

SOCIOLOGY

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Political conditions for the development of martial arts and combat sports¹

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Abstract

Perspective. The analysis is carried out from the perspective of the social sciences, the core of which is sociology in its various forms. Both the theory of structural functionalism and symbolic interactionism were used, but also the theory of social conflict and others to a lesser extent, which are useful at various stages in the research procedure.

Problem. The aim of the research is to try to describe and explain the relationships between political systems in two extreme forms (dictatorship – democracy) and martial arts and combat sports.

Method. The basic research method is an analysis of the literature in the field of social sciences, devoted to the aspects of martial arts and combat sports that interest us. The idiographic and nomothetic methods as well as the inductive and deductive are also used, and are needed to describe and explain the phenomena and processes concerning the relationship between politics and martial arts and combat sports.

Results. The development of martial arts and combat sports is determined by the political system. In dictatorships, they are used in an instrumental way and serve to achieve propaganda-political and military-utilitarian goals. In democracies, the development of martial arts depends on the needs and will of free citizens, who act as sovereigns and determine their development.

Conclusions. The most favorable political environment for the development of martial arts and combat sports is liberal democracy, which creates formal and cultural conditions for citizens to pursue their interests and passions, including in the field of sports, martial arts, and combat sports.

Introduction

The search for conditions and dependencies between the political systems of the contemporary world and martial arts and combat sports is not easy and causes many problems of various nature. The first one concerns definition issues. The issue of political systems, understood as ways of governing human communities, dates back to antiquity and is exemplified in the investigations of Plato and Aristotle. The latter distinguished between good governance systems, such as monarchy,

aristocracy, and polytheia, and bad ones, such as tyranny, oligarchy, and, surprisingly, democracy, although he saw many advantages in it. Thomas Hobbes believed that the basic criterion of good governance is consensus, social contract, because the “natural state” triggers conflicts. Max Weber emphasized the importance of the legitimacy of power and distinguished the following types of leadership: charismatic, inherited and rational-legal [Weber 2002: 158-184]. It is also quite problematic to define such title terms as martial arts and combat sports. Hand-to-hand combat has accompanied humanity since the very beginning of its existence. Having this skill often depended on ensuring the basic needs and life of the loved ones. Over time, these existential-agonistic skills took the form of separate ways of fighting, which differed from each other, inter alia, in different emphasis in the use of grips and punching techniques. Subsequently, mar-

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tial arts distinguished combat sports, and then combat systems that lost the values of art, spiritual development, autotelicity, creativity, and enriching one's own personality in favor of calculation, instrumentality, personal benefits, objective success and material profit [Cynarski 2004; Lewis 1998]. The aim of the work is to show the place of martial arts and combat sports in the political systems of the contemporary world in two extreme forms, namely authoritarianism and totalitarianism on the one hand and liberal democracy on the other.

To achieve this goal, three basic theories of social sciences will be used, which are undoubtedly structural functionalism, symbolic interactionism, but also the theory of social conflict [Jasińska-Kania, Nijakowski, Szacki, Ziółkowski 2006]. Behind these theories are such eminent intellectuals as Herbert Blumer, Kingsley Davis, Emile Durkheim, Anthony Giddens, Samuel P. Huntington, Robert M. MacIver, Karl Marx, Robert Merton, Wilbert Moor, Talcott Parsons, Joseph A. Schumpeter, Pitirim Sorokin, Herbert Spencer, Max Weber, Florian Znaniecki et al.

Various research methods will be used implicitly or explicitly, thanks to which it will be possible to reliably and credibly describe the logical relationships that interest us between martial arts and combat sports and the dominant political systems. The conducted analyzes will take into account idiographic and nomothetic approaches, as well as inductive and deductive approaches, and the findings and patterns detected will be probabilistic [Giddens 2006: 658-681].

Understanding the concept of a political system

The understanding of the term “political system” is undoubtedly influenced by the proposal of the American political scientist David Easton, who sees it as part of a wider social system related to policy making and implementation. According to him, the political system and the environment are interconnected vessels. Expectations reach the political system, which then generate decisions and actions within it, leading in consequence to the authoritative distribution of valued social resources, such as wealth, power, prestige, etc. The effects of this process favor the increase in the number of supporters (conformists) or, on the contrary, increase hosts of the dissatisfied (nonconformists) [Easton 1965].

