

Problemas actuales de la sociología de las artes marciales según la Escuela Rzeszow

Current problems of the sociology of martial arts according to the Rzeszow School

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Resumen

Las artes marciales son métodos de lucha de combate sin armas y el uso de armas combinadas con un elemento espiritual. Aquí se da un marco teórico apropiado de acuerdo con los parámetros de la sociología de la cultura, la sociología de la cultura física, la sociología y la antropología de artes marciales. Un método utilizado aquí es el análisis del contenido de la literatura y un amplio discurso temático de fuentes y estudios. En particular, el factor humanista debe tenerse en cuenta como un estándar metodológico de la sociología humanista. Se describió el desarrollo institucional de la sociología de las artes marciales, así como ciertos problemas relacionados con el período de búsqueda de identidad científica, temas de investigación más populares, métodos de investigación y una propuesta para la clasificación de áreas de exploración científica de acuerdo con la escala de investigación. En sociología de las artes marciales, se indicaron los problemas de desarrollo teórico, metodológico e institucional. Dentro de los enfoques teóricos, se seleccionaron diferentes paradigmas, con la sugerencia de preferencia por enfoques sistémico-humanísticos. En el área de la metodología de investigación se describieron los enfoques dominantes, especialmente los métodos cualitativos particularmente valiosos. En la descripción de la institucionalización de la sociología de las artes marciales se indicaron iniciativas dispersivas populares recientemente. Actualmente, varias instituciones científicas presentan la subdisciplina analizada con el estado de autonomía relativa.

Palabras clave: artes marciales, deportes de combate, teoría sociológica, sociología de artes marciales, direcciones de investigación.

Abstract

Martial arts are methods of unarmed combat fight and use of weapons combined with a spiritual element. Appropriate theoretical framework is given here according to the parameters of culture sociology, physical culture sociology, sociology and martial arts anthropology. A method used here is the literature content analysis, and a broad thematic discourse of sources and studies. In particular, the humanistic factor should be taken into account as a methodological standard of humanistic sociology. The institutional development of sociology of martial arts was described, as well as certain problems related to the period of finding scientific identity, more popular research topics, research methods, and a proposal for the classification of areas of scientific exploration according

to the scale of research. In sociology martial arts, the theoretical, methodological, and institutional development issues were indicated. Within theoretical approaches different paradigms, with the suggestion of preference for systemic-humanistic approaches were selected. In the area of research methodology the dominant approaches, especially particularly valuable qualitative methods were described. In the description of the institutionalization of sociology of martial arts dispersive initiatives popular recently were indicated. Currently, several scientific institutions present the analyzed subdiscipline with the status of relative autonomy.

Keywords: martial arts, combat sports, sociological theory, sociology of martial arts, directions of research.

Introduction

Theoretical and epistemological perspective

Theoretical framework adopted for discussion and analysis is accepted interdisciplinary. On the one hand there are: the sociology of culture (Golka, 2008) and sociology of physical culture (Krawczyk, 1995), whose scope is slightly wider than sociology of sport. On the other there are: sociology and anthropology of martial arts (Cynarski, 2012a), and the general theory of fighting arts (Sieber & Cynarski, 2012; Cynarski & Skowron, 2014). It is true that for combat sports sociology of sport gives a proper theoretical perspective. However, martial art, that is “a historic category of flawless methods of unarmed combat fights and use of weapons combined with a spiritual element” (Cynarski & Skowron, 2014, p.63), requires a different approach. As it is part of the cultural heritage of its country of origin and maintains links with the area of high culture, especially moral and spiritual one. While combat sports are: derivative of the martial arts traditions of the East or the West, whose distinctive feature is sports rivalry. The fight may be direct (but the rules protect the health of players) or in the form of expression of motion (demonstrational forms). Sometimes there are different formulas for competitive sports (as in kick-boxing) (Cynarski & Skowron, 2014).

What kind of theory should it be in order to have a sufficiently high explanatory capacity? Martial arts should be examined as a whole: systematically, and without losing the humanistic dimension. An interesting element in this area is the system theory by N. Luhmann (1985) and humanistic idea of the new paradigm (Cynarski, 2014), which means that this is at the same time a systemic, cultural and humanistic approach (e.g. rejecting behaviorism). In particular, humanistic factor should be taken into account as methodological standard of humanistic sociology (Znaniecki, 1934).

