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Yin and Yang. The East in Gipuzkoa: place, identity and meaning of wushu

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Abstract

Games, physical exercises and sports migrate from one territory and culture to another through travellers, just like food, art or languages. By studying internal logic (body techniques) and external logic (social uses) factors, this ethnographic paper seeks to understand the adaptation and integration of the Eastern motor activities called *wushu* (kung fu) into Gipuzkoan society. The first part of the paper examines the physical and sport leisure options offered in this city, ranging from the macro-structure of the offering to the layer involving activities of Eastern provenance, with a view to understanding kung fu's place and identity in this province. The length of the motor activity is used as a dependent variable in the study and praxeological analysis as an organisation and classification criterion for the activities. The importation and establishment of this technique have led the two large groups of Eastern motor activities, called *taolu* (*katas*) and *sanshou* (*fight*s), to vary and become separated and the equilibrium between them in the East to be broken. The second part describes the fieldwork, pertaining to the performance of *taichi* (*taolu*) and *shuai jiao* (*sanshou*), designed to reveal the meaning the actor attaches to Eastern activities. Eastern techniques are reinterpreted by their practitioners, who transform them and assimilate them into Western thought through the application of the principles of Cartesian dualism. As a result, the Eastern unity between yin and yang present in Asian life, and consequently also in motor skills, is shattered through globalisation and is adapted to the Western philosophical reality of a separate soul and body. In conclusion, the place, identity and meaning of kung fu in Gipuzkoa are an example of the process of the cultural globalisation of Asian activities in the West.

Keywords: ethnomotricity, motor praxeology, cultural globalisation, *wushu*, *taichi*, *shuai jiao*