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„Violence, Fight / Battle, and Aggression in Sport and Movement Culture“

Lecture at the Xth International CESH Congress 2 - 5 November 2005 in Seville

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(This is the English version presented - updated! - with notes and literature; cf. the German version published in 2009: <.../Gewalt-Beitrag-ESSH-Spring2009-2.pdf> and the updated German version: <.../VortragSevilla2005Deutsch.pdf>.)

In this contribution, I will deal with terminological and conceptual questions related to the topic of the Xth International CESH Congress 2005 in Seville, "violence and sport". Terminological questions are, of course, closely linked to the respective language. So here I am presenting my considerations, which of course I initially formulated in German, in my best English hoping for the indulgence of English speaking readers and for a constructive feedback from the scientific community. This may also be facilitated by the fact that there is a recently published "International Handbook of Violence Research" in both German and English, in which the state of research has been recorded in many articles.¹

abstract:

In sport science, especially in sport sociology, but also in sport psychology, education and history, it is very important to have a profound understanding of the significance of violence in sport. Nevertheless, there is a surprising lack of clarity about the central concepts of this problem area. For example, in the German "Wörterbuch der Ethik im Sport" the keyword "Gewalt" (violence) is simply referred to the keyword "Aggression".

I would like to clarify the problem area of "violence in sport and movement culture" on the basis of three terms which seem to me to be central: First of all, "fight" as the basis for my understanding of sport, then "violence" itself and finally "aggression" as a term which, unfortunately, is mostly used with a negative ethical charge and is mixed up with the term "violence" until it is unrecognisable or confusable. I will clarify these terms by my definitions and discuss their meaning, especially for research and presentation in sport history.

text of the lecture:

Dear colleagues!

My lecture will deal with terminological, conceptual issues in both English and German. In order to better reach the international audience gathered here in Seville, I will speak in English, although I would also, or even primarily, like to clarify the conceptual problems in the German scientific community. Despite my only modest knowledge of the English language and

¹ Heitmeyer, Wilhelm & Hagan, John (Hrsg.): *Internationales Handbuch der Gewaltforschung*. Wiesbaden 2002; Heitmeyer, Wilhelm & Hagan, John (Eds.): *International Handbook of Violence Research*. Dordrecht 2003.

scientific literature, I have also discovered terminological problems in English, and I hope that this lecture will provide some suggestions for clarifying them.

I will therefore try the split to discuss the problems of German terms in English as well. Hopefully you will be able to understand and perhaps enjoy this intellectual and linguistic acrobatics a little bit. I take as some support for this risk the fact that some important theorists in this field, such as Hannah Arendt and Norbert Elias, probably conceived their thoughts in their mother tongue German and then translated them into English. By mentioning these two authors, I would like to point out right away that my little investigation is not so much sport-historical as philosophical and sociological. For the rest, I would ask you to make corrections in the following discussion if my English was not sufficient.

My initial theses are:

- **Even the term "sport" / „sports" ("Sport") is used very unclearly, especially in German.²**
- **The term "violence" is also in need of clarification.³**
- **There are only a few authors who offer a definition of "violence" in connec-**

² See my following publications: „Sport (and culture of physical motion) for historians, an approach to make the central term(s) more precise“ in: Teja, Angela & Krüger, Arnd & Riordan, James K. (eds.): *Sport and Cultures. Proceedings of the 9th International Congress of the European Committee for Sport History (CESH) Kroton Italy 26 - 29 September 2004*. Vol. II. Crotona 2005, pp. 410-416.

<.../VortragCrotone2004Englisch.pdf> German version: „Sport (und Bewegungskultur) für Historiker. Ein Versuch, die zentralen Begriffe zu präzisieren“: <.../VortragCrotone2004Deutsch.pdf>. - „Was ist der Gegenstand der Sportwissenschaft?“ Vortrag beim IX. Internationalen ISHPES-Kongress in Köln am 09. 09. 2005. In: Lämmer, Manfred & Martin, Evelin & Terret, Thierry (eds.): *New Aspects of Sport History. Proceedings of the 9th ISHPES Congress Cologne, Germany, 2005*. Sankt Augustin 2007, pp. 435-440 (see <.../VortragISHPES2005.pdf>). - Cf. my steadily updated and commented definition of „Sport“ <.../sportdefinition.html> and <.../DefinitionSport.pdf>, meanwhile in English <.../sportdefinitionEnglish.html> and <.../DefinitionSportEnglish.pdf>.

