

Agonology – the unknown science

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Abstract

Is there a science that can provide well-justified knowledge about struggle associated with five aspects of the *homo agonisticus* nature? If there is, why is this science not commonly known? If there is such a science and it becomes widely known, then is there a chance for at least partial mitigation of the effects of constantly exposing people to destructive struggles that are so disastrous for individuals and global society?

Struggle is the most recognizable attribute in human beings, yet uncovering a mystery of *homo agonisticus* seems to be an undoable task. Struggle (armed or unarmed) is the relation that joins billions of everyday people all over the world. The term *agōn* comes from Ancient Greece and meant “a reunion, stadium, sport competitions”. *Agonology* – science about struggle – brings by the two in-depth theories of *agonology* – defensive struggle and combat sport – the effects of cognitive and behavioural therapy for humans.

Key words: budo • *homo agonisticus* • negative co-operation • struggle

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INTRODUCTION

Struggle is the most recognizable attribute in human beings, yet uncovering a mystery of *homo agonisticus* seems to be an undoable task. JR Edison's study [1] constitutes only an outline from the perspective of historical anthropology. Struggle (armed or unarmed) is the relation that joins billions of everyday people all over the world. A hypothetical observer from outside of our planet would not have any problems with formulating the conclusion that a contemporary human being is an agonistic creature, but this agonism would be difficult to clearly define.

First, a human being is born with the potential for survival, i.e., the ability to defend, and if he/she grows up in a society

with developed culture and ethics, he/she does not kill others just as a preventive measure (to survive).

Second, the category of *homo homini lupus*, besides cases of genetic defects, derives either from those with aroused or reinforced expansion needs (especially the need for power over as many people, things, elements of nature, etc. as possible) and aroused hedonistic needs or from those who, often through no fault of their own (or intentionally), are deprived of the possibility to satisfy their fundamental needs.

Third, a human being is an agonistic creature also in a sense that ends the inner struggle with a victory (withdraws from a shameful act, overcomes addictions, etc.) or, in extreme cases, loses it in a shameful and tragic way (for example, multiple

Budo (Budō) – originally a term denoting the “Way of the warrior”, it is now used as a collective appellation for modern martial arts of *kendō*, *jūdō*, *kyūdō* and so on. The primary objective of these “martial ways” is self-perfection (*ningen-kesei*) [21].

Bravery – means efficiency in good deeds, efficiency combined with estimable aspirations [28, 29].

Praxeology (praxiology) – science about good work. *A Treatise on Good Work*, a fundamental lecture of praxiology by T. Kotarbiński (the first edition in 1955) has been translated into majority of the so-called congress languages (English, German, Russian) and as well: Czech, Japanese, and Serbo-Croatian.

Dynamics of the fight (combat dynamics phenomenon) – is defined by the following indexes: activeness, effectiveness of attack, effectiveness of counterattacks and defensive effectiveness [13]. A new element was proposed as an addition – offensive activeness, as a counterpart of the combat dynamics evaluation [30].

and cynical murderer – Anders Behring Breivik in 2011 – or suicide-pilot and murderer – Andreas Lubitz in 2015).

Fourth, some people are linked together with a particular predilection to destructive struggles. One group is constituted by businessmen supported by a lobby of politicians and electronic media corporations who sell violence and aggression on a micro to macro scale. The second group includes zealous performers of such tasks, including neo-gladiators and hired killers (and it does not change the nature of things that this group also includes numerous soldiers protected by international conventions and local laws). In a world with common access to the Internet and electronic media, members of this group have made an impact on teaching people destructive struggle that is unprecedented in the history of mankind – the terms “violence” and “aggression” seem to be too gentle.

Fifth, there are people who can use the agonistic nature of human beings for the creative development of all positive health dimensions (somatic, mental, social) and survival ability in a way worthy of mankind and who have enough determination to implement such a model of auto-creation.