Bronislaw Misztal indicates that the sociological theory appears to be “cognitive practice”, which corresponds to the postulate of “epistemic science” prescribed by F.

Capra and is generally consistent with the assumptions of Luhmann's system theory. The cognitive practice involves processing experience in the “conceptual, symbolic and emotional” mapping. The theory must take into account the dimensions of time (temporal factor), becoming (process-related factor) and, of course, the cultural context (contextual factor) (Misztal, 2000, pp.16-21). In addition to the concepts of “personality” and “culture”, understood as systems Misztal introduces the concept of “discourse”, the ways of describing the differences between one's own world and other worlds. “Discourses do not form closed systems, but take on the form of a network incorporation of content” (Misztal, 2000, p.73). In his opinion, sociological theory passes from the paradigmatic and “monophyletic” environment to discursive environment of its practice. It confers to sociology the function (attribute) of cognitive, normative and political mission (Misztal, 2000, pp.74-76). The new theory in sociology is supposed to be a narrative of individual and group experiences. This theory is described by Misztal not in terms of the network, but “construction” and “architecture” (Misztal, 2000, p.101). Taking into account the role of postmodern criticism of the “advanced society” and postindustrial heuristics, Misztal places “hyper intellectualism” and postmodernism (along with “atrophy of intelligence”, consumerism and the explanatory inability) on his scheme of the “theoretical crisis of modern sociology” (Misztal, 2000, p.11).

Misztal discusses the topic of a dynamic, developing identity, which is associated with the identification process. The identification is conducted by the discourse in this way defining the identity. A man cannot be reduced to an individual unit, without seeing the whole person with his/her emotions, physicality, higher needs, etc. Theories of rational choice perceive the world as if it was populated by fictional, isolated from each individuals, who, despite conflicting expectations voluntarily engage in an equal, thoughtless and deprived of emotions exchange for obtaining benefits (Misztal, 2000, p.113). For example globalization is a process of creating a global system consisting of links and worldwide connections (Misztal, 2000, pp.154-163). It seems impossible for scientific identification beyond the systemic approach. The temporal factor included in the theories of Francis Fukuyama and S. Huntington requires additional cognitive broadening of the horizon and attempts to formulate anticipated, varied possible courses of events.

Sociology of martial arts should be a subdiscipline including the features of the new paradigm of social sciences. The issues should be accounted for as a whole. The same principle applies to the man – the author of events and reality, which should not be

reduced merely to material entities. Evaluation system, spiritual needs, cultural specificities of martial arts (area of symbolic culture) and changing reality should not be rejected. Thus understood, sociology should also refer to the sociology of leisure and recreation, sociology of health, sociology of psychophysical systems and anthropology of psychophysical progress. Then the problems perceived by Kennedy, Cynarski, Sanchez Garcia and other sociologists, will be easier to solve.

Methodology

One of the methods used is the subject literature analysis, and a broad thematic discourse of sources and studies (Krippendorf, 2004). To describe the analysed social reality, the vision of the respondents – representatives of that community- was taken into account. Expert statements (the method of court experts) and participant observation, which in the humanistic theory of martial arts is considered the primary method of study on the way of martial arts (for practical experience) are particularly valuable. The author uses a long-term participation in the study of martial arts, participation observation and research of martial arts as methods of research.

Results

Martial arts and combat sports – on practising

Relations between martial arts and other forms of human activity can be shown schematically as they range from the ways of combat to the movements referring to the fight; from martial arts preserving real, combative nature, the psycho-physical practices, ritualized - without a fight (*aikido Aikikai, qigong*, meditation exercises, breathing and prayer). They are connected with martial arts and self-defence systems by the similarity of the techniques used.

Utilitarian dimension concerns skills useful for fighting and winning a fight. However, there are practical goals, themes, and effects in improving the health, self-control and overall efficiency. Exercising for self-defence or for sports results are associated with combat, improvement of techniques and tactics. Exercising for the techniques themselves, however, may help to attain health, self-development, auto-creative and social goals. Supplementary exercises (relaxation, breathing, massage, mental training and supplementary sports) may serve to fulfil very different values-goals (Table 1).