³ This is emphasised by all editors and authors of the recently published anthologies on the topic of "violence" („Gewalt"). Cf. the introductory articles of the "International Handbook of Violence Research" (note 1) as well as two newer anthologies: Heitmeyer, Wilhelm & Hagan, John: „Gewalt. Zu den Schwierigkeiten einer internationalen Bestandsaufnahme.“ In: Heitmeyer & Hagan: *Handbuch*, pp. 15 - 25. Heitmeyer, Wilhelm & Hagan, John: „Violence: The Difficulties of a Systematic International Review.“ Transl. from the German by TRADUKAS. In: Heitmeyer & Hagan: *Handbuch*, pp. 3-11. Imbusch, Peter: „Der Gewaltbegriff.“ In: Heitmeyer & Hagan: *Handbuch*, pp. 26-57; esp. pp. 28-31. Imbusch, Peter: „The Concept of Violence.“ Transl. from the German by TRADUKAS. In: Heitmeyer & Hagan: *Handbuch*, pp. 13-39; esp. pp. 15-17. Heitmeyer, Wilhelm & Soeffner, Hans-Georg (Eds.): *Gewalt. Entwicklungen, Strukturen, Analyseprobleme*. Frankfurt a. M. 2004. Küchenhoff, Joachim & Hügli, Anton & Mäder, Ueli (Eds.): *Gewalt. Ursachen, Formen, Prävention*. Gießen 2005.

tion with "sport".⁴

I will examine these central concepts and their use in the social sciences (including sport science) and suggest definitions. My argumentation will therefore be fundamentally philosophical and sociological. In addition, I will clarify further terms used in connection with "violence" and "sport" or "movement culture" („Bewegungskultur“); among them, "fight"/"battle" („Kampf“) as well as "aggression" ("Aggression") seem particularly important to me.

Why are definitions of terms important at all? And what significance do clarifications, explanations and definitions have for this?

A definition is intended to clarify, specify, delimit or limit the meaning of a term. To understand a definition as a regulation or the like would be a misunderstanding. Every thinking person forms his own opinion and uses words in his own meaning. However, this should not be exaggerated subjectively or constructivistically. We are social beings, designed for exchange and understanding with other people, in science anyway. If we want to communicate with other people, who have their own use of terms, we must be able to clarify our use of words, at least be able to explain them when asked. Scientists must also be able to clarify their central terms from the outset, without waiting to be asked. So if sports scientists tell each other unasked what they understand by sport, they only do what is necessary; if they fail to do so, it is a serious obstacle to understanding.⁵ In this sense, defining is a necessary preliminary work for the scientific exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Now, as is well known, definitions are not instruments that primarily should or even could change reality; rather, they are mainly intended to make the found (objectively given) reality in them clear and distinct. "Primarily", "mainly" - with this choice of words I have already indicated that in all words, thus also (or even more so) in definitions, an idea of how reality *could be* is represented. With my words (and thus also definitions) I do not pursue a purely objectivistic ideal (which is not attainable anyway) on the one hand. On the other hand, I do not understand my use of words as being only subjectivistic or constructivistic. I accept the priority indicated above, in which both are included, and understand defining or definitions in

