

METHODOLOGY

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Humanities in the study of Budo – problems and methodology

Submission: 14.09.2013; acceptance: 20.09.2013

Key words: martial arts, theory, anthropology, methodology

Abstract:

The author discusses the subject of the humanities and social reflection in martial arts and combat sports. This is an approach synthesizing knowledge and inspecting and presenting opinions, which also includes postulating and designing theses. The first part of the work contains a description of the paradigmatic changes in science and a brief description of a new humanistic and systemic paradigm. Then, in the second part, several theoretical concepts operating within the subject area of ‘martial arts science’ are considered. The anthropology of martial arts and the humanistic theory of martial arts have been contrasted with other theories, developed earlier or at the same time. The third part of the discussion contains preferred methods of research, with a focus on qualitative methods.

The study ends with a summary and conclusions which can be applied to future study.

These are the opinions of the author, his voice in the discussion on further directions of Budo research (martial arts, combat sports) and the proposed methodology of the studies:

1. In humanistic studies qualitative research methods bring greater cognitive value as they are better able to explain the reality being described.
2. In ‘martial arts science’ it is hard to overestimate the value of the opinions of experts with many years of practical experience, as it is the science concerning this very practice.
3. Avoiding reductionism and closing oneself off from their martial arts should allow for the creation of a scientific theory common to the different traditions of martial arts.

Introduction

1. A new paradigm of science, culture and society

Even today in some social sciences and humanities institutions there is a lingering nineteenth-century paradigm of scientism, preferring reductionist approaches, narrow specializations and partial statistical analyses based on the model of the natural sciences. Meanwhile from around the middle of the twentieth century there has been an anti-positivism breakthrough. A paradigm of overall, systemic approaches is gradually gaining scholarly recognition. At the same time man is to be treated as a personal, physical and psychological being, with his/her own aspirations and choices [Fromm 1976/1989; Capra 1982; Heller, Życiński 1988].

The new paradigm breaks some old patterns, but does not so much displace the old ideas of reality and science, as supplement them. It is recommended to include group (of) interdisciplinary research and synergistic pursuit for synthesis of knowledge in sciences concerning humans and culture. Systemic recognition of human and culture also requires systemic, non-linear and holistic thinking, not in terms of structures, but in net processes and relationships. Only the use of the theory of systemic thinking and logic¹ that goes beyond the limits of sensory capabilities (common sense imagination) allow the development and effective use of the systemic meta theory [Parsons 1951, 1971; Cynarski 2001; Luhmann 2004].

¹ The author recommends a study of the paradoxical logic and non-classical logics [Cynarski 2002–2003].

Generally, in the sciences of man, culture and society, we should move away from the demarcation of scientific disciplines (a residue of the nineteenth-century institutionalization of learning) and reductionism in the study of particular phenomena. Particularly considering the fact that in social sciences evaluation should not be avoided, because it is not only wrong, but also dangerous. We also know that both the researcher (his knowledge and belief) will affect the test results, as well as the attitudes of respondents which modify researchers' views. There is no objective observer. The researcher must take into account the "humanistic coefficient", introduced by F. Znaniecki (1882-1958) as the basic standard methodology i.e. it should describe cultural reality as it appears to the members of the community of that cultural system.

In relation to classified concepts of instinctivism, behaviourism, psychoanalysis and Marxism the approaches coming from the perspective of humanistic psychology are particularly interesting [Fromm 1973/1992, 1976/1989], humanistic sociology [Znaniecki 1919, 1928, 1930, 1934, 1952; Bierstedt 1969] and e.g. holistic education [Szyszko-Bohusz 1989].

2. Higher levels of generality of analyses

Scientific analyses can be carried out at different levels of generality. At the top levels we find general theoretical concepts, whether for multi-disciplinary problems (as in the science of physical culture) or within individual specialist sciences. Middle-range theories are scientific sub disciplines. Even more specialized theories or specializations arise, such as "martial arts science" for the problem area of martial arts, combat sports, self-defence systems, etc.

2.1 General and medium range theories; scientific sub discipline

In the field of physical culture sciences, sport sciences and physical education there are two theories in particular which function to explain the phenomenon of Budo and related issues. These are 'the theory of combat sports' and 'the humanistic theory of martial arts'.