Table 1: Various aspects of practising martial arts (source: own research)

Fight to win	Practising techniques for other reasons	Other exercises (not directly connected with combat)
1. Self-defense 2. Sports results	3. Health, fitness, recreation, psychophysical self-improvement	For values/goals 1-3

Combat sports focus on the main purpose of sports competition, which is to obtain the best possible result. So this is a fight to win according to certain rules. Training is directed at that aim. In contrast, the way of martial arts can and need not take into account sports competition, and it often strongly rejects it. More important is the way to psychophysical harmony and achieving mastery in this way. Harmony may refer e.g. to social relations.

The differences concern the influence on health. Sports rivalry is not a health-medium, but martial arts without rivalry (practising only for recreation) can be (*cf.* Panczyk & Cynarski, 2006; Michelini, 2015). Perhaps it is better to describe and explain the cultural phenomenon of martial arts on the basis of separate *sociology of martial arts* or “sociology of psychophysical self-realization systems” (Cynarski & Obodynski, 2011a, 2011b).

Eastern dance, Yoga, meditation, *qigong*, *taiji quan*, and martial arts are generally defined as – Eastern movement forms (Brown & Leledaki, 2010). That is why combat sports may be analysed sociology in a similar way as other sports. In the same way, martial arts are closer to the sphere of “psychophysical self-realization systems”.

Subject literature

The research in the field of sociology of martial arts is conducted by Wojciech J. Cynarski, professor of Rzeszow University, teams of researchers associated with the IPA and IMACSSS, and individuals conducting mainly empirical and contributive research. Cynarski, as theoretician and leader of teams implementing projects of social studies within the IPA (www.idokan.pl), and IMACSSS (www.imacsss.com), publishes his works in a monograph series of the Lykeion Library, and in particular in the quarterly “*Ido Movement for Culture. Journal of Martial Arts Anthropology*” (www.imcjournal.com). In the journal there are also studies of authors such as Llopis-Goig (2015) and Ben Messaoud (2015). The authors analyse social representations in

martial arts practising in Spain and Tunisia respectively. Single empirical articles are published by e.g. Kitamura *et al.* (2012), Villamón *et al.* (2004), and others (*cf.* Theeboom, Knop, & Vertonghen, 2009). Much fewer, however, there are theoretical and methodological works treating martial arts as cultural phenomenon.

Further analysis of subject literature is going to involve test results, which refer to the manifestations of sociology of martial arts, as an emerging sociological sub-discipline, but also the sub-discipline within the framework of physical culture sciences, sports sciences and “martial arts science”.

The information on the development of institutional sociology of martial arts, some problems during the period of looking for scientific identity, more popular research topics, methods, as well as the classification of areas of scientific exploration according to the scale / scope of research are shown below.

Sub-discipline problems

Beginnings of sociology of martial arts

Prof. Michael Kennedy at University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, USA) offered a course in sociology martial arts under the name “Martial Arts, Culture and Society” in April 2007, which concerned relations and contradictions of Far-Eastern sports and martial arts, spectacle and presentation vs. combat and sport; militarism and pacifism; openness and mystery; the identity of the individual and the group. The course referred martial arts to anthropology, psychology and art therapy.

Another example of application of academic sociology martial arts was the project by Dr Ragna Zeiss from Holland of September 2008, concerning teaching this subject (*Sociology of Martial Arts*). However, the author is not familiar with the content of the project. The subject of teaching sociology of martial arts was tackled by Beth P. Skott (2009). Despite its name it was only a chronicle of a martial arts seminar. However, it is important that the very concept of “sociology of martial arts”, appeared then at a meeting of the American Sociological Association. Dr Skott from the University of Bridgeport is the holder of a yellow belt in *taekwondo*, so her knowledge of martial arts resulting from practical experience is not too extensive. Linking sociological knowledge with the position of an expert of martial arts is rare.