⁴ Nunner-Winkler is one of a few with her proposed definition; she takes up the allegedly "value-neutral" definition used by the "Gewaltkommission" of the German Federal Government in its 1990 expert report and explains it in detail: "Violence is the purposeful, direct physical damage to people by people." (transl. by me, CT) Hahn also referred to this definition of violence in his keyword article "Gewalt" in the penultimate edition of the "Sportwissenschaftliches Lexikon" (1992). Similar to Weiss; he at least offers a debatable definition, but typically mixes "violence" with "aggression": "Violence (aggression) in sport is understood to mean the intended physical and/or psychological harm to one person by another." (transl. by me, CT). - Nunner-Winkler, Gertrud: „Überlegungen zum Gewalt-Begriff“. In: Heitmeyer & Soeffner: *Gewalt*, pp. 21-61, p. 26. - Hahn, Erwin: (keyword) „Gewalt“. In: Röthig, Peter (Ed.): *Sportwissenschaftliches Lexikon. 6th, completely revised edition*. Schorndorf 1992, p. 183. - Weiss, Otmar: *Einführung in die Sportsoziologie*. Wien 1999, p. 188.

⁵ In German sport science, this is avoided with the central object concept of this science, "Sport"; cf. Röthig, Peter & Prohl, Robert: (keyword) "Sport (sport[s])". In: Röthig, Peter & Prohl, Robert (Eds): *Sportwissenschaftliches Lexikon. 7th, completely revised edition* Schorndorf 2003, pp. 493-495; cf. my publications listed in note 2!

this way:

Definitions should bring reality to the term as clearly and distinctly as possible and at the same time at least indicate in all subtlety how reality also could be.

With this in mind, I would first like to clarify what I mean by "sport". I have been developing a definition since 2002, the current version (!) of which I will only briefly present here:

"Sport" is a cultural field of activity in which people voluntarily enter into a relationship with other people in order to compare their respective abilities and skills in the art of movement - according to self-imposed or adopted rules and on the basis of socially accepted ethical values.⁶

„Sport“ ist ein kulturelles Tätigkeitsfeld, in dem Menschen sich freiwillig in eine Beziehung zu anderen Menschen begeben, um ihre jeweiligen Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten in der Bewegungskunst zu vergleichen - nach selbst gesetzten oder übernommenen Regeln und auf Grundlage der gesellschaftlich akzeptierten ethischen Werte.

This concept of sport is much narrower than is usual in (German) sports science.⁷ In my opinion, however, there are also some areas which are called "sport" in everyday language - and unfortunately also in sport science terminology - that do not fit into my definition of sport but are nevertheless worthy to be considered as subject areas of "sport science". I searched for a term for these further areas and found one in "movement culture", which I define as such in the recent version:

"Movement culture" is a field of activity in which people deal with their nature and environment and consciously and intentionally develop, shape and present their in particular physical abilities and skills, in order to experience an individual or shared gain and enjoyment that is significant for them.⁸

„Bewegungskultur“ ist ein Tätigkeitsfeld, in dem Menschen sich mit ihrer Natur und Umwelt auseinandersetzen und dabei bewusst und absichtsvoll ihre insbesondere körperlichen Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten entwickeln, gestalten und darstellen, um einen für sie bedeutsamen individuellen oder auch gemeinsamen Gewinn und Genuss zu erleben.

The meaning of "Gewalt" in German is considerably larger than that of "violence" in English.⁹ The Latin word "vis" has about the same range of meanings as the German word "Gewalt"; it means power, strength, might and, of course, violence. The Latin verb "violare", which is derived from "vis", means to damage, hurt, and thus has always presupposed a damaging

⁶ Cf. my steadily updated and commented definition: <.../sportdefinitionEnglish.html> and <.../DefinitionSportEnglish.pdf>.

⁷ See note 5!

⁸ Cf. my steadily updated and commented definition: <.../bewegungskulturdefinition.html> and <.../DefinitionBewegungskultur.pdf>, also recently in English: <.../DefinitionMovementCulture.pdf>. During my lecture (held in 2005 in English) I translated "movement culture" as "culture of human motion".

⁹ Cf. Imbusch: „Gewaltbegriff“ resp. „Concept“.

act of violence. The Latin word "violentia", which is derived from "violare" and which corresponds to a large extent to the English word "violence", also has predominantly this meaning. Both Latin words, "vis" and "violentia", together only have the "numinous"¹⁰ or ambivalent meaning that is inherent in the German word "Gewalt".

