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AN INTRODUCTION TO
THE HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY OF JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS
RAÚL SÁNCHEZ GARCÍA

ABSTRACT

This article is an extract from the forthcoming book *The Historical Sociology of Japanese Martial Arts* by Raúl Sánchez García [forthcoming in 2018, Routledge, ISBN: 978-1-138-57169-3]. It presents Japanese martial arts from a historical-sociology approach. After a brief discussion on the relationship between terminology and social processes, the chapter introduces the main tenets of Norbert Elias's process sociology and introduces the research strategy of the book. It has been edited and reprinted here with kind permission of the publisher with the aim of forwarding the research agenda of a historical-sociology approach to martial arts studies.

INTRODUCTION

The group of activities collectively known as 'martial arts' has become a relevant and distinguishable family of physical culture all around the world. Within the Japanese martial arts, the Nippon Budokan counts over 50 million practitioners outside Japan [Matsunaga 2009: 6] and 3 million inside [Usui 2009: 7]. However, martial arts are relevant not only in terms of numbers of participants and governing bodies: they also constitute a relevant research topic within academia. Recent collective volumes on the matter [Farrer and Whalen-Bridge 2011; Sánchez García and Spencer 2013] and international conferences (such as those organized by the International Martial Arts and Combat Sports Scientific Society) have established a new field of academic research called 'martial arts studies' [Bowman 2015, 2017].

THE SOCIAL BEHIND THE TERMS

For some of these scholars, the most pressing issue has been to establish a precise definition of the term 'martial arts'.[1] However, trying to produce a strict universal definition for a set of variegated activities that developed as part of different collective socio-historical processes risks oversimplification. For the moment – albeit still assuming the risk of oversimplification – it suffices to say that the activities nowadays internationally considered to be martial arts represent the latest phase in a long-term process of development in which chiefly Asian techniques or methods of war have been transformed/evolved into ways of self-perfection, self-defence, and/or sport while being opened to any social group regardless of class, gender, age, ethnicity or nationality.

Recognizable sets of physical practices spread during the second half of the 20th century within what Maguire [1999] defines as the 'global sporticization phase'. This phase can be connected in a broader sense with what Nederveen Pieterse [2009] considers the stage of 'Contemporary globalization', beginning in 1950, in which Japan, the USA and Europe emerged as the central nodes of cultural hybridization. In the spread of popular (especially Western) imagery of martial arts, the Japan-West axis was crucial, as was the Hong Kong/Hollywood axis, especially as it had such a great impact via the movies produced during the 1970s. In these movies, the 'Bruce Lee phenomenon' became key for

the spread of this set of recognizable Asian disciplines.[2] In fact, Bruce Lee should take some credit for the popularization of the term 'martial arts' [Clements 2017] – as it is a different term from those often used in Asian countries for naming such practices.

This argument does not claim that martial arts 'started in Japan', as if martial arts were an exclusively Japanese set of practices that progressively spread all over the world.[3] Other Asian countries – most famously China, Korea and Thailand – had indigenous martial traditions analogous or equivalent to the Japanese since ancient times [Draeger and Smith 1980]. Rather, the Japanese pattern was the most relevant in shaping, systematising and influencing the understanding of martial arts on a global scale.

The key issue is that Japan was instrumental in giving the martial arts a recognizable form/shape as they were transformed from a local set of practices to a global aspect of physical culture. Still today, the most iconic image within the public imagination is the black belt, which first appeared in judo during the early 20th century. In many ways, Japanese martial arts produced the blueprint for the organization and systematisation of martial arts in subsequent global governing bodies and international competitions. Certainly, judo was the first martial arts discipline to be widely acknowledged on the international stage, being accepted as an official Olympic event in Tokyo 1964. By contrast, Korean taekwondo only became a full medal sport in 2000 (after being a demonstration sport in the Olympic Games of Seoul 1988). Chinese wushu has not yet been included in the Olympic programme. Besides, whereas Japanese disciplines such as judo and karate (and probably

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1   See for instance the recent proposals made by Channon and Jennings [2014], Wetzler [2015], Judkins [2016], and Martínková and Parry [2016].

2   Even though Bruce Lee could be claimed to be a representative of Chinese martial arts, at that time, Lee was received within a context of counterculture America as a generic Asian other, or as Bowman [2011: 73] states, a 'generic ethnicity' that facilitated the identification of urban U.S. Blacks and Hispanics. Lee was not especially interested in preserving or passing on unchanged the Chinese traditions. He elaborated his own system (jeet kune do) from a blend of Chinese arts (mainly wing chun), other Asian arts, and Western influences such as boxing, French savate and fencing. See Bowman [2011] for an analysis of Bruce Lee's impact on global popular culture and Judkins and Nielson [2015] for the importance of Bruce Lee on the global expansion of wing chun.

