

## HISTORY

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## Report on the Fourth World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts under the perspective of martial arts tourism

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### Abstract

This report describes and reflects on the Fourth World Scientific Congress of Combat Sports and Martial Arts, which at the same time was the Seventh International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society Conference. This event took place on October 17-19, 2018 at the facilities of the University of Rzeszow, and University of Law and Public Administration in Rzeszow, Poland. The event gathered about two hundred participants, representing academic centers, scientific societies and MA&CS-related institutions. Up to fifty studies on several scientific fields related to MA&CS were presented, showing the current diversity of this area of research. Workshops and demonstrations of MA&CS styles techniques were also part of the conference. All this diversity created a rich environment for cultural dialogue, scientific communication and transference of theoretical and practical knowledge. We suggest to further exploit the connections among the different scientific fields and MA&CS styles for future editions of the congress, as a way to improve the participants' experiences.

### Introduction

Academic conferences are important venues for researchers to show and discuss their works, as well as for strengthening relations among scientists and institutions. This short report regards one these events, namely the Fourth Congress of Combat and Martial Arts [see e.g., Cynarski, Kubala 2017; Cynarski 2018] – being, at the same time, the Seventh International Conference of the International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society (IMACSSS). It was held on 17-19 October 2018 at the University of Rzeszow (Rzeszow, Poland). This was a meeting of scientists and other people interested in areas related to martial arts and combat sports (MA&CS), both at the theoretical and practical levels.

The theoretical basis for discussing this case is a paradigm which treats the content (i.e., MA&CS) as a particular form of physical culture and tourism expression. This is, the so-called “martial arts tourism” [Sieber, Cynarski, Litwiniuk 2007], which can be considered a form of what Malchrowicz-Mosko and Munsters [2018] call “cultural tourism” and “sport tourism”. For example, the sociology of tourism and the sociology of physical recreation allow to show together the relationship of traveling people who

study and/or practice MA&CS with lifestyle, fashion or the axiology perceived by these tourists. Indeed, the study of MA&CS and martial arts tourism has various dimensions, which also include the scientific and educational perspectives. It has been researched, among others, by Cynarski [2006] as an example of self-study tourism. Following this author [Cynarski 2017], the variety of people who join scientific conferences take part in non-entertainment trips. Their educational experience should result in gaining both theoretical and practical knowledge. The following questions then emerge: 1) “Who learns?”, 2) “What, when, where, with whom and why did they learn when traveling?” [Falk, Ballantyne, Packer 2012: 912]. This implies that people will have different learning experiences depending on multiple variables such as previous knowledge, interests or type of participation and relations established during the event.

### The Congress

The main organizer of this event was the IMACSSS, in cooperation with the University of Rzeszow. The sponsors

included Polska Grupa Energetyczna Obrot SA and the City of Rzeszow. The honorary patronage was taken by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, the President of the City of Rzeszow, the Senator of the Republic of Poland, Dr *hab.* Aleksander Bobko, Marshal of the Podkarpackie Voivodship, Voivode of Podkarpackie Voivodship and WSPiA-RSW, and media patrons of this event were Nowiny and Nowiny24pl, Radio Rzeszow and TVP3 Rzeszow.

The event gathered about two hundred participants from four continents at the facilities of the University of Rzeszow. There were representatives of academic centers, scientific societies and MA&CS-related institutions, including Fuminori Nakiri, Professor Emeritus at the University of Tokyo and President of the Japanese Academy of Budo, who gave the keynote speech of this congress entitled “Research on safety measures for Kendo equipment for prevention of injury in *Budo* (Kendo)”.

Up to fifty studies on several scientific fields related to MA&CS were displayed in the form of oral or poster presentations, including the biotechnical, historical, pedagogical, philosophical, psychological or sociological fields. This allowed participants to know about the diversity of perspectives from which MA&CS are currently studied. Analyses concerned not only the sport, competitive version of MA&CS but their social dimension in a wide sense. The abstracts of the presented studies have been published both in print and electronic version [Cynarski, Szajna 2018].



**Photo 1.** Plenary Session [courtesy of Adrian Piorko-Pawliniski].

On the last day of the Congress, at the facilities of the Higher School of Law and Administration-Rzeszow University, there were workshops and demonstrations of MA&CS techniques. Several experts presented their styles, these were Roland Maroteaux (France, 9<sup>th</sup> dan, aiki-jujutsu), Mohammad Nizam Shapie (Malaysia, 8<sup>th</sup> dan, silat), Volodymyr Pylat (Ukraine, Boyovyy Hopak), Matteo Giacometti (Italy, Muay Thai), Sergio Raimondo (Italy, V Duan, Chen Taijiquan) and Zbigniew Sawicki (Poland, Signum Polonicum old fencing school). These

workshops and demonstrations, which are common to most IMACSSS conferences, foster the transference between practice and theory, as well as the communication between MA&CS practitioners and academics.