For me, "**Gewalt**" is first of all a **very general** term, the English equivalent of which, force or power, I define as such¹¹:

„Gewalt“ is a phenomenon in which very large, strong forces are at work.

„Gewalt“ (im Englischen etwa „force“ oder power) ist eine Erscheinung, bei der sehr große, starke Kräfte wirken.

In this sense, the German word "Gewalt" is also and even predominantly used in connection with natural phenomena; the associated adjective is "gewaltig". This area is covered in English by words other than "violence", such as "force", also "power" or "strength". Philosophically or sociologically, this field of meaning¹² has little to do with sport (or movement culture); only in the physiological sense does this aspect of generic force (such as "power" or "strength") play a role in sport discourse.

The (sub)type of force that is more problematic (and more interesting) for a philosophical and sociological consideration in connection with sport and movement culture is **(interpersonal) violence**. "*Force and Sport*" would not (have been) a meaningful congress topic, but "*Violence and Sport*" was.

"Violence" therefore is the (English) key word that will be dealt with in the following, and this corresponds in German to "*Gewalt unter Menschen*" or **"interpersonal violence"**. **The adjective belonging to this field of meaning of "violence" is "violent" ("gewaltsam")**. In German, the ending "-sam" of this adjective already indicates that it describes a way of acting and not the characteristic of a phenomenon (like "-ig" in the corresponding German adjective "*gewaltig*").

This specific sub-concept of "violence" - in connection with (movement culture and) sport - will be clarified in the following. I have not found a convincing definition in the literature; therefore I propose the following (updated!) definition:

„(Interpersonal) violence“ is an option naturally given to us humans and culturally malleable, the realisation of which we threaten or actually

¹⁰ Cf. Soeffner, Hans-Georg: Gewalt als Faszinosum. In: Heitmeyer & Soeffner: *Gewalt*, pp. 62-85, p. 70/71.

¹¹ Cf. my steadily updated and commented definition: <.../gewaltdefinition.html> and <.../DefinitionGewalt.pdf>.

¹² Imbusch ("Gewaltbegriff", p. 38, resp. "Concept", p. 23) and others categorise this meaning as "metaphorical"; I do not think this to be plausible, but I can only offer my own assumption about the development of language (both, English and German): It is not from the narrower concept of interpersonal violence that "violence" („Gewalt“) was transferred to (natural) phenomena (force), but rather the other way round: from the elementary natural phenomena (including human nature!) to the possibility of acting in the interpersonal sphere.

inflict harm on ourselves or others.

„(Zwischenmenschliche) Gewalt" ist eine uns Menschen natürlich gegebene und kulturell formbare Handlungsmöglichkeit, bei deren Verwirklichung wir uns selbst oder anderen Schaden androhen oder tatsächlich zufügen.

I will briefly explain my method of defining: I follow the rules of essence definition that have been in force since Aristotle.¹³ According to these rules, one first looks for the next higher level of the term to be defined (the *genus proximum*), and then names what makes the term to be distinguished specific to that level (*differentia specifica*).

Whereas in the general concept of (violence resp.) "force" ("Gewalt") the next higher level (genus proximum) was the very general concept of "phenomenon", the concept of interpersonal force ("violence") is more precise: (interpersonal) "violence" is "a possibility of acting"¹⁴ - one of several, many.

We humans all have - as a biological inheritance, as well as a cultural acquisition - many options for acting, including violence. In principle, we also have the choice to make use of it - or not. And if we make use of this possibility of acting, we can do so in this way or in the other way, we can (within limits) shape, dose and form our violent acting. For this there are culturally passed "patterns", models, e.g. the (not only Christian) requirement of the complete renunciation of violence (not only active but also reactive: that if someone hits you on the right cheek, you should also turn the other cheek).¹⁵

This brings us to what distinguishes violence as a possibility of acting from other possibilities of acting (such as caring) (*differentia specifica*): If we make use of this possibility of acting which is given to all of us, we threaten to do harm to someone else, or we even do it; we can even do harm to ourselves (of course, threatening then is not appropriate).¹⁶

According to almost all ethical-moral approaches (religious or philosophical), violent action is basically "forbidden", at least it is precarious and needs justification, even if it is done in self-defence.¹⁷ This is because the realisation of this possibility of acting means in any case a

¹³ According to the analytical philosophy in the tradition of Rudolf Carnap, for my definition a term as "term explication" would be more accurate.

