

## Proposed Title

WRESTLING AND OTHER TRADITIONAL SPORTS IN RWANDA

## Abstract

To examine the role of traditional sports in Rwanda in order to better understand the social, economic and political changes is what this study undertakes. The two basic research questions asked are the following:

- (1) Which values and norms are reflected in Rwandan traditional sports?
- (2) In how far do these sports contribute to social change?

Anthropological studies of play games have shown—*an example of which is presented in chapter 1*—how they are defined. Thus, many features, values, world views, normative demands, and social functions of these sports are determined. These sports often reflect changes in society, whereas other sports often reflect more readily apparent changes than in other social spheres. Social actions on a sport competition constitute a number of acting persons and established rules. These values, norms, rules, and power relations are often more limited than other, less limited social actions. In addition, a large portion of the participants in these sports are young people who have the potential to create new values and behavioral patterns, thus thus produce social change.

This study verifies the role of traditional sports in Rwanda. The traditional sports activities in the interwar period, as an example case, provides the necessary background knowledge. Chapter 3 outlines the main features and the historical development of the age-old traditional sports in Rwanda.

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characteristics of the historical developments of the Buryat sports. They  
*gürsen*  
constitute the center of the Buryat sports from the epoch of the  
changing political conditions, simultaneously re-traditionalizing and modernizing them.

The analysis of these sports' rules, tasks and how they have changed over time, changed, where, when, by whom and how they were organized, etc. is based on historic and present social and cultural changes in the Buryat society. Changing political leadership (from tribal chieftains over Tsarist rule, Soviet power, early post-Soviet period) and the role of sports in the national identity (shamanism, Buddhism, etc.) and the revival of shamanism and Buddhism in the male dominated society to a more egalitarian one is a reflection of the values and normative demands (e.g. from tolerated ban, dining to alcohol restrictions, etc.) and the competition between the different groups.

That the Buryat sports competitions and revival of the production of social change is shown in their re-emergence in religious rituals in the 1980s and massive support from the Buryat community, and the three traditional sports became again closely linked with the practices of Buddhism and shamanism. Thus, because of their great popularity, these sports have revived and are flourishing in the Buryat society. The revival of these sports supports a reconstruction of a Buryat national identity. Thus, Buryat traditional sports prove sports' capacity of indicating social change.