

CHEERLEADING AS A PART OF FINNISH SPORTS CULTURE

An overview of the development of cheerleading in post-modern Finnish sports culture from 1979 to 2018

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ABSTRACT

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Cheerleading was born in the United States of America in the late 19th century and arrived in Finland in 1979. First, cheerleading was a sideline activity of other sports, but later it became a sport of its own. Now, cheerleading has become a visible part of Finnish sports culture and a popular alternative next to traditional sports. There has not been done academic studies about the development of Finnish cheerleading before this research.

The purpose of this thesis was to present the development of Finnish cheerleading from years 1979 until 2018. The main focus is on the time period from 2005 until 2015, when the development of cheerleading as sport, has been quick. Furthermore, the aim of this study was to study the development of cheerleading in post-modern Finnish sports culture.

This is a historic research about Finnish cheerleading. The data was collected from resources, such as annual reports of the Finnish Cheerleading Federation, newspapers, websites, international researches and books. The qualitative methods were used, however some of the numeric data was used to support and enable the comprehensive analysis of the data. The relation between the changes in Finnish sports culture and cheerleading, is clear. Cheerleading arrived in Finland during the age of divergent activity and characteristics typical for that age, such as the popularity of team sports, explains partly the integration of cheerleading. The data illustrate that cheerleading has integrated into post-modern Finnish sports culture.

Cheerleading has developed from a spontaneous entertainment to a well-organized sport, acknowledged by the government and other associations nationally and internationally. Cheerleading has become more professional in terms of administrative matters and advanced education of coaches. The active and enthusiastic people in the field of cheerleading, international success and accessibility of cheerleading, have been factors behind the rapid growth. Furthermore, in 2016, cheerleading was 12th most popular sport among children and youth. Professionalization of the administration of FCF, strategy and constant development, have had key roles in integration of cheerleading as a part of Finnish sports culture.

Key words: the sport and physical culture, age of divergent activity, cheerleading, development of sports, gender

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1 INTRODUCTION

Cheerleading has been a part of Finnish sports culture almost 40 years and the growth is continuously upward. However, there has not been done scientific studies in this field in Finland. In the US, which is the birth country of cheerleading, some researches about cheerleading have been done, but they are mostly from the collegiate sports point of view. This study is a historical research from the sociological point of view. In this research it is examined, how cheerleading has been developing and how it has integrated into the Finnish sports culture over the years.

Many researchers have been interested in researching development of sports, and other studies have been made related to the topic of this thesis and more specific, related to development of certain sports in Finland. Juga (2017) studied the development of orienteering as a part of Finnish post-modern sports culture. Orienteering has gone through a massive change in terms of technology, which has changed the field of orienteering in general. In addition, Kauppinen (2016) researched the development of Cross Fit as a part of Finnish sports culture in the post-modern era. There can be found nuances between CrossFit and cheerleading, because both of them represent sport, where the community aspect is very strong. Also, both have arrived in Finland during the post-modern era and the fragmented sports culture has enabled both sports to become popular among people.

Hänninen (2012) has studied snowboarding, and how it arrived in Finland, and yet, how it became popular winter sport activity for Finnish people. In the case of snowboarding, the key element was the active people involved into the field. This is similar to the early years of Finnish cheerleading, when the most active people decided to establish cheerleading clubs, and later even, the umbrella federation for Finnish cheerleading.

Also, Levy (2001) researched the path of Aikido in Finnish sports culture and how it became structured and organized part of Finnish sports culture. Levy's research has been made following the same kind of methodology as in this research is used, by using historical data gathered from different sources.

Since cheerleading is a female dominant sport, it was relevant to deepen the understanding of the development of female sports. Vehviläinen (2006) researched the development of women's soccer in Finland from the 1970s to 2006. On the other hand, Kentala (2017) made a research about professionalization of women's gymnastics club called The Women Gymnastics of Jyväskylä (Jyväskylän Naisvoimistelijat). More specific, Kentala's study is about the development of the member club of Finnish Gymnastics Federation. Especially, the administrative development of the sport club is viewed carefully in Kentala's thesis, and there can be found several similarities with the development of both, Finnish cheerleading in general and Finnish cheerleading clubs.

There are many reasons for conducting this study. The dynamic growth, increasing popularity among youth, administrative development and international success of Finnish cheerleading, encouraged to investigate the field and backgrounds more. The umbrella organization of Finnish cheerleading is Finnish Cheerleading Federation, FCF (suom. Suomen Cheerleadingliitto ry). In 2017, FCF had over 8000 members, which is 100% more than in 2003. Cheerleading has become an alternative option next to traditional sports. In 2016, cheerleading was already the 12th most popular sport among children and youth (Kokko & Mehtälä 2016).

As soon as cheerleading arrived in Finland, Finnish teams have been internationally successful, not only in Europe, but worldwide as well. Every year from 2003 until 2017, Finnish teams have been in top three in several divisions in European Championships. In addition, in the World Championships at least one Finnish team has been in top three countries every year, when Finnish teams have participated. For instance, in female division Finnish national team got silver medal in World Championships 2017. During the same year, in European Championships all-female team Helsinki Athletics Cheerleaders, HAC Elite, got gold and became the European Champion 2017. Additionally, Finnish cheerleading made history in 2018, when Finnish all-female national team won the World Championships. For the first time ever in the history of cheerleading, other country than USA, won the World Championships in all-female division. The placements of Finnish teams in adult divisions in World Championships from 2003 to 2018, can be found from appendices (appendix 4).

There is a personal reason for choosing this topic as well. I have been involved in cheerleading almost 15 years, having several kinds of roles in the field. I competed as an

athlete for six years. During that time, I was able to see what kind of sport cheerleading is, from the viewpoint of an athlete. As soon as I finished my career as an athlete, I started to coach an adults' beginner team. After some time, I started to coach juniors and continued that over several years. After all, I coached different teams for five years, and I got a good perspective from the point of view a member club coach.

I was also working as an employee of FCF from 2016 to 2018. The working experience in the third sector has helped me to understand the bigger picture of Finnish sports culture, the policies and structures of it. Also, understanding the role of cheerleading as a part of Finnish sports culture, has become clearer during my working years at FCF. Actually, working for the national federation, has opened my eyes and gave me the inspiration to make this research.

This thesis is conducted by seven chapters. Straight after the introduction, in chapter two, the research task is presented. The chapter three, is about the theoretical framework and literature review, where the Finnish sports culture is viewed more detailed. In the chapter four, the history of cheerleading is presented shortly, and the gender aspect in the early years of cheerleading, is also viewed. In the chapter five, Finnish cheerleading and the development, history and phases of it, are viewed more specific. Last part of the chapter five, presents the member numbers from years 2003 to 2017. The growth in the field of Finnish cheerleading, based on the data gathered from the license system, is presented. The chapter six is about cheerleading as a part of Finnish sports culture. The administrative development and commercialization in the field of cheerleading, are viewed. Finally, in the chapter seven, the research topic is discussed and summarized, following the subchapters of limitations, trustworthiness and ethics, learning process, and suggestions for further researches.

2 RESEARCH TASK AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this thesis is to present the development of Finnish cheerleading and the phases of it. A book about history of Finnish cheerleading is written by Kallonen (2005). However, this book does not include the information after the year 2005, which is an important period, when it comes to development and administrative changes of Finnish cheerleading. Hence, the old and new data about Finnish cheerleading is combined and presented in this research, and the relations with Finnish sports culture are considered. This thesis is made to provide a scientific resource about Finnish cheerleading, and hopefully it will encourage people to do further researches in the field.

In this research, the development of cheerleading during the past four decades in Finland, from 1979 until the year 2017, is studied. The emphasis will be in the last decade (from 2005 to 2017), because then the growth and changes have been most notable, in terms of administrative formation of the operations of Finnish cheerleading. Also, it is important to have the focus on the time period after 2005, since there are no researches made of that time.

The aim of this study is to view carefully how Finnish cheerleading has developed, and how cheerleading has been integrated into Finnish sports culture. The emphasis will be in the phases of the development of cheerleading in Finland, and the aim is to understand the typical characteristics of cheerleading in general.

2.1 Research questions

There are three research questions used to guide this study. The research questions are:

- What kind of sport is cheerleading?
- How Finnish cheerleading has been developing?
- How cheerleading has integrated into postmodern Finnish sports culture?

In this research, it is not supposed to describe the physical characteristics of cheerleading but give an overview about cheerleading as a form it is done in Finland. The first research question is covered using the own experiences and knowledge from the field, combined with the literature gathered mostly from the international literature and websites. The

second research question considers more specific the path of cheerleading, and the stages of the development in Finland. Finally, the third research question is conducted by analysing the Finnish sports culture, and which factors have affected cheerleading to become one of the most popular sports among youth. This research provides information about Finnish cheerleading history, gathered in a one paper. Understanding the paths of different sports, increases the understanding about sports culture and society in general. Furthermore, value provided by this research is remarkable in terms of the development of Finnish cheerleading. It is necessary to understand the relation with the sports culture in general, to make constant development possible. When talking about society and sports culture, everything involved in it influences the eternity.

2.2 Research data

This is a qualitative study. Typical for qualitative study is to try to understand some kind of phenomena and social behavior (Chadwick et al. 1984, 206-207). Since the aim of this study is to view and understand a past phenomenon, this thesis was decided to be completed as a qualitative research. When talking about qualitative research, it refers to many different types of data collection and research strategies. There are differences among the research methods, and depending on the researched topic, the method needs to be decided carefully. (Chadwick et al. 1984, 206.) The method used for this study is a historical research. Historical research is about examining elements from history (Berg 2004, 233). When talking about historical researches, historiography is a term to be understood as well. Historiography is a method for discovering and understanding, what happened in the selected time period in the past (Berg 2004, 233.)

When conducting a study with historical research method, the sources of data need to be considered carefully. The sources of data can be reports, documents, newspaper editorials, photos, interviews or questionnaires. (Berg 2004, 237.) In this study, all of these resources were used.

The research data of this thesis, is collected from different kind of sources from the past. The main challenge was the lack of literature about cheerleading nationally and internationally. So far, the existing data about Finnish cheerleading, has been slightly fragmented and not quite accessible, because most of the data has been in the files of

Finnish Cheerleading Federation. Also, only few articles or other papers about cheerleading have been written, which made the beginning of this research slightly challenging. In the US, there have been written some articles, where cheerleading is involved. However, in those articles cheerleading is considered as a collegiate sport, which is quite different than Finnish cheerleading is. Anyway, some relevant writings were found and for example, Hanson's (1995) book "Go! Fight! Win!" is used as reference. Hanson's text included proper information about the roots of cheerleading in the US, the birth and the first stages of cheerleading in its mother country. The articles by Grindstaff and West (2010) and Adams and Bettis (2003), viewed cheerleading from different points of views and for example, gender issues are considered with the help of these articles.

Some website material was collected, mainly from the national and international federations' websites, to cover the information as widely as possible and from many points of views. Also, some newspaper and magazine articles are used as a supportive material, especially when researching the international history of cheerleading. However, the website sources are selected and viewed critically.

A book by Kari Kallonen (2005), presents the history of Finnish cheerleading comprehensively, and is useful for the implementation of this research. The data after the 2000's, is mainly collected from the annual reports of the Finnish Cheerleading Federation from the years 2003 to 2016. The reports from the ten first years until 2010 are quite concise, so the most valuable information is gathered from the reports from 2010 to 2016. The data from the annual reports, is used to create a proper timeline of cheerleading in Finland. The purpose of the timeline is to provide a clear summary of the operations of Finnish Cheerleading Federation, in chronological order.

The numeric research data was gathered from the license system called Sporttirekisteri, which was called as Suomisport after 2017. The numeric data included mainly the rates of registered members and the gender distribution. Also, the member club surveys from years 2013 and 2015, were viewed and compared with each other. The surveys included matters about the development of the member clubs of FCF. The information from the license system and surveys was reflected with the information from the annual reports of FCF. Some information, which needed some explanation because of missing numbers of

other relevant information, was fulfilled with the comments from the persons working in FCF.

The information from the license system contains detailed and numeric information about the people involved in cheerleading. The reports from the system show all the members of the federation, who has bought a license. To be mentioned, the licensed members do not equal to the actual number of people involved in cheerleading in Finland, because the license is required by Finnish Cheerleading Federation only in competitions. Also, there can be bought a license, which does not include the permission to compete. These licenses are included to the rates gathered from the system as well. However, there might be some people involved in cheerleading without a license, especially if they do not compete. The people without a license, are excluded from this study. Even though, the overall license number do not equal to the actual number of people involved in cheerleading, it gives a sense of the rates and trends.

Any personal information of the members was not used in this study, because it is not relevant for the aims and purposes of the research. Since the total member rates are collected from the annual reports, the emphasis is in analyzing the age and gender changes during the years. The purpose is to find out some trends in terms of ages and genders, to increase the understanding about cheerleading as phenomenon.

3 FINNISH SPORTS CULTURE

In this thesis, Finnish sports and physical culture in postmodern society is used as a theoretical framework. First of all, the concepts of sport in Finland, are presented and explained. Later, the background of post-modernism in Finland and also post-modern sports culture in Finland, are viewed. Finnish sport culture has had several phases, and it has been changing constantly during the decades. Hannu Itkonen (1996) has divided Finnish sports culture into four ages, and those ages and typical elements of each time period, are viewed carefully in the subchapter 3.3. The phases of Finnish sports culture are important to understand, to make it possible to understand the factors behind the integration and development of cheerleading. The structure of Finnish sports culture is explained, to make surroundings of Finnish cheerleading more understandable. Finally, the birth of new sports is considered, and the similarities with the arrival of Finnish cheerleading are presented.

3.1 Concepts of sport in Finland

The Finnish sports culture has been changing constantly and the changes have been reflected by the changes in the society. Tiihonen (2014, 18) argued that historically it can be said that constant expansion from the late 1800s has happened, so that until the 1950s and 1960s, the main focus was sport itself. After that, sport was not the only concept, which was used in terms of sports culture. New concepts appeared to be used as well; in the 1960s concept of fitness sport, in the 1970s physical activities and in the 1990s the focus started to be also in health issues and health related factors. Finally, in the 2000s the concept of movement and being physically active, has raised as well. (Tiihonen 2014, 18.)

When talking about the concept of sports in the history, like mentioned, there are several phases and changes. For example, the first concept which represented Finnish sports culture was “gymnastik”, which means gymnastics. In the 1840, the explanation of gymnastics was slightly different than it is now in the 21st century. Gymnastics meant “physical exercises to maintain and improve the body physically” (Wuolio & Jääskeläinen 1993, 14.)

Sports culture in Finland used to be mainly competitive and unambiguous concept, until the 1960s and 1970s (Tiihonen 2014; Kokkonen 2013, 13-15). Before the 1960s, the facilities and possibilities to do sports, were quite limited. Better living standard and the increase of leisure time caused demand for new sports facilities and new sports (Kokkonen 2013, 14.)

In the 1970s, the massive changes happened in Finnish sports culture. Until the 1970s, it covered mainly competitive and elite sports. In the 1970s, physical activities became an important part of sports culture as well. Kokkonen highlighted that the changes in the sports culture during the 1970s modified the characteristics of Finnish sports culture in general. For example, not anymore only the traditional sports got media's attention, new sports were born and sports from abroad started to arrive in Finland. Children's and youth sports became more organized, meanwhile the competitive sports became more professional as well. (Kokkonen 2015, 21.)

Kokkonen (2015) argued that the changes in the society had an important role, when it comes to the change in the Finnish sports culture. Also, Piispa (2013) mentioned the structural changes in the society, as a factor, which influences the sports culture. The most part of the Finnish population lived in the countryside, until the 1970s. Not only the change, but also the rapidity of the change, had an important role when it comes to the changed structure of the society. Kokkonen highlighted some major changes in the society in the 1970s, which can be seen also in the changes in the Finnish sports culture. For example, most of the population lived in the cities, 60 % of women were involved in working life, service sector expanded, and the everyday life was not anymore as physically demanding as it used to be before. All these factors had an impact on the overall sports culture. (Kokkonen 2015, 21-23.)

In the 1980s, public sector had its golden era in sports culture and in decision making. Sports law was implemented, municipalities invested in building and planning sports facilities, and the government raised the subvention money amounts (Kokkonen 2015, 73). The expansion of sports culture continued its journey, and not only the health aspect was taken into the consideration, but also the importance of experiences and feelings in sports became as a part of the culture. This era is also called as post-modern period.

3.2 The structure of Finnish sports culture

The structure and the sectors of Finnish sports culture have not been varying much from the 1900s. However, the status and power of sectors have been changing during the decades. In Finnish sports culture, the field can be divided into three sectors, which are public, private and third sector (Ilmanen 2015, 19; Suomi 2010, 328-330). Public sector covers the government, municipalities and church. Private sector means the companies, which operate in the field of sport, aiming to get profit from the operations. The third sector, is mainly covered by non-profit organizations, sport clubs and federations. The third sector is also known as a voluntary sector because it is mainly consisting of voluntary work force. (Ilmanen 2015, 20.) Finnish Cheerleading Federation operates in the third sector and it is viewed more closely later in this thesis.

Typical for Finnish sports industry is that the third sector has had a strong role in Finnish sports culture from the 1800s. The third sector is still the most significant factor in the Finnish sports culture and sports field is heavily based on voluntary work. The roles of public and the private sectors have been changing depending on the decade. (Ilmanen 2015, 20-21.)

All the three sectors are in constant cooperation with each other (figure 1). In 1980s, when the sports law was implemented, the aim was to improve the equality matters, both, with the help of sports and in sports. Additionally, distribution between the sectors was made to share the responsibilities clearly, so that each sector would be aware of what is expected from them. The public sector was supposed to provide the conditions for doing sports, and the third sector was responsible for organizing sports nationally and locally. One of the most important requirements of public sector is to provide the proper facilities for doing sports. Additionally, the other important factor is the subvention money given by the Ministry of Culture and Education. (Suomi 2010; 2015, 60.)

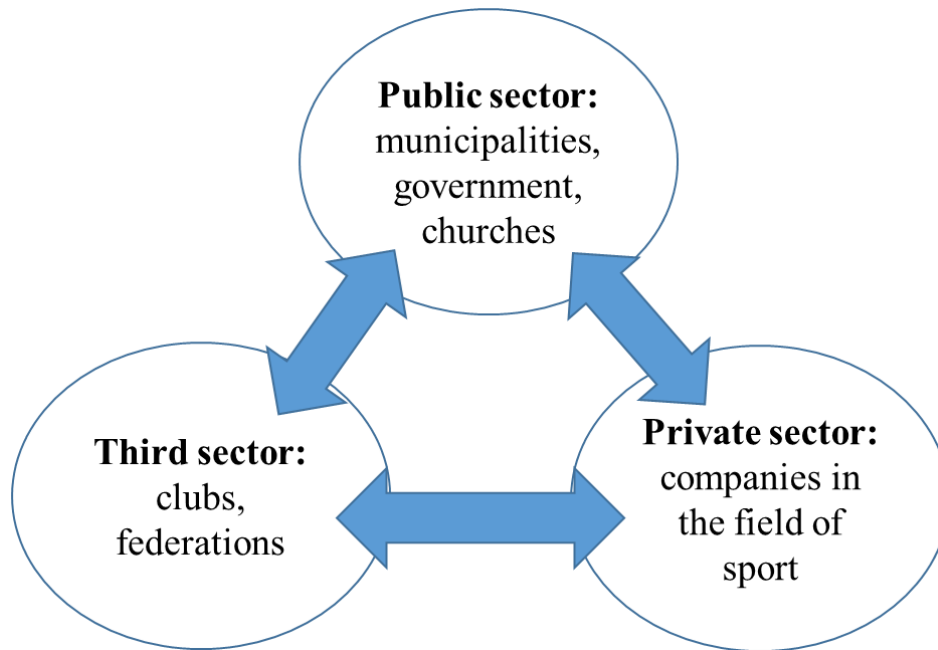


Figure 1: Structure of Finnish sport system (Ilmanen, 2015, 20-21).

3.3 The phases of Finnish sports culture

Finnish sports culture has its roots deep in the 19th century, when the first movements of organized sports became a part of the Finnish society. Even though most of the population lived in the countryside, organized sport was born in the capital city, Helsinki (Ilmanen 2015, 21). However, during the late 1800s and early 1900s, sport was not available for all, like it became later in 1900s. Sport was a privilege of bourgeois people (Ilmanen 2015, 21). The reason for this was mainly the fact that the working people had long days and weeks at work and did not have much leisure time or extra money to use.

Itkonen (1996, 215; 2002, 36-47; 2015, 50-54) has divided Finnish sports culture into four stages; the age of organization culture in late 1800s and the beginning of the 1900s, age of hobby-competition in late 1930s, the age of intense competition in late 1960s and the age of divergent activity which started in 1980s and is still continuing in 2018. The age of organization culture began in the late 1800s, when new sports clubs were established, and many sports clubs were registered under several umbrella federations. Also, the clubs, which were established in the first decades of 1900s, were in close cooperation with other associations outside the field of sports. Since the cooperation was with non-profit associations, sports clubs held their practices mainly in the facilities of the associations. The facilities were simple and modest, which explains the popular sports

of that time, such as wrestling and gymnastics. Also, outdoor activities like skiing and track and field, were popular. The field constructions were done by voluntary force. (Itkonen 2002, 36-47.)

The second period, age of hobby-competition, started in the late 1930's, when people became interested in competitive aspect of sports. The emphasis was heavily in competing, winning and breaking records. Even though the traditional sports, for instance, skiing and wrestling, were having the dominant position in Finnish sports culture, new sports were established as well. The facilities were improved and that helped new sports to enter the sports field. However, since the facilities became better, new sports were established and traditional sports were strengthening their position. Also, competition between the clubs and federations increased. (Itkonen 2002, 36-47.)

