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Editorial

Dear readers and writers,

It's amazing what has developed over the last few years. And perhaps even more amazing is how it all began—please forgive me taking this excursion into private life, but it shows that sometimes it really only takes the flapping of a butterfly's wings to trigger far-reaching developments.

On a late summer day in 1994, my daughter Sonja came out of school crying because boys had pulled her hair while the children were playing tag. That's why she didn't want to go to school anymore. When I told a colleague about it, he suggested sending Sonja to karate. No sooner said than done—which sounds easier than it was, because Sonja was indignant when I suggested "Karate" to her (and because I myself had no experience at all in martial arts until then). Nevertheless, she agreed to take a look at it, provided she was allowed to reject it outright at any time. Anyway, she then stayed with it for a year, during which time I observed the training with increasing interest and finally attended a beginner's course for adults in 1995.^[1] What followed was—and still is—probably the most remarkable thing in my movement career and a significant element in my professional biography as well: Kyu and Dan examinations, development of a segment "martial arts and combat sports" in the education of sport students at the University of Bayreuth, acceptance of doctoral students and own research in the field of "martial arts and combat sports", 2011 the opening symposium "martial arts and combat sports in research and teaching" in Bayreuth, successful application for the status of a commission "Martial Arts and Combat Sports" in the German Association of Sports Science in 2012, since then an annual conference—meanwhile with international keynotes and in 2018 even with a leap across national borders to Ghent in Belgium—and in the same year finally the foundation of the academic Open Access Journal *jomar* | Journal of Martial Arts Research. Of course, all this is not only due to my daughter (or the boys who would pull her by the hair or the context in which it happened or...), but also to the many people who accompanied and facilitated this process, my karate teacher and friend Detlef Seidel playing a decisive role here.

What is this journal about? Quite simple: about martial arts and combat sports in the focus of interdisciplinary research. Quite simple? Not at all! Brizin and Wiethäuper (2016)^[2] assume that "there is an inconsistent coexistence of

1: The story is part and occasion of the book "Drache und Tiger – Kampfkunstgeschichten für Kinder" (Dragon and Tiger – Martial Arts Stories for Children), published 2014 by Werner Kristkeitz Verlag Heidelberg.

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disciplinary approaches, basic assumptions, problems and interests to the heterogeneous phenomena of fighting in terms of movement culture" (p. 9). The authors see an opportunity for understanding in the approach of Heinemann's sports models (2007).^[3] In addition to the traditional sport model, the professional show sport, the expressive sport model, and the traditional game cultures, a so-called functionalist sport model is worked out. "Thus", say Brizin and Wiethäuper (2016, p. 11),

"superordinate organizational structures are considered which on the one hand allow the purposes and motives of the individual, but on the other hand are not regarded as reshaped by direct practice and thus remain outside. This model consideration enables a comprehensive view of the diversity in the duel disciplines, regardless of whether they are practiced in the traditional sports model with or without competition character as leisure, amateur or competitive sports, whether they have a commercial ulterior motive in professional show sports and pursue 'entertainment', whether, as explained in the expressive sports model, they concentrate on the experience of movement, or even use martial arts in the sense of a traditional game culture in order to work out local identifications and cultural roots".

Herewith the authors raise the question of purpose and with reference to Martinková and Parry (2015)^[4] distinguish "Close Combat, Warrior Art, Martial Art, Martial Way, and Martial Sports". Brizin and Wiethäuper (2016) emphasize that "with 'purpose' more is said about the participants than about a specific martial art, because purpose is finally determined by the user himself" (2016, p. 12).

Meyer (2016)^[5] takes the same line, showing that this topic is so difficult to define precisely because of "individual semantization", which is based on phenomenological categorization. "Whether", says Meyer, "something is martial arts / combat sports is decided by the active person or the observer on the basis of phenomenological comparisons with what they themselves have come to know as such" (p. 18). To clarify the matter, Meyer proposes to introduce "martial style" as a working term for phenomena such as judo, boxing, capoeira, etc., and "martial technique" as a working term for a movement element of a martial style. Martial arts / combat sports then encompass the totality of all martial styles, and "through the demonstration of what constitutes and defines a martial style, phenomena can be classified as belonging or not belonging to the collective or field term martial arts / combat sports" (p. 19). For this Meyer breaks the phenomenological attributes of martial styles according to Wetzler (2014)^[6]—outer attributes: clothing, armament; systematic attributes: recognition of sports rules, objective fight utility, aesthetics; internal attributes: history, spirituality / philosophy, assignment of meaning—and checks them for their suitability for definition. His analysis leads Meyer to the conclusion "that neither a single attribute nor a combination of attributes is sufficient to define and differentiate martial styles properly" (p. 27). Accordingly, in his opinion, these attributes were not suitable for the field definition of martial arts / combat sports. Meyer therefore continues to investigate the questions of what constitutes a martial technique and

2 .Brizin, D. & Wiethäuper, H. (2016). Gegenstandsbestimmungen zum Kämpfen – Zwischen kulturellem Handeln und offenem Bewegungsgeschehen. In M. J. Meyer (Hrsg.), *Martial Arts Studies in Germany – Defining and Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries. 5. Symposium der dvs-Kommission „Kampfkunst und Kampfsport“ vom 30. September bis 2. Oktober 2015 in Mainz* (p. 9-17). Hamburg: Czwalina; translated from the German original into English, likewise the following quotes of these authors.