3   This misleading idea expresses what I call 'The Holy Grail Theory'. Cultural practices are seen as a concrete object that were passed from country to country in an unbroken chain. This notion can be observed, for instance, in the explanation of the origins of sports, trying to identify the unbroken chain of transmission in which the Maya ball game gets connected, unproblematically, to modern football. One of 'The Holy Grail Theories' in popular discourse is that martial arts started in Babylon and then moved to India and from there Bodhidharma passed them towards China and from there they spread to Japan. Historical research on the influence of different cultural traditions suggests a much more complex situation. See Payne [1981] and Reid and Croucher [1983] for examples of these simplistic models of transmission.

also kendo and aikido) are distinguishable to a reasonable degree, the situation is not the same in other Asian disciplines. For example, apart from some easily discernible activities such as tai chi/taijiquan, Chinese martial arts are still widely known in the West under the generic term 'kung fu' or, more recently, 'wushu' [see Judkins 2014 for the historical controversy on the uses of both terms].[4]

MARTIAL ARTS AND THE SPORTS MOVEMENT

Asian countries such as Japan, China or Korea do not use the English term 'martial arts' in their native languages. In Japan, three cognate terms are commonly used to convey meanings equivalent to what we understand today by 'martial arts' [Green 2010: xv]: martial arts/ methods or bugei (武芸); martial techniques or bujutsu (武術); and martial ways or budo (武道). Nonetheless, the most internationally recognized term for designating all such Asian disciplines is not an Asian term, but, rather, the term 'martial arts'.[5]

In most countries of the world, the term 'sport' can be understood independently from martial arts, yet 'martial arts' cannot often be separated entirely from the notion of 'sport'. This situation illuminates something not only about the relationship between these two phenomena, but also about the complex geopolitical processes of expansion, integration, reinterpretation and accommodation of (physical) culture around the world. Broadly speaking, sports (originally an expression of Western countries) spread to other parts of the world more pervasively, and to a greater extent, than other aspects of physical culture. This is not to say that sport was uncritically accepted and unchanged in every region of the world. The variation of American baseball by the Japanese – stressing the qualities of budo, even calling this activity yakyudo (the way of baseball) – is a good example of the diverse cultural blends produced in such transnational journeys of (physical) cultures.

Comparing the equivalent terms in widely used dictionaries from Western countries and Japan is also revealing: a common denominator from all the definitions of 'martial arts' found in English, French, US, German, and Spanish widely used dictionaries is reference to 'sport'.[6] However, the Japanese definitions of bujutsu, bugei and budo do not include any direct reference to sport.[7] The definitions of budo, bugei and bujutsu highlight those features considered essential to Japanese identity, contrasting with modern hybrids encompassing foreign notions such as sport.

Nevertheless, it is undeniable that Japanese martial arts were affected by the influence of the sports movement, especially after the Second World War. During the 1950s, the Ministry of Education replaced the term 'budo' with the term 'combative sport' (kakugi 格技) in order to gain some distance from prior militaristic connotations and as a way to get closer to more democratic formats, such as Western sports [Bennett 2015: 180]. In 1989, the Ministry of Education officially resumed the use of the term budo to refer to martial disciplines instead of kakugi. Nowadays, the Japanese term 'kakutogi'(格闘技)[8] would be the rough equivalent of 'combat sport' and is often used to refer to disciplines such as boxing, wrestling, kickboxing, or MMA (mixed martial arts).

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4   Thanks to Paul Bowman, Ben Judkins and Mike Molasky for making useful comments on the terminological discussion of Chinese martial arts.

5   For instance, we find a mention of 'martial arts' in an anonymous book called **Pallas Armata** from 1639, with a reference of Jo Sotheby to the 'famous Martiall art of fencing' [Figueiredo 2009: 23]. According to John Clements, the term appeared even earlier. It came: 'From the phrase "arts of mars" and was used in English as early as the 16th century for self-defense disciplines but then the term becomes associated with military science and is not applied again to fighting methods until the early 20th century, where it becomes synonymous with Asian styles after 1945' [Clements 2017]. Only in recent times has the term martial arts started to be used again to refer to Medieval and Renaissance European fighting arts. For instance, the work of Sydney Anglo in **The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe** [Anglo 2000] marked a milestone in the scholarly research of this field.

6   Self-defence and educational components are also included, but not consensually in every definition. For instance, in the **Concise Oxford English Dictionary** [2011: 877], martial arts include the self-defence notion: 'various sports or skills, mainly of Japanese origin, which originated as forms of self-defence or attack, such as judo, karate, and kendo'. **Encyclopédie Larousse** [2018] does not include self-defence and includes instead a moral code related to education: 'group of combat sports of Japanese (or more generally Asian) origin such as judo, karate, aikido, kendo, taekwondo, vietvodao etc. founded upon a moral code (which included that of the samurai) and that must respect the opponents'. The relation between martial arts and sport is so close that in some languages such as German the most frequently used term to refer to disciplines such as judo or karate is 'Kampfsport' [Wetzler 2015: 23], merging in the same category of disciplines that which could be considered 'combat sport' and 'martial art.

7   Definitions in a widely used Japanese dictionary [Yamaguchi, Ryoji and Kazuyoshi 2013] do not include any explicit reference to sport in any of the cognate terms equivalent to the term 'martial arts': 'Budo: 武道: 1) the norms Samurai have to observe, follow'; 'Bushido: Japanese chivalry, the spirit of Samurai; 2) Military arts such as Japanese art of fencing, Judo and Japanese art of archery' [1305]. Bujutsu: '武術 Arts/Skills of Budo. For example, Kenjutsu (the art of fencing), Kyujutsu (the art of archery) [1296]. Bugei: '武芸 Artistic Skills in relation with Budo. Bujutsu. Bugi [1293].