The third phase, the age of intense competition, started in the late 1960s, when society policy was taken as a part of planning sports policies. Because of urbanization and work becoming less physically demanding, sports policies were modified to encourage people being physically active. However, the competitive aspect maintained strong, and this caused challenges in coaching. Hence, the importance of professional coaching was understood. For example, the Finnish Gymnastics and Sports Federation (SVUL), started to organize education for coaches and instructors. Also, many sports clubs were interested in hiring international professional coaches. Even though the competitive aspect of sport remained strong, physical activities became more visible part of Finnish sports culture as well. Physical activities did not change the field of sport remarkably, but the changes could be seen in sports clubs' actors and decision making in municipalities. Both, the competitive and physical activity sports, were needed to be considered in decision making processes. (Itkonen 2000; 2015b, 53.)

The fourth period, age of divergent activity, started in the 1980s. That was the time, when the characteristics of post-modern sports culture were seen in Finland. In post-modern society, the way of living and attitudes in general have changed. Therefore, motives towards doing sports have varied more than in previous eras. The leisure time sector has become fragmented and new sports have been established continuously. However, it is all about the relationship between supply and demand, when it comes to the establishment of new sports (Bourdieu 1985, 152-153.) New sports may be established, but how will they become as a part of sports culture? Both, Bourdieu and Itkonen, have mentioned that

values of both, sport and the surrounding society, need to meet each other, to make the sport stabilized part of sports culture (Bourdieu 1985, 152-153; Itkonen 1996, 281.)

Typical for the age of divergent activity, is that new clubs and federations have been established rapidly. In addition, totally new sports, especially team sports and sports from abroad, challenged the popularity of traditional sports. The fragmentation and diversification, could be seen also in changes of organizational and content structures. New disciplines of sports required decision makers to consider more specific, how to deal with them and how to support new sports equally with traditional sports. (Itkonen 1996, 90.)

Not only the field of sports in general is fragmented, but also the sports clubs have become more fragmented. Itkonen (1996, 90; 2000; 2015, 54) has presented six types of sports clubs operating in Finnish sports field. The sports clubs are divided into two categories, the first includes the clubs, which are involved in competition systems of the federations. The second category includes sports clubs, which are not participating in competitions, but are aiming to achieve other goals than succeeding in competitions. (Itkonen 1996, 90; 2002, 36-47.) These both types of clubs exist in the field of cheerleading as well. However, during the first decades of Finnish cheerleading, only clubs and teams concentrating in competing were established. The situation changed while the development continued. Based on the findings from the survey in 2013, showed that already 90% of the replied member clubs had also physical activity cheerleading and teams, which had other goals than competing. (FCF 2013, 2015.)

Finnish sports culture has gone through many changes in history. In this paper the emphasis is in the last stage, the age of divergent activity. Cheerleading entered the Finnish sports culture during the divergent activity, so it is natural to consider the relation between cheerleading and Finnish sports culture in the age of divergent activity.

3.4 Post-modernism in Finland

Changes in the society can be explained by multiple factors. According to Itkonen (2015a), several researchers have divided western societies' changes into three different stages; pre-industrial, industrial and post-industrial. These three eras can be also called as pre-modern, modern and post-modern eras (Itkonen 2015a, 40.) The changes between the

eras, can be explained by the changes in the dominant production forms. During the pre-modern era, the dominant production form was agricultural. The transition from the pre-modern era happened, when industrial production took the dominant place in the society. The third phase, post-modern era, started when service production replaced industrial sector as a new dominant sector. Nowadays, the terms of technology and information societies are used as well. Additionally, sports culture went through some changes, when the transfer into the post-modern era happened. For instance, multiple new sports were established and arrived in Finland. Among other, also cheerleading entered in Finland and people started to be more aware of new possibilities of different kind of sports. (Itkonen 2015a, 39-40; Inglehart 1997.)

Separating the eras into the three stages is an extremely rough and cannot be viewed only from one point of view. The different stages should be considered carefully and critically, because the changes do not happen the same way and at the same time, in different countries and cultures. Also, the exact time, when the change has happened from the previous stage to the next one, is impossible to define. Even though the different stages are typically known from the prevalent production form (agricultural, industrial or services), it does not mean that the previous production form would have been disappeared totally. For instance, in Finland even today's society, all the three production forms are still operated. (Itkonen 2015a, 39-40.)

Even though the production form of the society is one of the determining factor, when considering the differences between different eras, typical reasons for turning into the post-modern society from modern society are also the changes in the culture, communication and values. Zacheus (2008, 16-17) highlighted the changed values for example, in family relations, as an important factor in post-modern society. Before post-modern era, family was the most important network for people. However, in post-modern era the situation turned, and family got other alternatives alongside, for example different kind of communities, such as sports communities. (Zacheus 2008, 16-17.)

Dividing the different stages of the society based on the prevalent production form, is only one way to view it. According to Inglehart (1997), the division can be done also based on the changes in the attitudes and values. In addition, Zacheus (2008) highlights the meaning of changing values in the society as well. In pre-modern society, the obligations were the driving force, when talking about the way of living. After that, in

modern society, performance and effectivity were the most important factors behind the actions. However, in post-modern society, not only the effectivity and obligations were leading the society, but also experiences started to become important factors to be taken into consideration. (Inglehart 1997.)

It can be said, that the change from the modern society into the post-modern society in Europe, has happened after the Second World War, between the 1960s and 1970s. However, the transition was slightly different in Finland, where the post-modern era started at the beginning of 1980s. There are several reasons for the later shift, when comparing to the other European countries. One of the reasons is, that in the late 1970s economy in Finland started to raise, and in the 1980s, the economic growth was even better than in the 1970s. Better economic situation offered new alternatives in multiple ways, for example, both in working life and in sports culture. (Kokkonen 2015, 73-75.)

3.5 Post-modern sports culture in Finland

The post-modern phase of Finnish sports culture started in the 1980s. Typical post-modern factors, such as internalization and wider supply, are noticeable factors also in Finnish sports culture. During the 1980s, the exchange studies in US became more popular among Finns, and the Finnish exchange students brought new sports to Finland with them. Additionally, American football and cheerleading, are examples of these new sports resulted by globalization and media (Kallonen 2005, 16). The changed demand of spending leisure time, has widen the supply of alternatives, which is typical characteristic for post-modern culture (Itkonen 1996, 228-229.)

The structure of society has changed a lot, which has been the main reason for moving in to the post-modern sports culture. The traditional sports have weakened and new sports have become popular or even replaced the traditional sports partly. Many researchers have mentioned that a significant change in society has been the urbanization, which also has affected the changes in sports culture in general. With urbanization, youth culture has changed as well. Youth are closer to each other and spending the leisure time together is easier, unlike before urbanization. Not only new sports have become interesting, but also new hobbies in other fields started to challenge sports, such as cultural experiences. (Itkonen 1996, 228-229, 283; Piispa 2013a, 6-7; Kokkonen 2015, 75.)

Post-modern sports culture in Finland can be described by many terms, but several researchers (Itkonen 1991, 1996; Piispa 2013a, 2013b, 2015; Kanerva and Tikander 2012; Ilmanen 2015; Kokkonen 2015) have used the term divergent activity. According to Itkonen and Nevala (1991, 18), the post-modern sports field can be divided into four categories, which are competitive and elite sports, physical activities, commercial sports and alternative sports. Typical for the competitive sports is, that they are strongly monitored by the government, municipalities and federations. Government is responsible for the funding of sports, municipalities need to take care of providing suitable facilities for people and federations. In competitive sports, the entertainment aspect is present, when it comes to people supporting their favorite athletes or teams. Due to physical activities, the focus is in maintaining health. Two categories of physical activities can be recognized; the other is about being physically active and enjoying the sports, and other is more goal oriented. (Sironen 1995, 95-98.)

Commercial sports have resulted by the change in economic situation in the society. For instance, urbanization and increased leisure time, have made commercial sports entering the sports field possible. People are eager to support their favorite teams and watch sports on TV or live. Additionally, typical characteristics of commercial sports, are the aspects of entertainment, professional leagues, commercials, private gyms and products. (Sironen 1995, 98–99.) Typical for alternative sports is the criticism towards traditional forms of sports and, hence, re-formulating disciplines of sports. Also, the term “youth cultural sports”, is used when talking about alternative sports. (Sironen 1995, 98–99; Itkonen 1996; 2015a, 115-117.)

Furthermore, the age of divergent activity is known among researchers from its complexity and several subcultures. According to Piispa (2013b), the youth cultural changes have changed the sports culture in general notably. In the post-modern culture, young people aim to achieve different kind of things in life than in earlier decades. For example, the meaningfulness of life and sports, not only pushing harder and abending other things in life, have become important factors. Because of that, team sports and lifestyle sports have become more popular among youth, than the modern individual sports (Piispa 2013a, 6). In Piispa’s research about competitive sports, the interviewees highlighted as a major motivator when practicing, the importance of enjoying. (Piispa 2013b, 25). This is a common element of post-modern sports, when it comes the changes in values and attitudes. In addition, young people in post-modern society, want to

experience more than dedicate their life only for practicing hard and giving everything for the sports. Meanwhile young people want to do sports, they are also willing to spend time with friends, study and enjoy their youth (Piispa 2015, 96).

Due to the rise of team sports, urbanization has played a huge role in it; in city environments people are living close to each other and children may start playing sports together in neighborhoods. Besides, in cities the sports facilities are near to people and the supply of different kinds of sports is wider than in countryside. In countryside, people live far apart, so they might not have other options than practice sports by themselves or travel long distances to do sports. (Piispa 2013a, 6; Itkonen 1996.)

Youth cultural sports are sports, established by young people, who have the passion towards creating new alternatives next to traditional, more serious and winning orientated, sports (Ojala 2015, 170). Even though the motives of youth have changed during the decades, sports seem to preserve the dominant role in youth's lives, in comparison of other hobbies, such as music and culture (Itkonen & Ranto 1991, 10-11). Wheaton (2004) highlighted, that typical features of youth cultural sports are having fun, freedom and the lack of following the standards strictly. Additionally, typical for youth cultural sports is the active young people, driving the new phenomena forward with inspiration towards new lifestyle the sport could provide. (Ojala 2015, 170-171).

Besides team sports and youth cultural sports, lifestyle sports are recognized as a part of age of divergent activity. In lifestyle sports, it is about creating an entirety, which is not all about sports, but creating an overall lifestyle which contains individualism, communality and identity, where the importance of cultural capital is emphasized. (Piispa 2013a, 7.)

Finnish sports culture can be described by using four characteristics found by sociological researches. The first typical characteristic of Finnish sports culture is, that the sports is heavily based on voluntary work. The second characteristic is the very unique structure of Finnish sports culture, when it comes to decision making process and the work distribution among different sectors. Besides the voluntary sector, the public sector is developing the sports with the help of Ministry of Education and Culture. The private sector increases the variety of sports and new sport services. (Itkonen 2012, 11-12.)

The third typical characteristic of Finnish sports culture is the activity level among Finnish people. Finnish people are one of the most physically active nation, and there are

possibilities to be physically active in all ages and both genders. The high activity level can be explained by high level of education, which increases the understanding of the positive effects of being physically active. Also, municipalities provide proper facilities to do sports, which makes it easier to be physically active. (Itkonen 2012, 11-12.)

Finally, the fourth characteristic is the variation of different kind of sports. This is explained based on the activity level of voluntarism and Finnish people's willingness to establish new clubs and federations. In Finland, basically anyone can establish a club or federation and only few requirements are set, unlike in some other countries, where the establishments need to be done by government or municipalities. (Itkonen 2012, 11-12.) For instance, the Finnish Cheerleading Federation was established by few people, who were passionate about cheerleading and eager to develop it to become more structured and organized sport.

3.6 Birth of new sports

Many researchers, such as Eichberg (1987), Itkonen (1991) and later Piispa (2013a, 6), argued that sports culture is heavily in relation with the society. In addition, if society changes, so does the sports culture and other way around. In the beginning, when sports culture was born, the reason behind the sports was purely to have fun and entertain people (Kanerva & Tikander 2012, 11-12). However, later sports was modified to serve people's everyday needs such as hunting, war and moving around (Itkonen, 1991). When it comes to modern and post-modern sports, the focus was back in the leisure time activity and entertainment. Furthermore, when the motives behind doing sports change, the new forms of sports will be born.

According to Kotro and Pantzar (2005), the clear stages can be seen in terms of birth of new sports, and the relation with the needs of each time period. First, in the ancient world, sport was seen only as a biological function and the main focus was to improve people's individual physical qualities. The second stage is about improving people's skills to make them stronger for wars, as a team and as individuals. The third stage is about doing sports and being physically active to slow down ageing. Finally, the fourth stage is about doing sports because it brings joy, experiences and challenges. In the fourth stage sport is seen more as a way of living and part of the active lifestyle. (Kotro & Pantzar 2005, 185-188.)

The changes in the society, develop the sports culture. Koski (2000, 14) has presented a model, which categorizes the different kind of changes in the society into the five different categories (figure 2). Koski uses the categories to examine the changes in the organization of sports operations, whereas Kauppinen (2016) has applied this model to view the factors affecting the birth of new sports. In this research, this model is used the same way as Kauppinen used, since the changes in the society are in strong relation with establishment of new sports.

The four categories behind the changing environment are: common changes, social changes, financial and political changes and cultural changes. All these categories have an impact on the changing environment and are related to the birth of new sports. It is important to notice, that new sports are developed and established, because of many aspects and reasons, not necessarily because of one category. In addition, it is common that categories are overlapping, when a new sport is invented. Not only one, but many types of elements in the society, create new sports or formulate old sports into new innovations. (Koski 2000.)

Common changes	Social changes	Financial and political changes	Cultural changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation • Development of technology • Media • Internet • Magazines and Newspapers • Travelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New generations • Structure of the population • Active operators • Urbanization • Increasing leisure time • Increasing equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports policy • The change of organization • Commercialization • Productization • Development of equipment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in values • New needs

Figure 2. Changes in the society as a part of establishment of new sports. (Koski 2000.)

When considering the common changes in the society more detailed, globalization, media and internet are factors, which have affected in the arrival of new sports (Koski 2000). In

1980s, when travelling and globalization increased in Finland, cheerleading was one of the new sports in Finnish sports field. Cheerleading entered Finland as a sideline sport of American football. Internalization and media also brought snowboarding, surfing, bodybuilding, skateboarding and triathlon to Finland (Kanerva & Tikander 2012, 211, 396; Kokkonen 2012, 74). For instance, snowboarding was born because of the active people of skateboarding, urbanization, equipment development and internet (Harinen et al. 2015, 5-7).

Because the relationship with sport varies among different generations, the new generations invent new sports. The social changes are seen in the changed motives for doing sports. Unlike in the age of hobby-competition, when the focus was on competing, the new generation of the divergent activity wants to achieve more experiences and even create a lifestyle, where the sports is involved (Kotro & Pantzar 2005, 188; Piispa, 2013a, 6-8). Additionally, since the aims are different between generations, the ways of doing sports differ as well.

Urbanization, changes in leisure time and equality matters do have an impact on new sports in the field. Urbanization has brought people closer to each other and has enabled establishment of new sports places close to people (Piispa 2013a). In addition, urbanization was an essential factor when it comes to establishment of team sports (Kokkonen 2015, 76-78). Also, since people started to have more leisure time than they did have before 1950's, more possibilities aroused and different needs of spending leisure time were found (Itkonen 1996, 228-229). The changes of equality matter in sports, have been affected to the changes in sports culture and more specific, inventing new sports. For example, roller derby is sport, which was born because of the increased level of women's participation in sports (Liikanen 2015).

Financial and political changes can be seen in the organization system of Finnish society. The changes in private, public and third sectors and political decisions in the field of sports, have an impact in new sports and changed sports culture (Itkonen & Koski 2000, 62-64). The sports law in 1980s included new regulations in terms of the Finnish sports culture. People became enthusiastic of establishing new clubs and federations, so the third sector maintained its dominant role (Itkonen 2012b, 12). However, at the beginning of 1990s, the economic recession decreased government subventions, but meanwhile increased subventions from the private sector (Ilmanen 2015, 34; Zacheus 2008, 93-96).

In addition, funding from new sectors established new innovations, commercialization, productization and equipment development, in the field of sports. For instance, private gyms became more visible part of Finnish sports culture during the 1990s, which created new forms of fitness classes as well (Kokkonen 2015, 307-308).

Both, changes in values and new need of people, are boosting new sports to be developed and created. People have become more aware of their leisure time and how to use it. There are many motives to participate in sports and many alternatives for competitive sports are available (Itkonen 1996, 229). The changes in working life, such as flexible working hours, enable flexibility in doing sports as well. This differs from the previous decades, when sport was mainly done after the workdays and during weekends. Also, the work in itself used to be more physically demanding so being physically active after workdays, was not necessary. However, changed values creates new needs to be responded. For instance, the need of having fun while doing sports, has created sports, where the emphasis is in having fun and not taking it too seriously. (Heinemann 1989 as cited in Itkonen 1996, 228-230).

When it comes to new sports and the birth of new sports, it can be noticed that the new formats of sports are built around some new innovation, ideology or facility. It does not need to be a brand-new innovation, but it is enough that some old facility is used in a new way. For example, modern cheerleading is a result of this kind of ideology. The elements such as, aerobics, gymnastics, dance or stunts, are not separately new innovations, but combining them and adding other cheerleading techniques, makes it a new sport; old facility used in a new way.

Kotro and Pantzar (2005) have researched the birth of Nordic walking and they found that it is an innovation combined with already well-known sport. The sticks are an old innovation, but the whole concept was new and fresh. According to national authority for collecting and compiling statistics on various fields of society and economy, Nordic walking is one of the most rapidly developed and grown new sports, alongside floorball. There are several reasons behind the popularity of these two sports, but at least one factor is that both, floorball and Nordic walking, are suitable for both genders. Besides the gender fact, both sports have been also more playful than traditional sports. Therefore, this factor has been tempting more people to become involved. (Kotro & Pantzar 2005, 183-189.) Also, Nordic Walking and floorball, have been invented in the age of divergent

activity, when the emphasis is typically in creating an active lifestyle, having great experiences and taking part. Unlike, in earlier ages, when the emphasis was in competing, winning and breaking records. (Itkonen 2015b, 52-53.)

According to theories presented above, it can be said that cheerleading is kind of a new combination of gymnastics, aerobics and even circus. Also, cheerleading entered to Finland in 1979, when the age of divergent activity was about to start and new sports were born. Additionally, the typical characteristics of the age of divergent activity can be found in the development of Finnish cheerleading.

4 HISTORY OF CHEERLEADING

“The Sport of Cheer is an Athletic, Independent Sport with a Long, Innovative History!”

-International Cheer Union

Cheerleading is originally a spontaneous sideline activity supporting some other sport, mainly American football and basketball. During the late 1900s, cheerleading has become a sport of its own sport (Hanson 1995; Grindstaff & West 2010; FCF 2017). In 2010s, cheerleading is a worldwide and organized sport, which is physically demanding and meant for all people in all ages. Cheerleading consists of different elements such as, pyramids, stunts, tosses, dance, acrobatics, jumps and chants. There are two different categories in cheerleading, cheerleading and cheer dance. Within cheerleading the emphasis is on pyramids, stunts and tosses and in cheer dance the emphasis is on dance movements, jumps and pirouettes. (FCF 2017a.) Cheerleading is multifunctional sport and several kinds of roles do exist thus many kinds of abilities are needed. The smallest ones are usually on top of the pyramids. They are called as flyers. The bases are usually mid-sized and they need to be strong and fast in lifting. The tallest ones support the pyramids and stunts, and they are called as back spots. As it can be seen, teams need several kinds of abilities to be able to do the movements.

How did cheerleading become a structured and popular sport, from its first form of spontaneous yelling and supporting, done by masculine male students? When it comes to gender matters, the path has had different stages from an extremely masculine activity to a feminine sport. The roots are deep in the North American college culture, where cheerleading played a significant role in students' lives. Furthermore, cheerleading has managed to expand outside the university campuses and it has become a worldwide sport with national and international associations and competitions. (Hanson 1995, 3, 6; ICU 2018a, ICU 2018b.)

4.1 The birth of cheerleading

The history of cheerleading has multiple stages and different kind of elements, which have developed cheerleading over the years. In the beginning, it was a sideline activity supporting other sports, but during the years it became a sport of its own.

The first actual signs of cheerleading were seen in the mid-nineteenth century in different kind of collegiate games, such as, football and baseball games. Since all the students were not able to be part of the team as players, they participated as spectators. It started as a spontaneous activity, when some of the spectators started to lead the crowd to cheer for the players (Hanson 1995, 10). Cheerleading was born, when the first American collegiate football game between the universities Princeton University and Rutgers University, was held in 1869. During the game, the students in the crowd were supporting their teams. Already in 1880's, Princeton's students established all-male student group to lead different types of cheers in the games to support the players and to provide energized sport environment. (ICU 2018c, 2018d.)

Even though the roots are in Princeton University, Minnesota is seen as a birth place of organized cheerleading. Some of the graduated students of Princeton University moved to Minnesota and took the cheering culture with them. An essential name in the field of cheerleading history is Johnny Campbell. He was the first cheerleader, who went in front of the audience and directed and motivated the crowd by the organized cheers. The most iconic cheer, which is still used in the University of Minnesota, is: "Rah, Rah, Rah! Ski-U-Mah! Hoo-Rah! Hoo-Rah! Varsity! Varsity! Minn-e-so-tah!". It can be said that Johnny Campbell was the inventor of organized cheerleading in 1898. (ICU 2018c; Varsity 2018a.)

