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CASE STUDY

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KARATE SPORTS DISCIPLINES FROM THE SPOTLIGHT OF THE PARADIGM SHIFT OF JAPANESE COMBAT SYSTEMS: ANALYTICAL STUDY

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Abstract: .

Background: Nowadays, many karate organizations hold their own competitions at various levels, up to and including the world championships. They are positioned as separate sports, although the content, rules and regulations of many of them differ only in details. A large number of similar sports versions of karate interfere with the correct understanding and objective assessment of karate in the modern world.

Materials and Methods: Based on 40 years of practical experience in studying and teaching karate and on the results of his own research in 2019-2022, the author presents his point of view on the unification of sports versions of karate based on common systemic features into three separate sports. Like any sport, karate reflects the social phenomenon from which it originated. Using civilization-historical, functional and social approaches, the author suggests that the paradigm shifts in combat systems lead to the emergence of new forms that have deep systemic differences. Accordingly, these differences are also manifested in sports disciplines that have arisen on the basis of these forms.

Results: Three forms of karate have a component with pronounced features of modern sport and form three systemically different competitive disciplines: 1) Style (Traditional) karate; 2) General karate; 3) Sports (Olympic) karate. The differences between them stem from the differences between the forms of karate from which they arose.

Conclusions: Style, General and Sports karate are sports which require consideration in different paradigms. They are selfsufficient and equal in value and public demand.

Introduction

There is a large number of different karate styles and karate schools in modern world. Many of the organizations that cultivate them, hold their own competitions at various levels, including world championships. Those organizations position their competitions as their own original sport, creating own separate rules and forming special structures for holding them. Dozens of national and international competitions are being held in the world, organized by various style and sports organizations of karate every year. Many of them have the status of world championships, and hundreds of their winners bear the title of world champions.

The presence of a large number of competitive sports, with the term "karate" in its name, makes it difficult to objectively assess karate as a whole and causes a misunderstanding of the true state of affairs in world karate. A large

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number of different championships leads to a decrease in the number of participants in each of them and the dispersion of the strongest athletes between them, which leads to a natural decrease in the prestige of victory in each such competition and lowers the importance of champion status. The impossibility to compare the real level of skill of the winners of different championships or the strength and advantages of specific styles directly on the tatami inevitably leads to a verbal discussion about the strength or weakness of this or that organization, about the hypothetical right of one of them to prevail over others and even subdue them.

Against the backdrop of the media frenzy around the Olympic karate attempt, the World Karate Federation (WKF), recognized by the IOC, got a reason to impose the opinion that Olympic karate is displacing traditional martial systems from society, and only karate, as an Olympic sport, can guarantee further progress and development. The WKF considers itself entitled to call its competitions the only correct and legitimate ones, and also to call on all world karate organizations to join participation in such competitions on its terms.

The overabundance of world championships also affects the development of karate at the national level. Ukraine is one example, where state support for a sport directly depends on its inclusion in the "Register of recognized sports in Ukraine", which already contains 13 sports that have the word "karate" in their names. In addition to WKF Olympic karate, it includes 5 versions of the Shotokan style and 4 versions of the Kyokushin style, but there are no national organizations of the Shito-ryu, Wado-ryu, Gosoku-ryu, Fudokan styles that are popular in the country, successful and authoritative in the world, and also the World Union of Karate Federations (WUKF), which develops General Karate. The real reason for the refusal is the overabundance of karate-related sports in the registry, as well as the difficulty for officials to understand the commonality and specific differences between them [1].

A large number of competitive forms, often having only minor differences in content, rules or regulations, lead to disorientation of society, insufficient understanding of the role and functions of each of them and, as a result, society's expectations and their assessment can be based on requirements that, by definition, are not specific to a particular system. A reasoned and clear answer to the debatable questions is also required: does sports karate really displace traditional karate?; can competitive forms of traditional karate contest with Olympic karate?; can any form of karate claim hegemony over others?.