8   According to a standard definition of kakutogi: 'Combat Sports on a man-to-man basis which determines victory/defeat by struggling with each other or striking each other with hands and feet. For instance, Boxing, Wrestling, Judo and Sumo'. [Yamaguchi, Ryoji & Kazuyoshi, 2013: 251]. Kakugi's meaning is the same as kakutogi. During the period in which the Ministry of Education used the term kakugi instead of budo, the particle 'To (闘)' (which means fighting) was not used in order to prevent fostering fighting values in children [Nakajima 2017].

Nonetheless, 'budo' and 'kakutogi' were (and still are) commonly used to refer to the same activity. Such is the case of judo, a discipline commonly associated with budo (if we take into account its educational side) despite its having undergone a strong process of 'sporticization'. By contrast, despite its long tradition as a professional competition, sumo is not considered as kakutogi and is defined as 'national sport'. The 'reinvention' of sumo as an essential part of Japanese identity during the Meiji period involved using the notion of foreign Western sport as a perfect contrast, exemplifying what the Japanese were not.

To sum up, even though the influence of Western sports varied depending on the disciplines under analysis, the most widespread Japanese martial arts – judo and karate – were severely affected, becoming part of the global sports figuration either in the amateur and/or professional versions.

Before ending this section, a word of caution is required about the anachronistic use of the term 'sport' when talking about Japanese martial arts. Despite the fact that some of the Japanese martial arts that expanded did globally hybridise with sport formats, it would be an anachronism to talk about sports in pre-modern Japan. For instance, it is anachronistic to refer to archery or sumo as a kind of sport during ancient and medieval times (as Hurst [1998] or Cuyler [1979] sometimes do) just because those activities implied some kind of entertainment for the players and spectators. The characterization of these activities is improved, but not completely solved, by differentiating between 'traditional' (indigenous Japanese contest-like activities) and 'modern' sports (those developed after the contact with the Western sports movement), as proposed by Guttman and Thompson [2001].

The shift from ceremonial contests to 'sports-like' disciplines as a recognizable, distinctive activity took a long time and was embedded in broader social patterns. Thus, it is not helpful to speak about 'sport' in ancient Japan but more accurate to speak about 'ceremonial contests' (not necessarily with a religious function, although often political) that later placed more emphasis on the competitive side once the activity spread during the Tokugawa period. Moreover, despite the existence of common features between sumo of the mid-to-late Tokugawa and Meiji period and some 19th century sports in Britain, we should talk about 'sports-like activities' in the Japanese case. Historically, 'sport' is bound to a British/Western development. It was harshly contested after the forced opening of Japan in the Meiji period by important organizations of martial arts such as the Dai-Nippon Butokukai. It was especially virulent in this respect in the years immediately before/proceeding, and during, the Second World War.

Due to the influential work of Kano Jigoro, the Western sports movement fused with martial arts traditions during the Meiji period, but this relationship only took root after the Second World War. This is not to deny that Kano built the sports connection upon ploughed ground. Competitive sumo of the mid-to-late Tokugawa period, gekikken (swordsmanship competitions), and the jujutsu of early the Meiji period had already laid a solid competitive professional sports-like basis.

We should also not lose sight of the fact that Kano's judo made a big impact after success in contests against other jujutsu styles of the era. Thus, the 'sports-like' orientation attached to martial arts was not something that appeared in the Meiji period only with Kano; rather, a blend of Japanese martial arts and the Western sports movement were key elements in Kano's judo. The counter-current of the rejection of sports and the explicit attachment to bushido as a clear mark of Japanese martial traditions (deliberately contrasted with Western sport) could also be traced to the Meiji period, especially (although not exclusively) in the rise of the Dai-Nippon Butokukai.[9]

AN OVERVIEW OF ELIAS'S PROCESS-SOCIOLOGY

My approach to this entails an analysis derived from Norbert Elias's figurational sociology (also called process-sociology), one that is centred on long-term developments. Broadly known as a branch of historical sociology, Eliasian process-sociology shares with the discipline of history an interest in past eras. However, it is not merely for the sake of identifying a succession of unique and unrepeated sequences of events. Rather, in a profound discussion on the relationship between history and sociology, Elias [1983] made clear that the main focus of process-sociology was to search for structured patterns in processes of social development, not the biographical accounts of individual figures.

For instance, Elias needed to study the biography of Louis XIV to empirically test and construct 'elaborate sociological models of connections' that included the social position of the king in the figuration of the 'court society'. In this sense, unique and unrepeated sequences of events (the details of Louis XIV's biography) were embedded within patterned, repeatable sequences of events (the royal position) on another level.

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9   A similar pattern could be found in the explanation of the German 'turnen', articulated in a contrasting dialogue with foreign sport. In Germany, 'sports' was regarded as something low coming from England, contrasting with turnen which was regarded as something high in value [Reicher 2017].

Using this approach, Elias aimed to bring forth some identifiable dynamic patterns that would help us to advance towards more 'reality congruent knowledge' with a higher level of synthesis. In order to do this, Elias made use of diverse data coming from variegated sources and levels of analyses: from what is normally considered the 'macro level' of laws, economic relations or power balances between nations to the 'micro' data of everyday behaviour (as illustrated by chronicles, biographies, literature, or 'manners books' and so on).

Elias's theoretical concepts were developed and tested within this rich soil of empirical data and became further iteratively refined in subsequent studies. These empirically based studies about dynamic processes helped Elias to avoid the pitfalls of classical evolutionary models based on a succession of phases, and which were criticized for being teleological, Eurocentric and/or lacking testability [Goudsblom 1996: 21].