The diverse level of development of societies is used in the literature on the subject as a criterion for the classification of political systems. The level of economic, social and political development is determined and on this basis, societies are classified, distinguishing pre-modern, transitional, and (post) modern societies. Each of the listed societies has specific features. For example, the basic features of (post) modern society are the development of technology, the widespread use of modern,

innovative technologies, urbanization, development of mass culture, domination of rational thinking, secularization, the significant role of science, awakened educational aspirations, increased spatial and social mobility, the dominance of meritocracy in staffing social position, the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, freedom of the media, the important role of bureaucracy, the democratic nature of political institutions, the functioning of the free market, observance of the principle of equality and freedom [Giddens 2006: 442-473].

While the twentieth century was a century of unprecedented spread of democracies, it also witnessed the emergence of different varieties of dictatorship. A dictatorship is a power that has been conquered, often illegally, by a charismatic leader, putschists or a military junta. Dictatorships are carried out according to an authoritarian or totalitarian order. The authoritarian system limits political pluralism and relieves the rulers of responsibility for their actions. On the other hand, totalitarianism eliminates all pluralism, both political, ideological and economic. Usually, there is one hierarchical party that exercises power, controls and indoctrinates members of society, establishes the only binding ideology, and tries to maintain a high degree of mobilization of society. The classic type of totalitarianism was the communist regimes of the Stalinist era [Dziubiński 2015: 15-43].

Democracies or constitutional democracies are different from dictatorships. They are characterized by the following features: 1) the dependence of power on the law, 2) the tripartite division of power, 3) submission to the power of the will of voters. In modern democracies, the third of the listed features, although historically the most recent, is its basic criterion. A more detailed type of democracy is liberal democracy, which attaches great importance, in addition to Schumpeter's criteria, to the freedom of citizens, but at the same time to the protection of individuals and groups [Dahl 1995: 310-311]. In democracies, the basic institutions are political parties that aggregate and represent the interests of specific social communities. Parties create relations between the ruled and those in power, allow for the expression of political preferences and create conditions for influencing the politics of power.

Understanding the concepts of martial arts and combat sports

China and India are unanimously recognized as the cradle of Eastern martial arts. From there, they spread to the territories of East Asia, to countries such as Japan, Korea, Thailand, Burma, and Vietnam. Over the centuries, they have developed, evolved, modified and adapted in accordance with the socio-cultural conditions, customs and traditions, as well as the needs of local societies. An extremely important role in the development of martial

arts was played by Buddhist philosophy and the legend of the Shaolin monastery and the skills of the monks living there [Shahar 2011]. It is the philosophy-Buddhist religion that is the ideological and theoretical background of martial arts, in which it is not only about preparation for agonization, but above all about the harmonious development of the body and spirit, about the domination of a well-formed spirit over a wonderfully developed body. The perfected ability to use techniques is not used for violence against others, but only in an emergency, for self-defense. In martial arts, it is primarily about the development of such values as respect for others, self-improvement, discipline, goodness, honesty, friendship, justice, nobility and the mastery of the spirit over the body's potential. The motivation for training is internal and results from the will to improve oneself and is based on the master-student relationship. Contemporary martial arts are constituted by such varieties as: karate, taekwondo, kung-fu, muaythai or viet vo dao [Cynarski 2006].

Combat sports are derived from martial arts and are sometimes referred to as sports combat techniques. At the same time, the issue of spiritual development is usually marginalized or completely ignored. Combat sports are focused on the competition, effectiveness in the pursuit of victory over the opponent in an institutionalized form, in accordance with the applicable regulations and rules of sports competition. They define the rules of competition, including the issues related to allowed and prohibited techniques and the use of protective elements. Training in combat sports is aimed at training a competitor and preparing him for competition. Nowadays, it is conducted in many varieties of combat sports, which in the literature on the subject are classified as follows: 1) they are based on punches (boxing in various varieties, karate, kick-boxing, taekwondo, etc.), 2) holds (judo, Brazilian jiu-jitsu, sambo, sumo, wrestling in many varieties, etc.), 3) grips and strikes (sports jiu-jitsu, mixed combat sports – MMA, pankration, etc.) and 4) fighting with weapons (kendo, fencing, etc.) [Cynarski 2019].