This situation cannot continue further, as it does already have a negative impact on the development of karate in general and in all its manifestations. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to find a solution, which the author sees in the following:

- to systematize and group the existing competitive forms of karate on the basis of signs of commonality and differences between them;
- 2) to determine the unified competitive forms of karate that meet the criteria of a modern sport;
- 3) to determine the systemic differences between these competitive forms of karate.

Methodology

This article is an author summary of 40 years of personal practical experience in the study and teaching of karate, as well as the results of the author's own research in 2019-2022.

The methods used in the study are: - study and analysis of scientific publications and conference materials, results of karate competitions; - insider information obtained from personal communication with masters of different styles, obtained by the author in the course of his own training and karate competitions. They are significant figures in *Budo*, leading masters of traditional schools and styles of karate, leaders of the world's most authoritative karate organizations: Takayuki Kubota and Rod Kuratomi (*Gosoku Ryu*, International Karate Association - IKA), Hirokazu Kanazawa and Manabu Murakami (*Shotokan*, International Shotokan Karate Federation – SKIF), Kenneth Funakoshi (*Shotokan*, Funakoshi Shotokan Karate Association – ITKA), Vladimir lorga (*Shotokan*, International Karate Federation – ITKF), Takemasu Okuyama (*Hachi o Kai*, IKA).

The starting point of the study was the perception of sport as a civilizational phenomenon, which in different periods of the socio-historical development of mankind personified the principle of harmonious unity of the bodily, socio-cultural, moral and aesthetic aspects of human life. The object of the competition is a simplified model of some phenomenon from the labor, military, cultural or other practical activity of a person, which has moved from the paradigm of a real vital action into the paradigm of competition and play inherent in sports [2]. Sport, as a system for organizing competitions, depends on the civilizational environment and socio-historical processes, reflexively responds to changes in society. In this article, the author uses the definition of a separate sport as an essentially self-sufficient system of competitions organized according to the rules of fair competition on a regular basis [3]. Modern sport must contain mandatory structural elements that define it:

- as a sports discipline, which implies the presence of: a) a specific object of competition; b) pre-agreed rules for conducting sports rivalry, a list of permissible and prohibited actions, a clear way to evaluate them; c) permanent regulations for the organization of competitions;
- 2. as a separate social institution, having: a) a specially created organizational structure; b) modern sports management.

Karate has gone from a pragmatic system of preparing a person for a duel for life to a modern Olympic sport. On this path, there were both revolutionary turns that gave rise to new systemic paradigms of looking at karate, and periods of evolutionary development in which fundamentally new forms of karate appeared as a combat system. At the same time, the old forms did not disappear, but continued to develop and, along with the new ones, they created their own special forms of competition - sports disciplines [4,5].

Agreeing with the statement that sport is a simplified model of certain elements of society, like a hypothesis was put forward that on the basis of different forms of karate, as a combat system, separate sports disciplines of karate arose, the differences between which should be sought, first of all, in the differences between maternal combat systems and the paradigm in which they are considered.

Three different approaches were used for a comprehensive study of the existing sports disciplines of karate by comparing the mother fighting systems providing different aspects of their consideration:

- 1. **The civilizational-historical approach** is the study of the specifics of the conditions and factors that prompted the emergence of a new combat system, as well as the changes that arose under the influence of global world processes and during the transition from the Japanese to the Western civilizational environment [6-8].
- 2. **Functional approach** analysis of a social phenomenon that has become the object of competition; trends in changing the content, form, method of using technology, strategy and tactics, the structure of relationships, as a response to a paradigm shift and the main goal around which a new paradigm is being formed [9].
- 3. **Social approach** analysis of the criteria for assessing the social value and place of the combat system in society in different historical periods, their dependence on the needs and expectations of society.