Additionally, one reason why cheerleading became formalized sideline activity, is that the play fields did not have seats for spectators. Supporters needed to yell and cheer by standing on the sidelines of the fields, if they wanted to be a part of the game. In the late 1800s, cheerleading started to become more structured and groups of spectators started to do different kinds of routines on the sidelines, following the guidance given by the "yell leader". Hanson (1995) described the "yell leader" in her book as:

“[The] yell leaders were charismatic, highly visible, solo performers who emerged or were selected because of their popularity, personality, or perceived leadership abilities.” (Hanson 1995, 12.)

According to Hanson (1995), it was a huge privilege to be a yell leader, later called as cheerleader. Four former presidents of the US were cheerleaders as well; Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight D. Eisenhower, Ronald Regan and Josh W. Bush. (ICU 2018c, 2018d.)

The yell element is still strongly present in cheerleading performances. In the World Championships the performances start with a chant part, where the team aims to make the audience yell with them. Also, one of the leading international cheerleading organizations, Varsity Spirit, highlights the leadership aspect is still seen in modern cheerleading, in high schools and in colleges:

“Cheerleaders are the promoters of their schools and communities. They are a key marketing tool to the athletics programs that they support, and they create the community patriotism we call “school spirit.” Most importantly, they are tomorrow’s leaders who through the development of athletic skills, leadership, and teamwork will be vital members of the community in the future. Be a cheerleader and become a leader.”. (Varsity 2018a.)

Varsity was established in 1974 by Jeffrey Webb, who is the CEO of the organization (Varsity 2018b). Varsity has been the leader organization for developing cheerleading, both in the US and globally as well. In addition, Varsity is not only a global leading organization for cheerleading competitions, camps and clinics, but also uniforms and other products are delivered by Varsity all over the world. Over millions of participants from the US, are involved in Varsity’s actions, and the number of international participants increases continuously. (Varsity 2018a.)

The turning point for female cheerleaders was the mid- and late-1940’s, when the Second World War was on. Male college students went to war and female students stayed in college. Therefore, females substituted men and took men’s place as cheerleaders as well. (Adams & Bettis 2003, 13; Grindstaff & West 2010, 7; Hanson 1995, 17-18.) In case of cheerleading, social, cultural and political changes in the society, influenced the reformation of cheerleading.

4.2 Cheerleading: Terminology and definitions

In this study, several terms typical for the field of cheerleading are used. Therefore, the most common terms and concepts are explained and clarified to minimize the possible misunderstandings.

In this study, when talking about cheerleading, it means the modern form of cheerleading operated under the international umbrella organization International Cheer Union (ICU). Since there are many definitions and forms of cheerleading, it is crucial to understand, what kind of cheerleading it is meant in this paper. There are still some teams nationally and internationally, which are doing cheerleading as a sideline activity, but in this thesis it is viewed as an independent sport.

The term collegiate cheerleading is used frequently, especially, when talking about cheerleading in the US. Collegiate sports are typical in the US high schools and universities. Additionally, collegiate sports are a type of amateur sport organized and funded by schools. The roots of collegiate sports are deep in the history of the education system of the US. When talking about collegiate cheerleading in this research, it means activity done in school atmosphere. Also, typically the emphasis of the collegiate cheerleading teams is on supporting and cheering the other collegiate sports of the school, such as, football and basketball. In terms of Finnish school system, the collegiate sports are not in the same level than in the US. Therefore, collegiate cheerleading is a form of cheerleading, which does not exist in Finnish high schools. (NCAA 2018.)

The second term of cheerleading is “all-star cheerleading” which is closest to the form which is popular in Finland too. The major difference between all-star and collegiate cheerleading is that in all-star cheerleading the main objective is to compete in the field of cheerleading. All-star teams concentrate in training cheerleading and the abilities in that field. However, even though the definition is almost the same than the Finnish cheerleading, the term all-star cheerleading is mainly used in the US because of the huge variation of different types of cheerleading there. (FCF 2017.)

Some terminology is also used, when the physical elements of cheerleading are discussed. Because in this research it is not essential to understand the physical variations and differences between the movements, the terms are not explained more specific.

Several federations, organizations and associations are presented in this study. If the name of the federation is originally Finnish (for example Suomen Liikunta ja Urheilu), the English full version is used. As soon as the full version is presented once, the short version of it (for example SLU) will be used. The only exception is Finnish Cheerleading Federation (FCF), where only the English version is used. Since Finnish Cheerleading Federation is discussed multiple times, using only the English version, makes the text easier and clearer to read.

4.3 Gender in the early years of cheerleading

Sport in general, has been male dominated for decades before females had the right to participate as well. Especially, before the 1900s, women were mainly doing sports by themselves, it was strongly attached to everyday life chores and the aim was only the physical improvement. The competition aspect was not involved. Urbanization and industrialization of the society in the late 1800s changed the role of women as well. Women started to apply to new positions in society and in sports. For instance, in England women could take part in collegiate sports in 1870's. In North America, women were competing already in the late 1800s, for example, in tennis women were competing in 1877. The period from 1880 to 1917 can be described as a birth of women sports in the US and also in Europe. Though, first only the bourgeoisie women had the privilege of being physically active. The female sports raised especially during 1917 to 1936, when not only bourgeoisie women, were able to participate in sports. During this time period, radical changes happened in the society, when women started to take part in work life as well. (Boutilier & SanGiovanni 1983, 33.)

When it comes to women in Europe and Finnish women, the journey has started few years later than in the US. Finnish women have been always very active in sports, and sports field in Finland has been quite equal in comparison to other countries. When the sports movement started in Finland in 1880s, both men and women were involved in sports. The first sports federation in Finland, was established in 1850s, and the first sports federation for women was founded already in 1896. The first federation for women, was called as Finnish Women Gymnastic Federation. (Itkonen 1991.) However, even though sports have been available for both genders in Finnish society, the competition aspect changed the field in 1900s. The separation between men and women was made, because

competitions were not seen suitable for women. The role of women in society, combined with competing, was not seen appropriate. Even though the gap between female and male sports became greater, Finnish women started to compete earlier than in many European countries. Gymnastics was one of the most popular sports among women. (Laine 1996, 11).

According to Kanerva and Tikander (2012, 18-19), in the beginning of 1900s, the common understanding was that women were not allowed to take part in sports because of their physical and biological nature; the body of a woman was not made to do sports and it was both dangerous for her health and it was not esthetic or acceptable. Cheerleading was first only for white male individuals, because it was a collegiate activity. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, only a few percent of the American youth population had the privilege to go to college. These people were male and, more specifically, white men with a British background (Hanson 1995, 9-11).

In the US, women were excluded from all the collegiate activities at first. In the 1920's, cheerleading was still described as a masculine activity, but during the 1930's, female cheerleaders had already entered the field. However, at first only male cheerleaders' girlfriends and sisters could participate. (Hanson 1995.)

The University of Minnesota was the first university, which allowed women to take part in cheerleading teams, in 1923 (Hanson 1995, 17-18). Cheerleading was seen as the only possible activity, which women could participate at universities. Because of physical matters, Hanson (1995) highlighted that women were allowed to take part as decorative objects, supporting the masculine sports such as baseball and football. (Hanson 1995, 18.) Adams and Bettis (2003) found, that the reasons for preventing females from becoming cheerleaders, were also related to biological and physical matters. The following example explains the point of view by Adams and Bettis:

“During this era, men still outnumbered women on university campuses; further, traditional feminine emotional and physical traits did not seem appropriate for cheerleading; and the belief that women could even be harmed by the activity kept most women from participating.” (Adams & Bettis, 2003, 13.)

After the 1920s, female cheerleaders gradually were accepted as part of cheerleading teams (Grindstaff & West 2010; Hanson 1995). Quite soon, women brought new elements, such as, aerobics and dance, as a part of the routines. At the first stages, females were playing

the role of singers and dancers on the sidelines, but year by year they got more responsibility. After the Second World War, cheerleading had become a sport, which was seen as an acceptable activity for both genders, and also as an activity, which could be found from multiple universities, high schools and elementary schools all over the US. (Hanson 1995, 10-16.)

When it comes to gender issues within cheerleading, the situation reversed, when the shift happened within people's attitudes after the Second World War. (Hanson 1995; Grindstaff & West 2010.) In the beginning, cheerleading was a masculine activity, where the leadership skills were highly emphasized and valued, but after the 1950's sexuality and popularity became more valued elements in cheerleading (Hanson 1995, 17-18). During the years, the attitudes were changing and so was the framework of cheerleading – The spontaneous masculine way to support teams turned into a standardized and synchronized team performances by female cheerleaders. By the mid- 1970s, cheerleading had become from the male preserve to a feminine physical activity. (Grindstaff & West 2010, 149.)

Women's sport in the US had the most significant change in 1972, when the Title IX was implemented. The aim of it was improve equality in education system. From that year on, schools needed to provide same possibilities for females and males, also in terms of sports. (Kanerva & Tikander 2012, 18-20.)

As a conclusion, women were first excluded from the universities and also from sports. However, women entered the field of cheerleading step by step, and in 1920's, first female cheerleaders could be seen as decorative objects on sidelines. Later women got more responsibilities, and during the Second World War they were supposed to substitute men while they were in the war. This changed cheerleading permanently from a spontaneous masculine yelling to a synchronized sideline activity, where women remained their role. Cheerleading became from a male preserve to a feminine physical activity.

4.4 The establisher of National Cheerleading Association

One of the key persons in terms of the formation of modern cheerleading, is Lawrence R. Herkimer. Lawrence Herkimer found National Cheerleading Association (NCA) in the 1948. NCA was the first cheerleading training organization with educated coaches and

organized trainings and camps. Until that, teams had their own practices and camps organized by the universities and teams by themselves. The first organized cheerleading camp was held in Huntville, Texas in 1948 (NCA). The first cheerleading camp attracted overall 53 attendees, 52 girls and one boy. However, the growth was rapid and already by the next year, there were already 350 participants taking part into the training camp.

Herkimer was a cheerleader by himself in high school, and the head cheerleader in the university. After his graduation, he was operating as a teacher of physical education and statistics, but after the first years of NCA, Herkimer decided to quit his job and start to do cheerleading full-time. National Cheerleading Association grew dynamically and it has become a leading cheerleading camp organization, by organizing 430 camps annually, having 1500 instructors involved and 150 000 participants enrolled (Varsity 2018b.)

Herkimer was a father of many innovations in the field of cheerleading, such as, cheer camps, cheerleading related equipment like pom-poms, and he also invented a jump called "Herkie", which is the most iconic cheerleading jump (figure 3). Herkie is used in cheerleading routines worldwide (Grindstaff & West 2010, 149; New York Times 2015). With the help of new establishments and constant development, cheerleading became a popular and a fast-growing activity among all youth in the US (Varsity 2018b).



Figure 3. A "Herkie" done by its implementer Lawrence Herkimer. (New York Times, 2015.)

5 DEVELOPMENT OF FINNISH CHEERLEADING FROM 1979 TO 2015

In this chapter, the stages of Finnish cheerleading are viewed more closely. When cheerleading arrived in Finland, cheerleading was not the same sport as it was 100 years before in the US, when it was born. In Finland, cheerleading was a side line activity of American football done by females, yet it diverged later as an independent sport like in US. The journey of Finnish cheerleading is considered, and how it has become from spontaneous physical activity to structured and organized sport in Finnish sports culture. The journey of Finnish cheerleading can be divided into four phases; arrival, formation, establishment and professionalization of administrative matters.

Even though, cheerleading has been a part of Finnish sports culture only during the age of divergent activity (after 1980s), typical characteristics of other ages are found in the development of Finnish cheerleading, as well. The four phases of Finnish sports culture named by Itkonen, can be recognized from the forty years' time period of the development of Finnish cheerleading. The Finnish sports culture and Finnish cheerleading have developed following the same kind of path. However, naturally the phases and changes of Finnish cheerleading have been much more rapid, than the phases of Finnish sports culture.

5.1 Cheerleading entering Finland in 1979

Almost one hundred years after cheerleading was born in the US, it entered the European culture. Finland was among the first European countries with Sweden, UK, and Germany (FCF 2017). Cheerleading entered Finland in 1979, but more visibly during the 1980s with exchange students, dance and American movies. In the beginning of 1980s, cheerleading started to spread over Finland, and first organized cheerleading club, Turku Troijans, was established in 1984. (Kallonen 2005, 29.)

However, it is important to note that in the beginning, cheerleading was not a sport of its own in Finland either. When cheerleading entered Finland, the role of it was its original purpose, being on the sidelines of American football. The first cheerleaders in Finland

were players' sisters, girlfriends and other friends supporting the team (Kallonen 2005, 16).

The time period when cheerleading arrived in Finland, was also the beginning of post-modern era in the Finnish society. For post-modern sports culture, is typical to adapt new sports and new cultures from abroad and traditional sports started to have other alternatives (Itkonen 1996, Piispa 2013). When people found cheerleading in Finland, they realized that it could be a new kind sport and lifestyle. Like in other post-modern sports, the first people involved in cheerleading had background in other related sports. Dance and gymnastics backgrounds were widely presented among cheerleaders and new elements were adapted from those sports. Also, some teams had models as cheerleaders and they focused on creating the great atmosphere in the games by yelling supporting chants for the players. The model aspect was present only in Finnish cheerleading, not in the US. (Kallonen 2005, 16)

Finnish cheerleading can be seen also as a youth cultural phenomenon. It is a mixture of youth cultural sports, lifestyle sports and team sports. As it is typical for youth cultural sports, the first years of Finnish cheerleading were heavily based on the actions by active young people in the field. They organized practices and competitions by themselves without any umbrella federation, or regulations set by external bodies. In the beginning, the purpose was to create something new and free alternative, next to serious traditional sports. In the 1980s, more Finns started to do exchange studies in the US, and American culture started to interest people. Finnish people have found American culture attracting, which made cheerleading seen as interesting and fascinating phenomena. (Ojala 2015, 169-171.)

Also, the popularity of team sports was increasing among Finns, and people were eager to combine sports and having a good time with friends. Therefore, having an organized team, where to practice regularly with friends, has been a central characteristic of Finnish cheerleading. In addition, cheerleading became soon, not only a way of being physically active, but also a way of living.

The first tournament of American football called "Syyscup", was held in autumn the same year American football arrived in Finland in 1979. The first teams were from southern Finland; eastern and western Helsinki and Espoo. The teams were called as East City Giants, from eastern Helsinki, American Football Club of Munkkiniemi MAJS

(Munkkiniemen Amerikkalaisen Jalkapallon Seura) from Munkkiniemi, Helsinki and Poli, which was a team gathered from students of technical university, from Espoo. The umbrella organization for American football, Finnish American Football Federation (Suomen Amerikkalaisen Jalkapallon Liitto SAJL), was established in the same year in 1979. Already in 1981, the final of American football was held and the first picture of Finnish cheerleaders is taken from that game. However, at the beginning of 1980s, cheerleading performances were not including acrobatics or pyramids yet; cheerleading was purely a feminine sideline entertainment. The main purpose was to cheer and support the male dominated sports, to bring some female beauty into the masculine games (Kallonen 2005, 29).

The first cheerleading club was established in Turku in 1984, to support the American football team called Troijans. Troijans' cheerleaders had regular practices and soon they started to bring pyramids and other new elements into their performances. Until the late 1980s, cheerleading was spread to all the biggest cities in Finland. Even though, cheerleading started to play a bigger role as a part of American football games, the main purpose remained in supporting the players and encouraging the audience to cheer with the cheerleaders (Kallonen 2005, 16-17.)

As soon as more cheerleading teams were established, the backgrounds of cheerleaders started to vary more. For example, in the mid-1980s, dancers from Oulu started to be interested in cheerleading as well. Furthermore, Oulu's team called Northern Lights, started cooperation with a dance club called Telemark. If cheerleaders from Turku brought gymnastics and pyramids into the performances, cheerleaders from Oulu added elements from competitive dance into their performances. At first, teams planned and organized the practices together without specialized coaching. Because the lack of trained coaching, practicing stunts and pyramids was slightly dangerous and cheerleaders could not avoid injuries at times (Kallonen 2005).

By the end of the year 1984 cheerleading teams were established already in Helsinki, Turku, Oulu and Tampere, to operate with already existing American football teams. In Tampere, an American football team called Rocks, got its own cheerleading team called Rockettes in December 1984. Rockettes also performed in ice hockey games in Tampere, which was the first time cheerleading was involved in ice hockey as well. (Kallonen 2005, 23.)

The development of cheerleading in Finland has been rapid. Only two years after establishing the first cheerleading squads, cheerleading among American football was well-known all over Finland. The first cheerleading competition was organized in 1985, which was the first Finnish Nationals. The organizer was American Football Association of Finland (Suomen Amerikkalaisen jalkapallonliitto, SAJL). The cheerleading competition was integrated into the American football tournament, which was called the US Cup. Four cheerleading teams took part into the first Nationals. The competition had judges as well; the judges were people involved in American football, celebrities and guest players of US cup. The victory of the first cheerleading competition was shared with Troijans from Turku and Rockettes from Tampere. Even though, the first Nationals were already held, cheerleading was still perceived as a sideline activity, not yet sport of its own. (Kallonen 2005, 26-27, 29; FCF 2017.)

Until 1987, cheerleading was a separate activity of American football clubs operating under the umbrella organization SAJL. However, in 1987 cheerleading became more formalized and own division for cheerleading was established under SAJL. The major changes could be seen mainly in consistency of practices, establishment of new cheerleading teams, and having the first cheerleading competitions. Soon, the awareness of American football and cheerleading spread all over Finland. (Kallonen 2005, 26).

The first chairman of the cheerleading division was Anne Achté. As soon as the cheerleading division was established, the aim was to develop cheerleading more into the direction where American football and other sports were already - more structured and organized independent sport. Achté wrote in TeeDee magazine (TeeDee magazine is also known as "Touchdown" magazine published by SAJL, for the members of SAJL), that only the principles were important to learn from the origin country, but the rest could be applied depending on surrounding society. According to that, Finnish cheerleading have had its own vision about the development and only the principles were applied from the US. (Kallonen 2005, 35-36.)

In 1987, already 13 cheerleading teams were operating under the cheerleading division. The teams were from different parts of Finland, and year by year, more cheerleading teams were established. Cheerleading started to expand to other cities and other sports during the early 1990s. At the beginning of 1990s, the first signs of cheerleading as an independent sport, were seen. As mentioned earlier, cheerleading competitions were held

as a part of American football tournaments and all cheerleading teams had an American football team to support. However, team called Happy Dancers from Espoo needed to participate without a football team, because their original football team was merged with another team. Therefore, the cheerleaders left all by themselves without any football team to support. After Happy Dancers won the Finnish Nationals in 1990's, other teams decided to support many sports, instead of dedicating their cheering for one specific team. The beginning of 1990s was also time, when the international network was broadened. Two Finnish cheerleading judges went to Sweden to help in judging the Swedish Nationals (Kallonen 2005, 42-46.)

During the late 1980s and early 1990s, cheerleading was mainly attracting young women to participate. The constantly increasing popularity of cheerleading, caused the profile changes among cheerleaders as well. First competitions in the late 1980s and early 1990s were only for adults, but during the late 1990s, competitions were organized for juniors (aged between 12-16 years), children (aged 6-11 years) and mixed teams, also called as co-ed teams (FCF 2017). In 1992, junior division had its own Finnish Nationals. Most of the junior cheerleaders used to have gymnastic or dance background. Furthermore, so many juniors became interested in cheerleading, that all of them could not be taken into the teams, since the limited number of teams available. (Kallonen 2005, 51.)

In the beginning, the competitions were organized only once a year, but from the early 1990s, three competitions annually started to be organized. Juniors' and children's competitions were organized together, and adults had competitions of their own. Mixed teams, which included female and male cheerleaders, had their competitions during the same day as all-female teams. The first male cheerleaders were seen in the Finnish Nationals in 1994. (Kallonen 2005, 54; FCF 2017).

In 1994, Finnish cheerleading became more developed in terms of increased level of cheerleading in general, getting benchmark from abroad, having new administrative implementations, and making the operations more structured than before. The first coach training was organized in 1994 and even coaches from the US came to teach new techniques to Finnish coaches. Because of that specific training, the level of Finnish cheerleading increased significantly. Since more people were involved in cheerleading, and the need for organizing competitions increased, the competition system needed to be considered. For example, in the Finnish Nationals in 1994, the own competition rules for

cheerleading were used and also the judges were from the field of cheerleading, no longer celebrities or American football players, as it was before. (Kallonen 2005, 54, 57-58.) Having common rules for competitions, provided guidelines for teams and also made judging the performances more systematic. Since the judges were from the field of cheerleading, they knew the elements of cheerleading, which made judging more comprehensive, mature and reasonable. These were the first signs of the transformation from sideline entertainment to an actual sport.

In 1994 the number of cheerleaders started to increase, new cheerleading clubs were founded and cheerleading competitions started to become independent competitions. All these factors were preparing the field of cheerleading for the upcoming year, when the umbrella organization, Finnish Cheerleading Federation, was established in 1995. (Kallonen 2005, 58, 72.)

In comparison with other new sports, the active people in the field were in the key position driving cheerleading forward and developing it further. Cheerleading spread rapidly and year by year new implementations were established and steps towards more organized direction were taken. The typical elements of the age of organizational culture were seen especially in the first decades of Finnish cheerleading. The training facilities were modest and the cheerleading field was based on voluntarism. All the clubs and teams were run by voluntary work and volunteers organized the competitions. Also, typical characteristic for the age of organizational culture, was the rapid establishment of new clubs. The awareness of cheerleading spread quickly, so new cheerleading teams were established continuously. In ten years from 1985 to 1995, cheerleading had become from a spontaneous sideline performing to an organized sport.