3: Heinemann, K. (2007). *Einführung in die Soziologie des Sports*. Schorndorf: Hofmann.

4: Martinková, I. & Parry, J. (2015). Martial Categories: Clarification and Classification. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport*, 43, 143-162.

5: Meyer, M.J. (2016). Das Kamehameha-Problem – Was sind Kampfkunst und Kampfsport? In M.J. Meyer (Hrsg.), *Martial Arts Studies in Germany – Defining and Crossing Disciplinary Boundaries. 5. Symposium der dvs-Kommission „Kampfkunst und Kampfsport“ vom 30. September bis 2. Oktober 2015 in Mainz* (p. 18-38). Hamburg: Czwalina; translated from the German original into English, likewise the following quotes of this author.

6: Wetzler, S. (2014). Vergleichende Kampfkunstwissenschaft als historisch-kulturwissenschaftliche Disziplin – Mögliche Gegenstände, nötige Quellen, anzuwendende Methoden. In S. Liebl & P. Kuhn (Hrsg.), *Menschen im Zweikampf – Kampfkunst und Kampfsport in Forschung und Lehre 2013. 3. Symposium der dvs-Kommission „Kampfkunst und Kampfsport“ vom 7.-9. November 2013 in Erlangen* (p. 57-66). Hamburg: Czwalina.

what constitutes a martial style. He concludes that "martial techniques differ from sport, dance and ritual because they have a theoretical, subjective fight utility" and that "a martial style—as a system of martial techniques—includes the following obligatory properties: 1. Foundation: human combat; 2. Systemization through training and teaching; 3. Doctrine of a Master Reality; 4. Autoimmunity; 5. Self-sufficient fight cultural identity" (p. 33f.). What for Meyer follows from this is that "a (fighting) sports science [and thus the *jomar* | Journal of Martial Arts Research; note PK] has to deal with every movement phenomenon which the martial style definition above includes—independently of the skepticism the researcher may share" (p. 34).

Thus, the object of *jomar* is now clarified, but not already the problem of the dual concept martial arts / combat sports. According to Meyer, this concept does not only exist in German, but also in English (martial arts / combat sports) and Japanese (bujutsu / budō) linguistic areas—although the terms cannot be equated due to their respective cultural contextuality—and considers "the different assignments of sense and meaning that active persons give to the field of movement, to the numerous martial styles as well as to their own exercise motives" (2016, p. 35). Meyer shows that the two terms are not distinct. "Ergo," he concludes, "we must continue working with the double concept, even if the two concepts are mutually indistinguishable, and only function as field terms in their interaction" (p. 37).

Brizin and Wiethäuper (2016) attempt to dissolve this duality into the elementary of fighting. With Bietz, Grotehans, and Hindemith (2013, p. 366)^[7], the authors assume that fighting seems

"(...) to be a fundamental and deeply rooted human form of behavior, which not only shows itself in existential references as an archaic form of the confrontation with resources, territories or distribution chances, but which—in terms of movement culture—has also developed in many ways as a form of habitus in ritual and playful transformation".

In this context, "what we can experience and describe as a diffuse but typical duel related to fighting differs in a central moment from 'the other sport'" (Brizin & Wiethäuper, 2016, p. 12); because through rituals and movement tasks the approach to a level of ability is striven for that is considered advantageous and meaningful for a "hypothetical or real expected duel" (ibid.). Both a confrontation with "aspects of a serious fight" and something "playful" (ibid.), which is done for its own sake, take place. For the authors, the "peculiar ambivalence" of fighting does not consist in the duality of art and sport, but in the relationship between play and seriousness, between freedom of purpose and purposiveness (pp. 12f.). What is unique here is the radicalization of the competitive situation (Binhack, 1998)^[8], which distinguishes fighting from all other movement and sport formats and—even if it is regulated for sporting competitions—refers to its historical roots as action "always directed against the body and life of the respective opponent" (Binhack, 1998, p. 114).