The indicators for comparing combat systems are: 1. Differences between the mother (Japanese) and host (Western) civilizations according to the Theory of Local Civilizations [6], which led to changes during the transition to the Western civilizational environment; 2. Influence on the development of karate global processes of modernization, westernization and globalization; 3. The degree of remoteness from the original paradigm "*Bugei*"; 4. Preservation of the Japanese military tradition and the participation of the military class in the creation of the combat system; 5. Differences in the philosophy and psychology of combat, the conditions of the duel and the degree of aggressiveness and risk [9,10]; 6. The degree of authenticity of the content, form and method of application of technology; 7. The mission of a specific combat system in modern society; 8. The place of sports disciplines of karate in world sports.

The systematization is based on a previously proposed own theory [5], according to which the martial systems associated with karate are considered in three different paradigms and appear in five systemically different forms that arose and survived in the process of karate development (Table 1).

Paradigms	Bugei	Transition Bugei- -Budo	Budo	Transition Budo- -Sport	Sport
Paradigm Definition	professional military training		paramilitary education & training		system of sports competitions
Historical Forms	Bujiutsu	Koryu	Style karate	General karate	Sport karate
Paradigm Fit	<i>Bugei</i> paradigm	simultaneously Bugei & Budo	Budo paradigm	simultaneously Budo & Sport	Sport paradigm
Sport Disciplines			Traditional (Style) karate	General karate	Sport (Olimpic) karate

Table 1. Paradigms and Forms of the Japanese Combat System and related sports disciplines

Each of the three existing paradigms of karate as a combat system: "Bugei" (professional military training), "Budo" (military education) and – "Sport" are self-sufficient, complete and balanced systems in physical, moral, ethical and technical terms, having a common origin and technical base, but fundamentally different in goals, the nature of relationships and spiritual values, ways of using the technical arsenal and methods used, which are focused on their own mission, meeting the needs and mentality of the society of a particular historical period, and which have all the necessary structural components for implementation this mission. Karate Sports Disciplines from the Spotlight...

In addition to the three forms of combat systems that directly correspond to their paradigms, there are two transitional ones: from "Bugei" to "Budo" (traditional Okinawan and Japanese Ryu) and from "Budo" to "Sport" (General karate), which contain components inherent in the two different paradigms. The sport, in its modern sense, is not inherent in the combat systems in the "Bugei" paradigm and has not been developed in its traditional forms of Bujiutsu and Koryu. Competitions, which are part of the training in the "Budo" structure, only since 1957 have acquired the characteristics of a modern sport [11]. However, it was "Bugei" that was chosen as the starting point for studying the sports disciplines of karate, since it is here that a model of a peaceful duel is formed to compare the professional skills of warriors. Here the spiritual foundations and content of the duel were laid, the maximum level of requirements for the spiritual, physical and technical level of its participants was set, comparable to the criteria for a real death duel. The further development of karate went along the path of moving away from this initial model of the duel, simplifying and softening its conditions and requirements for it. The degree of remoteness from the initial "Bugei" paradigm largely determines the differences between modern forms of karate [4].

Modern karate originates from Japanese and Okinawan combat systems belonging to the "*Bugei*" paradigm, created in the conditions of an isolated Japanese civilization for practical military tasks by warriors, bearers of Eastern military traditions and thinking in terms of the Japanese mentality. From the point of view of the theory of local civilizations, Japan is defined as a special specific local civilization within the boundaries of one country, significantly different not only from Western, Islamic, Latin and other mega-civilizations, but also from the neighboring Qing civilization [6]. The Japanese collected the best techniques from Chinese, Korean, Okinawan systems into the technical arsenal of their combat systems, which later became the object of competition, trying to understand and preserve their deep essence, and Japanized them with minimal losses.

The emergence of new paradigms is directly related to the stages of the transition of karate from the Japanese civilizational environment to the Western one, the mentality of which, including the mentality of a warrior, differs significantly from the Japanese one. Actually, karate arose under the influence of the global processes of modernization and westernization of Japan in a different "*Budo*" paradigm, as a combat system for educating civilians in the spirit of a warrior, thereby essentially interrupting the military tradition. Further approaching into the Western civilizational environment led to the emergence of a new radically new form of karate in the "Sport" paradigm [5].