5.1.1 Birth of the Finnish Cheerleading Federation in 1995

Cheerleading has been developing and diverging from its original form as a sideline activity of other sports. More competitions were organized and more clubs were established every year. The breaking point was year 1995, when Anne Achté, a person who had been the leader of the cheerleading division of SAJL for five years, was about to end her career and decided to invite all representatives of cheerleading clubs to the

annual meeting of SAJL. She announced, that everyone involved in cheerleading division should be there, because the upcoming reformation. (Kallonen 2005, 76.)

In 25th of November 1995, the memorandum of association was written and the own committee for cheerleading was established. The name was at first Finnish Cheerleaders (Suomen Cheerleaderit), but the name was changed as Finnish Cheerleading Federation (Suomen Cheerleadingliitto) in 2002. In the first meeting, fifteen people took part and the aim of the meeting was to decide about the member fees and cooperation with the cheerleading division of SAJL. The first chairman of FCF was Tuija Karanko, who was chosen to be the chairman for years 1996 and 1997. (Kallonen 2005, 78.)

People started to become more aware of cheerleading and several sports clubs started to add cheerleading into their discipline selections. Cheerleading was practiced whether as a sport of its own or as a sideline activity of some other sport. The both forms of cheerleading attracted people. However, competitions were held as independent events, where cheerleading was the central activity. Even though, the teams could be cheerleading teams for some other sports, in competitions cheerleading teams competed against each other. (Kallonen 2005, 78-79.)

The first years of Finnish Cheerleading Federation were slightly complicated, because cheerleaders did have their own federation, but also a separate cheerleading division of SAJL. Additionally, SAJL asked cheerleaders to organize their Nationals like the Finnish Nationals were held for the first time in 1985; in the same event with the finals of American football. The idea did not succeed among cheerleaders and FCF. Since cheerleading was already diverged from other sports, cheerleaders wanted to maintain the direction and concentrate in actions of the own federation. (Kallonen 2005, 85; FCF 2017.)

Establishing an own federation for cheerleading, has been one of the first steps of making cheerleading as an independent sport. Also, it has been very person dependent that cheerleading did not go back to be a part of American football games. The people who were responsible for decision making in FCF, were determined about the vision of making cheerleading an independent competitive sport, not a part of some other sports. If the people would have been open minded for combining the competitions again, the situation of development of Finnish cheerleading could have been totally different.

However, the first years of the new federation brought new implementations. In 1996, a new competition called Super Cheerleaders was held. The competition was held during the same weekend than the final of American football in the US, Super Bowl, and so the name was decided to be related. Super Cheerleaders competition was a new competition. Already six categories were organized and most of the categories were adapted from the US. Although, one category which was called a small group division, was invented by Finnish cheerleaders by themselves. (Kallonen 2005, 78-79.)

During the 1990s, the need for new competitions and new divisions was sort of a sign of the growth of cheerleading in Finland. More people started to be interested and aware of the sport called cheerleading. Also, one competition annually was not enough anymore, so the number of competitions increased and more divisions were held for different ages. Finns have been very active and innovative in the field of cheerleading. Several elements have been copied from the US, but Finnish cheerleaders have not been afraid of inventing new elements or practices by themselves. For example, the small group division was invented by Finns and later it was adapted to other countries as well. Despite the young age of Finnish cheerleading, other countries have adapted things, not only from the US, but also from Finland. The small group division is a good example of this; later it became a division in World Championships.

Even though, cheerleading started to become more independent sport, in the 1990s American football was not anymore, the only sport which had cheerleaders. For instance, ice hockey games started to have regularly their own cheerleaders in the late 1990s. This caused misunderstandings between cheerleaders practicing under the FCF and dance teams in ice hockey games, who were called as cheerleaders as well. Because of the misunderstandings, cheerleaders under the FCF decided to quit performing in ice hockey games. Also, in the late 1990s, more clubs emerged with each other and new clubs specialized in cheerleading were established. (Kallonen 2005, 82-83.)

However, cheerleaders in ice hockey games and cheerleading as an independent sport were often mixed with each other by people outside the field. The same elements, such as pom-poms, were seen both in the ice hockey games and in cheerleading competitions, people did not find the difference between the two types of cheerleading. Both were called as cheerleaders, which has been a retardant matter with the process of making cheerleading as a diverged sport. People in the field of cheerleading knew the difference,

but in the society the difference between these two types of cheerleading was not understood. Especially, since ice hockey is one of the favorite sports of Finns, cheerleaders in ice hockey games got more visibility than actual cheerleading competitions. Therefore, people used to see cheerleading more as an entertainment than competitive sport. Slowly, diverged cheerleading started to become more known in the society as well.

5.1.2 The management of FCF

The core function of Finnish Cheerleading Federation has been to develop and maintain Finnish cheerleading in terms of competitions, training, and youth sports, and as a physical activity. FCF is the national body of Finnish cheerleading established in 1995. In this subchapter the management of the federation is viewed more detailed to understand the structure of Finnish cheerleading. The structure is explained as it was in year 2017. (FCF 2017a.)

The operation of FCF is divided into three main sectors: federation operations, physical activity operation and elite sport. FCF aims to develop its operation in these three sectors with the help of the board, five committees and the office staff. (FCF 2017a.)

The organizational structure has been changing during the years because of the rapid growth and constantly changing resource needs of the federation. For example, the first part-time paid employee started in 2005, which was ten years after the federation was established. In addition, eleven years after the first employee started, in 2016, already 5 full-time employees plus project-employees were working at the office. (Annual report of FCF 2005 and 2016.)

Having paid employees showed that the administrative development was taken seriously by FCF. Cheerleading has been strongly operated by voluntary work, but by the constant growth and willing to develop the field of cheerleading further, made hiring employees necessary. Running the operations of FCF by volunteers, was not enough to maintain the development. Paid employees have also improved the administrative matters to become more consistent.

The organizational structure of Finnish Cheerleading Federation, includes all the key elements of the federation (figure 4). The main decision maker is the member clubs. There

were 51 member clubs under Finnish Cheerleading Federation in the beginning of 2017. The clubs make the decisions about the major changes and new innovations. For example, the new strategy is always accepted by the member clubs, before the implementation of it can start. (FCF 2017a.)

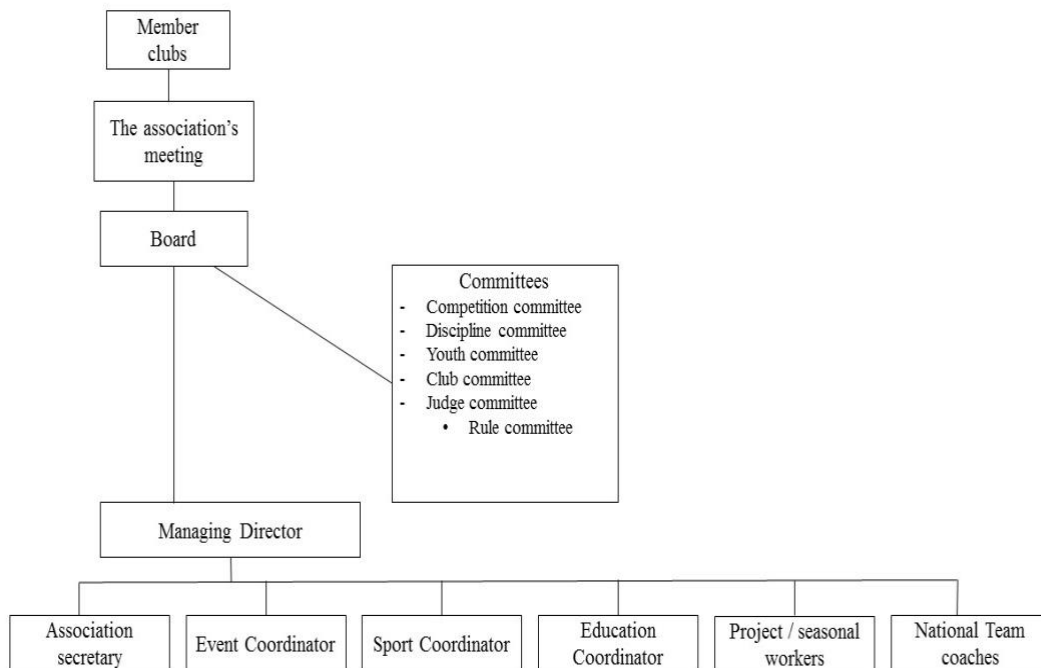


Figure 4. Organization structure of Finnish Cheerleading Federation. (FCF).

Annually, two meetings for the member clubs of the FCF are organized; one during the spring semester and one during autumn. The spring meeting with the members, is held to present last years' operational actions and the financial issues from the previous year. The autumn meeting is held to present the plan for upcoming year and possible new changes. Also, the budget for upcoming year is presented in autumn meeting and the member clubs are able to ask more specific questions from the board, committees and office staff. The annual meetings are places, where member clubs can influence and be a part of the decision-making process. All the accepted suggestions are implemented by the board, committees and office staff. (FCF 2017a.)

In 2017, the board of the federation consisted of six board members, two deputy members and the chairman. The board is selected every year in autumn meeting and accepted by the member clubs. The purpose of the board is to lead the federation, with the help of the

strategy and annual operation plan. Also, the board takes care of the juridical responsibility. The board has a meeting once in a month. (FCF 2017c.)

The board members of FCF have been volunteers from the early years of FCF. The purpose of the board is to consider carefully the larger policies and directions for development of Finnish cheerleading. Therefore, it is important that the board consist of people who have passion and understanding to develop Finnish cheerleading in general.

Five committees are working under the supervision of the board. Competition committee is in charge of the development work and the implementation of the competitions. The competition committee enables members to participate in competitions, organized with high quality and safety matters considered. Event coordinator of the federation organizes and coordinates the competition committee. (FCF 2017d.)

Discipline committee makes the discipline rules for the member clubs, which are eventually accepted by the members. There needs to be at least one person with juridical education involved in the discipline committee to make the committee valid. (FCF 2017d.) The requirements for the committee members, reflect the administrative development of FCF. It is a sign that things are wanted to be done carefully and taken seriously.

Youth committee is responsible for enabling young people to participate in developing the federation. The aim of the youth committee is, not only to bring the ideas from the youth perspective, but also make the youth more familiar with the operations of associations in general. Youth committee is one of the biggest committees of FCF, when it comes to number of members of it. In youth committee the minimum number of members is 10, unlike in competition committee the maximum number of members is 10. The members of youth committee are aged between 13 and 19 years old and the Education Coordinator organizes and coordinates the youth committee. (FCF 2017d.)

Youth committee is basically the voice of young members of FCF. The aim of the youth committee is to allow young members to be involved in development of Finnish cheerleading and to make operations of an association familiar to young people as well. Since the majority of members of FCF are young, under 18 years old, it is important to have a channel, where to hear the wishes and suggestions of the young members. By integrating young people to be part of FCF, encourages them to be active and unprompted,

yet engages them to be part of the development work. Engaging young people into the operations of FCF, would prepare them to be part of FCF in future as well.

Member club committee is responsible for developing the member club operations. The members of the committee are from the federation's member clubs and all sizes of member clubs are well presented. This is important factor to take into consideration, when aiming to develop the federation more suitable for small, middle-sized and large member clubs. To have different points of views from different sized clubs from all regions, guarantee that the development can be comprehensive. Club committee is in charge of making a survey for the member clubs of the federation every second year. The findings from the survey are presented to the board and club committee makes a two years plan based on the findings. In 2016, FCF divided the member clubs into six regions defined by Valo (National Sports Federation) and the club committee is operating as a coordinator between the regions. These regions are presented more specific later in this paper in chapter 5.6. (FCF 2017e.)

Making a survey for the member clubs, to find out their needs and wishes towards FCF, is a valuable tool as a part of the development work. This is one example, how FCF has developed as an organization. The work is consistent and the importance of the development of member clubs is understood. If the member clubs are advanced and satisfied, it affects into the whole cheerleading field positively.

Judge committee is one of the federation's oldest committees and is responsible for bringing judges to the federation's competitions, organizing judge trainings, maintaining and developing international judge cooperation and developing the evaluation done in competitions. Judge committee aims to develop cheerleading both, in physical activity and elite sport divisions, in all age groups. In judge committee, the maximum number of members is six plus the chairman. Finnish judges take care of the international relations by judging abroad and by inviting judges from other countries to judge Finnish competitions. Internationality has been a strong part of the judge committee from the early years of the federation. (FCF 2017d.)

FCF judge committee has been always in close cooperation with other countries and they have done judge exchanges annually. Having judges from abroad in Finnish competitions, develops Finnish cheerleading competitive wise. The comments from foreign judges, enable teams to have judgement from several points of views. Also, judges from Finland

go to other countries to judge and share the Finnish know-how. Finnish judges are respected in the international field of cheerleading, because Finland is one of the leading countries worldwide and knowledge of Finnish judges is valued.

The only paid employees of FCF are the office staff members. The office staff is responsible for the operational functions of the federation. The office staff, with the lead of the Managing Director, takes care of the guidelines of the federation, decided by the member clubs and the board. The strategical, financial and operational implementation is done by the office staff as well. (Annual report of FCF 2017.)

The arrival of Finnish cheerleading was in 1979, when post-modern sports culture was about to start in Finland. People were open minded for new sports and lots of sports were arrived in Finland in the beginning of 1980s. After the first six years of the arrival, already first cheerleading clubs were established and even the first Finnish Nationals were held. Cheerleading spread quickly all over Finland and in the late 1980s all the biggest cities in Finland were aware of that. Many elements, such as team sport aspect, the American background and youth cultural elements, made people interested in cheerleading. First, the concentration was mainly in the beauty aspect and entertainment, but elements of other sports were included in the late-1980s, when people with dance and gymnastics background started cheerleading. More teams were established continuously all over Finland.

The birth of FCF made the field of Finnish cheerleading more systematic and organized. Also, by having an own federation for cheerleading, diverged Finnish cheerleading from American football properly and set the clear direction for the development. The motivation was to develop cheerleading itself and diverge competitive cheerleading from the other form of it, as a side line activity of other sports.

The structure of FCF has been changing during the years, because of the growth and quick development. The needs and emphasises have been varying when it comes to the operations of FCF. Therefore, new committees have been established to make the development constant and comprehensive in all areas of the federation. FCF has improved and deepen its operations annually, and Finland is seen as one of the most developed cheerleading country worldwide, as well.

5.2 Formation of Finnish cheerleading in the 2000s

Development has been constant from the very beginning since cheerleading arrived in Finland. Every year something new has been established or developed. According to Kallonen (2005), the beginning of the 21st century was one of the most important time periods, when it comes to administrative development of Finnish cheerleading. The development has been consistent, and multiple changes have been faced, which have formalized Finnish cheerleading into the form it is in 2000s sports culture.

In this chapter, the development of Finnish cheerleading and the relation with the development of Finnish sports culture is viewed. First, the years between 1995 and 2015 are considered and the essential milestones are highlighted. After having an understanding about the milestones of the federation, the growth of the member number, is presented more detailed. Finally, the age and gender rates during the 2000s are viewed.

Finnish Cheerleading Federation went through many of changes during the 1990s, in terms of formalizing and finding the own way to operate. However, during the 2000s Finnish cheerleading has taken essential steps towards becoming a well-known, organized and competitive sport, which provides an alternative possibility to do sport, for all genders and ages.

5.2.1 *New name, new implementations*

At the beginning of 2000s, Finnish cheerleading created new implementations, which were still part of FCF in 2017. In 2001, Finnish Nationals were organized for the first time in the ice hall, because already 43 teams from 12 different clubs were participating. Old facilities were not suitable anymore and from that on, the Finnish Nationals have been held in ice halls. Besides the new competition arena, in 2001, the Finnish Nationals had some extra excitement involved, because the winners were sent to represent Finland in the first cheerleading World Championships. (Kallonen 2005, 90.)

Moving the Nationals into the ice-hall, represented the increased level of competitive teams and growth in general. Also, the operations of FCF had become clearly more stable financially as well. Renting the ice hall for the whole weekend, is not the cheapest rent option. Also, since the ice hall is a big venue, it requires well-planned competition

organization. Financially and operationally, it was possible to hold competitions in ice halls.

In 2001, the new coach training system was implemented, based on the coach training system of Finnish Sports Federation (SLU). The structured education system enabled the consistent development among the coaches, which led to the development of member clubs and teams. (Kallonen 2005, 90.) During the 2000s, cheerleading became more organized and the development started to be more structured and optimized. The ideas were adapted from other federations and new systems for ensuring sustainable development, were established.

As mentioned earlier, in 2002 the name was changed from Finnish Cheerleaders as Finnish Cheerleading Federation, FCF. Also, in the same year the first Swedish speaking club, called Grankulla Gymnastikförening Chillies (GGF Chillies), was established and registered as a part of Finnish Cheerleading Federation. (Annual report of FCF 2002).

When reflecting the phases of Finnish sports culture with the development of Finnish cheerleading, the clear characteristics of each age can be seen. The typical characteristics of the age of organization culture, such as simple facilities for sports and establishing new sports clubs, are seen in the first twenty years of Finnish cheerleading. First of all, when it comes to cheerleading, the facilities were modest and simple in the 1990s. Many clubs were practicing outdoors during summer, and during winter, teams used to have their practises for example, in the gymnasiums of schools.

At the beginning of 2000, cheerleading became more competitive and competition orientated sport. People involved in cheerleading wanted to highlight the difference between cheerleaders on side lines of certain sports, and the competitive cheerleading. For decades, emphasizing the difference between the two types of cheerleading, has been important for cheerleaders under FCF. Therefore, the competitiveness of cheerleading has been highlighted and more competitions were organized. Even a term “competitive cheerleading” was in usage, to make the difference clearer. The characteristics of age of hobby-competition are seen in 2000s cheerleading culture, since competitiveness was one of the main characters of that age. More cheerleading competitions were established during the 2000s. Also, the facilities became better and many clubs started to have proper facilities for practicing. Especially, in bigger cities, the clubs or even municipalities,

invested in having a safe platform for tumbling and pyramids. Soon, many teams could have practices on cheerleading mat.

5.2.2 Becoming as an acknowledged sport by the government in 2003

In 2003, FCF established the office in the capital city, Helsinki. However, the office was still operating in the same facilities with Finnish American Football Federation, but it was not a problem, since no full-time employees were yet working for the Finnish Cheerleading Federation. During the same year, in 2003, FCF moved under the national license system, which helped to become aware of the registered members of the federation and also to control the growth. The system enabled advanced forms of reporting and planning the upcoming years, based on the data in the system. (Kallonen 2005, 93-94.)

Ministry of Education and Culture accepted the application of FCF, to become as a part of the government's subventions in 2003 (Kallonen 2005, 94). This was a significant phase in Finnish cheerleading history, because this made cheerleading more as a sport like other traditional competitive sports, and clearly diverged from the sideline activity form of cheerleading. Also, the financial management in general became more planned and balanced, due to the chairman Taru Rautavuori's consistent work. (Kallonen 2005, 94.) Due to the acknowledgement by the government and the development on the financial side, cheerleading started to be seen as a sport among others. Not only in the field of cheerleading, but the government and society, started to understand cheerleading.

Media became interested in cheerleading quite soon after cheerleading arrived in Finland. In the beginning, media reported about cheerleading as entertainment and focused more on the looks and superficial matters. However, during the 2000s different types of media started to show their interest towards cheerleading as a sport. During the years while cheerleading was diverging from the American football, media started to be more interested about cheerleading from the sports point of view. For instance, in 2003 sports channel (Urheilun TV) broadcasted the Finnish Nationals for the first time. Additionally, it achieved immediately huge attention among Finnish nation. After the year 2011, Finnish broadcasting company called YLE, has broadcasted the Finnish Nationals every year on its TV channel YLE TV2.

In 2004, radio channel called Kiss FM radio wanted to interview couple of teams, which were participating in the Finnish Nationals. Also, cheerleading teams have been asked to take part in several TV shows and movies. Of course, because the sideline activity factor was still a part of some teams, for media it was still hard to recognize the difference between different kinds of cheerleading. This led to misunderstandings and mixing the sideline cheerleading with the competitive cheerleading, which led to mixing the entertainment and sports with each other. (Kallonen 2005, 90-94, 98.)

5.3 Establishment of Finnish cheerleading from 2004 to 2009

Cheerleading had become an organized sport during the late 1990s and the early 2000s. FCF was organizing trainings and competitions for the member clubs and the growth remained steady. During the years from 2004 to 2008, cheerleading became well-established and the core function of FCF was strengthen yearly. In addition, FCF was concentrated to build a strong base for the developments of upcoming years.

5.3.1 The 10th anniversary in 2005

In 2005, Finnish Cheerleading Federation turned 10 years and the federation already reached 32 registered member clubs and 2800 members in total. Also, the first book of Finnish cheerleading history was published by Kari Kallonen. That book is well-known among Finnish cheerleaders, because by the year 2017, it has been the only published book of the history of Finnish Cheerleading. Furthermore, in the 10th anniversary year, the first paid part-time employee was hired. The federation expanded continuously each year, and voluntary force was not enough to run the operations. Also, because of the subvention money, FCF could afford hiring staff. The overall functions of the federation were improved, and the operations started to be well planned and organized. For instance, already five competitions were organized in a year, so it became important to start planning the event calendar in advance. Hence, the event calendar was taken as a permanent part of the operation in 2005. (Annual report of FCF 2005.)