**Photo 2.** Participants of workshops and demonstrations [courtesy of Przemyslaw Pawelec].

During the closing ceremony, Prof. Fuminori Nakiri and former general secretary of the IMACSSS Dr Krzysztof Kubala were awarded. Dr Grzegorz Kozdras (Uniwersytet Opolski, Poland) received the IMACSSS Young Researcher Award for his poster “Education to moral values of JUDO school students”. Finally, the venues for next IMACSSS conferences in 2019 (Viseu, Portugal) and 2020 (Malaysia) were announced.

It is also worth mentioning the General Assembly of the IMACSSS, in which Prof. W. J. Cynarski was re-elected president, and the ceremonial academy preceding the congress on the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Idokan Poland Association, whose president W. J. Cynarski has been continuously since 1993. It took place on the first day of the Congress at the main assembly hall of the University. In this ceremony, selected activities of the members of the Association (closely cooperating with IMACSSS) were presented, as well as the Gold Medal of IPA Honorary Jubilee. They were awarded to people who rendered merit to the Association in both scientific and educational as well as organizational terms. The event was attended by representatives of the Polish academic community as well as guests from foreign centers, IPA members as well as representatives of local authorities [cf. Kubala 2018].

### **Some comments under the perspective of the martial arts tourism**

The Fourth Congress of Combat and Martial Arts – Seventh International Conference of the IMACSSS was in line with the previous editions of the event. Its main characteristic was diversity, at several levels. Oral and poster presentations showed a multiplicity of scientific perspectives under which MA&CS are being studied

nowadays, as well as the wide spectrum of MA&CS styles which are receiving researchers' attention (e.g., aikido, boxing, Canary Island wrestling, fencing, judo, kalarippayattu, karate, kendo, mixed martial arts, muay Thai, silat olahraga, sumo, taekwondo, taijiquan, wrestling, wushu). Practical workshops and demonstrations offered a glimpse of several MA&CS, some of them, like Ukrainian Boyovyy Hopak, quite unknown outside their native countries. Although most attendants came from different European countries, there was a significant presence of participants from Asia and, to a lesser extent, from the Americas and Oceania.

All this diversity created a rich environment for cultural dialogue, scientific communication and transference of theoretical and practical knowledge. But it can also have had some limitations depending on individual expectations. On the one hand, all participants were able to acquire new knowledge related to MA&CS, including fields and styles that were not of their expertise. This can be particularly interesting for bringing new ideas and building global and/or multidisciplinary approaches for the study of MA&CS. In addition, local cultures – especially Polish culture – and institutions (e.g., universities, departments, research units, sport federations, clubs) were introduced to participants through formal and informal interactions. This creates new opportunities for martial arts tourism, as participants were able to get to know and meet in person representatives from potentially foreign host institutions.

On the other hand, it must be considered that scientific and martial arts tourism is quite often very specific. In simple words, a sport psychologist could feel disappointed when attending this non-academic-fields-centered congress, as only a few works on psychology were presented and only a few sports psychologists attended the event. Similarly, a participant interested in karate could feel the same as only a few works on karate were displayed and a few karate experts were present. Taking this into account, we think it is key for the future editions of the IMACSSS congress to further exploit the connections among the different scientific fields (e.g., shared research methods) and MA&CS styles (e.g., shared techniques or competition models), as a way to improve the participants' experiences during the congress.

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## Raport o Czwartym Światowym Kongresie Naukowym Sportów i Sztuk Walki z perspektywy turystyki sztuk walki

**Słowa kluczowe:** kongres naukowy, studium przypadku, sztuki walki, sporty walki

### Abstrakt

Niniejszy raport opisuje i podejmuje refleksję nad Czwartym Światowym Kongresem Naukowym Sportów Walki i Sztuk Walki, który był jednocześnie Siódmą Międzynarodową Konferencją Naukową IMACSSS. Wydarzenie to miało miejsce w dniach 17-19 października 2018 roku na obiektach Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego oraz Wyższej Szkoły Prawa i Administracji Publicznej w Rzeszowie. Zgromadziło ono około dwustu uczestników reprezentujących ośrodki akademickie, towarzystwa naukowe oraz instytucji związanych ze sportami i sztukami walki. Przedstawiono rezultaty ponad pięćdziesięciu badań dotyczących kilku dziedzin naukowych związanych ze sportami i sztukami walk, pokazujących przy tym aktualną różnorodność tego obszaru badań. Podczas konferencji odbyły się warsztaty i demonstracje technik walki sportów i sztuk walki. Cała ta różnorodność stworzyła bogate środowisko dla dialogu kulturowego, komunikacji naukowej i przekazywania wiedzy teoretycznej i praktycznej. Autorzy tego krótkiego opracowania proponują dalsze wykorzystanie powiązań pomiędzy różnymi dziedzinami naukowymi i stylami sztuk i sportów walki w kolejnych edycjach kongresu, jako sposób na poprawę doświadczeń uczestników.