The following sections briefly introduce Eliasian concepts that are key to my approach to the sociology of Japanese martial arts. Further discussion of each is conducted at the points they are applied to Japanese cases. This strategy enables the empirical testing of concepts, their refinement, and even the formulation of new concepts if needed.

CHAINS OF INTERDEPENDENCE, FUNCTIONS AND POWER BALANCES

For Elias, sociology is the study of the long-term development (processes) of people forming chains of interdependence together (figurations). The notion of interdependence implies at the same time the notion of function and power relations. People depend on each other; they are bound together by functional relationships. For instance, I depend on the people who plant and grow the vegetables I eat. At the same time, they depend on me for their income. I also depend on the legal functions performed by judges to carry on with my life with certain basic rights, and I depend on my friends, family or partner for the emotional functions they provide for me.

Thus, Elias talks of functional interdependency, whether in terms of economic, legal, emotional, security or other areas. As functional interdependence implies asymmetrical relationships between people,

these interdependencies always include power relations.[10] Hence, Elias conceptualizes power balances between people – a further elaboration of concepts such as power ratio or gradient – to avoid the reified, static notion of power as a thing that somebody owns and the others do not.

Power relations are enmeshed in the functional interdependence of people. When interdependence changes, power relations change as well. Elias and Scotson [2008] developed the theory of 'established-outsiders' as a way to understand asymmetrical shifting power relations between social groups, be it in terms of class, race/ethnicity, gender, or so on. When power balances were very unequal, Elias [1987] spoke of 'monopolies' over certain social needs or requirements. He differentiated monopolies of means of production, of capital accumulation, of taxation, of means of orientation, of physical violence, etc., over which certain groups in society gained control and thus gained a stronger leverage to influence the organization of this society. However, the result of the complex web of people bound to other people in functional interdependencies with different power balances remains, to a degree, a 'blind social process'.

THE THEORY OF THE 'CIVILISING PROCESS'

A long-term 'blind but structured' civilising process was identified by Elias [2000] in the development of European societies from the Middle Ages to Modernity. The European case presented no unique pattern but rather different patterns of development. In fact, within his wide research, Elias refined the specificities of different European variants, making fruitful comparisons between the different patterns of the English, French and German cases. Moreover, as we can observe in the following passage, Elias was also interested in the Japanese civilising pattern, although he did not analyse it specifically or in any depth.[11]

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10   This is precisely why Elias's use of 'function' differs greatly from classical structuralist/functionalist sociological approaches. For Elias, functions are not ethereal components of society. The classical notion of function or functional imperative for the society **à la** Talcott Parsons implied a static, process-reduction idea of function, based on the foundational binomial of individual/society. For Elias, people are bound together by functional interdependence; people fulfil some function for some other people and this functional interdependence always implies power relations [Elias 1970: 74].

11   Elias [1995; 2001; Elias and Scotson 2008] discussed the Japanese case in scattered remarks. Even though the theory of the civilising process has been fruitfully applied to the Japanese case [Ohira 2014; 2017], so far only brief, mainly exploratory, research has been conducted on the long-term development of the Japanese civilising process from a figurational perspective [Mennell 1996].

Ralph Bonwit offers many examples that point to the strong similarities between those forces of social interweaving that led to Japanese feudal relations and institutions and those structures and forces discussed above in relation to Western Feudalism. A comparative structural analysis of this kind would prove a more useful way of explaining the particularities by which the feudal institutions of Japan and the historical changes they underwent differ from those of the West [Elias 2000: 578].

Nonetheless, despite variations, the civilising pattern followed by European societies featured: 1) a specific process of 'state formation' for which the acquisition of the twin monopoly of taxation and violence was of utmost importance. The state formation process involved the development of more complex figurations; longer and denser chains of interdependence between individuals on a sociogenetic level; 2) the development of a more rounded, encompassing and even self-controlled 'habitus' – including shared economies of affects, personality structures, and so on – at a psychogenetic level.

Furthermore, Elias added a third interrelated layer to sociogenesis and psychogenesis: 'technogenesis' [Elias 1983; 1995; 2000; 2001]. These three dynamic processes constituted what he called a 'triad of controls' [Elias 1970:156]: the control of people over each other (sociogenesis); the control of each person over him or herself (psychogenesis); the control of humans over non-human events (technogenesis).

In the civilising process, a greater control over non-human events also took place in terms of 'reality congruent' knowledge that afforded useful applications of technology. In fact, Elias's [2007] theory of knowledge is clearly related to these basic 'triad of controls'. In a typical 'double bind process' between emotional involvement and knowledge, the more congruent knowledge of reality that we have (whether that be of non-human nature, our relationship with others, or with ourselves), the more control we have over this reality. The feedback cycle also works the other way around: more fantasy-laden knowledge implies less control, which fosters more fear and fantasy solutions.

According to Elias's civilising process theory, the development of longer chains of interdependence was related to growing social differentiation, specialization of activities, and the integration of these activities at a sociogenetic level. Such phenomena brought forward what Elias dubbed a 'functional democratisation' [Elias 1970: 68-69] – a thrust towards a more even power balance between social groups of different kinds. The lengthening of the chains of interdependence also produced a shift of the 'survival units' to which individuals' identities were attuned. The shift within the civilising process followed a general integration pattern, from smaller units (family, tribe, clan) towards bigger ones (nation-

states and unions of states),[12] although de-integration into smaller units could also happen during decivilising patterns [Mennell 2001].