The year 2006 was again full of new challenges and new implementations, when it comes to overall development of Finnish cheerleading. Due to the constant growth and

development, one part-time employee was not enough anymore to take care of the everyday operations of the federation. Hence, the Managing Director, was hired to add the resources and to maintain the quality of work. Since FCF became more developed and well-planned each year, the federation decided to apply the membership of Finnish Sports Federation (SLU), which is known from 2017 as Finnish Olympic Committee. However, SLU did not make the decision about the application during the same year.

In 2006, FCF was a member of two international umbrella organization; European Cheerleading Association (ECA), which was the umbrella organization of European cheerleading and International Cheerleading Federation (ICF), which was the umbrella organization worldwide. Though, ICF changed its name to International Federation of Cheerleading (IFC), because the misunderstandings with International Curling Federation, which had the same short name, ICF, already in usage. (Annual report of FCF 2006.)

Competition-wise, the Finnish national team in all-female category was gathered by FCF for the first time in 2006. During the first years of Finnish cheerleading, Finland had national teams in cheerleading, but then cheerleading was still slightly different type of activity and the teams were still a part of American football teams. Now in 2006, all-female national team was supposed to represent Finland in Cheerleading World Championships in 2007, which were held in Helsinki, Finland. Due to the massive event, a separate working group for planning and organizing the event, was gathered. The competition was a huge success and got over 6000 spectators during the competition weekend. (Annual report of FCF 2006).

The year 2007, was a hectic year due to six national competitions and one international competition, which took over one year of preparation. Also, in 2007, FCF decided to start antidoping work, by familiarizing themselves with the regulations and rules of antidoping programs. The aim was to create an own antidoping program for FCF during upcoming years. (Annual report of FCF 2006 and 2007). Elements of the age of intense competition can be found, because FCF was organizing several competitions annually and even wanted to host international competition. The emphasis was in elite sport and competing. Also, gathering the first national team, reflects the level of putting effort on having the best possible team representing Finland. The previous years, the national team was usually the best club team of the year. Now, the best individuals wanted to be gathered to

guarantee the best result in the home World Championships. The performance of the Finnish all-female team, was a success and they got silver in the competition. Finland was seen worldwide both, advanced country in top level cheerleading and professional event organizer.

The competition aspect remained strong in the field of cheerleading, and the typical characteristics of the age of intense competition were present between years 2004 to 2008. Typical for the age of intense competition was the new policies and the changed role of both municipalities and government in terms of sport. Since FCF started to get government's subvention, new regulations needed to be considered, such as planning and reporting the financial matters of each year. Finally, one of the central characteristics of the age of intense competition, was the increased understanding of educating the coaches properly. In 2000, FCF established its first education system for instructors and coaches, to make the development constant and more profound. Additionally, this system was developed to become more comprehensive in 2008. The education path was modified to be suitable for coaches in all levels. Also, clubs started to hire foreign coaches for training camps, especially from the US, to teach more advanced techniques to Finnish teams. Starting to search professional coaches from abroad, was typical during the age of intense competition.

5.3.2 The new umbrella organizations

The international cooperation was tightened in 2008. Until 2008, FCF had been a member of IFC, but now a new umbrella federation was established in the US, called International Cheer Union (ICU). Finnish Cheerleading Federation sent representatives to the first meeting of ICU to hear more information from the new organization. The aim was to create new contacts with cheerleading delegates worldwide. In addition, the cooperation with the new umbrella organization started and the first judge training of ICU, was held in Helsinki during the same year. (Annual report of FCF 2008). The field of international cheerleading has been quite fragmented with several umbrella organizations. Even though cheerleading was born long time ago in the US, the structure of the field of cheerleading has been changing. Different umbrella organizations have made international cheerleading hard to unify and standardize.

In 2008, the more developed education system of FCF was implemented. The education system was decided to be reformed to be more structured and clearer for the members. Hence, the system was named as four-level education system, which was easy to follow. The new system was supposed to enable people to consider their individual education progress more specific. The first level was an instructor training, which was meant to beginner coaches to have to knowledge of safety matters and coaching principles. The second and third levels were organized in cooperation with Finnish Sports Institute (Suomen Urheiluopisto), to deepen the knowledge of coaching. The fourth level provided specialized training and workshops for advanced coaches. (Annual report of FCF 2008.) The four-stage education system was still in usage in 2017.

Finally, in October 2009, SLU accepted the application of Finnish Cheerleading Federation made in 2006. The reason for taking three years for acceptance, was the organizational changes of SLU (FCF 2018). SLU planned reformation considering several sports federations, which caused the pause in acceptance of the new applications. Though, the reformation did not happen, and SLU started to accept new members again. Because of the new membership of SLU, the office of FCF also moved to another floor in the same building. Now, FCF got an office from the same floor than other member federations of SLU. The cooperation with other member federations of SLU offered new networks and new possibilities in the field of Finnish sports. The antidoping work took another step in 2009, when the first antidoping tests were made in the qualification competition organized by FCF. (Annual report of FCF 2009).

In 2009, the first world championships under the new umbrella organization called ICU were organized. The winner club team was representing Finland in the World Championships. Finland took part as well for this competition by sending three teams to represent Finland in all-female, dance and co-ed¹ categories. This time, the representative teams were again club-based teams, not a national team gathered from talented individuals, like in 2007. The reason for having the club teams representing, was mainly because of the lack of resources. The teams were the winner teams of the qualification competition held in 2008 autumn. However, Finnish teams succeeded well by getting silver in all-female category, bronze in cheer dance category and the fourth place in co-ed category. (Annual report of FCF 2009).

¹ *a mixed team; a team which includes both male and female cheerleaders

5.4 Professionalization of cheerleading from 2010

The fourth phase of the development of Finnish cheerleading started in 2010. The operation of FCF and member clubs, started to become more professionalized and commercialized, because of the rapidly grown and fragmented field. The field of cheerleading changed during the 2010s, towards more systematic and professional in administrative way. When using a term professional or professionalization in this chapter, it means the advanced administrative implementations of FCF. However, in the field of cheerleading, the athletes have not been paid. From that perspective, cheerleading is not a professional sport, even though the operations may be professionalized.

In 2010, Ministry of Education and Culture granted 45 000 euros subvention for Finnish Cheerleading Federation, which covered 65% of the overall expenses of the federation. FCF also applied the membership of non-profit organization called Young Finland (Nuori Suomi) during the same year. FCF was accepted as a member federation of Nuori Suomi, which core function was aiming to increase the activity level and well-being among youth. (Annual report of FCF 2009 and 2010.) Later, in 2013 Nuori Suomi became a part of the National Sport Federation, Valo, which emerged with Finnish Olympic Committee in 2017.

5.4.1 *The first full-time employees in 2010*

The resources were fixed in 2010, when the contract of temporary office secretary ended. Because of the dynamic growth and expanded operations, a full-time permanent employee, Event Coordinator, was hired. Event Coordinator was responsible both, for all events and competitions organized by FCF and the administrative work. (Annual report of FCF 2010.)

In addition, another full-time employee was hired, because the increased need of new resources. The new employee, Education Planner, was responsible for trainings, camps and developing the education system of FCF. The year 2010 is remembered in Finnish cheerleading history also due to environmental issues in Europe. In April 2010, the World Championships were held, when the volcano erupted in Iceland and disturbed the air traffic in Europe. Only two Finnish teams made their ways to the World Championships;

all-female team and dance team. Despite the unfortunate environmental accident, the Finnish teams succeeded in the competition. The dance team got the third place in the dance division and the all-female team got 4th place in all-female division. (Annual report of FCF 2010.)

FCF was known as an active and trusted event organizer in Europe. Additionally, FCF got the honor to host European Championships in Helsinki in 2010. During the upcoming year, in 2011, the cooperation tightened especially between the Nordic countries. FCF organized the Nordic Championships for the first time in cheerleading history in Vantaa.

When it comes to cooperation with other European countries, FCF started to consider changing the European umbrella organization from ECA to European Cheer Union (ECU). FCF decided to consider the change of the European umbrella federation, because the networking matters and cooperation with other European countries. Since the consideration wanted to be made carefully, FCF sent a representative to take part in the first meeting of ECU, only as an observer. The aim was to analyze the situation from the point of view of FCF and consider, which would be the best option in general. (Annual report of FCF 2011.)

Not only Finnish cheerleading field was more fragmented than earlier, but also the field of cheerleading in Europe. The fragmentation and new established federations and clubs, were typical elements for the age of divergent activity. In Finnish sports culture, federations were also changing names and merging with each other.

In 2011, Finnish cheerleaders made history in the World Championships. Finnish cheerleaders Mija Schrey and Mika Pennanen became world champions in the category of partner stunts, in the World Championships organized by International Cheer Union ICU. (Annual report of FCF 2011.) This was the first time Finnish cheerleaders won the US cheerleaders.

Financially, the functions of FCF became more demanding after 2010. The increased number of member clubs increased new needs to be fulfilled. Member clubs started to need more support and advice from FCF. In 2011, Ministry of Education and Culture, granted again the subvention of 45 000 euros, which was the same amount than in previous year. However, now the subvention money covered slightly over 37 % of the overall expenses, unlike the previous year the same size of subvention covered the most part of the total expenses. Cheerleading was growing, but the financial resources were

more limited. Therefore, the operations needed to be considered carefully and new major investments could not be planned.

The growth continued dynamic and strong each year. Due to the need of consistency and constant development, in 2011 the strategy work was started for the first time in the history of Finnish Cheerleading Federation. The first strategy period was planned to be from 2013 to 2018. (Annual report of FCF 2011.) Even though, FCF had been developed in administrative way and the operations were more systematic than ever future planning was not in advanced level before 2011. Since strategy is one of the corner stones of the organizations, FCF did not have one before 2013.

5.4.2 The implementation of the first strategy in 2013

The planning of the first strategy continued during 2012, and the more specific policies were decided. Also, during the same year in the dance category, FCF decided to gather the all-star national team to represent Finland in the World Championships. Dancers from different clubs were qualified and the first dance national team under FCF was established. In two other categories, all-female and co-ed divisions, the winner club teams were decided to be sent to the competitions, due to the financial and practical issues. (Annual report of FCF 2013.)

At the beginning of 2013, the new strategy was implemented, and the new strategy started to guide through everyday operations in general. Also, a comprehensive survey was sent to member clubs, which was supposed to give FCF insight about member clubs current situation, their wishes and suggestions. Based on the results of the survey, FCF was able to find out ways, how to support the member clubs and what kind of subvention the member clubs needed.

The operations at the office had become more professional and already three full-time employees were working at the FCF office. In 2013, 5000 members were registered under the FCF. The Ministry of Education and Culture granted this year 50 000 euros, which covered slightly over 34% of the total expenses of the federation. (Annual report of FCF 2013.)

Year 2013 was a multilateral year, not only nationally, but also internationally. Finally, after careful consideration, FCF changed the European federation and became a member

of European Cheer Union (ECU). Few reasons for the decision, can be identified. First, other Nordic countries also decided to become members of ECU. Therefore, it was natural for FCF to become a member of ECU, as well, to maintain the valuable cooperation with Nordic countries. Second, ECU cooperates with ICU, and since FCF became a member of ICU earlier, it was better to become a member of same organization in Europe as well. (Annual report of FCF 2013.) The field of cheerleading is heavily based on networking and the relations with other countries are significant. Therefore, being a member of both ICU and ECU, was a strategically a good choice yet the level of the competitions was higher in the competitions organized by ICU and ECU than the old ones. After 2013, FCF has been a member of ECU.

The growth continued and by the end of the year 2014, already 6300 licensed members were registered under Finnish Cheerleading Federation. The revenue of the federation also grew and in 2014, the subvention of Ministry of Education and Culture was 70 000 euros. The increase was 20 000 euros more, than in previous year. Even though the amount was greater than ever before, it only covered 9,5% of the overall expenses of the year. Especially, the competition sector was expanding and need for new competitions increased. One new competition was created in 2014, as a permanent part of the event calendar. The total number of organized competitions annually, was now six competitions.

Also, one strategical decision was to improve both types of cheerleading; the top-level and the physical activity side of cheerleading. The emphasis had been earlier on competitive cheerleading, but within the growing member number, also different kind of needs aroused among member clubs. FCF wanted to make cheerleading accessible for all, not only for people who wanted to compete. Therefore, a concept called Active Cheer was created, to attract people to become interested in cheerleading without the need or pressure to compete. This concept was made to make starting cheerleading easy and accessible. Active Cheer concept aimed to provide tools for member clubs, to train new coaches without the need of strong knowledge or background in cheerleading. The purpose of the new concept was to encourage people to be physically active without the pressure of competing. With Active Cheer guidelines, basically anyone could start doing or coaching cheerleading. The planning needed resources thus one part-time project worker was hired to plan the new Active Cheer concept. In addition, the need for more

resources increased in administrative matters and a full-time office secretary was hired as well. (Annual report of FCF 2014.)

Later, Swedish cheerleading federation became interested in Active Cheer concept and they asked the staff of FCF to explain the concept more detailed. Swedish cheerleading decided to take Active Cheer concept as a part of their operations. This is one example of the advanced level of Finnish cheerleading. The implementations of FCF are found interesting by other countries.

One of the key elements of the age of divergent activity, is the variety of ways of doing sports. The early decades of Finnish cheerleading, were heavily focused on competing, but as more members became involved, new needs were aroused. Not everyone wanted to compete, some were willing to focus on spending their leisure time by being physically active. This kind of mindset is typical for the age of divergent activity as well. The competitiveness remained strong for decades in the field of Finnish cheerleading, because people were eager to make other society to understand the difference between entertainment and sports. People in the field wanted to be treated as athletes, not as entertainers. However, since the awareness had become better, the competitive aspect was not needed to be emphasized as much as earlier. Now, cheerleading was wanted to be seen as an accessible sport for all people. By putting an effort on developing the non-competitive and competitive sides of cheerleading, made it more approachable, for all people with different motives.

5.4.3 The 20th anniversary in 2015

In 2015, FCF celebrated the 20th anniversary year of the federation. Year was full of new achievements. The Active Cheer concept was ready for implementation. When it comes to new implementations, also antidoping work group was gathered, to finalize the antidoping program of FCF. Additionally, societal values were emphasized in 2015, when the equality plan was created, to guide the federation to be as equal as possible. For instance, the equality matters in terms of genders, were considered. As a result of the equality consideration, categories for all genders were decided to be organized in all competitions. (Annual report of FCF 2015.)

The subvention money from Ministry of Education and Culture, was again more than in previous years. Now the amount was 80 000 euros, which covered 9,1 % of the overall expenses. Especially, competition and education sectors expanded in 2015. Additionally, one new competition was implemented, which became a permanent part of the annual event calendar. In 2015, seven competitions were organized during the year. (Annual report of FCF 2015.) The amount of competitions was increased during the past years, which correlates with the increased number of members. Also, levels of the competitions varied and different levels of categories were organized. Both, beginners and advanced cheerleaders wanted to compete, so competitions had different profiles. Some of the competitions focused on providing experience in performing, and some competitions were about to find out, which team is the champion.

Since one strategical choice was to develop elite sport side of the federation, in 2015, a national team was gathered both in dance category and in all-female category. The national team project was started at the end of spring term in 2015, and the goal was the participation in World Championships in 2016. (Annual report of FCF 2015.)

The changes in Finnish sports field in 2016 were seen also in several functions of FCF. FCF was a part of National Sport Federation (Valo), which operated in the supervision of the National Olympic Committee. However, Valo and Olympic Committee merged in 2016. Because of the change, most of the federations under Valo became members of Finnish Olympic Committee. Year 2016 was also important with the relation between cheerleading and International Olympic Committee. IOC accepted cheerleading and the umbrella organization ICU, as a part of its recognized sports. ICU was admitted to 3-year conditional membership and cheerleading was seen as a show discipline in Winter Olympics 2018. (Annual report of FCF 2016.) Even though, the journey is multilayered towards being an Olympic sport, this was a positive sign that it may be possible in future. During the conditional membership, ICU is required to improve certain aspects of its operations set by IOC, such as, equality issues.

The equality matters were considered wider in 2016 thus improvement was expanded to involve both, gender equality and adapted physicality. The cooperation between other sports federations was improved, and possibilities for adapted physicality in cheerleading were considered. FCF sent two representatives to England, since Para Cheer is more improved there. The aim of the trip was to adapt ideas and practical guidelines to be taken

as a part of the development of FCF. However, the resources of the federation were not ready yet to implement Para Cheer activities yet the planning and development of it started. Nonetheless, some cheerleading clubs already started to plan Para Cheer operations and some clubs even established Para Cheer teams. (Annual report of FCF 2016.)

In 2016, already four full-time employees, one project worker and one intern were working at the office of FCF. Ministry of Education and Culture raised the subvention money, which was now 10 000 euros more than previous year, so the subvention was 90 000 euros. The subvention covered a bit over 7% of the overall expenses. (Annual report of FCF 2016.) The subvention granted by Ministry of Education and Culture between years 2010 to 2016, can be seen in the table 1. Unfortunately, the information from the previous years and from year 2012, was not available for this research. Actually, this demonstrate that the reporting has not been systematic until the 2010s. The administrative side of FCF, has had lack of reporting and documenting, but it has improved after the 2010s.

Table 1. The subvention made by the Ministry of Education and Culture between years 2010 to 2016.

Year	Subvention (€)
2010	45 000
2011	45 000
2013	50 000
2014	70 000
2015	80 000
2016	90 000

The operations of FCF had become year by year more encompassing, structured and considered, hence the amount of subvention increased as well. To be able to get funding from the government, it is required to prepare a comprehensive plan, how the subvention is used. The subvention for FCF, has doubled in six years. This can be explained mainly by rapid growth in the field of cheerleading, but also by the more encompassing operations of FCF. New implementations have been established every year, such as,

antidoping programme, physical activity programme called Active Cheer, equality plan and the first strategy. Additionally, paid employees represent also the status of the federation as a stable and developed operator. All together, these above mention factors, have allowed the increase in subventions.

The massive growth happened from year 2005 both in terms of member number and financially. Also, when it comes to administrative development of the federation, years from 2005 or more specific the years after 2010, have been the most crucial ones. Most of the innovations and actions related to the development and growth, have happened after 2010 and cheerleading has become more structured sport, where the development is well-planned and considered. Cheerleading has become a recognized sport also in terms of the other federations and government. Becoming a member of different umbrella federations such as SLU, National Olympic Committee and International Olympic Committee (test period) represent that in the society, cheerleading is treated more as sport than entertainment.

The characteristics of the fourth phase of Finnish sports culture, the age of divergent activity, has been present in the field of cheerleading especially from 2009 until 2017. The field of cheerleading is fragmented and many new ways of doing and developing cheerleading have been implemented. For instance, commercialization became part of Finnish cheerleading already in the early 2000s, but the actors in private sector became more visible after 2010. One of the biggest actors of Finnish cheerleading in the private sector, has been a company called Sportiro, which was established already in 2005.

Besides the commercialization, also the variation between cheerleading clubs has become clearer and both competitive and non-competitive cheerleading clubs are existing. This is also typical for the age of divergent activity and more specific, for youth cultural sports. It is important to have options to find the own way of doing and practicing sports, weather it is competitive or non-competitive. The member clubs have many types of teams, so people interested in cheerleading have options to choose from.

5.5 The growth of registered members of FCF

In this chapter, the growth in terms of members of FCF, and more specific member rates from the years 2003 to 2016, are presented. The data is gathered both from the licence

system and the annual reports of FCF. The licence system includes all the information of licenced members. It needs to be noticed that some duplicates do exist in the system with persons, who have bought a licence and then upgraded that into more advanced one. The reasons behind upgrading the license in the middle of the year, can be simply based on the changes from non-competitive team to competitive-team. Also, the licence system gives the numbers only from year 2005 until the year 2016. Therefore, the data is gathered also from annual reports to make it possible to have the data from 2003 until 2016.

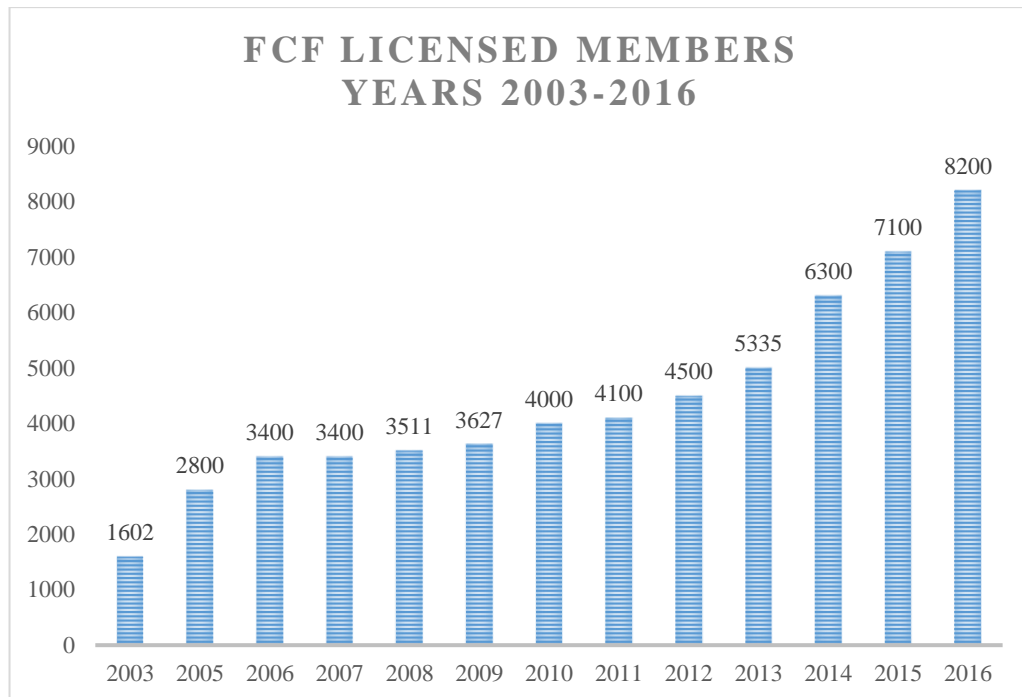
First, a closer look will be taken into the overall rates in terms of the number of licenced members. This information provides a view of the development of the federation and the direction, where it is heading. After presenting the overall member rates, the age and gender numbers are viewed. Before having a discussion about the age distribution, the age limits of each divisions in Finnish cheerleading should be taken into account. People in age from 12 to 15, are in junior division and 16 years old people and older are in senior division. People under 12 years are in children's division.