This addresses what Bowman (2017, p. 17)^[9] with reference to Laclau and Mouffe (1985, p. 111)^[10] calls the "relationality" of all identity: fighting is not

7: Bietz, J., Grotehans, D. & Hindemith, I. (2013). Genetisches Lehren im Sportunterricht am Beispiel Kämpfen. *Sportunterricht*, 62(12), 365-371; translated from the German original into English.

8: Binhack, A. (1998). *Über das Kämpfen. Zum Phänomen des Kampfes in Sport und Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt/Main: Campus; translated from the German original into English.

only a relationship between partners or opponents, it is also relational as it can only be grasped and understood in relation to the context. And: like all identities, martial arts and combat sports—as phenomena in contexts—are “complexly articulated collective wills” (Bowman, 2017, p. 17; with reference to Laclau), i.e. not something ‘in itself’, but the expression of respective social agreements. So, when we talk about martial arts and combat sports as phenomena, we have to be aware that these phenomena are not given as such, but are ‘made’. Thus, we cannot be concerned with defining martial arts and combat sport as well as possible;

„it is rather that we must face up to the fact that ‘things’ are neither simply nor necessarily ‘things’: that all identities are at root contingent discursive achievements, or establishments, or—to use Laclau’s words—‘transient points of stabilization’” (Bowman, 2017, S. 18).

According to Bowman (2017, p. 18), two dimensions have to be distinguished in this context: the “in here” dimension and the “out there” dimension. A definition on which we agree stabilizes our academic discourse “in here”. But this could also mean a fix view and closed-mindedness towards other ideas “out there” in terms of space and time. Therefore, in thinking and talking about martial arts and combat sports the academic community requires an openness which continually tries to recognize and catch up with other ideas about martial arts and combat sports “out there”. In this respect it might be necessary to completely say goodbye to the need to develop definitions because

„rather than orientating and habituating us into an academic life of taxonomical labours centred on defining and demarcating, post-structuralist approaches proceed from the proposition that identities are always irreducibly relational and incomplete, and hence contingent and open or ongoing. Identities are constituted by and within discourses, and they always emerge as points in clusters of moving constellations of related, contiguous, cognate, differentiated, associated, contrasting and oppositional terms, in all kinds of possible relations—linguistic, semiotic, lived, institutional, legislative, and so on” (Bowman, 2017, S. 20).

Against this backdrop, the **jomar** | Journal of Martial Arts Research deals with the ambivalent and—if at all then only—relational phenomena of fighting, which are provisionally defined in the dual field concept of martial arts and combat sports, i.e. “made” and graspable in their respective contexts, and which, as martial styles, i.e. systems of martial techniques, have certain of the above-mentioned characteristics—namely in an interdisciplinary approach that is as open as possible to thought and language. On the one hand, this expresses that **jomar** is open to all conceivable disciplinary perspectives, as long as they see themselves as serious in the sense of good scientific practice. ^[11] I would like to emphasize that this refers to practice-orientated contributions as well as to theoretical, empirical and methodological contributions. On the other hand, **jomar** is concerned with bringing together different disciplines in order to benefit from their encounter and their confrontation with the subject. The resulting discourse is not only open to all those who wish to contribute to it, it is also open to interested readers, because **jomar** is an Open Access journal accessible free of charge from both sides. It publishes original

9: Bowman, P. (2017). What can a Martial Body do for Society? Or: Theory before Definition in Martial Arts Studies. In S. Körner & L. Istaş (Hrsg.), *Martial Arts and Society. Zur gesellschaftlichen Bedeutung von Kampfkunst, Kampfsport und Selbstverteidigung. 6. Jahrestagung der dvs-Kommission „Kampfkunst und Kampfsport“ vom 6.-8. Oktober 2016 in Köln* (p. 15-32). Hamburg: Czwalina.

10: Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics*. London: Verso.

11: Cf. the recommendations of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft; retrieved Nov 29th, 2018 from http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/dfg_im_profil/reden_stellungnahmen/download/empfehlung_wiss_praxis_1310.p

articles, systematic reviews / meta-analyses and practical contributions (with a double-blind peer review process) as well as conference papers, conference reports, impulse papers and reviews of media units (with an internal peer review process). In addition, there are the categories **jomar** debates, **jomar** interviews and **jomar** reprints, which are initiated and arranged by the editors themselves. A special feature of **jomar** is multi-media publishing, i.e. audio and video files can be published together with text contributions. Since all contributions can be entered on a rolling basis, **jomar** has no deadlines for submissions. In order to guarantee high publication quality, all articles in **jomar** are reviewed by experts.

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Finally, I'd like to express my anticipation regarding the development of the **jomar** | Journal of Martial Arts Research. May the **jomar** flourish and—nationally as well as internationally—contribute to the clarification of the thematic field of martial arts and combat sports!

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