However, even in the case of greater integration, Elias also acknowledged unavoidable problems [2001: 213], generating processes of disintegration. It is quite common during the levelling of power imbalances that some people suffer a certain loss of power-potential and a reduction in the scope of their functions. Such shifts can even result in the complete loss of social groups [Elias 1970: 67; 1997: 373]. Moreover, it is quite common that the integration at the sociogenetic level occurs faster than the psychogenetic adjustments people must undergo to emotionally tune-in to the new survival unit [Elias 2001: 227]. Those suffering a certain reduction in their functions or undergoing integration into larger survival units may resist the new situation. Their personality structure (habitus) clings to their old image and the identity provided by their social group or social unit of reference. This identity reaction was identified by Elias with the concept of 'drag effect' [2001: 211].

CIVILISING-DECIVILISING AND INFORMALISING-FORMALISING BALANCES

Elias was acutely aware of opposing forces acting at the same time upon complex social processes. For Elias, any social process unfolds within a shifting balance between civilising and decivilising trends. Elias's magnum opus, *The Civilizing Process* [Elias 2000], identified a prevailing long-term civilising trend occurring in Europe from the Middle Ages to Modernity. Nonetheless, other lesser-known works of Elias's, such as *The Germans* [Elias 1996], deal with the prevailing decivilising trend that gave way to the rise of the Nazi regime.

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12   As a general pattern, the integration into greater survival units brings forward a changing in the weighting of the I-We balance [Elias 2001: 184] towards the I pole in what could be conceived as a socio-historical process of individualization. Nonetheless, the picture is more complex, and Elias considers the situation in a democratic and a dictatorial state in the building of what is normally known as 'national character' [Elias 2001: 181]. Besides, Elias wrote specifically about the Japanese case, stating: 'So far, the shift of the we-I balance in favour of the I-identity is less pronounced there [in Japan] than in western countries' [2001: 178]. The fact that still nowadays in Japan the last name precedes the first name when referring to a person bespeaks the importance of the we-pole in relation to the I-pole. Elias also commented that despite a general tendency of greater impermanence in we-relationships of marriage or professional binds: 'In Japan, however, the worker-employer relationship seems so far to have kept its lifelong character' [Elias 2001: 235, note 10]. The individual's identity always implies different weightings of the we-I poles, containing also an interweaving of layers depending on the different we-groups to which each individual is emotionally bound [Elias 2001: 183, 202].

As well as a 'tension balance' [Elias and Dunning 2008] between civilising and decivilising patterns, another balance must also be taken into account: that between formalising and informalising trends. Cas Wouters [1986; 2004; 2007; 2011] identified this formalising-informalising balance as what he dubbed 'informalisation'. Wouters's theory of informalisation came from his direct observation of a more flexible application of rules and manners during the 1960s and 1970s which entailed a wider variety of behaviours expressed in more moderate, flexible and controlled forms. According to Wouters, this pattern represented a complex form of civilising process.

Wouters observed that what Elias had identified as the 'whole' civilising process was just the formalising tendency of the civilising process predominant between the Middle Ages and the 19th century. At the turn of the 20th century, the pattern changed to an informalising tendency in the civilising process, gaining predominance from then on. Such a tendency was not unilinear, as informalisation proceeded in a spiralling fashion, involving phases of informalisation and reformalisation. During reformalisation phases, many earlier informalised social codes were integrated into the prevailing code and became formalised. The main waves or spurts of informalisation within the European civilising process occurred at the turn of the 19th century, the roaring twenties and the permissive society of the 1960s and 1970s.

If the formalising-informalising balance that Wouters identified within the civilising patterns is also applied to the decivilising patterns, a classification of four possible compound trends emerge [Sánchez García 2018]:[13] 1) civilising-formalising, the main line of development that Elias [2000] identified in the European civilising process from late medieval times to modernity; 2) decivilising-formalising, a decivilising trend that Elias [1996] identified with the rise of the Nazis and which

De Swaan [2001] dubbed 'dyscivilization'; 3) civilising-informalising, a pattern that Wouters [2007] called informalisation; and 4) decivilising-informalising, a classical decivilising trend that Elias [2000] identified with the fall of the Roman Empire and the feudalization pattern in Europe.[14]

PROCESS-SOCIOLOGY AND THE SPORTICIZATION PROCESS

Applying the previous relational axis of civilising-decivilising and formalising-informalising trends to the development of modern sport we could differentiate an initial sporticization pattern, characterized by a predominant civilising formalising trend; and a later sporticization pattern, characterized by a predominant civilising informalising trend.

The Initial Sporticization Waves

According to Elias [2008a; 2008b], modern sports developed within the specific British (English, to a great extent) civilising process. Sports became distinguishable from their folk antecedents in two consecutive 'civilising spurts' in what could be generally characterized as a process of 'sporticization'.[15]

The first wave of sporticization occurred during the 18th century and was characterized by a period of peace in which simultaneous and parallel processes of parlamentarisation (resolution of political conflicts through verbal confrontations instead or armed conflicts) and sporticization (detachment from direct use of violence in leisure activities) led by the landed classes (aristocracy and gentry) took place. This first wave affected the so called 'country sports' such as horse racing, fox hunting, cricket and boxing.