Intellectual elites from the Euro-Atlantic zone rightly note the necessity of building the Society of Knowledge. The Internet and other electronic media are the main tools that can best serve the implementation of this mission. We have the ideas, and the tools are available. However, when we leave aside the assumption, based on the true premises, that those tools most clearly serve to shock *en bloc* society with violence, interpersonal aggression and destructive struggles, we have to pose three significant questions (the second and third are conditional questions):

Is there a science that can provide well-justified knowledge about struggle associated with five aspects of the *homo agonisticus* nature specified above?

If there is, why is this science not commonly known?

If there is such a science and it becomes widely known, then is there a chance for at least partial mitigation of the effects of constantly exposing people to destructive struggles that are so disastrous for individuals and global society?

THE ANSWER TO THE FIRST TWO QUESTIONS – SCIENCE FROM BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN

Agonology – science about struggle – is an original achievement of four Polish scientists. Its development occurred in accordance with the principle “from general to specific”. Five complete but different theories of struggle were published in Polish between 1938 and 2000. This proves that *agonology* is an esoteric science but that the nature of the situation can be explained by the historical and political context. Limited access to this unique knowledge has existed for almost 80 years [2].

In Ancient Greece, the term *agōn* meant “a reunion, stadium, sport competitions” (also a rivalry in drama and music). Derivates of this term include *agōnistikós* – “apt to fight, quarrelsome” – and *agōnia* – “a struggle for victory in competitions, strain, fear”. In the language of praxeology, “agonology” (*French* agonistique, agonologie; *German* Agonistik, Agonologie) is a general knowledge about struggle [2]. The theory of struggle (*agonology*) is, in other words, the theory of negative co-operation referred to by Kotarbiński as “a struggle” alternatively with “a negative co-operation” [3-6].

In 1938, on order of the Polish Army Headquarters, Tadeusz Kotarbiński edited a brochure *From Problems of General Theory of Struggle*, which was published by the Psychological Section of the Military Knowledge Association (one year before the outbreak of the Second World War [3]). He raised this set of problems again in 1957 [4] and 1963 [5].

The essentials of Kotarbiński’s interest in struggle included awareness of the fact that people develop the greatest amount of energy and intelligence when they find themselves in constrained situations. In the case of a struggle, for example, an adversary does all he can to obstruct the action of the other side. There are plenty of these situations in various types of struggles. In the broadest understanding, Kotarbiński defines “a struggle” as any activity with the participation of at least two subjects (assuming that a team can constitute a subject), where at least one of the subjects hinders the other [3-6].

As the most curious case of a struggle, however, he depicts a situation in which both subjects not

only objectively pursue the discordant aims but are also aware of that fact and account for the opposition's activities in their plans of action. These types of struggles take place in sports, in debates of politicians and lawyers, in business competition, partly in education, etc. They qualify as the "intermediate level" of the generalization stage. This places a military struggle (an armed one) on "the basement", notwithstanding the "highest level" of the general theory of the deed (praxeology), which includes the theory of struggle [3-6].

Józef Konieczny dealt with a mathematical theory of struggle [7], but first, he developed a theory of destruction [8]. The possibility of building a modern theory of struggle was perceived by him as joining two strands of thought. The first strand is elaborating on a qualitative theory of struggle that lies in a conceptual apparatus of praxeology, cybernetics, a formal language of mathematical logics, and set theory. The other, a qualitative theory of struggle, lies mainly in building mathematical models, and its results are decisive algorithms of various detailed problems. A statement by Konieczny that purposeful destruction takes place in activity that is not an armed struggle is worth mentioning [8, p. 24].

Jarosław Rudniański, when developing a general theory of struggle, referred above all to its language (a conceptual apparatus). An elaboration of a complete theory of non-armed struggle as well as the theory of compromise [9] is considered to be the most significant contribution in this area of scientific exploration [9]. An essential work of Rudniański, *A Compromise and a Struggle* (1989), was intended to be written in "two stages". The general theory of struggle was published 1983, during a period when Poland was under martial law, under a title *Elements of Praxeological Theory of Struggle. From Problems of a Negative Co-operation* [10].