The growth has been upward, as it can be seen in table 2. Few points about the rates needs to be highlighted. The rate from the year 2004 is missing, because the annual report was not available, neither the rate from the license system was available. Second, the rates from years 2012 and 2013 are collected from the license system, because the annual report from year 2012 was damaged and could not been read. Third, in the annual report of 2013, only the approximate numbers were presented. All other rates are gathered from annual reports of FCF.

The table 2 shows the growth was quite steady between the years 2005 and 2009. After 2010 the growth started to be dynamic. As it can be seen, during the years from 2010 until 2016, the member rates have doubled. First, when thinking about the factors behind the dynamic growth between years 2010 to 2016, the strategical work done by FCF has been most likely one reason. Also, recognitions by the government and other national umbrella associations, such as, SLU has made cheerleading well-known sport. This has increased the possibility for people to find cheerleading as an option next to the traditional sports. During the years 2009 and 2013, FCF fixed its resources by hiring more employees, which maintained the development. Systematic and constant work towards the mission and vision, the growth has remained upward and people in all ages have become interested in cheerleading. The amount of member clubs has increased and practicing possibilities

do exist in many cities. Also, member clubs have teams in many levels, which has made cheerleading approachable for people with different backgrounds and abilities. The international success has brought space in several media, which have spread the awareness about cheerleading and also inspired people to be a part of the success story.

Table 2. Licensed members of Finnish Cheerleading Federation years from 2003 to 2016 (Sporttirekisteri 2016.)



5.5.1 Members of FCF from 2005 to 2016

The gender rates and the average ages are presented in this section. The gender matters have been quite same during the years and male participants have covered approximately 2 % of the all members from 2005 until 2016. Some minor changes can be seen, but since the changes are that small, in this research they are not analyzed. Continuous work towards getting more male interested in cheerleading is done by the federation, yet a lot is still needed to be done. The strategy and the vision of the federation includes a factor about making cheerleading accessible for all people in all ages. Therefore, more possibilities for all genders and ages, are systematically created. For example, training camps and competition divisions for both female and co-ed teams are organized by FCF annually. (FCF 2017).

5.5.2 *Female members*

In Finland, 98% of the Finnish Cheerleading Federation members are female. This makes the sport strongly profiled as female dominant sport. When cheerleading entered Finland, it was heavily based on the sexuality matters and entertainment. Only females were involved, which made the field of cheerleading known as a feminine activity. This has been challenging to change, because of the strong stereotypes in the society and the prejudices of people. However, every year male participants become more interested in cheerleading and member clubs are establishing more co-ed teams, where both female and male can practice. FCF is also doing constant work towards making the message clear, that cheerleading is a sport for all. Cheerleading consist of different kind of elements and several kinds of skills are needed. One can be advanced in some area, but some other finds that difficult. For example, one can be the best of the team in jumps and acrobatics, but the lifting technique needs more repetitions and constant practice. Furthermore, the more variety exist among team members, the better is the total. For example, when building a human pyramid, it is necessary to have different sizes of people; tall, short, big, light, strong and flexible ones. The physics of men is biologically different than females', and in co-ed cheerleading teams the advantage of the physical differences is used. Therefore, especially with the help of male members, usually the tosses are higher and pyramids more stable.

The majority of cheerleaders have been females ever since cheerleading arrived in Finland. However, the average ages have varied slightly during the years. In 1980s, competitions were organized only for adults, which means people mainly older than 16 years were involved in cheerleading. During the 1990s, also junior divisions were organized, which encouraged younger people to start training cheerleading. (FCF 2017.)

The figure 5 presents the age distribution among female members of FCF. From the figure 5, it can be seen that the majority of female cheerleaders have been aged 12 to 15 years during the years 2005 to 2015. After female members have turned 15 or 16, a significant drop can be found in the figure. When comparing the shapes of the figures, the age distribution has become wider each presented year. Member clubs have established more teams, both competitive and non-competitive, for children, youth and adults which has made practicing cheerleading possible for many ages.

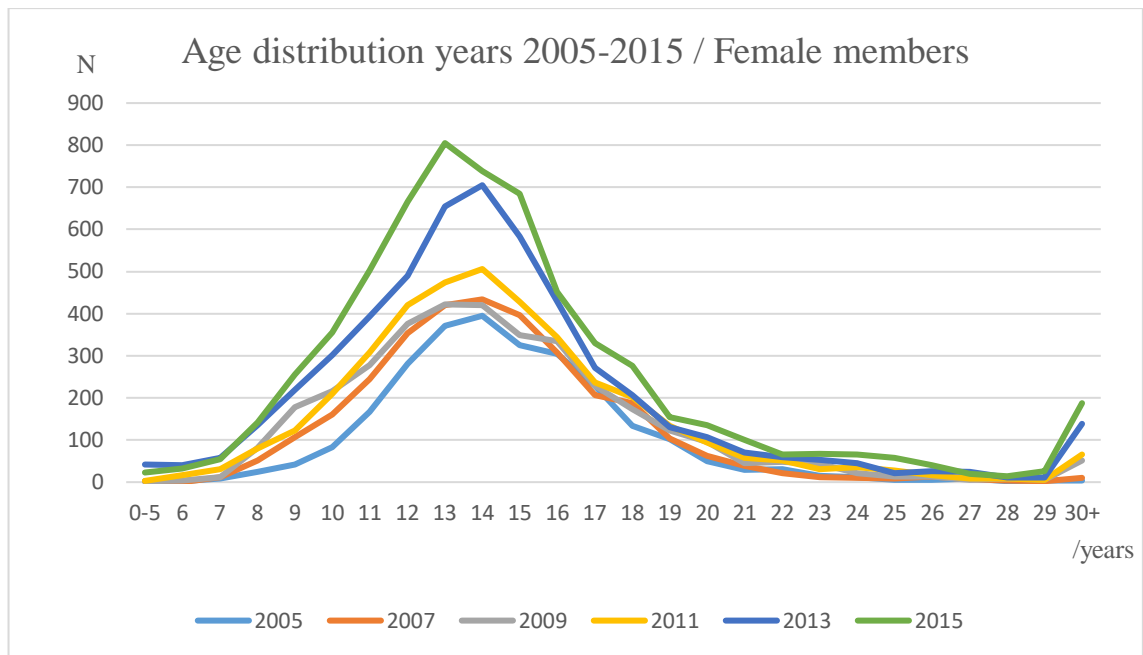


Figure 5. The age distribution of female members from 2005 to 2015.

Even though the majority of female cheerleaders have been mainly 12 to 15 years old, the second aspect to be noticed is the number of females over 30 years or more, has grown. During the years between 2013 and 2015 the shape of the figure has become notably sharper and upward. More female members in age of 30 or older, have become interested in cheerleading after the year 2013. Also, some females in this age group have started cheerleading earlier and decided to continue training or coaching cheerleading. In Finland, adults have become more interested in having hobbies and trying new ways to be physically active during the age of divergent activity. Therefore, federations and companies in private sector have established groups for adults. This might be one factor for the increased number of over 30 years old females involved in cheerleading as well. Since the demand for adults' teams has increased, cheerleading clubs have replied for that.

When considering the youngest females involved in cheerleading, the share of 10 years old and younger, has grown steadily after year 2005. The variety of cheerleading teams and new established clubs in different cities have made it possible for young people to start training cheerleading.

Each year, the number of female members until the age of 14 years, has been upward. After that age, the numbers start to decrease and the biggest drop is after the age of 15

years. From the age of 15, the member numbers turn downward. In terms of the age trends of female members, the drop after 15 years is the most significant aspect to notice. There can be multiple reasons, why the drop happens in the age of 15. First, after people turn 15 years, cheerleaders need to change the competition division from juniors to seniors. This means that the team changes and many new things are to come. Not only the new team members and new coaches, but also new techniques and cheerleading movements typical only for senior female teams need to be applied. This may be a factor, which makes females in the age of 15 think that it is easier to quit. Furthermore, one of the most motivating thing for young people is the sense of belonging and the surrounding community in practices (Tiirikainen & Konu 2013, 43). When going forward, from junior division to senior division with new team members and new coaches might decrease the motivation for some people. Second, there is a significant drop in the physical activity level of Finnish teenagers in general (Aira et al. 2013, 15). According to The National Sports Research (Kansallinen liikuntatutkimus 2009-2010) from years 2009 and 2010, people between the ages of 12 to 14 years, are the most physically active, since 56% of them are involved in sports club activities. However, in the age group of 15 to 18 years, only 34% are involved in club activities. The results of National Sports Research from years 2009 2010 and the rates of female members of FCF, are following the same path. (SLU 2010.)

The teenage years are challenging to maintain the interest in sports, meanwhile other new things in life are becoming interesting as well. For example, in the age of 16, Finnish young people finish their elementary school. This causes the change in young person's everyday life and new interest may appear.

The figure 6 presents the average age of female members between the years 2005 to 2016. The detailed female member numbers by ages can be found from appendices (appendix 1). In 2005, the average age of female members was 14,7 years. Though, during the years from 2005 until 2007, the average age was decreasing, and in 2007 the average age of female members was 14,4 years. After the year 2007 the average age turned to be upward, and in 2010 the average age was already 15 years. Between the years 2010 and 2012 the average age turned again downward and in 2012 the average age of female members was back to 14,7 years. However, from 2012 until 2016 the average age turned to be upward and in 2015, the average age of female members was the first time over 15 years, exactly 15,1 years. Working towards making cheerleading a good choice for all ages, can be seen

in the increased level of average age with female members. Especially, people who quit the competition career and want to continue cheerleading in some level, have more options to choose. The variety of different teams have made this possible and the average age has increased.

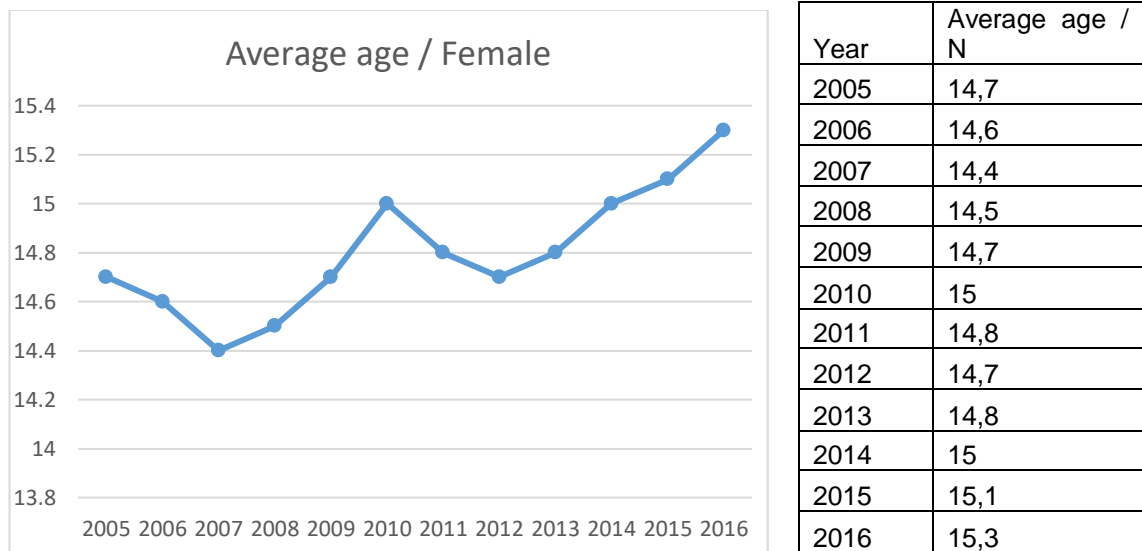


Figure 6. Average age of female members in years 2005 to 2016.

5.5.3 Male members

Even though the majority of the members of FCF has been females, also the number of male members has increased. The detailed male member numbers by ages can be found from appendices (appendix 2). Like mentioned, when cheerleading arrived in Finland, only females were involved. In late 1990s, co-ed teams were established as well and male cheerleaders started to become a part of Finnish cheerleading field. However, still many cheerleading clubs do not have co-ed teams running, which prevents some of the potential male members of starting cheerleading. This means that males do not have as much possibilities to start cheerleading as women do have. However, the clubs are constantly establishing more co-ed teams and the federation works towards providing possibilities for both, all-female and co-ed teams, to ensure the overall development of cheerleading in Finland. (FCF 2017.)

The figure 7 presents the age distribution among male members from the year 2005 until 2015. The first thing to be highlighted is, that a certain age group cannot be pointed out,

like in the figure of female members. Male members are spread wider among different ages. However, few drops can be seen in the figures. The first drop is in the age of 12 and the second drop happens in the age of 15, like it happened with female members.

When it comes to male cheerleaders, first leaving the children division and going further to a junior division, and continuing to the senior division, are crucial ladders. Especially, earlier in the 2000s, only few co-ed teams were running in Finland, so all cities did not even have clubs, where males could attend. Therefore, in some cases quitting might have been the only option for male cheerleaders. However, more co-ed teams have been established, and the more options for male members have appeared. It cannot be denied, the social pressures and stereotypes might have affected somehow as well. Since cheerleading has been heavily profiled as a feminine sport, the social pressure from others, might affect male members to drop off from the field of cheerleading. The issue with decreased physical activity level with teenagers, can be one reason with male members as well.

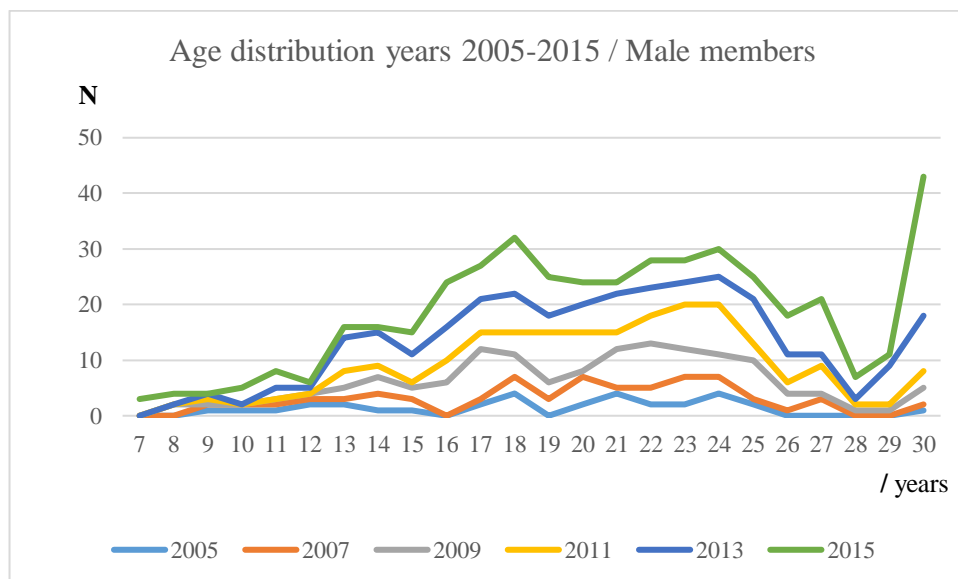


Figure 7. The age distribution of male members in years 2005 to 2015.

After the age of 15, the figure is upward until the age of 18. In the age of 19, a drop can be seen again, and the third drop happens in the age of 24 and 25. The explanation for the drop in the age of 19, might be the Finnish Defense Forces system. All men above 18 years, need to accomplish a time period from three months to a year, by serving the country in a training camp kind of place, or alternatively, complete civil service. Some

might need to quit their hobbies for that time thus possible reason for male cheerleaders to quit in the age of 19 might be the system. Since the number of the male members is so small, the conclusions cannot be made based on this data.

Like female members, with males the age group over 30 years old, should be highlighted as well. In 2015, the age group of 30 years and older, was the biggest age group among male members. The changes in this age group are interesting, since the differences are clear and significant. In 2005, 30 years and older covered only 3,1% of the total number of male members, but between the years 2013 and 2015, this age group covered already one fifth (20%) of the total number of male members. Reasons for this might be the increased options for male members, overall increased number of co-ed teams and engagement level of male members. However, male members have found new roles; the number of male coaches has increased during the years as well. All of these suggestions would need more research to make valuable conclusions. (FCF 2017.)

The figure 8 shows the average age of male members between the years 2005 and 2016. The figure is gently upward except one bend in 2007. Between the years 2005 and 2009 the average age was between 18 and 19 years. After the year 2007, the average age has been always above 20 years. In 2015, the average age of male members was already 23,7 years, which means the average age increased with one year. The increased average age, might be a result of the high engagement level of male members and the new members in the field.

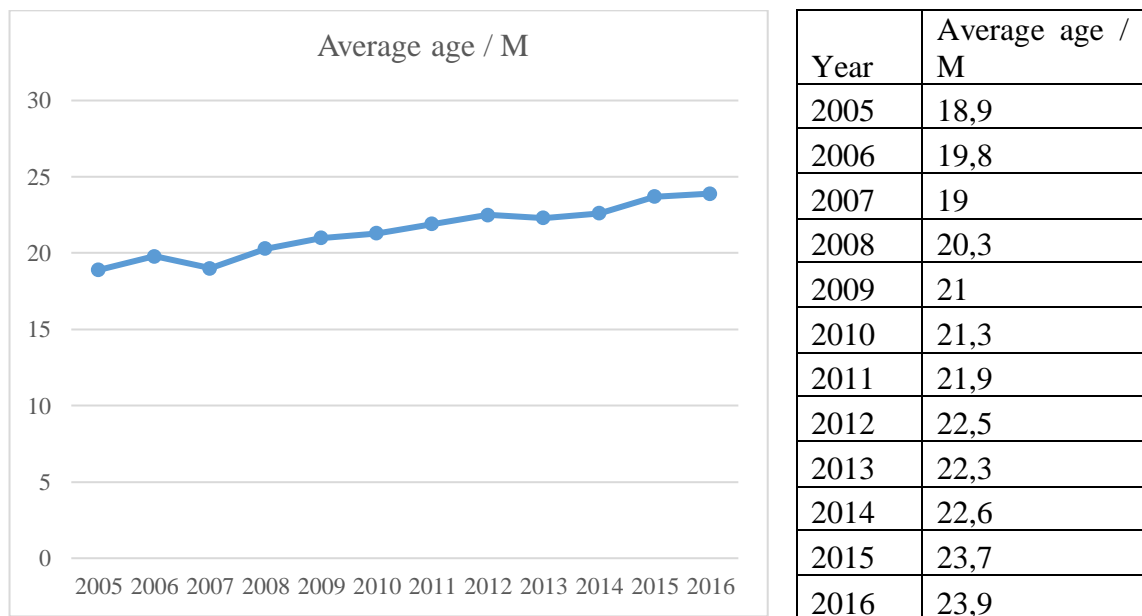


Figure 8. Average age of male members in years 2005 to 2016.

5.6 Finnish cheerleading regionally

In this chapter, the regional differences are viewed in terms of the member numbers of each region. Hence, when talking about sizes of the regions, it means the size in terms of member numbers. The geographical matters will not be examined more specific in this research, but the aim is to provide an understandable view of the situation, how Finnish cheerleading was located in Finland in 2017.

The first clubs were established in Turku, and then later, in Helsinki, Tampere and Oulu. The four cities have remained their position as the biggest cheerleading cities throughout the history of cheerleading in Finland. All these four cities have more than two clubs in a city, except Oulu. In Oulu, only one cheerleading club is operating, though it is one of the biggest cheerleading clubs of FCF. Also, Lahti, Hämeenlinna, Porvoo, Seinäjoki and Vantaa have become cities, where exist more than one cheerleading club. However, new cheerleading clubs have been established every year and the figure 9 presents Finnish cheerleading in 2017 geographically in the map of Finland. In figure 9, the bigger red marks represent the cities, where two or more cheerleading clubs are running.