R. M. Kalina started out of the praxeological theory of fighting, creating at first a philosophy of defensive struggle and educational theory of the defence, and then 'the theory of combat sports' [Kalina 2000]. He focused on the problem of the combat, as a form of negative cooperation. The author also raises issues connected with the ethical, fair and noble conduct of combat. The language of

praxeology is useful to describe processes such as training or combat sports.

Cynarski developed the 'humanistic theory of martial arts' [Cynarski 2002, 2004], based mainly on knowledge of Budo and formulating his theses in accordance with the canon of the paradigm of the systemic approach. Currently he is going in the direction of formulating 'the general theory of fighting'.

Another, overall (systemic) approach to the phenomenon of martial arts and combat sports is offered by A. A. Figueiredo [2009]. According to the spacious concept of 'motricity', we can analyse here, in varied ways, combat techniques, their teaching and educational influences. Meanwhile, K. R. Kernspecht [1988, 2011] focuses on the phenomenon of combat, especially fighting in self-defence. He creates a multi-disciplinary, structured knowledge called combatology, as a theory of self-defence and fighting. There are also other proposals for theoretical approaches.

Hoplology is a specialized science used to study martial arts. It also has a meaningful record in this area [Draeger 1973]. It works, however, in the spirit of reductionist approaches. It is more concerned with weapons and their use, than the man himself [Cynarski, Kurek 2009]. The reduction applies for example to reducing the testing of the material and technical aspects of this kind of human activity. The reduction applies for example to limiting studies to the material and technical aspects of this kind of human activity.

David Jones [2002] develops an anthropology of martial arts, from the perspective of the American anthropology of culture. The concept of martial art is understood in a very broad sense. It applies to various forms of magical preparation for combat, stylized military training and ritual forms of combat. It also encompasses primitive forms of combat and military skills. Researchers here use ethnographic, anthropological and cultural methods related to *hopology*.

On the other hand in Cynarski's approach [2009b, 2012a, 2012B], 'the anthropology of the martial arts' is a general philosophy of the Warrior of the Way, a man of Budo. He explains different, not just Asian, varieties of martial arts, as systems for the mental and physical improvement of a human being. Man, and the world of his values and aspirations is the centre of attention here.

Anthropology is a development of the humanistic theory of martial arts. It takes into account the dimensions of transgression and transcendence [Sieber, Cynarski, Litwiniuk 2007]

The philosophy of martial arts can be understood in at least three ways: 1) as the wisdom handed down

to us by the masters and the traditions of martial arts schools; 2) as contemporary philosophical thinking about martial arts; 3) as a general theory of martial arts. In this third approach, it is present in the aforementioned theoretical concepts. In terms of the second approach one can find interesting work on ontology, axiology, epistemology, philosophy of man, philosophy of struggle or oriental philosophy of sport. The most valuable works seem to be written by people with rich practical experience in martial arts, i.e. thus transferring in this way the wisdom of the art of living to modern times [Kim, Bäck 2000; Cynarski 2012a: 120-222].

2.2. Detailed theories and gradually developed concepts

Martial arts are a social phenomenon and so they are analysed by sociologists, mostly in the area of sport sociology. However, an autonomous 'sociology of martial arts' has also been created [Cynarski, Obodyński 2007; Cynarski 2012a: 13-119]. For martial arts which are not combat sports (such as aikido) it may be more appropriate to adopt the perspective of the sociology of psychophysical self-realization systems [Cynarski 2011b; Cynarski, Obodyński 2011]. Here we refer to the philosophical anthropology of martial arts and the idea of human psychophysical progress in studying a particular item (*Budo*) or any other system of meditation (*Yoga*, *Qigong*, *Taijiquan*).

Jones's anthropology is linked to the following concept: the theory of martial arts as performance art [Klens-Bigman 2002]. It is probably the right one for ritualised forms, such as *iaido*. For the entire continuum of the variety of martial arts it has a weak explanatory power. The inner pathway of martial arts, as well as spiritual self-improvement, are not for show.

A theory of cultural dialogue, used successfully by Tokarski and others seems to have a greater explanatory power [cf. Tokarski 1989, 2011, Kiyota, Kinoshita 1990; Cynarski 2000, 2011a]. This theory allows for the simultaneous interpretation of many aspects of the history and evolution of the idea from the martial arts area. A sort of a precursor to this type of research was D. F. Draeger.