There are institutions specializing in teaching martial arts, as Canadian Martial Arts University and Union University College of Martial Arts of Serbia, where martial arts and knowledge about them are taught in a multidisciplinary perspective. In Poland,

educational activities, scientific research and publishing have been conducted since 1993 by the Idokan Poland Association (IPA) based in Rzeszow. It is the leading scientific society, which has been conducting international comparative studies in sociology of martial arts since 2003. The IPA in the Committee of Scientific Research gathers the vast majority of Polish researchers martial arts and a group of scientists from abroad.

In contrast, limited interest of larger sociological institutions in the themes of martial arts may be evidenced by the rare presence of such topics at conferences and scientific congresses. A chance for institutional development of sociology of martial arts is the Division of Sociology and Anthropology, which was established within the framework of the International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society (IMACSSS) set up in February 2010. This is the first specialized scientific society of researchers in the field of science of martial arts worldwide. The chance for development is enhanced by the fact that the first president of IMACSSS is a sociologist – W. J. Cynarski.

The state of scientific reflection

In the United States of America, Ratti and Westbrook (1991) were among the first researchers of social conditions of martial arts in their genesis. They pointed to the historical social division in Japan, which allowed the aristocracy to practise different types of martial arts with and without weapons as well as fighting on a horseback, strategy, art fortifications etc. Poorer nobility practised mainly archery, spear fighting, fencing and *jūjutsu*. Lower social groups limited access to the secrets of martial arts. Samurai were bound by the chivalry code of *Bushidō*. While half-legendary *ninjutsu*, the art of espionage and assassination, was practised by *ninjas* who were living on the margins of society.

Anthropologist John Donohue has important achievements for the sociology of martial arts. He has completed a research on American perceptions of Asian martial arts, that is, on the local reception and adaptation of martial arts, society and people practicing them (Donohue, 1994; cf. Goodger, & Goodger, 1977). The issue of adaptation East Asian martial arts in America was also studied by Jeong Myun Gim (1998), who emphasized especially the recreational dimension of martial arts and their importance for the leisure industry. Similar studies were conducted in Europe at the same time (cf. Hartl, Faber, & Bögle, 1989; Norden & Polzer, 1995; Hoff, 1998; Saldern, 1998).

Another study on reception, transformation and adaptation of martial arts based on the American and European experiences was conducted by researchers in the Committee of

Scientific Research IPA (Cynarski, Sieber, & Litwiniuk, 2005). European reception (German or Polish) is different from the North American and Central European mentality is different from the mentality of the statistical American.

A fairly extensive manual (402 pages) by Kurt Weiss and Robert Gugutzer (2008) includes a chapter on *Sociology of diverse forms of sport*. But there is nothing about the sociology of martial arts. Perhaps the authors have not read many Polish papers published in Polish with English abstracts or in English. However, they should be familiar with articles published in Germany eg. *Taekwondo im Westen. Interviews und Beiträge zum kulturellen Schlagabtausch* (Hartl, Faber, & Bögle, 1989). The authors of *Taekwondo in the West* describe the changes in perception and the use of taekwondo and other martial arts in the United States and Germany.

Article by Alain James and Richard Jones (1982) is one of the first empirical studies, which analysed “the social world of *karate-do*” with status position, hierarchy of values and rules of conduct set by the tradition of a particular school. Similar studies in the environment of people practising *capoeira* were conducted by André Luiz Teixeira Reis – a Brazilian sociologist and also a teacher of *capoeira* (Reis, 2005). His experimental research was conducted in Poland during a few-month-long stay in Warsaw.

Other empiric researchers study the experiences of children engaged in “soft” (as *aikido*) and “hard” (as kick-boxing) varieties, their relationship to their own body. They also analyse the opinions of coaches on the influence of practising a martial art or combat sport on human physical and spiritual sphere (Theeboom, DeKnop, & Vertonghen, 2009). In turn, an international team of researchers evaluated the impact of favourable socio-cultural factors on the development of martial arts in Central Europe (Cynarski *et al.*, 2009). Later similar studies related to the barriers of this development were also conducted (in Poland, Germany and Slovakia) (Obodynski & Cynarski, 2007; Cynarski *et al.*, 2013).