This knowledge was very inconvenient and dangerous for the communist regime. During the martial law period, Professor Rudniański was a teacher of the theory of struggle for a group of underground "Solidarity" leaders. Above all, he taught about the effective use of methods applied during a non-armed struggle that were elaborated on and described. Not surprisingly, the authorities have hampered the popularization

of the work published in 1983. Rudniański described, among other things, the immediate methods of a non-armed struggle: methods of gaining allies in teams of current and potential adversaries, methods of infiltration. On one hand, he unmasked the ways and methods of actions of communist authorities, and on the other, he showed how to disclose agents and how to penetrate into the enemy teams by oneself. He disclosed the connection between a camouflage of violence and a camouflage of authority. He described the method of the depriving situation, methods of strengthening the needs of expansion, a general method of canalization of ideals, and a method of intensifying fear. He defined and widely justified the principle of a controlled surrounding in a non-armed struggle.

In a group of problems that refer to the efficiency of a non-armed struggle with a stronger adversary, he distinguished a wider and a narrower comprehension of strength (we referred to this concept above); the moral strength of a unit and a team; the main directions of a strategy to use moral strength in a non-armed struggle versus a stronger adversary, seeing a numerous and material considerations; and likewise, master tricks and compulsory situations [2, 9, 10].

This broad and precise knowledge about the methods of unarmed struggle may be useful for anyone. This knowledge may be useful for people of authority (those who exercise it and those who pursue it), regardless of the political system, but paradoxically, it may also be inconvenient for people of authority if it is too widely popularized. There is an increasing probability of the effective control of political institutions, the judiciary, and the media power by people of science and other independent social entities.

Directly after the period of martial law in Poland ended (1988-1990), I had an opportunity to explore *agonology* under the direction of Professor Rudniański at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Science. In 1991, I published the theory of defensive struggle and the theoretical basis for the use of martial arts to reduce aggressiveness and develop people's bravery [11]. A yearly experiment and observations repeated after three years have confirmed the persistent therapeutic and educational effects of this method [12]. In 2000, I published the theory of combat sports [13].

The theory of non-armed struggle was developed under different circumstances [9, 10]. The creative effort of the author of this theory was combined with the everyday struggle of reality experienced on the east side of the *Iron Curtain* – before and during the martial law period in Poland. Therefore, the assumptions of the theory of non-armed struggle are well-grounded in practice and have been verified. Lech Wałęsa, a leader of 10 million members of the *Solidarity* movement overcame the communist regime without violence.

The aphorism *thoughts are free of duty* (German: *gedanken sind zollfrei*), called into question by Karl Klaus, among others, has now been revived. People may be physically isolated and indoctrinated in different ways, but their minds cannot be imprisoned.

Currently, symbolic remains of the *Iron Curtain* are language barriers and irrational prejudices, for example, if twenty-five years of social transformation passed, then the value of knowledge not available, especially in English, is doubtful [14]. If *agonology* is not made available for the global society (and availability can be facilitated by the editors of prestigious scientific journals) and if the Society of Knowledge cannot use it rationally, then the time may come when the lynch will become an acceptable way to claim own arguments and the freedom of speech and gestures will be tied up with the awareness of such sanctions.

THE ANSWER TO THE THIRD QUESTION – TWO COMPETING HYPOTHESES

There are enough historical facts as well as theoretical and empirical arguments to formulate two competing hypotheses – pessimistic and optimistic.

Pessimistic hypothesis. Selective, selfish and incompetent use of *agonology* can further strengthen our agonistic destructive nature layer, in extreme cases, either towards oneself or with a focus on destroying other people or a determination to combine both tendencies.

Optimistic hypothesis. If each individual, or even a multimillion person team, explore and responsibly use this knowledge, they may achieve the ability to defend themselves in a non-violent way,

whereas if an individual as an agonistic being supplements the knowledge with appropriate training, he/she may count on both the preventive effect (developing own bravery) and on the therapeutic effect (reducing potential susceptibility to self-destruction and destroying others).

At the core of the pessimistic hypothesis lies the assumption that constantly exposing people to destructive struggles is currently a major global issue because, for millennia, there have been people who are eager to do this, but for the first time in the history of humankind, they actually have tools to make a powerful impact on the entire population. The optimistic hypothesis is grounded in the assumption that historical and experimental knowledge gathered provides reliable evidence of the determination and ability of individuals and large teams to survive without the necessity of destroying others due to ideological or other reasons (leaving apart self-defence) as well as developing and maintaining this potential ability by appropriate training.

