

SOCIOLOGY

ZBIGNIEW DZIUBIŃSKI

Józef Piłsudski University of Physical Education in Warsaw (Poland)
e-mail: zdziubinski@wp.pl

Martial arts ethos from an axio-normative perspective

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Abstract

Perspective. The analysis is conducted from the perspective of social sciences, the core of which is sociology in its various orientations and varieties. The perspectives of structural functionalism, social interactionism, and social conflict and, to a lesser extent, some others that were useful in various parts of the research procedure, were used.

Problem. The aim of the research is to attempt to characterize martial arts from the perspective of ethos and the axio-normative system, in other words, to use these concepts to describe this phenomenon, which is martial arts.

Method. The basic research method is a critical analysis of the literature devoted to the aspects of martial arts that interest us, but also includes an idiographic method, necessary to describe various phenomena and processes occurring in martial arts, and a nomotetic method, necessary to construct certain general statements and to establish regularities of a more general nature.

Results. The ethos of martial arts is patterns of thinking, behavior and actions that are binding and implemented in this community, and shared by its members. The ethos of martial arts is determined by such cultural components as values and norms, procedures, social institutions and roles, customs and morality. The composition of these components and the strength of their interaction play an important role.

Conclusions. The ethos of martial arts, despite its significant embedding in tradition and customs, is shaped by patterns and mechanisms that shape the ethos of (post) modern societies, capitalist societies whose development is determined by the logic of socioeconomics, business, consumerism and media.

Introduction

Generally speaking, the ethos of a given community most often relates to its traditions, customs, customs, ethics, the world of principles, interactions and social relations, both individual and institutional. The Platonic and Aristotelian ethos is a way of speaking, acting and behaving, based on positive values and shared by society [Szawiel 1998: 202]. On the other hand, the American sociologist Robert Merton [2002: 582-583, 603-606] points out that the ethos is a carrier of values that affect social phenomena and processes, but at the same time is a certain system of norms and rules of action characteristic of a particular culture or professional category. The second case is about the ethos of a doctor, teacher, judge, government official or martial arts representative.

By axio-normative system we will understand a specific set of rules, which are values and norms, procedures, institutions and social roles, but also customs and morality, regarding all aspects and dimensions of social

life, which is a characteristic feature of the culture of a particular society [Dziubinski 2019: 27-53].

Martial arts as well as combat sports and combat systems are another extremely important concepts for these considerations [Cynarski 2004]. There is no consensus among researchers about the criteria for distinguishing these concepts. However, the goal seems to be the dominant goal of a given type of fighting. And yes, the priority of martial arts is personality and spiritual development, combat sports competition, while martial systems quick and effective elimination of the enemy. The boundaries between these types of fighting are not sharp, and the practice of social life confirms their fluidity, which is that martial arts (*judo*, *taekwondo*) or combat systems (*sambo*) occur in the form of combat sports, and often acquired skills in arts or sports the fights are of a utilitarian nature and are used in formal organizations to secure and maintain order [Cynarski 2006]. According to the logic of postmodernity, they will systematically accelerate the processes of institutionalization, professionalization,

commercialization, mediatisation and consumerism of these types of struggle, and those of them that will not succumb to these processes will be marginalized.

Regardless of the differences between the various types of combat, a bit schematizing and simplifying the problem, for the purposes of these considerations, due to many common features, we will treat all the listed types of combat together and call them martial arts.

Bearing in mind the three concepts outlined, namely the ethos, axio-normative system and martial arts, the purpose of this work was to attempt to characterize martial arts from the perspective of the ethos and the axio-normative system, in other words, to use these concepts to describe this phenomenon, which is art fight. This is not an easy task from both a theoretical and methodological point of view. The solution to the formulated problem is not further facilitated by the fact that both martial arts, ethos and the axio-normative system have grown in many meanings and ways of interpreting them. Despite the expected various difficulties, we consider such an attempt important and not only for the better understanding of martial arts and their current condition, but also for getting to know man and the social community in a broader sense, as well as this superstructure, which is culture, with our values, norms, principles and patterns of behavior [Kroeber 1989: 9-396]. Striving to achieve the goal formulated in this way, we will focus on showing axio-normative mechanisms for the formation of a martial arts ethos.

