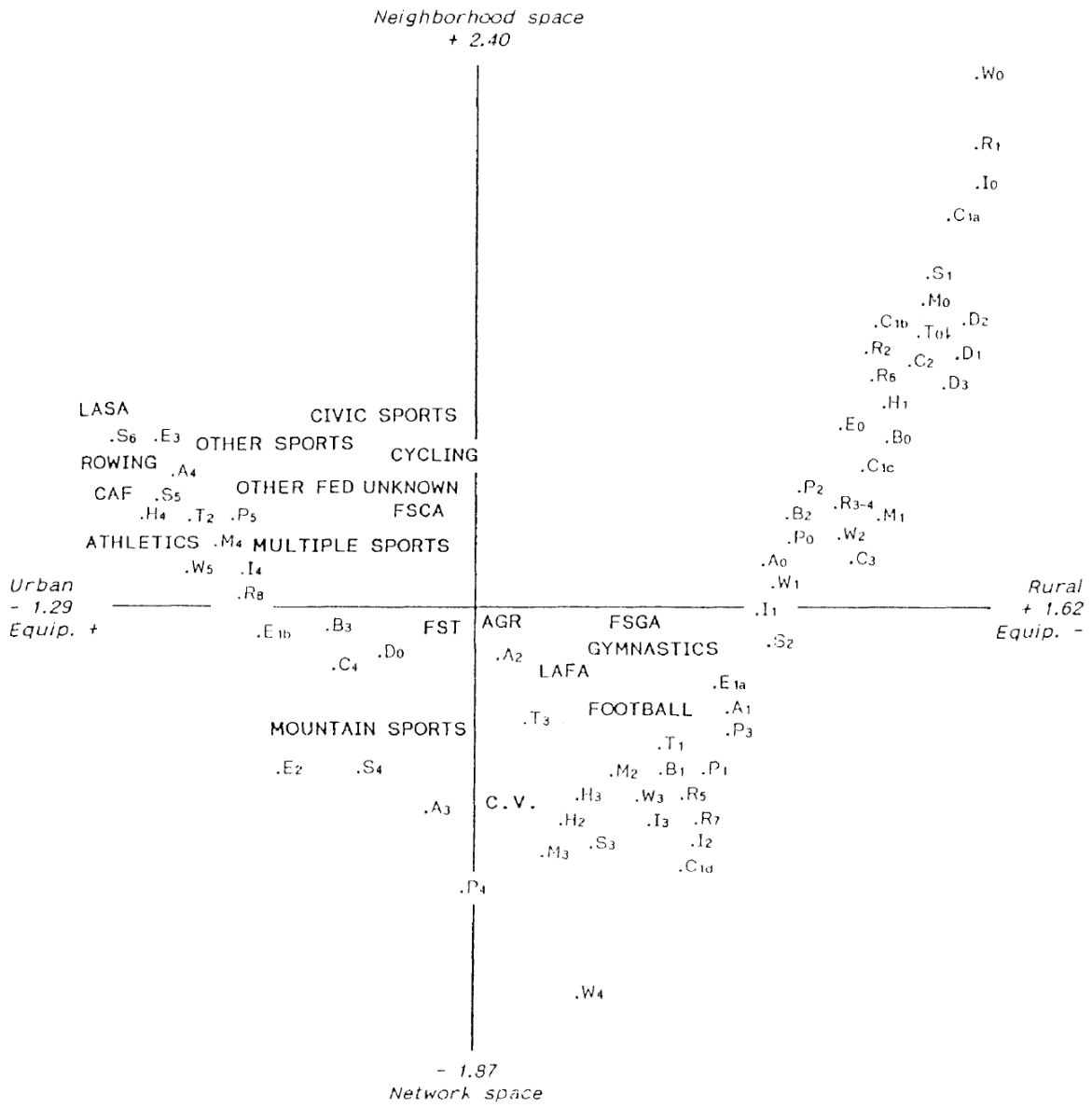
Transportation means (T)

1922	1930	1939	T ₀ : none
1922	1930	1939	T ₁ : tramway line
1922	1930	1939	T ₂ : tramway line and railway station
1922	1930	1939	T ₃ : railway station
	1930	1939	T ₄ : bus and railway station
	1930	1939	T ₅ : bus only