Sociological reflection on the phenomenon of Asian martial arts is undertaken on the grounds of culture sociology, physical culture sociology in the perspective of a more general theory of cultural dialogue. The first and second of the highlighted areas of scientific penetration is still underdeveloped, which can result from limited knowledge of cultural sociologists and sociologists of sport about the field of physical culture, which are the ones practised today throughout the world. The other, cultural and systemic approach seems to be more promising. The area of cultural dialogue concerns the different

cultural forms, which enables interpretation of martial arts in their psycho-physical, very diverse form.

Can one talk about the sociology of martial arts? If the “way of martial arts” is something significantly different (in terms of objectives and the meaning of the practice) from sport and recreation, such a reflection is justified. Let us call it sociology of this particular cultural sphere, another sociological sub-discipline and medium-range theory.

Centres and institutionalization

The institutionalization of martial arts (Donohue, 1994; Cynarski, Sieber, & Litwiniuk, 2005; Cynarski, 2006) and the institutionalization of research on martial arts (Cynarski, 2006; Figueiredo, 2010; Cynarski & Reguli, 2014) are also interesting areas of sociological research. Institutions of academic teaching and research of martial arts in the field of sociology, have been founded just recently, between 2007 and 2010. They were mostly scattered initiatives, such as:

- Michael Kennedy’s educational projects on the sociology of martial arts (University of Michigan, USA);
- W. J. Cynarski’s open lecture (on sociology of martial arts) and lectures on the Humanistic Theory of Martial Arts (University of Rzeszow, Poland);
- other individual initiatives.

Gradually specialized scientific journals were formed which began to attract experts, sociologists and anthropologists of culture. Individual enthusiasts began their studies, which led to creation of articles and books. The scientific societies were set up such as the IMACSSS (Rzeszow, 2010). Specialized research institutes were established on the basis Chinese, Japanese and Korean institutions (*cf.* Cynarski, Sieber, & Litwiniuk, 2005; Cynarski & Reguli, 2014).

The proximity of the sociology of sport is here apparent. Textbooks on sport sociology ignore the subject of martial arts, or treat it marginally (*cf.* Weiss, 1999; Cynarski, 2001; Cynarski & Obodyski, 2004). Noteworthy is a proposal to consider the sociology of martial arts in the context of a broader theory e.g. sociology of culture or the sociology of psychophysical systems of self-realisation (Cynarski, 2011; Cynarski & Obodyski, 2011a, 2011b). This approach allows not losing the context of the cultural and spiritual dimension analyzed forms of human activity.

On 24 September, 2010 Cynarski presented his paper: "Towards the sociology of psychophysical self-realizational systems" in during the 2nd ISSSS Conference in Warsaw. It may be a more appropriate name.

Ideologisation

Martial arts are often connected to national cultures because of origin and educational approach (Li, 2001; Chan, 2000; Bar-On Cohen, 2006). Throughout history martial arts have been used as an aggressive ideology, as in Japan before 2nd World War. Now they are a part of global culture and part of problems with worldwide commercialisation. They should be researched together with modern society. For example, with a help of sociology of culture and cultural anthropology (*cf.* Donohue, 1994; Cynarski, 2011; Spencer, 2012; Cynarski & Sieber, 2015b; Cynarski & Szajna, 2015).

Sometimes martial arts are artificially associated with certain kinds of ideology, playing the role of packaging, which can increase the chances of selling the product on the highly competitive market. Sometimes this ideology serves another purpose of ideologues and their missionaries.

In turn, the ideologizing of sociology should be evaluated in terms of pathology of science. Ideology (e.g. political correctness) should not hinder the development of science. However, this is a topic for a separate study.

Borderland with the sociology of health

Traditional martial arts combined, in many cases, teaching of combat techniques and medical interventions (resuscitation and first aid, massage, herbal medicine, acupuncture etc.) (Henning, 2005; Burke *et al.*, 2007; Cynarski & Sieber, 2015a). Martial arts training often includes mental / mental; toning exercises and relaxation, focus, meditation, visualization, etc. (Fuller, 1988; Cynarski & Sieber, 2015a). Warrior had to be emotionally balanced and resistant to stress. This is of course related to mental health and is interesting from the perspective of the psychology and sociology of health (*cf.* Lakes & Hoyt, 2004; Woodward, 2009).