We will conduct the analysis from the perspective of social sciences, the core of which we have recognized sociology in its various orientations and varieties. We will use the perspective of structural functionalism, social interactionism, social conflict and, to a lesser extent, others that will be useful in various fragments of the research procedure [Jasinska-Kania *et al.* 2006]. The basic research method will be a critical analysis of the literature devoted to the aspects of martial arts that interest us, but also an idiographic method, necessary to describe various phenomena and processes occurring in martial arts, and a nomothetic method, necessary to construct certain general statements and to establish regularities of a more general nature.

In order to give the analysis a logical order, we will first focus on characterizing key concepts, namely the ethos and axio-normative system, to further define the role of values and norms, procedures, institutions and social roles, custom and morality [Sztompka 2005: 257-287] in creating the ethos of martial arts.

Ethos and axio-normative system as a subject of interest in sociology

There are three basic perspectives for understanding ethos in sociological literature. The first of these is the

Aristotelian perspective, whose characteristic feature is the focus on the existing, well-established and well-established way of life. The elements that are common play a decisive role here. It is about connecting beliefs, assessments, tendencies, habits and everything that constitutes the life of a community. In this perspective, ethos is a static and characteristic social reality that is difficult to implement in new socio-cultural conditions [Gadamer 1986: 325].

The second is the Weberian perspective, in which the German sociologist used the concept of ethos to describe and explain social change [Weber 1994]. Searching for the reasons for the dynamic economic and economic development of the emerging capitalist world, he pointed to religious motivations, which, according to him, proved to be a force inducing people to engage in the work of dynamic development of these societies [Weber 1984: 209-260]. The ethos understood in this way is a phenomenon highly desired by the individual as well as by the whole community, because from a psychological point of view it is a peculiar idea encouraging people to act for the benefit of the individual and thus the common good [Sokolowski 1979: 322-323]. In this way, Protestants, guided by the economic and economic ethos, despite some conflict with the ascetic lifestyle, achieved successes in mortality, which had a positive religious sanction [Bendix 1975: 165].

The third perspective of understanding the ethos was introduced into the scientific circulation and popularized by Maria Ossowska [1973]. She emphasizes that the ethos is a characteristic lifestyle of some community and the general orientation of a culture, expressed in its implicit sharing of a specific hierarchy of values or its expression in an unconscious way in actions and behaviors. This approach to ethos also covers morality. It presented a very positive picture of the knight's behavior and extrapolated it to the entire life of the people of the analyzed age. Knightly behavior is associated only with positive, good, beautiful and noble behavior, often called ethical behavior. Therefore, ethos, in its understanding, means those phenomena and social processes that are not moral categories, but determine the actions of people in all socio-cultural situations and contexts, both trivial and insignificant, as well as those of exceptional significance.

After presenting the three dominant perspectives of the ethos, it is worth adding that these are not the only ways of understanding it, but those that most permanently entered the scientific circulation (especially sociology) and are most often exploited in both theoretical and empirical research.

Given the above, we will understand the concept of the ethos of martial arts as a certain objectified picture of the life of the martial arts community. This image will consist of their way of thinking and acting. Thus, the ethos of martial arts will cover everything that makes up

the objectified picture of the martial arts culture. And this culture is a characteristic system of values and patterns shared by the martial arts community. It is not only about the beautiful and lofty ideas of martial arts, but about its actual culture, which is changing along with the changing societies. For example, in the recent past, an important feature of the martial arts ethos was autotelism, selflessness, and often altruism. Today, the canon of the ethos of martial arts has entered such phenomena and processes as the pursuit of success, commercialization, mediatization and consumerism, associated with the sale of products and sublime dreams [Lipiec 2007: 145-224].

The culture of martial arts and their ethos is a system of characteristic features, at the core of which is a specific axio-normative order, more or less aware of it by members of this community. Thus, the actions and behaviors of the martial arts community are governed by this axio-normative system, which is also called the social normative system, pattern maintenance system, and institutional structure. Whereas the ethos of the martial arts community is the actual level of respect of these rules by its members [Sztompka 2005: 257-287].

Norms and values and the ethos of martial arts

The specific rules of the martial arts culture, namely values and norms, usually do not have the same meaning for this community, because they contain a differentiated obligatory power. Some are more important than others. These rules of martial arts culture that are associated with the strongest expectations of a particular action are called imperatives. In the face of such imperatives, expectations are unambiguous, without accepting any compromises. In this case, we are talking about do's and don'ts. An example of a norm prohibiting (when, someone cannot do something) are prohibitions derived from the philosophy of the creator of taekwondo that one cannot pursue a noble goal by means of inadequate means or that one cannot be tough against the weak and mild against the strong. However, an example of a prescriptive norm is the requirement to do good things even if or even more so if they are heavy and difficult, or to require consistency in pursuing tasks. The situation is similar in the case of values. An example of an axiological norm ordering is that every martial artist has current medical examinations, while forbidding that random advantage cannot be used for sporting success [Sztompka 2005: 257-287].