The second wave of sporticization occurred during the 19th century, in which the bourgeoisie (industrial middle classes) joined the landed classes in taking the lead through the public-school sports phenomenon, developing ball games (e.g., football and rugby), hockey, tennis or athletics. Both sporticization waves implied the use of more precise and

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13   These are trends, not static categories. Each illustrates patterns, not a fixed state of things. They describe historical tendencies and dynamics, which implies that there are at least two epochs to compare. Thus, the focus is not on the 'is' or 'is not' but on the 'more' or 'less', following the developmental approach defended by Elias. From a figurational, processual point of view, it is of no use trying to establish universal categories for civilising and decivilising trends with such and such characteristics; we always face dynamic processes that need the comparison of different periods in a sequence of social development. From a non-processual point of view, a modern dictatorial state could be seen as a figuration sharing common features with the generation of European kingdoms, with their own almighty rulers: both cases present a state monopoly of violence and taxes. However, from a processual point of view they represent a very different pattern. The pacification obtained in the change from a figuration conformed by fighting tribes to a centralized elite of rulers-warriors would lead to an increase of chains of interdependence and constitute a civilising-formalising trend. On the contrary, the change from a figuration such as the Weimar Republic to the barbaric Nazi State represents a decivilising-formalising trend in which the elite class always fostered an intense polarization between those adepts to the regime and the outsiders, considered as direct enemies, scapegoats or heretics.

14   In a discussion about informalisation, Elias loosely refers to the decivilising-informalising trend with the term 'formlessness': 'I have the feeling that this type of informalisation requires a higher degree of self-restraint. The "stays" of formality, of the easy-to-be-learned formal phrases have gone and yet there is a need for shades, for "nuances". I think one has to distinguish this kind of informalisation (which seems to have gone less far in France than in either Germany or Holland) from-shall we call it "formlessness"? – from behaviour dictated by a stronger dose of overt affects' [Elias in Wouters 2007: 234-35].

15   Maguire [1999] analysed three more stages of sporticization, in which the sports movement became a global phenomenon.

explicit rules that were written down and more formally and strictly enforced by the incipient governing bodies surrounding the activities.

Because rules invariably restricted the means by which individuals could achieve sporting success, sporticization necessarily entailed the development of stricter self-control and self-discipline within the personality structure (habitus) of the participants. Some psychogenetic features of this development included a greater sensitivity towards violent actions and verbal abuse in the sports game. It basically represented the development of a more civilised 'sportsman habitus', connected to the ethos of fair play (made explicit during the 19th century wave) and the detachment from getting too emotionally involved in victory or loss as a sign of good upbringing.

In summary, due to the sporticization process in which pastimes became codified, standardised and increasingly regulated, a decrease of the level of violence and a greater demand for participants' self-control unfolded over time. The relatively simple figuration at the time encompassed high-class people, playing by and for themselves; the role of audiences/spectators was not really influential in determining the format of the games.

These high-class players iteratively honed a 'sociotechnical' invention called sport that afforded them an enjoyable tension/excitement within the safety limits of a rule-bound activity. Thus, these activities featured an adequate tension balance between danger and safety, between emotional decontrolling and emotional restraint. However, as the sports phenomenon expanded towards other social groups, the influence of spectators within the sports figuration increased, affecting the formats and rules of sports in order to gain an adequate tension balance not only for them, but also for the players. This occurred in the following informalisation turn.

The Informalisation Turn

The spread of modern sport in England during the second half of the 19th century, from the reserved setting of the public schools to the whole society, was led by a 'competition and intertwining mechanism' among individuals and social groups [Wouters 2016: 13]. Teams representing clubs, neighbourhoods, and cities were progressively immersed in competitive leagues that further helped to standardise a certain set of rules and governing bodies for the organization of the matches and seasons. Sport became more 'seriously' played by players who were expected to produce 'sports-performance', not only for themselves, but for those they represented.

Thus, the chains of interdependence in the sports figuration became longer and more encompassing. It is precisely around the first wave of informalisation of the last quarter of the 19th century [Wouters 2007] when the professionalization of the game represented a serious threat to the amateur organization of the game. That is why, during the 1880s and 1890s, there arose an explicit emphasis on the 'amateur ethos' [Dunning and Sheard 2005: 126] as a reaction from the established public-school elite (the amateur players) to the intrusion of working class players (the professional players) and organizations that became dominant in some modalities of the game. For instance, the integration conflicts that surged in the game of rugby ended up splitting the game in 1895 into two variants led by different organizations: Rugby Union (professionals) and Rugby League (amateurs).

As different sports became played internationally during what Maguire [1999] defines as 'the third global sportization phase' (1870 to the early 1920s), chains of interdependence grew even longer, led by competition and intertwinement mechanisms. 'Achievement striving' values [Dunning 2008] became more ingrained, progressively displacing the amateur values as the balance among different individuals and social groups equalized.

This by no means implied a sudden change. In 1896, the rebirth of the modern Olympic Games by the Baron de Coubertin was led by a group of aristocratic, high class amateurs that controlled the organization and its values well into the 20th century. The Olympic movement was able to maintain tighter control than other organizations, such as the governing bodies surrounding football. The latter embracing from the very beginning a much more professionalized model. Nonetheless, as the 20th century unfolded, the 'achievement striving' orientation became the main set of values, both in the Olympic and the professional organizations. The difference was not just a matter of nuance. As Maguire remarks, during the 'fourth global sportization phase (1920s-1960s), it was the American version of the achievement sport ethos that had gained ascendancy' [1999: 84-86], displacing the amateur ethos of the English gentlemen as the sports movement flowed into different parts of the globe.