¹⁴ Imbusch also sees it this way: "Gewaltbegriff", p. 38, resp. "Concept", p. 23; in the English version it is called "behavioral option". Dunning also seems to understand this - with reference to Elias - in principle this way: Dunning, Eric: „Gewalt und Sport." Transl. by TRADUKAS. In: Heitmeyer & Hagan: *Handbuch*, pp. 1130-1152, here: pp. 1138-1139; Dunning, Eric: „Violence and Sport." In: Heitmeyer & Hagan: *Handbook*, pp. 903-920, here: pp. 909-910.

¹⁵ In the "Bible", already in the "Old Testament": Lamentations of Jeremiah 3:30; in the "New Testament": Gospel of Matthew 5:39; Paul's letter to the Romans 12:19 (to 21).

¹⁶ This "*differentia specifica*", which I understand and formulate in this way, largely corresponds in content to what Heitmeyer and Hagan formulate as "broad consensus" on the "meaning" (not the term!) of violence: "..., that violence causes injury and sometimes death and results in many different forms of destruction, so that there are always victims. But at that point, if not before, the consensus certainly ends." (Heitmeyer & Hagan: "Violence", p. 4) What generally bothers me about this use of language is that the abstract term "violence" is substantiated, made into an acting being that "causes injury ..." etc.; but it is and remains human beings who do and cause this.

¹⁷ As Hannah Arendt put it in 1969/70: "Violence can be justified, but it can never be legitimate." Arendt, Hannah: *Macht und Gewalt*. (1969, 1970) Frankfurt a. M., Vienna, Zurich 2005, p. 80.

serious violation of the personal integrity of a (other) person, his or her dignity.¹⁸ In this sense, doping is also a kind of violence (against oneself), as are the phenomena of anorexia in runners, ski jumpers, gymnasts, the excessive training of stretchability in gymnasts, gymnasts, figure skaters, etc. The fact that personal integrity is violated applies first and foremost, of course, to victims of violence; but violent offenders also violate their own human dignity, "take damage to their soul", to put it in biblical terms.¹⁹

Interpersonal violence can be justified in specific situations: For example, if I dislocate my child's arm because I pull it back to prevent it from being hit by a car, I may have violently damaged his/her health, but I saved the higher good, his/her life. The balance of goods must always give such a positive result when acting violently. In individual cases, it may be necessary to make a decision in a split second, and errors or wrong decisions can "happen"; but ethically, the principle applies that violent action against other people can only be justified in exceptional cases if the balance of goods is positive.

Even the legally justified - and thus fundamentally "legitimised" (not "legitimate" in the sense of Hannah Arendt!) - state use of force, e.g. by police officers or soldiers, should be suspiciously controlled by a democratic public in each individual case and always remains in need of justification.

Violence is, by my definition, only *one option* for acting; we human beings always have the freedom to choose not to realise this option. We are *responsible* for which of the options we choose to act. This personal responsibility, together with the always grave consequences of violent action, is the reason why we need to reflect on violence thoroughly and to come to an agreement with each other about the ways in which we allow it to be exercised - socially and individually - and about the limits we consider necessary in each case.

The manifestations of violence, violent acting, are manifold, be it active doing or omitting to do something, be it active or reactive, direct or intermediated, be it directly recognisable or not, be it psychological, physical or social harm, do the effects occur directly or later. The *causes* for the exercise of violence are just as diverse - and difficult to understand.²⁰

With my proposed definition, I take up the approach in philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology, which seems to me to represent a broad understanding of

¹⁸.....The same applies to violence against oneself, but here the same person is both "perpetrator" and "victim" at the same time, insofar as he or she is responsible for himself or herself as an adult. For me, violence perpetrated by adults (parents, trainers, etc.) against children, including in "sport", tends to belong in the criminal realm. In my view, these are important, largely neglected areas which should be examined more carefully - with clarified terms - by sport scientists.