Their pedagogy is the application of martial arts. We can find at least a few concepts of Budo/martial arts pedagogy, for example the canon of holistic pedagogy used in education through martial arts [Szyszko-Bohusz 2003]. Sometimes normative ethics and the discipline of martial arts are used for the education or rehabilitation of young people [Wolters 2005; Wolters, Fußmann 2008; Saldern 2011].

3. The detailed studies and their methodology

In the social sciences and humanities various methods of research are used, both quantitative and qualitative. Within different disciplines and schools there are different preferences. In general, it is most beneficial to use a variety of complementary methods, techniques and research tools.

It is worth keeping in mind that the accepted theoretical perspective imply a conceptual language (definitions of basic concepts), the choice of research methods, and finally the interpretation of the results.

3.1. Historical and socio-cultural research

Historical research, includes descriptions of the organization's history, biographies of the masters, and interrogation of original source documents from martial arts schools [cf. Mol 2001, Gutiérrez-García *et al.* 2010]. The role of historians is to explain controversial issues especially when for centuries, factual material has been mixed with myths and legends. To this day different organizations repeat inaccurate information about the achievements of some masters, of course for marketing purposes.

They are also used various other martial arts analyses which take into account diachronic and synchronic contexts, such as the anthropological, cultural and sociological studies conducted by authors from East Asia, the USA and Europe [Hartl, Faber, Bogle 1989; Donohue 1994; Inoue 1998; Cynarski, Walczak 2009].

Researchers use various research methodologies typical of the social sciences.

3.2. Psychology and pedagogy of martial arts

One of the first researchers who took into account the spiritual dimensions of martial arts and the psychological aspects of meditation practices in their studies was Michael Maliszewski [1996]. He used field research and participant observation.

The perception of martial arts and their use in the education of children and young people is interesting to sociologists and educators [cf. Theeboom, DeKnop, Vertonghen 2009]. Psychologists are trying to determine the impact of practising martial arts on practitioners' personality. There was a discussion on the subject in an edition of the weekly "Science" [cf. Diamond, Lee 2011; Mercer 2011; Strayhorn J. M. Strayhorn J. C. 2011].

3.3. Linguistic and semiotic analyses

For centuries martial arts have been functioning as educational systems, especially in respect of the different pathways (*dō*). Knowledge is passed on in the form of symbols (signs, gestures, names), encoded in the forms of movement. This direct transfer makes the example of the master-teacher an important element. This applies to their choice of values, patterns of behaviour and attitudes towards life and people. The analysis of the symbolic contents and semiotics of the pathways of martial arts enables us to explain the area of symbolic culture [Cynarski, Obodyński 2009]. In addition, the language itself which is used to describe martial arts terminology (such as Chinese, Okinawan, old Japanese) and the concepts developed outside the country of origin of martial arts require description and explanation [Cynarski 2009a: 236-246].

3.4. Examples of research methods

Research methodology for East Asian martial arts requires (to avoid confusion) its own practice and a high level of sophistication – at best, in more than one martial art. It is a qualitative method of participant observation associated with the experience of metaphysical dimensions. This psycho-physical practice is called *shūgyō*. In the humanistic theory of martial arts the combined acquisition of knowledge and practical experience through many years of training is called ‘Budo studies’ [Cynarski, Litwiniuk 2001]. Despite the fact that such terminology is not used, consciously or not, the method itself is currently used by many researchers, such as D. F. Draeger (9 dan *iaido*), K.R. Kernspecht (10th degree master in Wing Tsun *kung fu*), A. A. Figueiredo (6 dan *karate*).

For someone studying martial arts, when this person is also a master-teacher, the group practising in the *dojo* serves as a kind of laboratory. When someone practises several martial arts disciplines, he or she gains a fuller picture of the way of the warrior. According to W. J. Cynarski, the holder of high master’s degrees in several martial arts (*jujutsu*, *karate*, *aikijutsu*, *kenjutsu*), a wider practical knowledge gives you greater understanding of their former and present sense. Relationships with the masters-teachers of the highest rank play an important role.

A sense of one’s own practice and experience also applies to non-Asian martial arts. Descriptions of *capoeira* made by an outside observer would probably have little value. However observation “from the inside” meets the standard of humanistic coefficient [cf. Reis 2005].