If due to editorial limitations, Ockham's razor is used and further reasoning is limited only to those two assumptions, it will be easy to generally justify that both the pessimistic and optimistic hypotheses are correct. Contemporary *homo agonisticus* is facing the same alternative, even though it has been defined in various manners in the past. Professor Rudniański, in his fundamental work *A Compromise and a Struggle* [9], quoted the Mahatma Gandhi maxim: "Good and evil must exist side by side, a man should make a choice."

Lubitz made an egoistic choice and did not give a choice to people who trusted him. This is a terrifying example of the dramatic situation in which humanity has found itself. In this easy typology (pessimistic hypothesis), not only Lubitz but also Breivik, Hitler, Stalin, anonymous suicide-bombers, etc., can be included with no difficulty. The scale of the effects of their actions is commonly known. Determining the number and scale of the effects of their potential followers is rather impossible.

On this and future stages of the progress of knowledge, the enlightened members of the Knowledge Society are left with a question: on what grounds are we to base our trust of people who could use tools, which are not intended for these purposes, to destroy themselves or

numerous innocent people, let alone trust those who possess weapons of total destruction if there are no basic data on the agonistic specificity of their nature?

Jarosław Rudniański discovered that *agonology* is a useful tool of theoretical research due to a contestation among a range of different domains of science. He engaged in discussions about human activity in the method of combining the evaluation of skills (praxeological skills) with the structures of ethical and moral values criteria [9, 10]. Leon Krzemieniecki has applied the theory of struggle to the interdisciplinary phenomena of analyses of struggle that are described in the belles-lettres [2, 15]. Because *agonology* keeps developing and therefore faces progressing crises of universal values and spiritual practices, the perspective of combining this unique knowledge with psychological, pedagogical, etc., knowledge raises hope for the improvement of interpersonal, intercultural relations and of constructive dialogue between people responsible for global governance.

Thus, the hope lies in the education system based *inter alia* on exploring the agonistic nature of human beings in an accessible and attractive way so that the people's lives on Earth survive (regardless of race, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, abilities, interests, wealth, etc.). This statement relates directly to the optimistic hypothesis.

However, the premises and assumptions in which the pessimistic hypothesis is grounded clearly highlight the unprecedented power of synergy of the factors imposing a totally different narrative on the social surroundings. Just the combination of the current situation with one historical fact is enough to justify the truth of this hypothesis and capture the imagination of the responsible member of the Society of Knowledge. As a global society, being inundated by electronic media, we are incommensurably higher than citizens of the Roman Empire (who were fascinated by gladiators' games) in an illusory trap of satisfying the lowest instincts by repeatedly watching destructive fights and other extreme constraints in the course of the day. This genre of fascination, instead of generating *catharsis*, is an effective way of learning aggression and provoking one's own aggressiveness. The process of cancelling the gladiators' games, which began in 326 AD through

a special edict by Constantine the Great, lasted for more than 350 years – until 681 AD [16, 17]. Nonetheless, elimination of the prevalence and extreme aggression from electronic media is rather impossible [2].

The authors of the Saint Books (especially *The Old Testament* and the *Bhagavad Gita*), historians, philosophers, writers, and poets have noted the possibility of overcoming the toxic layers and activating the creative potential of the agonistic human nature for thousands of years.

Professor Jigoro Kano was the first scholar who yoked blood fights in close contact [18]. In 1882, the educational system was given a friendly name that reflects man enduring through struggle, *judo kodokan*. Kano needed many years of reflections and practice before he decided to make public the most general ethical principles of judo: “maximum efficient use of energy” (*seriyoku-zenyō*) and “mutual prosperity for self and others” (*jita-kyōei*). These ethical principles were formally announced when he was sixty-three years old, forty years after establishing the *Kodokan* [19]. Kano had been successfully promoting judo in Europe (since 1889) long before he spoke of the contribution of judo in education [20] during a scientific seminar held during the Olympic Games in Los Angeles (1932). He attempted to include judo in the program of the Olympic Games. Despite the fact that the contemporary sport is full of gladiator syndrome, the healthy aspect of judo is dominant. Currently, there are numerous *departments of judo therapy* at Japanese universities.