¹⁹.....Wieviorka formulates this idea as a "hypothesis that it [violence, C.T.] also puts the subjectivity of the perpetrator of violence at risk" (*emphasis in the original, C.T.*): Wieviorka, Michel: *Die Gewalt*. (Paris 2004) Abridged German edition, translated by Franz. v. M. Bayer. Hamburg 2006, p. 15. Erdheim presents a similar thesis (with reference to Elias Canetti "Masse und Macht", 1960): Erdheim, Mario: "Das Traumatisierende an der Macht. In: Springer, Anne & Gerlach, Alf & Schlösser, Anne-Marie (eds.): *Macht und Ohnmacht*. Gießen 2005, pp. 11-25.

²⁰.....Most academics deal only with partial aspects of violence, and even for this, very few of them propose clear definitions of the term. The broad spectrum of research on violence is shown by the anthologies listed in notes 1 and 3. Luc Ciompi has presented a theoretical approach that is appropriate to the (psychological) complexity of the topic: Ciompi, Luc: *Die emotionalen Grundlagen des Denkens. Entwurf einer fraktalen Affektlogik*. (1997) Göttingen 32005.

violence, in particular rejecting the restriction to "physical" violence. Following Johan Galtung²¹ and others, my definition also includes "structural" violence. This is currently being discussed - not only in the scientific fields already mentioned, but also in anthropology, pedagogy, biology, medicine, etc. - fiercely debated.²²

The connection between "violence" on the one hand and "movement culture" and "sport" on the other hand - despite the early essay by Norbert Elias²³ and various contributions by him and Eric Dunning²⁴, and in Germany especially by Gunter A. Pilz²⁵ - has not yet been systematically and thoroughly dealt with; in particular, a clear philosophical and conceptual foundation is missing. With this presentation I would like to give some suggestions.

Elias has offered cultural-historical hypotheses which have been frequently picked up recently, especially in the field of sport history.²⁶ This is in principle welcome and also of heuristic value, but Elias' hypotheses are often only weakly founded²⁷, so that further

²¹ Galtung, Johan: *Strukturelle Gewalt. Beiträge zur Friedens- und Konfliktforschung*. Reinbek 1975.

²² Cf. the literature mentioned in notes 1 and 3 and especially Nunner-Winkler: "Überlegungen" (note 4) and Peuckert/Scherr: Peuckert, Rüdiger & Scherr, Albert: (keyword) "Gewalt" (violence). In: *Grundbegriffe der Soziologie*. Ed.: Schäfers, Bernhard. 8th, revised edition Opladen 2003, pp. 114-118. - In terms of content I largely agree with Hügli: Hügli, Anton: „Was verstehen wir unter Gewalt? Begriff und Erscheinungsformen der Gewalt.“ In: Küchenhoff & Hügli & Mäder: *Gewalt*, pp. 19-42. However, his definitional approaches seem to me to be insufficient in terms of "craftsmanship" (p. 20: "Violence is everywhere where there are victims, where someone experiences an injury, first of all a physical injury, ..."; pp. 23/24: "Suffering violence ... means to experience a negative impact which can be directed against life and limb, against our freedom, against our belongings or against our social existence. The influence is called negative if it is either experienced as suffering and painful or can be described as objectively damaging, hurting, destroying, annihilating or whatever"; p. 25: "The exercise of violence in its paradigmatic form is a conscious and deliberate, i.e. intentional, causing of violence"; transl. by me, CT). (German texts cited: p. 20: „Gewalt ist überall da, wo es Opfer gibt, wo irgendwer eine Verletzung und zwar zunächst einmal eine körperliche Verletzung erfährt, ...“; pp. 23/24: „Gewalt erleiden ... heißt eine negative Einwirkung erfahren, die sich gegen Leib und Leben, gegen unsere Freiheit, gegen unser Hab und Gut oder gegen unsere soziale Existenz richten kann. Negativ heißt die Einwirkung, wenn sie entweder als leidvoll und schmerzvoll erlebt wird oder als objektiv schädigend, verletzend, zerstörend, vernichtend oder wie auch immer bezeichnet werden kann.“; p. 25: „Gewaltausübung in ihrer paradigmatischen Form ist eine bewusste und willentliche, d. h. intentionale Verursachung von Gewalt.“).