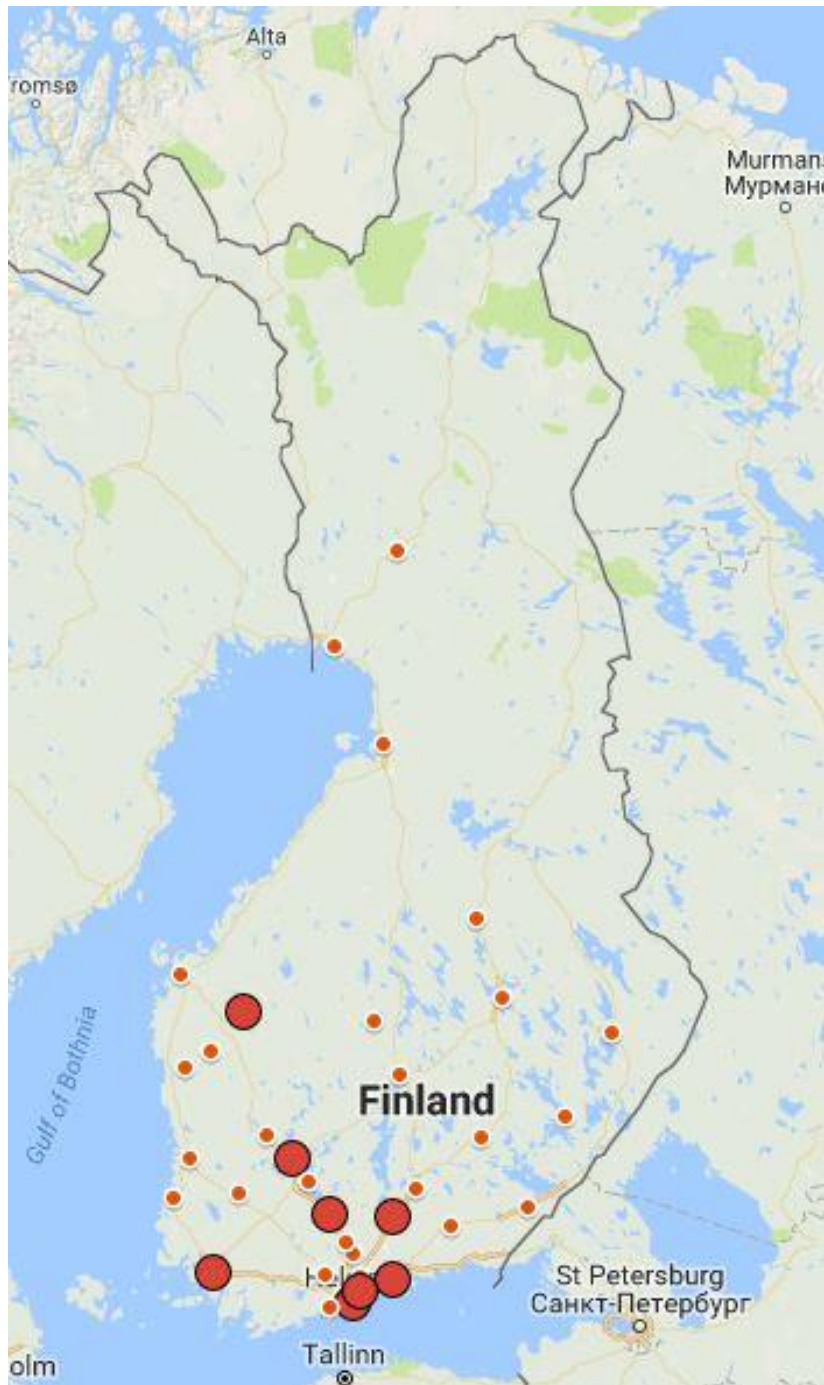


Figure 9. Cheerleading in the map of Finland in 2017. (FCF 2017.)

At the beginning of the journey of FCF, only few clubs in different parts of Finland existed. Also, the competitions were mostly held in the Southern Finland or Northern Finland. Since not many competitions or trainings were held, until the 2000s, the regional issues and differences were not an issue. However, after the year 2011, the growth started to be dynamic; more member clubs from all parts of Finland, have been registered and at the same time, the overall member number of FCF has increased. Because of the growth,

more competitions and trainings have been established, and the regional equality has become a topic to discuss. (FCF 2017e).

Most competitions and trainings have been held in the Southern Finland area, since that area is the biggest in terms of the member numbers. Naturally, this does not serve the members, who are living far away from this area. Travelling long distances for every competitions and camps, causes problems like higher expenses and longer competition days for people who live outside the Southern Finland area. The discussion about the regional equality aroused among the member clubs thus regional operations was decided to be started. (Annual report of FCF 2016).

In 2016, the member clubs were divided into six regions, based on the model created by National Sport Federation (Valo). The aim of the regional distribution, was to increase the regional development and provide the services of FCF more equally and closer to member clubs, all over Finland. The regional work started in 2016, by planning the regional competitions. Already in 2017, the first regional competitions were held in three regions.

The numbers presented in table 3, are gathered from the license system from year 2017. All the member numbers of the clubs were calculated and then turned into percentage numbers. The percentage numbers show the differences between areas. This enables the understanding the regional matters of Finnish cheerleading, and how cheerleading is located geographically in Finland.

Table 3. Members of FCF by regions in 2017 (Suomisport 2017.)

Region	Member Clubs N	Members N	Members %
South	16	3181	38,5
South West	6	981	11,9
Pirkanmaa-Kanta-Häme	8	1245	15,1
South East	6	604	7,3
East	7	853	10,3
North	8	1393	16,9
Overall	51	8257	100

According to table 3, the Southern area is the largest of all six areas, when it comes to the numbers of licensed members. The members of Southern area cover almost 40% of all

members of FCF. Also, 16 clubs are in Southern region, which means over 30 % of the member clubs are operating in Southern area.

The second largest area, in terms of member numbers, is the Northern region. Almost 17 % of the all members of FCF, are members of the clubs, which are located in Northern region. Pirkanmaa-Kanta-Häme region covers approximately 15% of the members and the fourth largest, Southwestern area, covers almost 12 %. Eastern area is the second smallest by having around 10% of all members and the smallest region is the South-eastern area with approximately 7 % of the overall members of FCF.

The figure 10 presents the member distribution visually. The list of the member clubs by regions can be found in appendices (appendix 3).

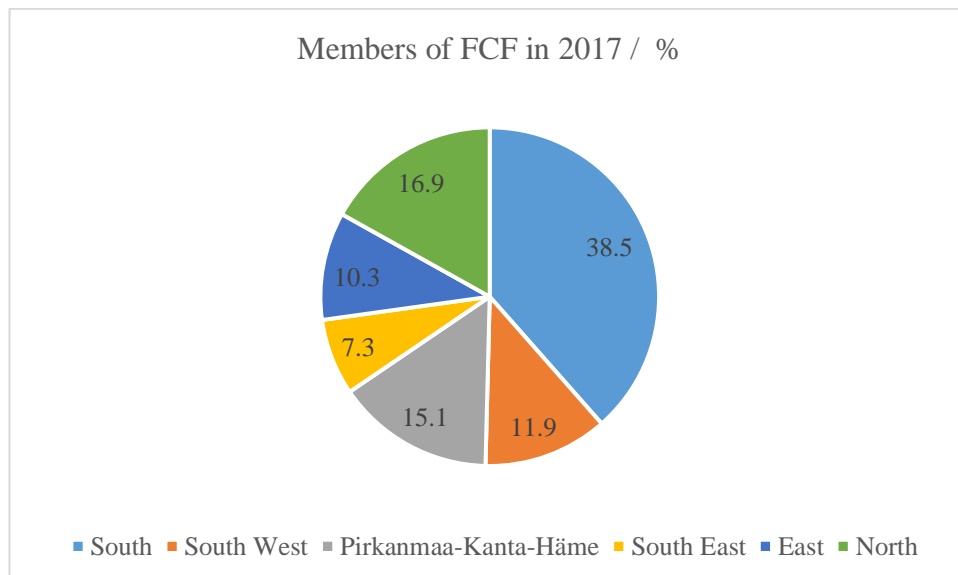


Figure 10. Members of FCF regionally in 2017.

6 CHEERLEADING AS A PART OF FINNISH SPORTS CULTURE

The changes in the field of cheerleading have been rapid and it has become a popular alternative for other traditional sports. The National Sports Research (Kansallinen liikuntatutkimus 2009-2010), includes data about the most popular sports among Finnish youth and children. The research from years 2009 and 2010 presented, that cheerleading was not included in the 44 most popular sports among youth and children. However, in 2016 the situation was quite different, when cheerleading was listed as the 12th popular sports among children and youth, in the National Sports Research 2016 (Kokko & Mehtälä 2016.) What has happened between the years 2010 and 2016? How cheerleading has become significantly more popular in six years? In this chapter, a closer look into the administrative development of cheerleading, will be taken. Also, the results of the survey made for the member clubs of FCF in years 2013 and 2015, will be used to analyze topics related to development of member clubs.

The most significant change has happened after 2010 in the field of cheerleading, when it comes to the development of FCF and the member clubs. Several possible reasons for the rapid growth can be discussed and the changes in the Finnish sports culture affects as well. Cheerleading has arrived in Finland during the age of divergent activity. Typical for the age of divergent activity is, that team sports and new kind of alternative sports have become popular among young people. Also, the field of sports have become fragmented and people have become curious of seeking new experiences in the field.

6.1 The administrative development of FCF member clubs in years 2013 and 2015

The member clubs of FCF have been developing especially during the years between 2010 and 2016. The surveys from years 2013 and 2015 include information about the administrative development of the member clubs. From the table 4, the results of selected topics can be seen. The topics were selected based on the relevance, from the administrative point of view of the member clubs and Finnish cheerleading in general.

In year 2013, 21 member clubs participated into the survey. The number of replied clubs covered 47% of the total number of member clubs of FCF. The activity level was higher

in 2015, when already 29 clubs, 57% of the all member clubs of FCF, took part into the survey.

Table 4. Topics related to administrative development of FCF member clubs (FCF member club surveys from years 2013 and 2015.)

	2013 / %	2015 / %
Participated member clubs	47	57
Member clubs have paid employees	33	41,4
Trained coaches or instructors by FCF	50	90
Member clubs have paid coached	25	41
Plan made for upcoming years	65	
Strategy made		44,8

The first variable is the number of paid employees. In 2013 one third (33%) of the member clubs had at least one paid employee working for the club. Furthermore, in 2015 already over 40% had paid employees working for the club. This can be explained by the growth happened in the field of cheerleading, which naturally means that the sizes of clubs have grown as well. When more members and coaches are involved in club activities, more management work needs to be done as well. Hence, member clubs have needed to hire part-time or full-time employees to be able to run the operations successfully and with good quality. When sport clubs are growing, voluntary workforce may not be enough to maintain the good quality and good service level. Even though, paid employees have more positive than negative impact on club actions, some challenges might appear, when it comes to sharing the workload between paid employees and voluntary workforce. As soon as a club finds a way to solve these problems, the positive influence is more notably than the negative aspects of it. (Koski 2012, 5-6.)

However, cheerleading clubs and several Finnish sports clubs in general, are still mainly operating by having voluntary work force. Finnish sports culture has strong roots in voluntary work, but paid employees have become more typical part of sports clubs during the years. Paid employees have made the variety in club activities wider and made the administrative work more organized. Even though, Finnish cheerleading clubs had more

paid employees in 2015 than in 2013, this is not the only aspect to discuss, when considering the development and even professionalization, from the point of view administrative matters. (FCF 2017f)

The second related topic is the paid coaches in cheerleading clubs. In this research, by using a term “paid coaches”, means the clubs which do pay something for the coaches. This does not mean that the coaches are paid as full-time coaches. In 2013, only 25% of the member clubs did pay something for the coaches, but in 2015 already 41% had paid coaches involved. Since more clubs are going towards of rewarding the coaches somehow, the gap between the clubs is becoming bigger. The developed clubs are becoming extremely organized and professional with hired staff, while the smaller clubs cannot maybe invest in the same volume. For instance, hiring exchange coaches from abroad, or even from other fields of sports, give more perspective, variety and knowledge for the club. Since all clubs are not able to do so, the difference between clubs increases.

The third topic under the administrative development is the long-term planning and strategy work of the clubs. Considering the future direction and future steps, is highly important, when thinking about developing and also maintaining the club operations. (Kentala 2017). In the survey of year 2013, a term “strategy” was not used at all, but there was a question about plan for upcoming years. The majority of the clubs, 65%, had some kind of plan for upcoming years. However, in the survey of year 2015, a question about the club’s strategy for upcoming years was involved. Slightly under half of the clubs, 44,8%, had a strategy for their future. The first strategy period for FCF was made for years 2013 to 2018 thus this might have encouraged clubs to plan strategy for themselves as well.

The fourth factor related to development of cheerleading clubs, is the number of trained coaches and instructors by FCF. In the beginning of 2000s, most of the cheerleading coaches did not have any background or training in coaching. Most of the coaches were self-educated coaches and former cheerleaders. Becoming a coach after, or meanwhile, the own competitive cheerleading career, was a natural step to take.

In 2013, half of the clubs (50%) had coaches trained by FCF and in 2015, already even 90% of the clubs, had utilized the training system of FCF for their coaches. Since most of the clubs have coaches participated into the trainings organized by FCF, it can be said that coaching also has become more organized and systematic. When taking a closer look

into the comments of the survey in 2013, the majority of the clubs started, that they would like to have more trainings for coaches provided by FCF. The aim of FCF is to support the member clubs and try to respond for their needs and wishes. Based on the findings from the surveys, FCF started to plan more training opportunities for coaches. The growth in the number of trained coaches between years 2013 and 2015, can be explained partly because of the increased supply of coach trainings organized by FCF.

6.2 Commercialization as a part of professionalization

Finnish cheerleading has been heavily based on the third sector and voluntary work. This is typical for the entire sports culture in Finland and voluntarism has maintained its dominant role over the decades. (Heikkala & Koski 1999, 50-51.) However, from the 1990s, the companies in private sector started to provide more options for people. This has increased the commercialization in Finnish sports culture.

When it comes to Finnish cheerleading, commercialization came along in the 2000s. First, only one or two companies were operating in the private sector, but the third sector and FCF have had the dominant role in terms of developing cheerleading. First cheerleaders used only the regular sports equipment, found from the sports equipment stores, but as soon as people became more aware of the customized products for cheerleading, the demand for cheerleading equipment increased. In the early decades of Finnish cheerleading, products meant for cheerleading, were available only in the US. Therefore, in beginning people started to make orders online to get the right kind of shoes and shorts.

Since the field of cheerleading in Finland was growing systematically, the need for relevant equipment increased among cheerleaders. More people were willing to order products from the US, and the market niche for cheerleading products was realized. The first company called Sportiro, specialized importing cheerleading and cheer dance products from the US, was established in 2005. (Sportiro 2018.) However, because the dynamic growth of cheerleading, the target group of Sportiro exploded during 2010s. A company, which specialized in cheerleading products in Finnish markets, affected the birth of cheerleading fashion among Finns. Also, people became more aware of suitable equipment spatialized in cheerleading movements. People became more aware of the suitable equipment and the differences between products designed for cheerleading, and products designed for sports in general, were understood.

Based on the matters discussed earlier in this study, cheerleading can be seen as a youth cultural phenomenon. Typical for youth cultural sports is to care about the style and equipment (Ojala 2015, 178). By wearing specialized equipment and having a typical style for the certain sport, people want to be recognized as a part of certain field of sport or subculture. For example, people in the field of cheerleading, have wanted to differentiate themselves from people representing other sports. They have been proud of their sport and with clothes and other equipment, people in the field can even have the sense of belonging. However, people interested in style, has fasten the commercialization in the field of cheerleading.

Establishment of Sportiro, has been a breaking point, when it comes to commercialization of Finnish cheerleading. People started to put effort on having proper equipment, because Sportiro made it possible and accessible. After Sportiro was established, the number of companies with cheerleading aspect started to rise as well. Later, in 2013 a company called Wildcheer, was established. Like Sportiro, Wildcheer imports and sells cheerleading products (Wildcheer 2018).

Naturally, Finnish people in the field of cheerleading were absorbing the inspiration and influences from the US, since everything was much more developed there. After the importance of relevant equipment was understood, the proper training facilities became a matter to consider. Furthermore, facilities specialized in training cheerleading, were running in the US and Finnish cheerleading teams started to dream about having proper cheerleading halls. The first cheerleading hall in private sector called Skillz Gym, was established in 2013 in the upper floor of the new sports centre in Helsinki. Skillz Gym focused on providing training facilities for cheerleading clubs, camps and personal training. Before this, the training was focused on the practices of cheerleading clubs and usually the facilities were not always suitable. Especially, in the smaller cities, the sports facilities in general have been more narrowed and when it comes to cheerleading, the lack of proper facilities was present in many cities.

The concept of having personal training, was new in the field of Finnish cheerleading. This has been a factor which has fasten, not only the technical development of cheerleading, but also made the training more advanced, since the coaches were educated and not volunteers. People started to be able to take courses to improve specific skills, which improved the level of Finnish cheerleading in general. Before this, teams used to

have common practices together and people had different levels of skills. By having the option for personal training or small group training with educated coach, enabled individuals to develop their specific abilities.

Finnish cheerleading has become more commercialized and in 2017 several companies with the core function of cheerleading related business, were already operating in the private sector. For example, the number of organizers of training camps, professional coaches and entrepreneurs of cheerleading products, has increased. The field of cheerleading has become more fragmented and all three sectors of Finnish sports structure, are part of the field. The third sector is covered because of FCF and the member clubs of it. FCF and member clubs are in the central position, when developing the field of cheerleading. The private sector is involved, because of the increased number of solution providers of products, trainings and facilities specialized in cheerleading. People are interested in developing themselves as individual athletes, which has increased the demand for personal trainings. Last, the public sector is part of the field of Finnish cheerleading, since the cooperation between the clubs and local cities is highly important. The cities are in charge of providing the facilities for sports clubs, so the cooperation between local cities is crucial.

Since member clubs have become more professional in terms of administrative work, they also seek for cost-effective cooperation with private sector companies. However, the work towards getting sponsorships is not necessarily organized or planned in the member clubs and it is heavily in relation with the contacts teams already have. The clubs tend to apply funding and financial support from the companies, which are aware of cheerleading in general. (FCF 2018)

The types of sponsorships vary depending on the club size and the needs of it. For example, some clubs have larger investments, such as building an own training hall. This kind of investment requires the club has a proper plan for applying sponsorships and is active in seeking possible sponsors from private sector or even from municipality. Usually, the funding is applied for a specific purpose of the team, such as covering the competition and camp expenses. The sponsorships can also be something else than money funded for the club. For example, some teams have offered visibility in social media and got new training equipment for that.

Since the field of cheerleading is still strongly based on voluntary work and the clubs are non-profit organizations, all kind of support is valuable for them. The clubs organize by themselves ways to earn money to cover their expenses. For example, the clubs might have their own events, where the teams are performing. During the event, the spectators are able to buy some goodies from the cafeteria held by the parents of the athletes. Also, many teams do promoting work for different companies and events. Since cheerleading is a performance sport and spectator friendly in general, teams are asked to do cheerleading tricks in several kind of events.

Even though, the biggest member clubs have paid employees and the financial aspect is more stable than during the early decades of Finnish cheerleading, voluntary work remains strong in member clubs. When it comes to sponsoring and cooperation between clubs and companies, the development has been huge during the decades. Until the 2000s, only few teams did have some kind of sponsors. In the 2000s, especially bigger clubs, have more sponsors and even strategy made for applying sponsorships. Within the grown awareness of cheerleading, some companies have contacted teams spontaneously willing to do cooperation with them.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter the topic of this thesis is covered and the outcome of the study is discussed. The journey of implementing the research, is also viewed and evaluated. Also, the limitations of this thesis are discussed critically. Finally, the suggestions for further researches are presented.

7.1 Summary

The purpose of this thesis was to understand, what kind of sport is cheerleading and how it has become as a part of Finnish sports culture. Cheerleading has become one of the most popular sports among young and children in Finland (SLU 2016) and the reasons behind that have not been studied. The growth has been tremendous during the years from 2010 to 2016, however the data about Finnish cheerleading has not been gathered after year 2005, to be found from one place. This study is supposed to provide the data about Finnish cheerleading, from the year it arrived in Finland, until the year 2018. The data of this study provides a basis for further researches.

When starting to implement this study, some challenges appeared in finding suitable research method, since typical research methods for qualitative research, such as, interviews or questionnaires were not planned to be implemented. In this study, all data was gathered from different existing sources, such as surveys implemented in the past, articles and annual reports of FCF. Also, the data collected from the license system of FCF, was gathered. Finally, the study was conducted by using historical analysis as a method. Typical for this method is to gather and analyze data from the past (Berg 2004, 236-237). Even though, this study is a qualitative study, also quantitative and numeric material was used to support the qualitative overall study.

Three research questions were selected to guide this study through. The first question was: What kind of sport is cheerleading? Cheerleading is a sport, which combines different elements, such as aerobics, dance and gymnastics. These elements are adapted from other sports, but unique for cheerleading are pyramids, tosses and stunts. Cheerleading has its roots in the North America in the late 1800s. The first format of

cheerleading was seen in the sidelines of sports fields, where baseball and other sports were played. Spectators did not have seats, so they needed to cheer and yell on the sidelines. Soon cheerleading started to become more structured and different kinds of routines and yells came along. Before men needed to go to the Second World War, cheerleading was a privilege of the male gender. Women came up to substitute men, while they were in the war and this changed cheerleading dramatically. After the Second World War, cheerleading never became the same than before and women remained as a dominant part of cheerleading. However, nowadays in the 2000s, cheerleading is found as a suitable sport for all ages and genders, because of the variety of elements included in it. People with different abilities and backgrounds, can start to train cheerleading. Both, competitive and non-competitive cheerleading teams, are established in Finland and worldwide.

The second research question of this study was: How Finnish cheerleading has been developing? When it comes to Finnish cheerleading, the development has been rapid and comprehensive. The arrival of American football happened in 1979, when the first cheerleaders became a part of the games as well. In Finland, cheerleading was also at first a sideline activity of American football and later sideline activity for other sports, such as ice hockey as well. During the early 1980s, cheerleading started to become a divergent independent sport. The first cheerleading club was established in 1984 in Turku and the first cheerleading competitions were held in Helsinki in 1985. The separate division for cheerleading, was established in 1987, under the Finnish American Football Federation. The timeline and the most important milestones of Finnish cheerleading are presented in figure 11.