The difficulties and losses of the transition arise from the difference in the acceptance by the Japanese and Europeans of alien phenomena like karate. Europeans are more likely to reject or simplify everything that is not clear to them or does not fit into their system of perceptions. In other words, a social phenomenon formed according to the laws of one civilization will be able to integrate into the value system of another civilizational environment only when it acquires a form understandable and acceptable for this environment, which requires time and intermediate forms [12]. An essential factor in the paradigm shift and the emergence of new forms of karate is the influence of the military class on the processes of their creation. D. Draeger saw the main differences between the combat systems in the peculiarities of the Japanese mentality and the degree of participation of warriors in them, and divided them according to their purpose: *Bujutsu* for warriors, and *Budo* and sports for civilians [13].

	Bugei	Budo	Sport
Name in <i>Kanji</i>	<i>Bugei: bu</i> 武 military; gei 芸 skill	Budo: bu 武 martial; do 道 spiritual way	no authentic name in <i>Kanji</i>
Mother Civilization	Japanese local civilization	Japanese local civilization	Western local civilization
Influenced Processes	long-term evolution	modernization & institutionaliza- tion	westernization & globalization
Function	combat skills intended for real war	paramilitary education for civilians and youth.	martial sports: peaceful compe- titions
Creators & Consumers	created by the Japanese for the Japanese according to the laws of Japanese local civilization	created by the Japanese both for the Japanese and non-Japanese: transition from the Japanese local civilization to the Western one	created by non-Japanese for non- -Japanese according to the laws of Western local civilization
Influence of the Military Class	created by warriors for warriors	created not necessarily by war- riors for non-warriors	created by non-warriors for non- -warriors

 Table 2. Three Paradigms of the Japanese Combat System – Civilizational Aspects

Developing the logical chain of D. Draeger and highlighting the sport as a separate modern karate paradigm, it was proposed to compare the three karate paradigms, taking into account the main civilizational and historical factors [5]. (Table 2).

Each transition of combat systems to a new paradigm was another step away from the original mission and military tradition, a process of their simplification and primitivization, which was expressed in the narrowing of the technical arsenal and reducing its effectiveness due to the gradual elimination of dangerous and traumatic techniques; changing the nature of the implementation of the remaining techniques in favor of safety and entertainment.

Since the moment of its creation, modern karate abandoned the main idea - the effective and quick destruction of the enemy, around which the "*Bugei*" paradigm was formed, in favor of the idea of spiritual, mental and physical education of the younger generation, inherent in "*Budo*". Therefore, ideologically, karate came out of the military tradition, although it largely retained its elements in the technical, spiritual, and strategic aspects [14,15]. This allows us to consider it a modern combat system with a significant traditional component. Further transition to the "Sport" paradigm turns karate into a globalized combat system, since the traditional component almost completely disappears under the influence of globalization processes, with the exception of individual elements built into the finished structure of Western martial arts. Previously, Olympic judo went through a similar procedure of reflective reaction to changes in society [16].

The change in the paradigm of combat systems led not only to the rejection of the use of a part of authentic techniques dangerous to health, and to a revision of the attitude towards its purpose and method of use. Reducing the level of danger and risk in terms of escrimology [10], the ban on aggression, reducing the overall tension of the duel and the degree of responsibility for the consequences of the defeat determined the differences in the goal, philosophy and psychology of the duel [17] (Table 3).

	BUGEI	BUDO	SPORT
Α	professional combat skills	potential for self-defense	win in competition
В	"kill or be killed"	"protect yourself"	"become a champion"
C	traditional	modern	globalized
D	authentic combat spirit	basically authentic combat spirit	spirit of the game
Ε	maximum	average	minor
F	initiative of aggression is allowed	limited by law and for self-defense only	absolutely forbidden
G	priority use of dangerous technique	the most dangerous technique is excluded	absolutely forbidden

Table 3. Three Paradigms of the Japanese Combat System: functional approach.