²³ Elias, Norbert: „An Essay on Sport and Violence.“ In: Elias, Norbert & Dunning, Eric (Eds.): *Quest for Excitement*. Oxford, New York 1986, pp. 150-174; German translation: „Sport und Gewalt.“ Transl. from the English by D. Bremecke. In: Elias, Norbert & Dunning, Eric: *Sport und Spannung im Prozeß der Zivilisation*. Frankfurt a. M. 2003, pp. 273-315.

²⁴ Dunning himself has summarised his numerous publications: Dunning, Eric: "Violence" (see note 13).

²⁵ Gunter A. Pilz is the German author with the most publications on the subject; his sociologically oriented reasoning has remained essentially unchanged since his 1982 anthology: Pilz, Gunter A. (Ed.): *Sport und körperliche Gewalt*. Reinbek 1982.

²⁶ Cf. Krüger, Michael: „Zur Bedeutung der Prozeß- und Figurationstheorie für Sport und Sportwissenschaft. Zum 100. Geburtstag von Norbert Elias.“ In: *Sportwissenschaft 2* (1997), pp. 129-142; Krüger, Michael: (review) „Norbert Elias / Eric Dunning: Sport und Spannung im Prozeß der Zivilisation. Band 7 der Gesammelten Schriften von Norbert Elias. Frankfurt/M. ... 2003 ... Dunning, E. et al. (Eds.): Fighting Fans. Football Hooliganism as a World Phenomenon. Dublin ... 2002.“ In: *Sportwissenschaft 4* (2003), pp. 473-478.

²⁷ Elias, Norbert: „Die Genese des Sports als soziologisches Problem.“ (Orig. English 1979) In: Elias, Norbert & Dunning, Eric: *Sport im Zivilisationsprozeß*. Transl. by Hopf, Wilhelm & Nippert, Reinhardt Peter. Münster no year (c. 1983), pp. 9-46 (with numerous illustrations); reprinted (English, without illustrations, abridged at the end!), with the title „The Genesis of Sport as a Sociological Problem“ in: Elias & Dunning: *Quest* (see note 22), pp. 126-149; reprinted again in German (without illustrations) in: Elias & Dunning: *Sport* (see note 22), pp. 230-272. Norbert Elias inadmissibly generalises in his line of reasoning with (states and) developments in movement culture or sport, for instance in antiquity, e.g. by referring the unique death of the Olympic champion in Pankration, Arrhichion (Elias wrongly calls him Arrhachion!) from Phigalia, as "not unusual" and taking it as (almost the only) historical-empirical evidence for a general thesis on the "level of violence in competitions" (Elias: "Genesis" (1983), pp. 20 and 22; "Genesis", pp. 136 and 137; "Genese" (2003), pp. 246 and 247); in addition, he used an outdated literature basis.

research is necessary. Elias himself has pointed out that his hypotheses would have to be historically and empirically tested and could only be refuted in this way.²⁸

Such a critical review of Elias's theory of civilisation was carried out thoroughly by Hans Peter Dürr, a German ethnologist.²⁹ His research results, which shake up the entire body of Elias's theories, have not yet been widely enough received. I will deal with this in more detail on a later occasion, particularly because Elias's theory of civilisation is regarded and presented by many sports historians as the new, fruitful paradigm.

Eric Dunning, who was closest to Norbert Elias as a student and colleague, in his article „Gewalt und Sport“ in the International Handbook of Violence Research³⁰ has not, as far as I can see, added anything substantially new to his earlier publications.