The year 1989 was a crucial moment when the *kakugi*, a physical education subject in the Japanese education system, was modified to *budo* (judo, kendo, sumo). These three martial arts were taught thereafter in junior high schools, whereas judo and kendo were taught in high schools [21]. An obvious health benefit is confirmed by the secondary analysis of people who die or become disabled from a fall in the period of 1990–2010; this analysis was performed by the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington [22]. Only in the Japanese population between 4 and 59 years old was there a radical decrease in incidents (in contrast to the increase in other countries). However, there are no data about the effects on mental and social health of the entire population of Japan in that period. In contrast, the results of experiments

in the USA [23] and in Poland [12, 24] confirm that a positive enhancement of all dimensions of health (somatic, mental, social) may be achieved by the combination of martial arts, regardless of the cultural lineage, with traditional patterns of education.

CONCLUSIONS

The practical basis of judo developed by Kano is the key element of *budo* in the Japanese system of education. While establishing the basis of *agonology*, Kotarbiński dealt with struggle only in a theoretical sense. Therefore, in this respect, both systems are similar. Two in-depth theories of *agonology* – defensive struggle [11] and combat sport [13] – together with the effects of cognitive and behavioral therapy empirically verified and based on martial arts [12, 22-26] are close to the philosophy and pragmatism of *budo* [27]. Furthermore, the theory of combat sports [13] has provided two significant tools for empirical studies that are adequate to study struggle on a micro scale – measuring the dynamics of the fight (sports and non-sport confrontation) and measuring the methods of bravery.

Thus, there are methodological, educational, and therapeutic bases that are reliably verified on a large-country scale and by studies of independent scientists to implement these elements into national educational systems. Transmission of appropriately selected issues of *agonology* combined with the practice of any martial arts, self-defense exercises, and relaxation and concentration exercises deserves to be recommended as health-related training for all.

At the current *agonology* development was implementation at the end of 1987 (in Poland) in *prophylactic and therapy* dimension. So it is applied science used empirically. The scope of use is from micro to macro scale. The methodology based on precise language, well-justified empirically verified rules, principles, methods and means makes it possible to describe the phenomena fight from micro (on the internal struggle of man) is a macro scale (diagnosis and formulate an application to prevent the total destruction).

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The phenomenon of negative co-operation (struggle) between the entities of science is being led in a wicked way and is known since science exist. In nineteenth century harassment by the *French Academy of Sciences* experienced Louis Pasteur (1822-1895), French chemist and pioneer of microbiology. Examples can be multiplied.

I tried to publish the paper *Agonology – unknown science* first time in 2015 and subsequently sending the manuscript to three prestigious scientific journals outside the Poland (the last attempt in August 2016). In one editorial office the reviewing procedure lasting over a year what induced me to withdraw the manuscript. The other two were not interested in publishing the paper. Way of the refusal of one of them (after three days without giving any substantive reason) is an evident example of the intellectual violence and the discrimination – every manifestation of the discrimination is a form of violence. Paradoxically violence, but also the methods of counteracting, belong to the main issues remaining of an interest of *agonology*.

Counterbalance of these difficult to accepted by the scientific community (no matter from where they come) ways of treating ones by others is huge interest in the global space of science the paper *Agonology as a deeply esoteric science – an introduction to martial arts therapy on a global scale*, which I delivered during the 6th International Conference on Applied Human Factors and Ergonomics (AHFE 2015, Las Vegas, USA July 27-31, 2015). The consequence are invitations for the prestigious international conferences devoted to mental health, therapy, neuroscience, etc. Not smaller interest arouse article *Cognitive and application barriers to the use of “agonology in preventive and therapeutic dimension”* which I introduced during AHFE 2016 (Florida, USA July 27-31, 2016).