Along this pattern of development, modern sports featured not only more controlled forms of violence but also strong social pressure to use rational/instrumental violence in order to comply with the 'achievement striving' orientation of professionalism [Dunning 2008]. The increase of instrumental violence in modern sport should not be interpreted simply as a decivilising trend in sport – or as a de-sporticizing trend – but as an informalising trend. Precisely, the use of instrumental physical violence contained in 'dirty play' or 'tactical fouls' to destroy the opponent's game or instrumental (symbolic) violence in match fixing, cheating and doping cases do not imply an immediate gratification of an impulsive outburst of anger but the long-term calculation of effects and gain/risk ratio.

PROCESS-SOCIOLOGY AND RESEARCH ON JAPANESE MARTIAL ARTS

Some studies have been conducted on martial arts from the process-sociological approach [Kiku 2004; Van Bottenburg and Heilbron 2006; 2011; Yokoyama 2009; Sánchez García and Malcolm 2010; Sánchez García 2016; 2018]. However, the most extensive treatment of the long-term Japanese civilising pattern in relation to martial traditions comes from the work of a non-Eliasian sociologist: Ikegami Eiko [1995; 2005]. Her work resonates clearly with Eliasian approaches even though she claims Charles Tilly to be her main academic influence.

In her book *The Taming of the Samurai. Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan* [1995], Ikegami traces the changes occurring in the samurai culture during the transition from rampant warfare towards the pacified Tokugawa shogunate (1600-1868). Her argument resonates with what Elias described as the 'courtization of the warriors' in the European case, even though Ikegami pointed out the specificities of the Japanese case. Based fully on Ikegami's argument, Kiku [2004] sought to apply the theory of the civilising process to Japanese martial arts, but only in a modestly exploratory way.

Another fruitful application of Elias's approach to the development of Japanese martial arts comes from Bennett [2015]. Even though Bennett does not use the civilising theory in a systematic way, he successfully applies it to explain specific moments during the long-term development of Japanese swordsmanship. Bennett even introduces the topic of decivilising patterns in the militarization of the country before the Second World War.

My book, *The Historical Sociology of Japanese Martial Arts*, continues to explore the question in a comprehensive and systematic way from a figurational/process-sociology approach. Instead of creating some kind of 'theoretical monster', adding pieces of different authors to fit the frame of the analysis, the book uses Eliasian conceptual tools to show the full potential and explanatory power of process-sociology. The reasons for this boil down to methodological soundness: it allows better control of the preconceptions involved in the theory. It also helps to avoid the temptation to feed common-sensical ideas into ad hoc concepts from different theoretical traditions whenever they fit in the arguments.

A LONG-TERM APPROACH: FOLLOWING THE PATH OF TERMS

A common – though misguided – research strategy for analysing martial arts involves trying to establish a very exact definition of the current term and then looking for the antecedents of the activities that fit such a definition. The search for some kind of 'original essence waiting to unfold through history' is based on a naive teleological view. A more advisable research strategy would involve looking for the emergence of distinctive terms for combat activities within the social processes in which they were embedded.

According to Friday [1997: 6-7], around the 8th century, terms such as *bugei* and *hyoho* were used mainly to refer to the martial traditions of military aristocrats.[16] During the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, the notion of martial traditions attached to professional warriors was expressed in the terms *budo* and *bujutsu*, used interchangeably with *bugei* until the Meiji restoration. Despite early attempts to systematize martial traditions in Kamakura archery, it was during the Muromachi period when the first examples of distinguishable martial traditions were expressed in the notion of *ryu* (current, flow),[17] and possible ramifications of the ryu in different *ha* (branches).

During the Tokugawa period, martial ryu became stabilised and budo became progressively attached in a more specific fashion to the code of conduct or morals of samurai (even though bugei and bujutsu at that time also transmitted this meaning). Budo became clearly distinguishable from bujutsu or bugei in the Meiji period, with the creation of modern budo (*gendai budo*). The relationship between budo and morals grew stronger during the Meiji period and became definitive during the early 20th century through WWII – involving strong militaristic undertones before to the Second World War. Currently, budo denotes 'the process by which the study of bujutsu becomes a means to self-development and self-realization' [Friday 1997: 7]. Bujutsu focuses on the fighting capacity of the martial disciplines, while bugei is a more comprehensive term, including both budo and bujutsu.

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16   Bugei and hyoho evolved through time and became attached to different meanings already well distinguished in the Tokugawa period: bugei became the generic term for samurai fighting arts and hyoho as a synonym for swordsmanship.

17   Prior to ryu were certain family martial traditions called kaden [Mol 2010: 74], based on the accumulated experience of former generations in the battlefield. Kaden could fit also the definition of martial arts as they already presented some kind of format and systematization. Nonetheless, as they were orally transmitted it is hard to trace their origins and development, it is safer to rely on the use of ryu as they are present in written texts. Many any of these Kaden were introduced later as part of the ryu.