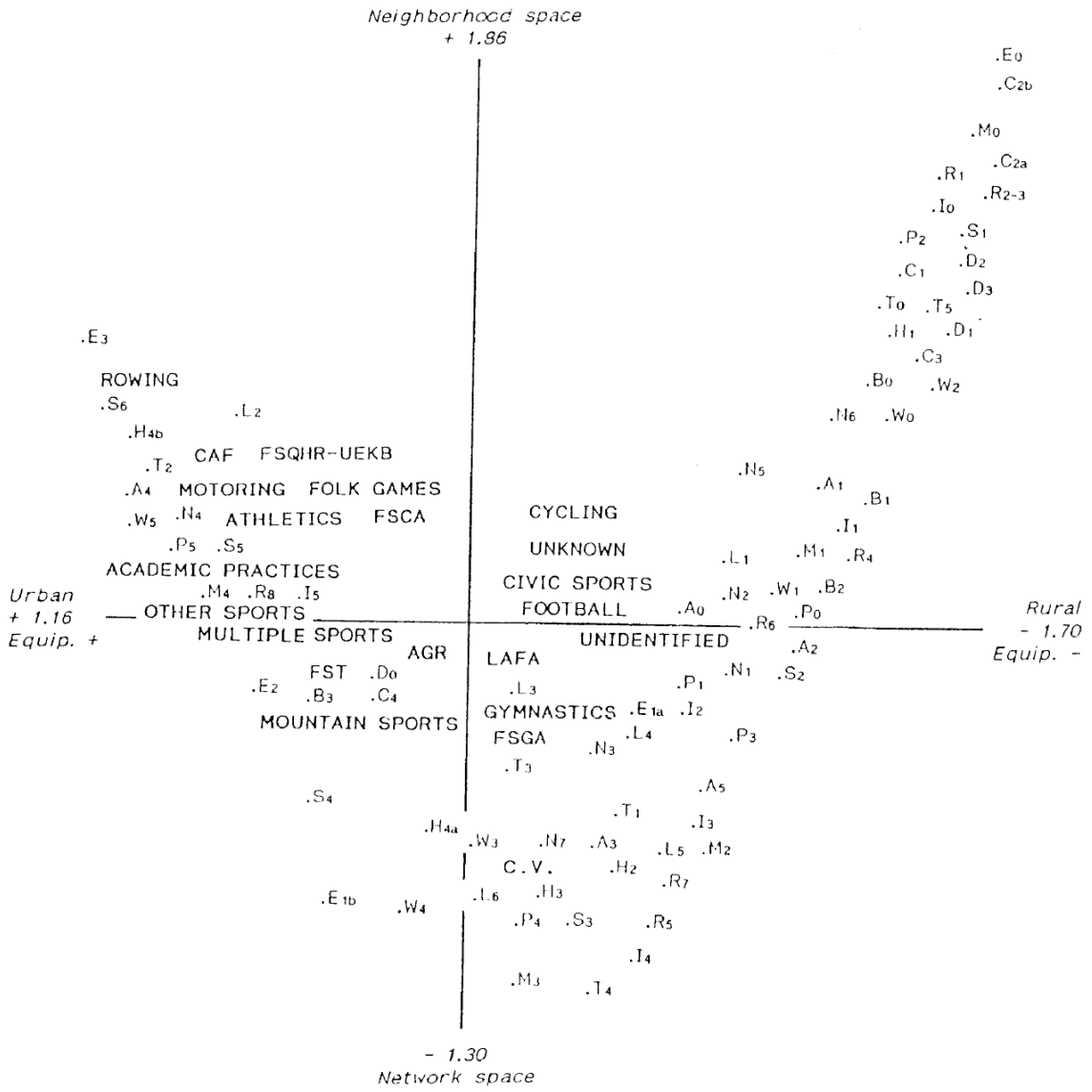
Places of worship (W)

1922	1930	1939	W ₀ : none
1922	1930	1939	W ₁ : catholic
1922	1930	1939	W ₂ : protestant
1922	1930	1939	W ₃ : catholic and protestant
1922	1930	1939	W ₄ : catholic and jew
1922	1930	1939	W ₅ : catholic, protestant and jew

Space of sporting associations
1922



Space of sporting associations
1930



Space of sporting associations
1939