One part of historical studies constitutes bibliography and bibliometrics research. It serves to put knowledge about the sources of studies, popular or scientific literature devoted to martial arts and combat sports in order. It also includes factual material on the global spread of martial arts. Compilations of specialist Spanish and Czech literature may serve as an example here [Perez-Gutierrez, Gutierrez-Garcia 2009; Vit, Reguli 2011].

Monographic studies [cf. Borbély 2005; Cynarski 2009a] are particularly helpful when an area of knowledge does not have adequate scientific description. Then, as we know, we look for other possible sources – existing and activated. The next step is just to create other contributions to the state of knowledge.

In the extensive thesis *Reception and internalization of the ethos of practising martial arts to persons* (420 pages) [Cynarski 2006] the author applied both a diagnostic survey method as well as the method of expert courts (also known as competent judges). It was by direct interview with martial arts masters, all experts of the highest rank. A direct in-depth interview provides valuable data on attitudes (knowledge, emotions and conduct) through a qualitative analysis of the content of the respondents’ answers. It performs a methodological standard of ‘humanistic coefficient’.

Another recommendable, qualitative research method is a narrative interview [cf. Ślęzak 2006]. This is actually one of the techniques for biographical studies used in sociology. In this case, as well, good acquaintance of knowledge of the tested environment (the world of martial arts) is recommended.

Summary and Conclusions

Both the humanistic and systemic approaches form a new paradigm of science which meets the criteria of the 21st century but which does not lose sight of the personal and psycho-physical man.

In this spirit, new theoretical concepts are being developed, such as the anthropology of martial arts, the humanistic theory of martial arts and the general theory of fighting arts. The result of this perspective is that the norm of a “humanistic coefficient” is obeyed. Holistic, multi-faceted approaches are recommended, while problems should be studied in an interdisciplinary way.

Historical, sociological and cultural studies within the various social sciences and humanities still continue to operate. The philosophical basis of martial arts, its psychological problems

and educational uses are studied. Different methodological procedures are also used.

Conclusion 1. In light of the foregoing deliberations, we can conclude that in humanistic studies greater cognitive value is brought by qualitative research methods, which have greater power to explain the reality being described.

Conclusion 2. In 'martial arts science' studies it is hard to overestimate the value of a panel of experts with many years' practical experience, as it is a science of this particular practice.

Conclusion 3. Avoiding reductionism and shutting oneself off from other martial arts (having interest in only one variety) should allow for the creation of a scientific theory common to the different traditions of martial arts.

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Humanistyka w badaniach budo – problemy i metodologia

Słowa kluczowe: sztuki walki, teoria, antropologia, metodologia

Streszczenie

Autor odnosi się do obszaru humanistycznej i społecznej refleksji o sztukach walki i sportach walki. Jest to ujęcie syntetyzujące stan wiedzy, przeglądowe i pogładowe, zawierające także tezy postulatywne i projektujące. W pierwszej części praca zawiera opis zmian paradygmatycznych w nauce i krótką charakterystykę nowego paradygmatu – humanistycznego i systemowego. Następnie, w części drugiej, zostało przedstawionych kilka koncepcji teoretycznych funkcjonujących na obszarze problemowym „martial arts science”. Antropologia sztuk walki i humanistyczna teoria sztuk walki zostały przeciwstawione innym teoriom, rozwijanym wcześniej lub równolegle. Z kolei w trzeciej części pojawia się omówienie preferowanych metod badań, z akcentem na metody jakościowe.

Pracę kończy podsumowanie oraz wnioski, o charakterze aplikacyjnym. Są to opinie autora – jego głos w dyskusji o kierunkach dalszych badań *budo* (sztuk walki, sportów walki) i proponowanej metodologii badań:

1. W badaniach humanistycznych większą wartość poznawczą wnoszą metody badań jakościowych, posiadając większą moc wyjaśniającą opisywanej rzeczywistości.
2. W badaniach „martial arts science” trudno przecenić wartość wypowiedzi ekspertów o długoletnim praktycznym doświadczeniu, skoro jest to nauka dotycząca tej właśnie praktyki.
3. Unikanie redukcjonizmu i zamykania się na inne sztuki walki powinno umożliwić stworzenie teorii naukowej wspólnej dla różnych tradycji sztuk walki.