Martial arts culture rules do not have to be and are not so categorical in every case. There are rules that contain an obligatory factor with a lower strength, which means that such rules neither command nor prohibit a particular action, but only allow such a course of action. These rules are usually associated with the concept of can or slow. When judo first appeared in the program of the event during the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964, the

greatest judokas could and did not have to take part in the games. This is merely permission to participate, but it is by no means mandatory.

The last type of martial arts culture rules is by no means mandatory, but entirely optional and most often associated with recommendations and preferences. These rules indicate what a member of the martial arts community would do most desirable and commendable. However, it should be said at once that such behavior cannot be required of anyone. This is about model and benchmarking activities. In this case, it is often said that it would be good if members of the martial arts community did just that. These rules can be considered as recommendations, certain signposts, ideals that should be hoped that at least some of the members of the martial arts community will follow them. However, disregarding them does not entail any negative sanctions. These rules are best illustrated by the principle of fair play, which indicates a certain charity, philanthropy and altruism, and even heroic actions [Simon 1991]. Acting in accordance with the principle of fair play means exceeding basic requirements and acting according to higher ideas, with a view to the welfare of others, not only partners, but also competitors. It is not only about compliance with applicable laws, but deeds in terms of their nobility going beyond formal regulations [Lipiec 1999: 159-174]. Of course, nobody counts on the fact that this standard will be widely respected. After all, nothing bad is happening to all those members of the martial arts community who, while respecting the applicable laws, act selfishly and do not even think of being compassionate, empathic and altruistic. Therefore, due to the rarity of such behaviors, those who confirm compliance with this norm in practice are honored with symbolic awards, make heroes and ensure a prominent place in the history of martial arts [Loland, McNamee 2000: 63-80]. An example is the creator of *karate Kyokushin*, Masutatsu Oyama, who in 1993, during the European Championships in Katowice, was awarded the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.

The most outstanding members of the martial arts community who pursue the most elevated ideals, monuments are built, gold names are entered on martial arts history cards, they are exhibited in museums and occasional publications, and names them in streets, squares, schools and sports facilities. In this way, those who more than fully meet social expectations are honored. For example, in many Japanese cities, the streets are named after the creator of *judo*, Jigoro Kano. This social recognition, respect and fame perform extremely important functions in martial arts, namely, they make everyone realize the ideals of martial arts that trigger and activate social motivations and aspirations [Dziubinski 2017: 27-40].

To date, we have drawn attention to such rules of the martial arts community as orders, bans, permis-

sions and preferences. Another element of maintaining axio-normative order is the response of the martial arts community to both situations of compliance and violation of specific rules. In sociology, such reactions are called sanctions that trigger as a result of social control [Luschen 2000: 461-476]. Sanctions occur in the form of rewards and penalties. The martial arts community has established many symbolic and non-symbolic awards for outstanding achievements. The best receive cups, diplomas, material and financial awards, occupy an important place in mass culture, but are also surrounded by respect and recognition.

The martial arts community also provides for negative sanctions that result in penalties. This happens when the rules of the martial arts community are violated. This is not just about breaking the formal rules set out in existing regulations, but also those that apply in a wider society. For example, a member of the martial arts community who has committed theft should expect not only union disqualification, but also the so-called code penalty, namely issued by a common court under the Criminal Code. Failure to comply with applicable martial arts regulations is usually associated with a sanction in the form of a warning or deprivation of membership of a national federation. Formal sanctions are followed by a whole range of symbolic sanctions, such as moving the environment away from disloyal members of the martial arts community, discrediting and compromising on the national and international arena [Dziubinski 2015: 15-43].

Procedures, institutions and social roles and the ethos of martial arts

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As we have already established, the rule of martial arts culture occurs in two forms, namely in the form of values and in the form of norms. However, values and norms rarely or almost never occur alone, but in combination and integration with others, creating wider wholes, called bundles of norms and values. Bundles of norms and values that serve the achievement of specific goals are called procedures in sociology. Often in martial arts we deal with the subordination of a team or sequence of norms to one goal, one value [Sztompka 2005: 257-287]. This happens, for example, when a martial artist pursues a goal (value) that is achieving a higher level of excellence in a selected martial art. In this case, he should aim for this goal by applying many norms, including, among others, he should participate diligently in systematic training, lead a rational lifestyle, follow a proper diet, undergo medical examinations, but also rest properly.