A – main objective, B – motivational slogan, C – social characteristic, D – fight strategy and spirit, E – degree of risk and responsibility, F – right to violence, G – use of dangerous technique

As per the author, all competitions held by different karate organizations can be divided into three groups based on the differences between their maternal combat systems. All forms of competition in karate, the object of which is a real duel with direct contact between two opponents who have a common philosophy and similar rules, should be attributed to one of three sports disciplines:

1. Style or Traditional karate in the "Budo" paradigm;

2. Sports karate in the "Sport" paradigm;

3. General karate, as a transitional form from the "Budo" paradigm to the "Sport" paradigm.

The presence of other characteristic features of modern sports: a regular calendar of competitions, a special organizational structure and modern sports management - gives reason to consider them separate, self-sufficient and original sports. The main differences between them are shown in Table 4.

Sports disciplines of karate have differences in the general strategy and tactics, rules and conditions of the competition, the training methodology used. The strategy and rules of the competition show a trend towards a gradual abandonment of the criteria of a real fight in favor of reducing the risk, tension and liability for error. The methodology of teaching and training is also gradually moving away from the initial paradigm. In Style karate, usually, an authentic approach to training is used, when the focus of training is uniform, comprehensive, planned without significant correction for special preparation for specific competitions. The training process is built in the spirit of *Budo*, on the principles of *Shugyo*: integration of body and mind, spirit and form, duel and *kata*, when a person's spirit and mind

	Style karate	General karate	Sport karate
A	"Budo"	"Budo" and "Sport" at the same time	"Sport"
В	Japanese Local Civilization	Western Local Civilization	Western Local Civilization
C	modernization	westernization	globalization
D	traditional karate	modern karate	globalized karate
Е	for any style only	unified for all styles	no any styling
F	lpon-kumite	Sanbon-kumite	Shobu-kumite
G	authentic combat strategy	basically authentic strategy	strategy of the game
H	high	average	small
Ι	potential & realism	potential & realism	attack zone &difficulty

Table 4. Three Karate Forms as Spo	orts Disciplines
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A – Paradigm of Karate, B – Mother Local Civilization, C – Influenced of World Processes, D – Social Characteristic, E – General Nature of the Competition, F – Formula of Kumite, G – Fight Strategy and Philosophy, H – Degree of Risk and Responsibility, I – Evaluation of an Attacking Action

are trained through physical practice, his personality is formed [18]. The general philosophy of training is close to the philosophy of life, it involves the creation of potential, rather for the struggle for life than for winning competitions, for the effectiveness of actions in extreme situations [9,15]. In contrast to this, training in Sports karate has a narrowly specialized cyclical nature, is aimed at achieving the maximum sports form for specific competitions, and is built according to the canons of modern methods of sports training.

In social terms, all three sports disciplines are equally in demand and popular in modern society, practiced on all continents, have no national borders. All the karate masters with whom the author spoke spoke about this. The choice for training any of the three sports disciplines depends solely on the personal perception and recognition of a person's way of thinking, values and philosophical concept, on which a certain sports discipline of karate is based. That is why there are so many sports karate fans in Japan.

To compare the competitive level of competitions in Style and Sports karate, an analysis was made of the world championships of the World Karate Federation - WKF, recognized by the IOC (Spain, 2018) and the Japanese Karate Association - JKA, which regularly holds world championships in *Shotokan* style (Ireland, 2017) [19,20]. A study of the conditions and results of the championships showed that victory in the JKA competitions has a bigger "value", both due to significantly more difficult conditions and in terms of the number of fights won required for victory [21].