Terminological Controversies

Donn Draeger's well-known [2007a; 2007b] model attempted to explain the evolution from classical bujutsu of pre-Tokugawa times to the classical budo of Tokugawa times via a clear-cut demarcation between fighting practices and mere ways of self-perfection. Notwithstanding the importance of Draeger's analyses for the understanding of Japanese martial traditions,[18] more recent research has shown that Draeger's evolutionary model from bujutsu to budo is flawed, not least terminologically. Rare exceptions notwithstanding – such as the change in terminology from *Jikishin ryu jujutsu* to *Jikishin ryu judo* in 1724 – the differentiation between 'do' and 'jutsu' never took place during the Tokugawa era.[19] Such differentiation only occurred at the earliest during the later Meiji period [Hurst 1993: 42], possibly even later. The complete change in terminology came only during the Taisho period, thanks to a great extent to the work of the Dai-Nippon Butokukai.[20]

Terminological controversies cannot be understood in a vacuum. Changes in terminology are always embedded within broader social processes. That is why authors such as Friday [2005] actually criticise Draeger's entire interpretation of the transformation of martial arts. For instance, Draeger considered that koryu bujutsu aimed at the development of effective skills for battlefield combat, whereas Friday [2005] considers it more appropriate to understand koryu bujutsu as activities not primarily intended for training in combat but for self-perfection and cultivation. Indeed, Friday's approach denies that a radical clear-cut demarcation in the martial culture of the warriors occurred during the Tokugawa period – from martial techniques (bujutsu) to martial ways (budo), as argued by Draeger [2007b], or from heiho (combat systems) to bugei (martial arts) as argued by Hurst [1993: 42]. Such changes had started during the Warring States period and were ongoing thereafter.

The Development of Martial Arts within Broader Social Processes

Currently, features such as martial efficacy, etiquette, aesthetics, self-perfection and sport are all present in the martial arts discourses. These are the results of progressive sedimentations of the practices and values of different social actors at different stages in time. The exclusive identification of martial arts with the warrior group emerged only during the unification of the country and became definitively set during the Tokugawa period. Until then, the warrior group did not hold a monopolistic use of warfare and fighting techniques; it was something that was shared with other social groups such as religious institutions and peasants.

During this long period, martial arts have evolved far from techniques focused exclusively on combat efficacy on the battlefield. The initial content of martial arts was evidently about fighting-related techniques but, progressively, the main concern shifted from combat effectiveness in war towards questions of etiquette, self-perfection, or even entertainment. In this manner, the term 'martial arts' is tightly bound to the civilising process theory: a progressive degree of detachment from mere violence and combat has been at play in what we consider today 'martial arts'– even though some predominant decivilizing phases have occurred as well.[21]

Obviously, this transformation occurred over a long period of time. The differentiation between mere military training and the 'something else' that was included in the notion of martial arts during the Kamakura period is hard to pinpoint. 'Military archery' and 'ceremonial archery' were the same, except in terms of the time and occasion of the use, whether on the battlefield or in court ceremony respectively. During the Kamakura and Muromachi periods, fighting proficiency, etiquette, aesthetics and self-perfection were well-balanced elements of a warrior's martial traditions and were furthermore all embedded within a religious facet.

It is anachronistic to talk about art, religion and martial arts in ancient times as we do today – as clearly discernible and separate social spheres. The degree of social development during premodern Japan does not permit the making of such clear-cut distinctions as those between the religious/spiritual sphere from politics, war, art or everyday life. Japanese people of these times lived their lives permeated by religious

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18   Draeger's model continues to be the default assumption of the hoplological school. See for example Skoss [2005], Hall [2012: 280-82].

19   Terada Kanemon Masashige (1616-74), grandmaster of one of the branches of Kito ryu, the Kito Midare ryu, had founded the Jikishin ryu around 1640s. By 1724, the Jikishin ryu would become Jikishin ryu judo (predating Kano Jigoro's use of the term by more than 150 years) and bare-handed techniques occupied a significant part of the curriculum. However, the greater predominance of bare-handed techniques did not mean a complete specialization. As written documents of the era showed, the ryu also contained subsections on the use of grappling armed with short weapons as well as sword techniques [Mol 2001:130].

20   For more on the Dai-Nippon Butokukai, see Yasuhiro Sakaue's article in this issue.

21   Explanatory models such as Armstrong [1986] and Donohue [1993] applied to the Japanese case also support Elias's 'civilising theory' (see Donohue and Taylor [1994] for a critical assessment of different models). Nonetheless, these theoretical models cannot grasp fully the complexity of the Japanese case (e.g. account for the decivilising influences and recurrences) in the way that the Eliasian model can.

beliefs. That is why notions of etiquette in martial arts during the Kamakura period were always connected to ceremonial and religious rituals.

In the Muromachi period, martial arts started to be thought of as paths of self-perfection, containing esoteric religious undertones, strongly connected with the notion of performing arts. The same goes for the relation of martial arts and warfare. At times when warfare was a regular part of daily lives – at least up until the *pax* Tokugawa of the 17th century – martial arts were inextricably bound to the shifting dynamics of warfare. In this sense, a clear-cut demarcation of warriors as a separate group of war-specialists did not exist either, until the end of the 16th century when the category of warrior became more strictly delimited.

Furthermore, even though men may have played the main role in warfare and in the development of martial traditions, women participated and had some influence in the development of martial arts as well. Warfare, as well as the development of martial traditions, was just part of a broader social pattern of state formation. Thus, changes in the monopoly of violence and taxes must be taken into account to understand the specific development of warfare and martial arts.

Elias's process-sociology has the advantage of preventing any tendency to disconnect martial arts from broader social patterns. Such disconnections can end up producing a type of 'martial arts hagiography', as can often be seen in standard 'commonsensical' historical approaches, which trace milestones and coordinates as if they are ever disconnected from broader social patterns.

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