Martial arts, in which people pursue individual and collective goals, is called the social context. In this con-

text, people act in a variety of ways, namely, they practice martial arts, organize a training process, manage the club, raise funds for the activities and organization of events, control the health of martial arts practitioners, promote martial arts and organized events, cooperate with national organizations and international. Thus, in the generally understood context of martial arts, there are specific subcontexts that are bound by a community of general martial arts rules, but at the same time each of them has specific, distinctive rules. Such a general set of rules for the context of interest to us, within which characteristic goals are realized, we call a martial arts institution [Skapska, Ziolkowski 1998: 317-321].

Another extremely important issue affecting the emergence and maintenance of axio-normative order in martial arts is the issue of position (status) and the roles assigned to them (*karateka*, trainer, club president, doctor, referee etc.). Each of these items has specific expectations. A certain and appropriate pattern of behavior is established for everyone who holds such a position. These are certain martial arts ideals, ambitious aspirations, prescriptive and prohibited activities, and more. It goes without saying that other rules apply to the aforementioned *karateka*, coach or referee. The set of all these values and norms characteristic of a given position is called the social role. Whoever occupies this position, regardless of individual personality traits, is obliged to respect these values and norms [Sztompka 2005: 257-287; Dziubinski 2017: 27-55].

The concept of social role as a kind of metaphor was introduced into sociology by two American researchers, namely Ralph Linton and Robert Merton. They used some observations regarding the actor's stage performance to describe and explain social life [Merton 2005: 142-153; Dahrendorf 2005: 305-316]. This model can be successfully used to characterize martial arts in general. The concept of role analyzed is extremely important, especially when we consider a single martial arts actor or a set of actors in relation to the axio-normative martial arts system. Performing specific roles by members of this community, with precisely written scripts, allows to maintain order and determine the predictability of this area of life, which is the martial arts community and its culture [Parry 2007: 63-80].

Customs, morality and the ethos of martial arts

A classic of American sociology, "father of social Darwinism", William G. Sumner, pointed out that the content of rules also influences the axiological and normative system. He distinguished, among others, two types of rules, namely customs and morality [Sumner 1995].

Customs are a very diverse and rich category of rules that accompany martial arts participants in all aspects of their lives on a daily basis. Researchers agree that martial

arts habits play an extremely important role. Depending on the type of martial art, they are significantly influenced by the culture of the society in which formal and informal hierarchies are present, including, for example, family relationships, master and student relationships, or resulting from the attitude towards the elderly. These customs have their origins, for example, in Confucian philosophy, the code of Japanese nobility or samurai traditions. They are associated with almost all everyday activities. They are certain automatisms that allow you to perform various activities without thinking every time what decision to make in one case or another [Sztompka 2005: 257-287]. For example, respect for a martial arts teacher or elders is something so natural that martial arts students are not aware that they act according to these rules [Cynarski 2019: 117-125].

It must be made clear that customs that are foreign to martial arts, which go beyond the normality, are subject to negative sanctions of the closer and wider environment. It happens that a participant in this community, presenting the difference in their behavior, meets with mockery, ridicule and is treated as a weirdo and eccentric and becomes the object of gossip and anecdotes, but he can also face isolation, infamy and ostracism. The strength of the environment's response and the power of sanctions depends on the type of deviation from the norm. An example would be the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 1964, when the Japanese wrestler Waseda during the decisive fight fought from the opponent and fought cowardly, for which he was disqualified. For this shameful act, an unprecedented wave of criticism from Japanese society fell on the player, after which he was removed from the team and the Olympic village. The disgraced athlete had one option: harakiri. Fortunately, desperate parents arrived at the imperial court and received forgiveness for their son [Olszanski 2019: 19].

Moral rules are different from customary rules [Benn 1998]. They relate to such martial arts spheres in which my actions are important for the good and sense of honesty and justice of others. If I act contrary to applicable moral virtues, such as a consistent pursuit of perfectionism, systematic work on myself, self-realization, self-discipline, humility and perseverance, I do harm to everyone practicing martial arts and the whole community. If I use acquired skills in quarrels and street fights, if I humiliate, use violence against the weak and expose them to suffering, I hurt them and depreciate martial arts. An example is the boxer Jerzy Kulej, who before going to the Olympic Games in Mexico, after an alcoholic libation in Zakopane got into a fight with four policemen whom he knocked out. For this act he did not go to prison only thanks to the intercession of coach Feliks "Papa" Stamm and the commitment to bring a gold medal from the games [*Kulej was a scapular ...*].