The equal public demand and prestige of all three sports sports disciplines of karate is evidenced by the fact that all of them were recognized by the IOC. In 1993, the 101st session of the IOC recognizes Style (Traditional) karate and General karate as two equivalent disciplines of a single sport - karate [22]. The recognition of Sports karate under the WKF rules, which was radically changed in 2010, was the inclusion of karate in the program of the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Results

The results of the study make it possible to describe the characteristics of three sports related to karate:

- Style or Traditional karate with versions for the main styles as separate sports disciplines traditional karate in
 the "Budo" paradigm (military education) while maintaining the main features of the Japanese military tradition: the
 spirit, strategy and psychology of a real fight; extremely high cost of error; controlled use of authentic techniques,
 which, after some correction, can be used in a real fight; lack of weight categories; minimum protective equipment;
 traditional rituals. *Ipon-kumite* rules risk of defeat after one mistake in defense; two levels of assessment of the attacking action in terms of quality, reality and destructive potential. *Shugyo*, a traditional preparation method, is used.
- 2. General karate with versions for worldwide all-style organizations modern karate, a transitional form from the "Budo" paradigm to the "Sport" paradigm, competitions according to the same rules for different styles while maintaining their originality; an organic combination of military tradition with modern competition management. The Sanbon kumite rules are a relaxed version of the traditional rules: the athlete gets a chance to correct a mistake; weight categories have been introduced and the use of protective equipment has been expanded. Both traditional and modern training methods are used.

3. Sports or Olympic karate is a globalized karate in the Sport paradigm; formed as a sports discipline in the understanding of Western local civilization, by including elements of karate into the finished structure of a typical combat sport; cleared of traditional and national features; the spirit, strategy and psychology of the duel is shifted from real combat to sports; the tradition is partly preserved in terminology and ritual. The rules of kumite are a game version of the duel, being as far as possible from the original paradigm, focused on the spectacle, often with the rejection of the logic of a real fight and authentic strategy. The assessment of attacking actions has three levels and depends on the attack zone, technical complexity and entertainment of the attacking action.

Discussion

The author's opinion about the need to consider karate in three different systemic paradigms and the existence of karate in different forms coincides with the functional approach of I. Martinkova and D. Parry, who described five main and several minor forms of karate [23]. Testing among masters of the highest ranks of 8-10 dan, conducted by W. Cynarski, showed the presence of sportification, which accompanies the development of karate in Europe, but is not its leading trend. Many masters believe that sports competition is contrary to the spirit of karate-do, and continue to cultivate its traditional forms [24]. The difference between Japanese style karate and Okinawan karate, which the author relates to traditional *ryu*, is described by G. Bayer [25]. The differences between style karate and sports karate contain the danger that martial arts will lose their original purpose, essence and meaning [9]. Karate competitions are necessary because they meet the interests of today's youth, and are also a good test of the correctness of training. Therefore, in their spirit, strategy and preparation, they should be close to the realities of a real fight for life, contain the potential for effective self-defense. However, when they become an end in themselves, they gradually lose many of the qualities that are characteristic of martial arts. A similar opinion was expressed in personal conversations with the author by many contemporary masters (Kanazawa 2003, Yorga V 2015, Kubota 2018).

Conclusions

As a result of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- 1. In modern karate, there are only three forms of competitions or sports disciplines that meet the criteria of a separate, self-sufficient, original sport: Style karate, General karate and Sports karate;
- For the correct identification of each sports discipline and taking into account its grandiose differences from others in civilizational, historical, functional and social terms, we consider it mandatory to use the definitions "style", "general", "sports" along with the term "karate" in the name of these types sports;
- Each of them performs its own special mission in society, is equally in demand and popular, has equal rights and significance. Any claim to hegemony, an attempt to oust or belittle the significance of another is incorrect and illegal.

The prospect for further research is to streamline the diversity of karate competitions and create an understandable and fair global competitive structure, which is based on the recognition of the existence of three self-sufficient sports disciplines of karate.

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