The presented martial arts and combat sports, analyzed from the existential-phenomenological and anthropological-cultural perspective, are extremely complex. On the one hand, they are more or less related to health, physical development, mobility, and hygiene but also to the education (upbringing and training) of children and adolescents. On the other hand, they have numerous connections with religion, tradition, customs, myths, art, recreation, play, defense, spectacle but also work [Huizinga 1967]. Moreover, they reveal numerous connections with art and human creativity, focused on the human body and spirit as well as social interactions. Therefore, we can say that martial arts understood in this way, perhaps slightly idealized, reveal a kinship with a disinterested, aristocratic sport, in which the aim is to experience the joy of movement, physical exertion, relaxation, but at the same time enriching one's

spiritual interior through the creation and self-creation of existential, aesthetic and hedonistic [Loy, McPherson, Kenyon 1978].

Combat sports differ from martial arts, especially when analyzed from an axiological and teleological perspective. They appear almost exclusively in an institutionalized form, have new meanings and fulfill new functions. In various forms of concretization, they are not an end in themselves, as in the case of martial arts, but a means of achieving specific goals. Combat sports, especially in competitive and spectacular form, become an instrument for achieving a wide spectrum of non-autotelic values, such as medals, championship, record, victory, win, prestige, recognition, social advancement, money, fame, media coverage, reward, wealth, etc. Combat sports in their basic part are located in professional sports and are served by a commercially oriented mass culture. In this way, they fit into the logic of the functioning of commercial competitive and professional sport [McPherson 1980: 126-143].

It is worth asking at this point whether the aforementioned transformations from martial arts to combat sports are appropriate only to the phenomenon we are interested in, or are they an exemplification of a wider phenomenon. Well, in developed societies of the modern world and in (post) modern sport, the division of human activities into spontaneous and codified, compulsory and free, autotelic and instrumental, is losing importance. The importance of the idea of selflessness, altruism, and creativity for one's own satisfaction is also diminishing, in favor of "raw individualism", self-interest, profit, wealth, prestige, power and high position in the social structure, including the sports structure [Guttman 1978: 137-156; Dziubiński 2020: 47-54].

Martial arts in political systems

By martial arts we will understand those forms of physical activity that are autotelic, creative, enriching the personality in the physical, mental, spiritual, and social sphere of a person, in which participation is not forced in any way, but results from the sovereign decision to pursue passions and interests and experiencing pleasant, often extreme sensations.

In authoritarian and totalitarian systems, the development of martial arts is determined by the will of the ruler or group exercising power. Thanks to having an apparatus of violence and social resources, it has conformist supporters. In these systems, martial arts are most often subordinated to the achievement of propaganda, military and utilitarian goals. In these societies, there are usually no awakened aspirations to practice martial arts and to pursue sports passions and interests. This is most often due to many socio-cultural as well as economic and economic factors. These societies are usually lagging

behind in development in relation to modern societies. This applies in particular to the low level of education, domination of the traditional economy, lack of modern technologies, underdevelopment in the field of science, low standard of living, low social mobility, social differences and inequalities, employment in agricultural and working-class professions, domination of patterns of irrational thinking, etc. The above-mentioned factors that these societies focus their attention on securing existential needs, while martial arts and sports in general are marginalized [Rowe, Lawrence 1998].

The situation is diametrically different in liberal democracies, which, thanks to “cultural hegemony”, affect the rest of the world (Guttmann 1994). On the one hand, they are characterized by a high level of wealth, education, scientific research, communication opportunities and mass culture, the performance of prestigious office jobs in the knowledge-based economy, the development of modern technologies, and on the other hand, the creation of needs, expectations, patterns and styles of caring for health and physical fitness and creating conditions for the realization of valued values, including by practicing martial arts. Moreover, performing office jobs related to very limited energy expenditure results in a demand for sports activities, including in the field of martial arts [Allison 1986; Dziubiński 2015: 15-43].

It is also worth mentioning that in liberal democracies, practicing martial arts is a prestigious and ennobling activity, testifying to physical fitness and health, determination, the ability to overcome weaknesses and consistency in achieving goals. Thus, practicing martial arts not only brings the desired effects in terms of fitness, health and spirit, but also affects the image of the participant who gives himself social prestige and recognition [Maguire 2011: 1010-1026; Baudrillard 1998].

