

Social and cultural anthropology
Higher level
Paper 1

Monday 16 May 2016 (morning)

1 hour

Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Read the passage carefully and then answer all the questions.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[20 marks]**.

Texts in this examination paper have been edited: word additions or explanations are shown in square brackets []; substantive deletions of text are indicated by ellipses in square brackets [...]; minor changes are not indicated.

Extract adapted from Walker, H. (2013), “State of play: The political ontology of sport in Amazonian Peru”, *American Ethnologist*, **40** (2): 382–398.

Traditionally seminomadic*, the Urarina of Amazonian Peru live in small self-sufficient kin-based groups. The relations between these groups were traditionally characterized by mutual suspicion and violence. Members derive a sense of common identity through sharing food and productive activities.

- 5 Individual differences are carefully attended to, and there is a strong sense that no one should presume to know the minds of others. This corresponds to respect for personal independence, leading to a distinctive form of egalitarianism. For in this fragmented sociality – characterized by face-to-face interactions between kin and hostility towards strangers – there is little emphasis on status or role.
- 10 Throughout Amazonia today, soccer (football) is part of everyday life and one of the most enthusiastically embraced elements of non-indigenous society. Young boys play spontaneous fun games of “keepings off”, trying to keep the ball away from one of the players. Scoring is relative rather than absolute, and almost irrelevant. This lends the games an unmeasured timeless quality. Despite the efforts of local schoolteachers, “team tactics” are generally
- 15 non-existent, resulting in an impression of chaos for an observer more accustomed to the disciplined European style.

Aside from soccer there are no organized games with defined rules and participant roles among the Urarina of Amazonian Peru. People learn to “play” early in life; “playing” is one of the very first things they learn. Babies spend much time in string hammocks with tiny wooden toys,

20 described as “companions” for the baby’s shadow-soul to “play” with. Such “play” is considered essential to the child’s development and well-being. “Play” keeps people happy and is an essential part of life. People do not say to each other, “let’s play soccer”, but simply, “let’s play”, implying that “to play” means to enter into a particular mode of being. “Playing” has no goal that brings it to an end.

- 25 Once, my Urarina companions and I visited a school festival, centred on a soccer tournament, organized by a community downstream. Four Peruvian flags stood there to greet us, as though eradicating old intergroup hostilities. The sport started promptly, children’s matches followed by adults’, each team representing a community. In contrast to the games played at home, these matches were fiercely contested. I noticed that when people addressed each other on the field,
- 30 they tended to use Spanish names rather than Urarina names.

The schoolteacher-referee called out fouls or imposed rules, which were rarely observed at home, but accepted here. Under the influence of schoolteachers, the spirit of the game seemed different in the context of the tournament than it did at home. There was more rigidity, more determination, less spontaneous fun and laughter. People played to win and every rule was

35 carefully followed.

Though the boys on our team played well and valiantly, they did not win. This did not surprise me; ours was a more isolated, “traditional” community than its downstream neighbours, with fewer visible signs of the influence of Peruvian society. Despite our schoolteacher’s efforts at encouraging teamwork, the emphasis was on individual skill and flair; a resistance to allowing

40 soccer to cross over from “play” into “game”.

At the end of the event, as they sang the national anthem, the teacher cried out, “Viva Peru!” and everyone called out “Viva!” and applauded cheerfully. The teacher launched into a formal speech in Spanish about “being good brothers and neighbours, and good Peruvians”. Significantly, the festival speeches were in Spanish, the language of colonial administration and hierarchy, and reflected concern with instituting a new bureaucratic mode of authority, based on formal roles, rules and social relationships. This is what soccer as “game” rather than “play” is all about.

Urarina see playing soccer as “civilized”, “organized” and full of “law”. Time is controlled with absolute precision. Soccer festivals exemplify this control of time and modern temporality. They mark time in a radically new way: unlike customary rituals, they are not tied to changing seasons or the developing human body, but linked to national days of celebration.

Soccer festivals produce the modern citizen and the nation. But the strong appeal of soccer for the Urarina lies in its basis in “play”, which they proclaim as indispensable for living well. Yet “games” were absent in the past as was submission to abstract rules transcending the moral ties of kinship. In local tournaments, enjoyment takes a back seat, and players strive to win.

Amazonia is famous for its widespread warfare, but while its consequence is fragmentation, sport tournaments, by contrast, centralize and unify. The collectivity takes on a coercive character, and power is legitimized by recourse to roles and rules. Soccer exemplifies the Western logic of the state, sovereignty, unification, and control over and against anarchy. As a vehicle of nationalist sentiment, sport is central to the process by which the state expands.

[Source: “State of play: The political ontology of sport in Amazonian Peru”. Harry Walker. *American Ethnologist*. May 10, 2013. © 2013 by the American Anthropological Association. Reprinted with the permission of John Wiley & Sons Inc.]

* seminomadic: as hunter-horticulturalists, the Urarina migrate seasonally

1. Describe the difference between “play” and “game” on the basis of this passage. [6]
 2. Using theoretical perspectives, explain how soccer as “game” turns the indigenous Urarina into Peruvian citizens. [6]
 3. Compare how soccer transforms Urarina society and culture with processes of social **and/or** cultural change in **one** society you have studied in detail. [8]
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