Research areas

The issues which are dealt with more frequency involve motivation of practitioners – new paradigmatic personal approach of respondents, and surprising popularity of MMA in popular culture. A brief overview of these issues according to subject literature is a kind of illustration – more on that below.

Motivation of practitioners

The literature on the motivation of martial arts practitioners is diverse both in a range of the societies studied, varieties of martial arts or combat sports, as well as methods. Fencing, the typical combat sport, is practised mainly for sports competition (Szajna & Cynarski, 2015). Increasingly, this also applies to karate, as it can be judged by the results of long-term studies (Jakhel & Pieter, 2013).

Motivation of training in one of regions of England was researched by G. Jones, Mackay and Peters (2006). In their examinations amongst the four most important motives for participation of young Englishmen are: “membership”, “fitness”, “development of skills” and “friendship”. Researchers are posing the thesis that a wide range of motives for engaging participants with reference to martial arts looks similar to motives for participation in other areas. The three least significant motives for the participation in the training of martial arts included “awards / status”, “situational” and “competition”. For these incentive factors there were no significant differences according to gender or experience of the practitioners.

In a martial arts motivation study, Kusnierz (2011) summarized: Facts that the essential in motivation for engaging in training was to master the hand-to-hand fighting and self-defense rules and skills. The martial arts training / practice increased participants' discipline and the level of fitness and health. On the other hand, for many people, the social aspect of martial arts is also an important reason for their participation. From this point of view, Reis (2005) even declared that taking part in martial arts practice can also improve the well being of the society'.

In Malaysian studies, physically active lifestyle is indicted as the main motive for the training (Parnabas, Shapie, & Parnabas, 2015). Health reasons are also mentioned in research in American circle of *taekwondo* (Zeng *et al.*, 2015) and in Chinese *wushu* (Zeng, Cynarski, & Xie, 2013). Social determinants of attitudes towards health in fighting arts were also elaborated in comparison between combat sports and combat systems and martial arts (Cynarski *et al.*, 2017),

The motives of practitioners depend on the kind of martial art or combat sport (Witkowski, Cynarski, & Blazejewski, 2013), but also on the age and length of practice (cf. Zaggelidis, Martinidis, & Zaggelidis, 2004; Rosa, 2012). Respondents also differ in the level of fascination with culture of East Asian countries (Litwiniuk & Cynarski, 2001).

Phenomenon of MMA

On the grounds of popularity of MMA in mass culture sociological discussion about desportization of combat sports on example of the mixed martial arts appeared (MMA) (Buse, 2006; Van Bottenburg & Heilbron, 2006; Sanchez Garcia & Malcolm 2010; Dooley, 2013) and the “new gladiatorship” or “modern gladiatorship”: “an extreme form of commercialization and brutalization of show fights, for example, the so called MMA” (Cynarski & Litwiniuk, 2006). Is it still a sport, or is it only an improper name connected with martial arts? Is it only certain reduction and regression of MA and CS to combat itself as in the case of sports like *judo* (Villamón *et al.*, 2004)?

Cultural anthropology and ethnography can give a framework. Additionally, for the theoretical perspective, the sociology of body (bodies) can be useful (Spencer, 2012, pp.152-154; cf. Shilling & Mellor, 2007; Shilling, 2008). For explanation of the MMA phenomenon Spencer (2012, pp.151-152) proposed using the phenomenology of M. Merleau-Ponty and J. L. Nancy. Such a perspective can be helpful in other similar research, too.

Methods of research

In view of the earlier system and humanistic paradigm, qualitative research appears particularly valuable (Cho & Lee, 2009). Is there a special set of test methods (specific methodology) in sociology and anthropology martial arts? This may be an analysis of expert opinions when the experience of others is used (e.g. use of narrative interview (Slezak, 2006)). Participant observation is even more valuable (Spencer, 2012, pp.166-168), as one's own experience and the experience of others are used.

In particular, one's own practical experience (practice and psycho-physical experience), called *shugyo*, and the advancement in the study of martial arts according to the years of experience and certified mastery, would be in that case a specific method (Cynarski, 2012c). In addition, methods and techniques used in sociology of culture and sociology of sport may be use here.