The analyzes clearly show that it is liberal democracies that create the best opportunities for the development of martial arts. On the one hand, social intellectual, economic and economic resources create needs in the field of martial arts and patterns of satisfying them, on the other hand, their expectations in the field of martial arts are materialized by political decisions. This mechanism is complemented by the free market, which activates the layers of initiative and entrepreneurship of citizens, which are consequently aimed at commercial satisfaction of the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

Combat sports in political systems

By combat sports, we will understand all their types and varieties that function in the form of pure competition of a perfectionist nature, both in terms of fitness and technical requirements, as well as ethical ones. Within the framework of combat sports understood in this way,

a part of them is distinguished, which is work aimed at pragmatic, mainly material effects. Here they appear as a profession and are subject to all the regularities typical of other professions [Krawczyk 2002: 112-114]. Combat sports in their competitive or professional version are programmed and systematic activities, respecting certain rules and distinguished by a strong element of competition and a tendency to achieve better and better results, aimed at manifesting body-motor perfectionism. They are related to meeting spectacular needs and thus appear on the free market in the form of a product that is purchased by consumers, thus ensuring an inflow of funds [Hargreaves 1986].

The situation of martial arts in dictatorships and liberal democracies is different. Combat sports in authoritarian systems are primarily used not only to achieve propaganda-prestigious, but also military goals. It is the ruler who decides whether combat sports should be developed or whether there is a chance to achieve goals with their help that will positively influence the internal and external image. Therefore, it all depends on the ruler and his confidence in the propaganda function of combat sports. The position of combat sports in specific types of authoritarianism is very different. Often combat sports as such, in the European sense, do not exist. The probable cause of this state of affairs is the incredible backwardness of civilization, which means that neither the ruler nor the members of society are concerned with martial arts, but focus their attention on securing basic, existential needs (food, place to sleep and rest, safety, etc.) [Cha 2009: 1581-1610].

The relationship between politics and combat sports in totalitarian systems looks different, as their development is holistically subordinated to power in all areas. Because these countries have the following characteristic features: a guiding ideology applies to all, the power of the mass party under the leadership of a dictator is absolutely in power, there is no rule of law, the government has a monopoly on the mass media, the power has an extensive police system based on violence, fear and secret services, the economy it is based on a centralized, command, and distribution management system [Bairner, Kelly, Lee 2017; Lipoński 2012: 545-557].

The relations between politics and combat sports in liberal democracies, the development of which does not depend on the decisions of the ruler or the ruling regime, are much different, but result from the needs and will of free citizens who act as sovereigns and determine their fate. The strong position of competitive and professional combat sports in modern democracies is a consequence of the high standard of living of citizens, among whom the demand for strong, touching and exciting emotional experiences is systematically growing. In an extremely dynamic way, thanks to the involvement of science and the latest technologies, the transmission of sports information is improved, which is becoming more and more

interesting and attractive to the viewer [Horne, Tomlinson, Whannel, Woodward 2013: 123-139].

In democracies, in line with social expectations, combat sports gain political legitimacy, expressed in the formal and legal support of governmental and local government administration, by creating the law enabling activities in the field of combat sports, by creating and modernizing sports infrastructure and creating conditions for their training and conducting competition on the local, national and international level. Democracies support the development of combat sports by creating conditions for training coaching staff, conducting scientific research, training young people, but also members of national and Olympic teams [Houlihan 2005].

Non-profit organizations and commercial organizations play an important role in the organization of combat sports in democracies. They conduct activities in the field of combat sports in a universal, competitive, but also professional form, in which the rules and patterns typical of professional work apply, and market mechanisms of purchase and sale, supply and demand are applied. They apply both to the athletes themselves and to the created product, which is a show, spectacle and performance. In the discussed system, the practice of martial arts is democratized, as well as its consumption in spectacular forms.

This democratization consists of eliminating barriers to access them. This does not mean, however, that all organizational forms of combat sports are available to everyone. Because training them in some commercial and "elite" clubs, under the watchful eye of titled coaches, requires significant financial resources.

It is also worth mentioning the links between politics and combat sports in the European and global dimension [Maguire 1994: 98-127]. It must be immediately admitted that supranational sports policy plays an increasingly important role, and the democratic countries lead the way in it, which set the direction and pace of its development [Houlihan 1997: 163-185]. International contacts of athletes from democratic countries are a permanent element of their policy, which aims to implement the humanistic values of sport and Olympism, such as peace, friendship, justice, solidarity, respect and equality through combat sports. Combat sports and sports in general have an important role to play in meeting these challenges, as expressed in their formal regulations by the Council of Europe and the European Union [Henry, Amara, Al-Taigi, Lee 2005: 480-496].