Moral rules are the foundation of social intercourse and cooperation, because they determine the princi-

ples of action of people in martial arts. They are the strongest expression of the social nature of martial arts. For this reason, moral rules are not facade, discretionary or conventional, but constitute some universal and basic imperatives for the functioning of the martial arts community. Due to the importance of these rules, their violation is usually met with a strong response from the social environment. A good example is the boxer Andrzej Gołota, who has repeatedly misused the rules and principles of martial arts, using his skills in mafia-gangster activities, but also during purely mischievous brawls and fights. He was hunted by an international arrest warrant. In 1988, he beat five goalkeepers in one of Warsaw's discos. A year later he was accused of raping a young Gdynia citizen and of beating a policeman. In 1990 he beat a man at a disco in Włocławek [Ulanowski 2003].

Discussion

Without understanding the concept of the ethos of martial arts in various ways, we have recognized it, adopting a sociological perspective, as patterns of thinking, conduct and action that are binding and implemented in the martial arts community. Therefore, the ethos of the community we are interested in is their patterns of behavior, which are factual, dominant and are shared by its members.

Since we know precisely what the martial arts ethos is, it is worth answering the fundamental question, namely, what factors, which variables and what mechanisms decide that this ethos is one and not another?

Without aspiring to completely clarify the issue, somewhat schematizing, simplifying and sociologizing the problem, we can say that the ethos of martial arts is determined by various components of the reality that interests us. First of all, they include such components of martial arts culture as values and norms, secondly, procedures, institutions and social roles, and thirdly, customs and morality. The composition of these and other ingredients and their strength of influence, which is subject to the processes of influence of changing societies and their cultures, plays an important role.

The above findings are in line with classic sociological theories on ethos and axio-normative order, represented by such researchers as Ralph Linton, Robert Merton, Maria Ossowska, Piotr Sztompka and Max Weber.

Conclusions

In conclusion, it is worth recalling once again a kind of truism, namely that the ethos of martial arts, despite their significant embedding in tradition and custom, is shaped by patterns and mechanisms that shape the ethos

of (post) modern societies, capitalist societies whose development is determined by the logic of socioeconomics, business, consumerism and media.

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Etos sztuk walki w perspektywie aksjo-normatywnej

Słowa kluczowe: etos, ład aksjo-normatywny, sztuki walki

Abstrakt

Perspektywa. Analiza prowadzona jest z perspektywy nauk społecznych, za rdzeń których uznano socjologię w jej różnych orientacjach i odmianach. Wykorzystano zarówno perspektywę funkcjonalizmu strukturalnego, interakcjonizmu społecznego, konfliktu społecznego oraz w mniejszym stopniu innych, które były przydane w różnych fragmentach postępowania badawczego Problem. Celem badań jest próba scharakteryzowania sztuk walki z perspektywy etosu i systemu aksjo-normatywnego,

innymi słowy, wykorzystania tych pojęć do opisu tego fenomenu, jakim są sztuki walki.

Metoda. Podstawową metodą badawczą jest krytyczna analiza literatury poświęconej interesującym nas aspektom sztuk walki, ale także metoda idiograficzna, niezbędna do opisu różnorodnych zjawisk i procesów zachodzących na gruncie sztuk walki oraz metoda nomotetyczna, niezbędna do konstruowania pewnych konstatacji generalnych i ustalania prawidłowości o charakterze bardziej ogólnym.

Wyniki. Etos sztuk walki to obowiązujące i realizowane w tej społeczności wzory myślenia, postępowania i działania, podzielane przez jej członków. Etos sztuk walki determinują takie składniki kultury, jak wartości i normy, procedury, instytucje i role społeczne, zwyczaje i moralność. Ważną rolę odgrywa kompozycja tych składników i siła ich oddziaływania.

Wnioski. Etos sztuk walki, mimo znaczącego osadzenia w tradycji i obyczaju, kształtuje się według wzorów i mechanizmów, które kształtują etos społeczeństw (po)nowoczesnych, społeczeństw kapitalistycznych, których rozwój determinuje logika socjoekonomii, biznesu, konsumpcjonizmu i medialności.