Thematic areas – in general

Thematic areas can be divided according to the scope and level of generality into:

- A. Martial arts in the cultural dialogue and the process of globalization (macro scale);
- B. Socio-cultural conditions of martial arts in particular countries (meso scale);
- C. *Dojo*, as a social group - interpersonal relationships (micro scale).

In case 'A' martial arts are studied in the process of cultural globalization and westernisation of martial arts (Tokarski, 2003; Cynarski, 2008). An interesting topic here is the issue of films about martial arts (Brown, Jennings, & Leledaki, 2008). Another aspect of mass culture is the presence of martial arts in computer games (Hamalainen *et al.*, 2005), also on a global scale.

Area 'B', i.e. meso scale concerns the analysis of "medium-range" – studies in different countries. Such studies and explanations for the US, Belgium and Poland, have already been completed (Donohue, 1994; Orlando, 1997; Theeboom, Knop, & Vertonghen, 2009; Cynarski & Walczak, 2010).

Scale 'C' - Gym and *dojo*, or club and school, is the interesting place from perspective of the little social structures. The social groups have their own hierarchy, structure, values, identity and create own tradition (James & Jones, 1982; Cynarski, 2005, 2013).

Discussion

We can find in the literature such sociological directions of research as: historical analysis; evolution of martial arts; reception and understanding, cultural studies (Sanchez Garcia, & Spencer, 2013; Channon & Jennings, 2014); and axiological analyses, biographical studies; theory of cultural dialogues; problem of women-warriors; *dōjō* (Jap. the place of the way) and interpersonal relations; descriptive ethics among martial artists; connecting martial arts with marketing, management and business; and "martial arts tourism" (Cynarski & Obodynski, 2007). The "martial arts tourism" is really a special event (trips organised to study martial arts) (*cf.* Cynarski & Sieber, 2007; Cynarski, 2012b; Pawelec *et al.*, 2015).

Sometimes, the problem of the participation of women in martial arts is considered separately (Maeda, 2000; Cynarski & Sieber, 2015b; Cynarski & Szajna, 2015). Indeed, the specificity of the active presence of women in the world of martial arts is remarkable. However, in some works this kind of reflection is confused with the ideology of feminism and gender. The ideologies should be avoided so as not to fall into the trap, as in theory

of the sociology of leisure. Fashionable ideologies should not affect the shape of the scientific concepts.

In physical culture sciences participation in martial arts is described in the area of this part of culture. This participation is really significant and not only in the countries of East Asia (*cf.* Theeboom, Knop, & Vertonghen, 2009; Cynarski, Sieber, & Szajna, 2014; Cynarski & Niewczas, 2017). Similarly as participation of martial arts in global mass culture (macro scale).

Other theoretical and methodological approaches result from referring to the concepts of other classical sociologists such as e.g. N. Elias and his *The Civilizing Process* (Sanchez Garcia & Malcolm, 2010). It is a proper direction to develop programs of classical sociologists, through their continuation or antithesis. It is also worth looking at the achievements of outstanding and versatile humanists, like E. Fromm, to broaden the horizons of research.

It would probably be valuable, if this study has provoked a debate similar to the one, held on the pages of the “International Review for Sociology of Sport” and on popularity of MMA. Such a discussion would be constructive for more significant presence of sociology of martial arts.

Conclusions

The differences between the scopes of the concepts of “martial arts” and “combat sports” were explained. For sociology of martial arts subject literature was described, with an indication of the most important directions of social and cultural changes in this area. The theoretical, methodological, and related to institutional development problems of sociology of martial arts as a sub-discipline of sociology were discussed.

Different paradigms were distinguished in theoretical approaches, with the suggestion of preference for a new paradigm of systemic-humanistic approaches. In the area of research methodology the dominant approach was determined, with qualitative methods as particularly valuable. In the description of the institutionalization of sociology of martial arts dispersed initiatives dominating until recently were mentioned. Currently, several institutions (scientific societies, groups gathered around specialized scientific journals and some universities) grant the sub-discipline in question the status of relatively autonomous.

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