Discussion

The presented issues concerning various aspects of martial arts and combat sports in the political systems of the contemporary world are extremely complex and cannot be clearly described, let alone explained. This

is because the countries that are very diverse in terms of socio-cultural as well as economic and economic development are located within individual political systems. Each of them, while meeting the basic assumptions of a given political system, is a separate practical application and a separate way of organizing social life [Dziubiński 2015].

Regardless of the theoretical difficulties encountered, on the basis of the analyzes carried out, we are able to state that the development of martial arts and combat sports is determined by the political system. We can say that in authoritarian and totalitarian systems, they are used by a tyrant or a regime in an instrumental way and serve to achieve propaganda-political and military-utilitarian goals. In these systems, martial arts and combat sports are what the power leader and the conformist supporters around him want to have [Cynarski 2015; Easton 1965; Giddens 2006].

On the other hand, in liberal democracies, martial arts, and combat sports develop at the will of society, which is the sovereign and determines their fate, regardless of whether their development is stimulated by the support of central and local administration, or thanks to the activity of citizens on the free market. In these societies, martial arts and combat sports find fertile ground for a high standard of living of citizens, high level of education, high level of development of science, education, various technologies, etc. All this causes that patterns of practicing martial arts and combat sports as well as a sports lifestyle are becoming popular, but there is also a demand for the consumption of martial arts and combat sports, which results from the specificity of (post) modern societies, oriented towards the consumption of emotions and hedonistic experiences provided by martial arts and combat sports [Dziubiński 2015; Horne, Tomlinson, Whannel, Woodward 2013; Houlihan 1997; Cynarski 2015].

Conclusions

The development of martial arts and combat sports is determined by the political system. In dictatorships, they are used in an instrumental way and serve to achieve propaganda-political and military-utilitarian goals. In democracies, the development of martial arts and combat sports depends on the needs and will of free citizens, who act as sovereigns and determine their development.

The most favorable political environment for the development of martial arts and combat sports is liberal democracy, which creates formal and cultural conditions for citizens to pursue their interests and passions, also in the field of sports, martial arts, and combat sports.

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Polityczne uwarunkowania rozwoju sztuk walki i sportów walki

Słowa kluczowe: polityka, sztuki walki, sporty walki

Abstrakt

Perspektywa. Analiza prowadzona jest z perspektywy nauk społecznych, za rdzeń których uznano socjologię w jej różnych odmianach. Wykorzystano zarówno teorię funkcjonalizmu strukturalnego, symbolicznego interakcjonizmu, ale także teorię konfliktu społecznego oraz w mniejszym stopniu inne, które

są przydane na różnych etapach postępowania badawczego Problem. Celem badań jest próba opisu i eksplikacji zależności występujących między systemami politycznymi w dwóch skrajnych postaciach (dyktatura – demokracja) a sztukami walki i sportami walki.

Metoda. Podstawową metodą badawczą jest analiza literatury z obszaru nauk społecznych, poświęconej interesującym nas aspektom sztuk walki i sportów walki. Wykorzystane są także metody idiograficzna i nomotetyczna oraz indukcyjna i dedukcyjna, niezbędne do opisu i wyjaśnienia zjawisk oraz procesów dotyczących relacji polityki i sztuk walki oraz sportów walki. Wyniki. Rozwój sztuk walki i sportów walki jest determi-

nowany przez system polityczny. W dyktaturach są one wykorzystywane w sposób instrumentalny i służą realizacji celów propagandowo-politycznych i militarno-utilitytarnych. W demokracjach rozwój sztuk walki uzależniony jest od potrzeb i woli wolnych obywateli, którzy występują w charakterze suwerena i decydują o ich rozwoju.

Wnioski. Najbardziej sprzyjającym środowiskiem politycznym dla rozwoju sztuk walki i sportów walki jest demokracja liberalna, która stwarza warunki formalne i kulturowe do realizacji przez obywateli swych zainteresowań i pasji, w tym także w dziedzinie sportu, sztuk walki i sportów walki.