The same characteristics can be found from the journey of Finnish cheerleading and from the development of Finnish sports culture in general. The development of both has followed the same kind of path. Even though, Finnish cheerleading has arrived in Finland during the age of divergent activity, elements of other ages have been present also. The four phases of Finnish sports culture, named by Itkonen, are present in the development of Finnish cheerleading. However, the phases have changed much more rapid, than they have happened in Finnish sports culture.

Typical for the age of organizational culture were the modest training facilities, rapidly established clubs and the emphasis on voluntarism. During the first twenty years of Finnish cheerleading, teams practiced in very simple facilities, such as gymnasiums and even outdoors. Especially teams from smaller cities did not have many suitable facilities for practicing cheerleading, because of the narrower supply of the municipality. Also, people were eager to establish their own cheerleading clubs and teams. The first cheerleading club called Turku Troijans, was established in 1984. Other big cities followed and established their own cheerleading clubs. Until the 2000s, cheerleading was operated only by the voluntary work. Even though, FCF and many clubs are having paid employees, the field of cheerleading relies heavily on voluntarism, such as the whole Finnish sports field.

The characteristics of the age of hobby-competition, were seen in Finnish cheerleading in the beginning of 2000s. Typical for the age of hobby-competition was the increased intensity level of competing and developed facilities. In the beginning of 2000s, people involved in cheerleading wanted to emphasize the aspect of competition. They wanted to clarify the difference between cheerleading in ice hockey games and cheerleading as a competitive independent sport. More competitions were organized and the focus was in competing. Also, teams started to have more suitable facilities for training cheerleading which increased the level of cheerleading.

The third phase of Finnish sports culture, the elements age of intense competition, are found from the field of Finnish cheerleading approximately from 2004 to 2008. New policies were established in Finnish sports field during that age and the competition aspect remained strong. The importance of educated coaches, was understood, and professional coaches from abroad were hired. In the field of cheerleading, during the late-2000s, FCF improved the education system for coaches to make the system more consistent and

approachable. The teams started to put emphasize on the quality of coaching and foreign coaches from the US were hired. Since the technique was still much more advanced in the US, the tips and ideas from foreign coaches, developed Finnish cheerleading.

Cheerleading arrived in Finland at the beginning of the age of divergent activity. There can be seen the typical characteristics of the age of divergent activity in the arrival and integration of Finnish cheerleading. Typical for the age of divergent activity, is the fragmentation of the sports field, rapid establishment of new clubs and federations and the popularity of new sports. Especially, team sports and sports from abroad, have challenged the popularity of traditional sports. Also, new motives towards doing sports, have aroused and people are willing to seek other aspects than competing, such as new experiences. Cheerleading is an example of the sports, which has arrived in Finland during the age of divergent activity. When considering the development of Finnish cheerleading more specific, the elements of the age of divergent activity in the field of Finnish cheerleading, can be found after 2010s. Cheerleading field has become more fragmented and the supply of services in the field has become more versatile. More training possibilities are available, facilities are specialized in training cheerleading and both, competitive and non-competitive teams, are established. FCF and the member clubs of FCF, are willing to provide training possibilities for all people with different kind of motives. Therefore, FCF has established a concept called Active Cheer, which concentrates only in the non-competitive training of cheerleading. Cheerleading has become a popular option for young and adults and it can be competitive or non-competitive.

Finnish cheerleading has developed in four decades from a sideline activity to a sport of its own, operating under the national umbrella organization called Finnish Cheerleading Federation, which is a member of National Olympic Committee. The first aspect to be highlighted in terms of the development, is the administrative development of FCF. Finnish Cheerleading Federation was established in 1995, and the first ten years the federation was operating without any paid employees. In 2003, the federation got the office and also the Ministry of Culture and Education accepted the application of FCF concerning the government subvention money. This was an important step for Finnish cheerleading, because this supported the ideology of seeing cheerleading as an independent sport among others, not as a sideline entertainment. For instance, implementing an education system for coaches and later a strategy for FCF, have been

important factors in the development of Finnish cheerleading. The education system for coaches, was implemented to enable people to make long-term plans in the field of cheerleading.

However, during the 2000s the administrative operations of FCF were not advanced or systematic yet. The lack of documentation is one example of that. The research data of this study is mainly from years after 2010. In many situations, the data from the early years of 2000s, was not found or was not available at all. FCF has become more consistent and organized in terms of administrative issues during the 2010s, with the help of volunteers and paid employees, planning and stable finance.

Also, commercialization has made the field of Finnish cheerleading not only more fragmented, but yet more advanced and variable. Especially, after 2010's the number of cheerleading focused companies operating in private sector increased, because there was found a market niche for cheerleading business. More options for consumers, such as customized products, facilities and services, became available. When it comes to administrative development of Finnish cheerleading, the year 2012 was an important milestone. The first strategy of FCF was prepared for years 2013 to 2018. Preparing a strategy for upcoming years, made long-term development and planning possible. Also, setting reasonable goals and action plans for the future, made the operations more structured and stabilized.

The systematic development of cheerleading internationally has been noticed as well, by the International Olympic Committee. In 2016, IOC accepted cheerleading and the umbrella organization ICU as a part of its recognized sports. ICU was admitted to 3-year conditional membership, and cheerleading was seen as a show discipline in Winter Olympics 2018. The different federations and associations are recognized cheerleading as a sport, which has fastened the development of cheerleading.

The second aspect in terms of development, is the growth and administrative development of member numbers. The growth has been incredibly dynamic and the member number of the FCF has doubled in five years, from 2011 to 2016. In 2011, 4100 members were registered under FCF, but in 2016 already twice as much members 8200, were involved. Also, the number of member clubs has increased: In 2005, 32 member clubs were registered under FCF, and eleven years later, already 51 member clubs were registered. The member clubs have become more professional in terms of administrative matters.

Many clubs have paid employees and have planned their future more critically. Also, the level of coaching has increased since the majority of cheerleading clubs find it important to educate their coaches. Because of the increased level of member clubs, the level of Finnish cheerleading has increased.

The international success, which Finnish cheerleading teams have achieved during the decades, has been one reason for the massive growth. According to Itkonen, the international success, especially in the Olympic Games, inspires youth generation and encourages them being physically active and try new kind of sports (Itkonen 2012, 162). Finnish teams have been successful in the international competitions, which has attracted people to become as a part of the success. However, not only because the success may inspire people to start training cheerleading, but international success also gives space in the media, which increases the awareness of people.

The third aspect to consider under the theme of development of Finnish cheerleading, is the equality matters. The strategy for years 2013 to 2018 highlighted, that the aim is to make cheerleading accessible for all people in all ages and all genders. Even though the gender distribution has remained quite the same, from the very beginning until the year 2017 (approximately 2% male members and 98% female members), the new possibilities for both genders have increased. For example, competitions and divisions organized for all genders and all ages, are organized during a calendar year. More clubs are establishing co-ed teams and provides training possibilities for different levels, ages and genders. In terms of age distribution, it can be seen that with both, women and men, the average age has increased. In the beginning of 2000s, not that many options were available for people in all ages. Nonetheless, this has changed and several options are available for different kind of intensity levels.

Also, the equality matters between the regions have become more relevant. Finnish cheerleading field has been divided into six regions following the model created by the National Sport Federation (Valo). The regions are cooperating with each other with the supervision of the member committee of FCF. The number of competitions and trainings has increased yet they have been mainly organized in the Southern area. This has not been equal for all regions. Since the aim of FCF is to make cheerleading accessible for all, the long distances and expensive competition trips cannot be an obstacle for that. Therefore,

in 2016 the planning of regional operation was started and the first regional competitions were held in 2017 in three regions.

The third research question was: How cheerleading has integrated into postmodern Finnish sports culture? Cheerleading has become a strong part of Finnish sports culture. Based on this research, the integration of cheerleading has been divided into four phases; arrival, formation, establishment and commercialization and professionalization. In 1979 and during the 1980s, cheerleading entered to Finland. First cheerleading started to spread into the biggest cities. Quite rapidly, people became aware of the new activity, and not only American football, but also cheerleading as a part of that, started to spread all over Finland and new cheerleading teams were established continuously. However, during the 1980s cheerleading was spontaneous and heavily self-organized by the active people in the field.

Later, in 1990s, cheerleading started to become more structured and organized activity. People with backgrounds from dance and gymnastics, became interested in starting to train cheerleading. The field of cheerleading was expanding and more structures were set. In 1995, the own federation for cheerleading was established. The federation started to organize education and competitions and also took care of the international cooperation and networks. During the late-1990s, cheerleading became an organized sport.

In the 2000s, cheerleading became an established sport in Finnish sports culture. The member number increased every year, first part-time employees were hired after 2004, new implementations were continuously planned and other umbrella associations in Finland became interested in cheerleading. All of these made cheerleading stabilized sport.

After the year 2009, the field of cheerleading started to be more professional in terms of advanced and more commercialized supply in the field. Several ideas and inspiration were observed from the US, which led also towards the commercialization of cheerleading. Cheerleading had been mainly profiled as a sport operating in the third sector, but after 2010, more private companies were established. Personal training, improved facilities and productization made cheerleading more commercialized, since the variety of solution providers in the field increased. More customized services depending on the level of expertise, started to be available. Also, FCF has developed the actions of it each year, and made the available services more comprehensive and made the operation more equal.

Finally, in the National Sports Research from years 2009 and 2010 cheerleading was not listed among 44 top sports among young and children (SLU 2010). The dynamic growth started after 2013 and the member rates increased heavily each year. In addition, in year 2016 cheerleading could be found from the same list from the place 12 (Kokko & Mehtälä 2016). This is an interesting indicator, which represents, how cheerleading has integrated into Finnish sports culture.

Cheerleading has integrated into Finnish sports culture, because of the variety of possibilities in the field. People with different backgrounds can start cheerleading, because multiple roles are needed and teams and different advance levels are available. Different kind of skills and abilities are required, to make cheerleading movements successfully. FCF and the member clubs of it, have made Finnish cheerleading structured and systematic sport, in terms of administrative matters. A side line entertainment done by self-organized teams, has become competitive and independent sport done by thousands of people in Finland.

7.2 Limitations of the thesis

This study was completed by utilizing gathered data from the past. The data was comprehensive and both numeric and written. Though, some limitations should be recognized, when considering the trustworthiness of this thesis.

First, since the data was collected from different sources from the past, there is always the possibility for misunderstandings and wrong information. For example, the numeric information collected from Sporttirikisteri, is not necessary totally correct. As mentioned in the beginning of this study, the numbers represent the amount of bought licenses. People, who have bought the licenses, may have bought wrong license, informed the age accidentally wrong or even bought the license twice. Also, the data was collected and sorted only by one person, which increases the possibility of making mistakes. Not all data was used in this research, which also increases the possibility of excluding important data from this research. These kinds of errors need to be taking into account, when considering the limitations of this thesis.

Since there have not been analysed the operation of FCF before, this research is supposed to provide the base data for upcoming researches. Therefore, the limitation of this study

is made to analyse only the age and gender distribution and exclude other variables from this research. The excluded variables are not essential or relevant for this research. The timeline, member rates and age and gender distribution, will give a comprehensive insight about the development and the situation of Finnish Cheerleading Federation in 2017.

Second, according to Chadwick et al (1984), four basic problems of observation can be presented: “you cannot observe something without changing it, you cannot observe something without misperceiving it, you cannot interpret an observation without misrepresenting it and you cannot communicate an interpretation of an observation without an additional misrepresentation.”.(Chadwick et al 1994, 10.)

For example, since I am from the field of cheerleading and have had different roles in the field of cheerleading, I as a researcher, observe and research the field from inside. I have much knowledge about cheerleading, and that might make me blind for some matters. Some of my own assumptions or previous knowledge, might have narrowed my observation and consideration.

Third, most of the data was originally in Finnish and then translated to English. Even though my English is close to fluent, it is not my native language, which increases the risk of misunderstandings and wrong translation.

Fourth limitation for this thesis is, that any supportive research method has not been used. To make the studied topic more comprehensive and reliable, there could been done an interview about the selected topic. Since an interview or survey was not implemented, the reasons behind the existing data cannot be specified or deepen.

7.3 Trustworthiness and ethics of the research

When conducting a research, weather it is a qualitative or quantitative, the ethics and trustworthiness of the research should be considered (Berg 2004, 43). Additionally, to make a research justifiable and trustworthy, it should always follow the common policies of science (Tutkimuseettinen Neuvottelukunta 2012).

The ethics are related, especially, into the gathering phase and presenting the research data (Hirjärvi et al 2009, 23). In this research no interviews or questionnaires were implemented and the data was gathered from the literal resources. However, since most

of the data was from Finnish Cheerleading Federation, the contract was made between me and the federation. To ensure that all participants are satisfied with the research, we made a written agreement of the research data and the usage of it. According to common research ethics, we decided the data gathered from the license system needs to be gathered and presented so, that it is not identifiable. Therefore, only numeric data was used in this research and personal information was excluded.

All data was gathered carefully and as objective as possible. However, like mentioned in the limitations of this thesis, being fully objective, was a challenge, since I have so much knowledge and experience in the field of cheerleading from the past. This made the research process interesting, but also challenging, because I needed to make sure that I exclude my own prejudices and assumptions. To guarantee the transparency of this research, I did use only the information I could find from the research data. When it comes to the literature and references used in this research, they were critically chosen and reflected with the research topic.

7.4 Learning process

The process of this thesis has been interesting and I have learnt much about, how to implement a scientific research. The literature I used for this study gave me a great view about Finnish sports culture and history of it. In addition, after knowing more about the Finnish sports culture, I found it easier to understand the relation of the society and sports. For example, I have known when cheerleading arrived in Finland, but I have not understood the relation with the changes in the society and changes in the Finnish sports culture. This kind of learning experience makes me feel I really have learnt something about both, cheerleading and the society, and especially the relation between these two.

Also, conducting a historical research was a new experience for me. When finalizing my previous degree, I have completed another qualitative research, where the data was collected by implementing a questionnaire. Analysing different kind of data from the past, was challenging yet inspiring.

Having the possibility to study the field, which have been a huge part of my life, was definitely a very motivating factor for me. After implementing this research, I think my own expertise in the field of social sciences of sports has improved as well. I understand

better the relations between the changes in the society and sports culture. However, deepening my own knowledge in the field of cheerleading, has been one of the most rewarding factors during this research.

7.5 Suggestions for further researches

This thesis is made to provide a proper view of Finnish cheerleading, which enables the further researches about more specific topics in the field. Data about Finnish cheerleading does exist in several places, but it has not been collected to be found in one place before this thesis. Since cheerleading is constantly growing sport and a part of Finnish sports culture, I found it important to complete this kind of research. This study covered the development, growth, age and gender distribution and regional aspects of Finnish cheerleading.

When it comes to further researches, I would suggest to deepen some of the selected topics more. For instance, how the growth of cheerleading is in relation with changes in the society? In this study, the overview of the growth and the changes in the society were researched. Therefore, it would be interesting to deepen the research, what has happened yearly in Finnish society, and what kind of matters have affected to the growth? Second suggestion is to research more the gender aspect. Especially, the differences in female and male members' average ages, would be interesting to study. Third suggestion for further researches could be, to research more the profiles and backgrounds of cheerleaders and their families. What kind of background the people involved in cheerleading have and what kind of standard of living their families have? Also, generally, why people start training cheerleading? And yet, why they decide to quit training cheerleading? Researching member clubs and their operations could be one topic to research as well. Some of the cheerleading clubs are already professional administrative way, with hired staff and own training facilities. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct a research about the development of a cheerleading club, such as Kaisa Kentala's thesis about a gymnastics club in Jyväskylä. Finally, international success should be researched more, since Finland has been one of the leading countries worldwide for decades. Benchmark from other countries could be involved, and the factors behind the great success could be considered.

As it can be seen, there are plenty of options to be studied in the field of Finnish cheerleading in future. This research was the basis for the upcoming researches and I personally hope, that this would encourage people to continue researching the field of cheerleading more.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 4 - Female members of FCF years 2005 to 2015

Age	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
0-5	2	2	2	3	42	23
6	3	0	4	16	40	32
7	8	12	11	30	58	55
8	24	51	81	80	135	141
9	42	106	178	123	219	256
10	83	160	216	209	301	356
11	167	245	277	308	394	503
12	281	353	376	421	490	666
13	371	420	422	474	654	805
14	395	434	420	506	705	738
15	325	396	349	428	584	684
16	304	308	334	344	429	452
17	229	207	228	236	271	330
18	134	187	174	202	207	276
19	102	104	123	133	130	155
20	49	63	96	94	106	135
21	29	39	45	57	71	100
22	30	22	48	51	59	65
23	15	12	44	31	53	67
24	11	10	21	35	45	65
25	6	9	13	28	22	57
26	6	14	14	16	26	40
27	9	7	5	9	24	19
28	3	4	9	8	11	14
29	4	2	6	6	11	26
30	4	10	52	65	139	188
Total	2636	3177	3548	3913	5226	6248

APPENDIX 5 - Male members of FCF years 2005 to 2015

Age	2005	2007	2009	2011	2013	2015
7						3
8			2			2
9	1	1		1	1	
10	1	1				3
11	1	1	1		2	3
12	2	1	1		1	1
13	2	1	2	3	6	2
14	1	3	3	2	6	1
15	1	2	2	1	5	4
16	0	0	6	4	6	8
17	2	1	9	3	6	6
18	4	3	4	4	7	10
19		3	3	9	3	7
20	2	5	1	7	5	4
21	4	1	7	3	7	2
22	2	3	8	5	5	5
23	2	5	5	8	4	4
24	4	3	4	9	5	5
25	2	1	7	3	8	4
26		1	3	2	5	7
27		3	1	5	2	10
28			1	1	1	4
29			1	1	7	2
30	1	1	3	3	10	25
Total	32	40	74	74	102	122

APPENDIX 6 - Member clubs of FCF in 2017

SOUTH		
Club	Members N	City
Aalto Predators	9	Helsinki
East City Giants	1	Helsinki
Funky Cheer Team Espoo	297	Espoo
Funky Team	567	Helsinki
FunShine Cheerleaders	182	Porvoo
Golden Spirit	692	Helsinki
Helsinki Athletics Cheerleaders – HAC	594	Helsinki
Hyvinkään voimistelu ja liikunta	25	Hyvinkää
KeKe Cheerleading	30	Helsinki
Kimata	96	Vantaa
Kirkkonummen Tanssiyhdistys / Thunder	25	Kirkkonummi
Kunto ja Terveys ry		Helsinki
Riverside Rebels Cheerleading	11	Porvoo
Spirit Shakin' Cheerleaders	452	Tuusula
Tikkurilan Naisvoimistelijat		Vantaa
Liikuntaseura Vihti-Gym	200	Vihti
	3181	
SOUTH WEST		
Club	Members N	City
Huittisten Voimistelu ja Liikunta		Huittinen
Liikuntaseura Pori	250	Pori
Rauman Cheerleadingseura	128	Rauma
Turku Tornadoes	32	Turku
Turun Cheerleadingseura Smash	489	Turku
Unity Cheer	82	Turku
	981	
PIRKANMAA-KANTA-HÄME		
Club	Members N	City
Dream Team Cheerleaders	407	Tampere
Haka Gym	1	Valkeakoski
Hämeenlinna Cheer Team	161	Hämeenlinna
Hämeenlinna Huskies	14	Hämeenlinna
Riihimäen Voimistelu ja Liikunta	59	Riihimäki
Tampereen Pyrintö / PCT	426	Tampere
Tampereen Sisu / TSC	136	Tampere
Viljakkalan Naisvoimistelijat	41	Viljakkala
	1245	

SOUTH EAST		
Club	Members N	City
Asikkalan Voimistelu	30	Asikkala
Black Diamond Cheerleaders	179	Kouvola
Lahti Elite Cheer Team	44	Lahti
Heinolan Voimisteluseura	1	Heinola
LCS Panthers	305	Lahti
LOMA Cheerleaders	45	Lappeenranta
	604	
EAST		
Club	Members N	City
Cheer Stars Finland	270	Kuopio
Eastern Star Cheerleaders	60	Savonlinna
Iisalmen Naisvoimistelijat		Iisalmi
Jaguars Spirit Athletes	433	Jyväskylä
Joensuun Voimistelu ja Liikunta	90	Joensuu
Mikkelin Naisvoimistelijat		Mikkeli
Saarijärven Naisvoimistelijat		Saarijärvi
	853	
NORTH		
Club	Members N	City
Arctic Cheer All-Star	52	Rovaniemi
Crocodiles Cheerleaders	116	Seinäjoki
Karijoki Cheer Team	8	Karijoki
Kauhajoen Karhu	96	Kauhajoki
Kemin Lämärit	20	Kemi
Northern Lights Cheerleading	542	Oulu
Seinäjoki Silver Sharks	263	Seinäjoki
West Coast Vikings	296	Vaasa
	1393	

APPENDIX 4 – The ranking of Finnish teams in World Championships from 2003 to 2018

World Championships	All-female team	Co-ed team	Dance	Partner stunt
2003	2.	4.	2.	
2005	2.	3.	2.	
2006	-	-	-	
2007	2.	3.	2.	
2008	-	-	-	
2009	2.	4.	3.	
2010	4.	-	3.	
2011	4.	7.	5.	1.
2012	3.	5.	5.	
2013	3.	3.	4.	
2014	3.	5.	3.	
2015	3.	3.	3.	
2016	2.	3.	4.	
2017	2.	3.	5.	
2018	1.	6.	4.	