If one shares my definitions of "sport" and "violence", the following understanding emerges: Since in my concept of sport, deliberate self- or third-party-harm is excluded, **one cannot speak of "violence in sport" in my terms. But what is meant when many authors like Dunning, Pilz and others talk or write about "violence in sport"? Probably always "violence in the context of sport".**

I think that *one* source of this conceptual misunderstanding is that sport is essentially fighting, albeit ritualised, symbolically: the competition is to determine a winner. Elias and Dunning often use - besides the word "fight" - the term "battle", preceded by the word "mock": sport is a played, simulated fight. *However, sport is and remains - notwithstanding symbolisation or play - essentially a fight as well.* And in the emotionally highly charged and often confusing turmoil of the combat, even in sports, the fighting individuals or groups may sometimes cross the culturally drawn line between symbolic and real or between played and serious.³¹

I would like to clarify this term, too, by a **definition**, how I understand and use it - in connection with sport:

"Fight" (or „combat“ or „(mock) battle“) in sport is the strictly just symbolic, playful way of determining the winner among different (at least two) competing individuals or groups.

Since in sporting combat large, strong forces (or powers) always have to be used when the

²⁸ Elias, Norbert: „Introduction“, in: Elias & Dunning: *Quest*, pp. 19-62, p. 22; Elias, Norbert: „Einführung“, in: Elias & Dunning: *Sport*, pp. 42-120, p. 47.

²⁹ Hans Peter Dürr has done this in five voluminous books; he refers mainly to Elias's main work „Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation“. His result: Elias' theses are not well founded, some of them are even simply wrong, and above all the theory of the "process of civilisation" based on Elias's work leads to crooked or even false results. The results of his first four volumes, published between 1988 and 1997, have been summarised in the final fifth volume, which was first published in 2002. - Elias, Norbert: *Über den Prozeß der Zivilisation. Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen*. (Basel 1939) 2 volumes. 2nd, extended edition, including an introduction, Bern 1969. (German) reprints in many editions since 1976 in Frankfurt a. M. Not before 1978 published in English version; current edition: Elias, Norbert: *The Civilizing Process. Integrated Edition, revised by Dunning, Eric & Goudsblom, Johan & Mennell, Stephen*. Oxford 2000. - Dürr, Hans Peter: *Die Tatsachen des Lebens. Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozeß. Band 5. Frankfurt a. M. 2002 (paperback edition: 2005)*.

³⁰ See note 13!

³¹ Cf. Binhack, Axel: *Über das Kämpfen. Zum Phänomen des Kampfes in Sport und Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt, New York 1998 (= updated edition of the doctoral diss. phil. Frankfurt 1996).

competitors have approximately equal capabilities (and this is the ideal case in sport), the proximity to the very general concept of violence („Gewalt“) defined above is clear. **A powerful („gewaltig“) effort is normal and legitimate in sporting combat; a violent („gewaltsam“) one is certainly not.** One should not neglect the significant differences between the very general concept of violence and the narrower concept of interpersonal violence (at least in German). Many people slip into this linguistic and intellectual trap, which exists especially in German.

There is a further possibility of confusion or displacement³²: In the sporting fight the competing people are finally divided into winners and losers. This can be experienced by the losers as psychologically painful; they have been "beaten" (!) in everyday and journalistic language. **Losers of the sporting fight may fantasise themselves as being damaged.** There may be a mental - of course not real - proximity to the experience of (concrete interpersonal) violence.

This is a point at which the *difficult balance between symbolic and real* in sporting fights psychically can switch to pathogenic feeling and acting - both individually and socially.

These two aspects are mental, linguistic "traps" to connect violence with sport.

Who falls for this may then talk and write about "violence *in* sport". All the more important is a clear use of language, especially of clearly limited, defined terms which are above all philosophically and ethically based. In particular, it must be (ethically) clear in each individual case where each author draws the **line between sport (fighting for victory with rule-using harshness) and damaging acting as non-sport**. This is an important and so far too much neglected field of sport science.

In my opinion, an even more significant source of misunderstandings in the sport science literature concerning the problem area of movement culture / sport and violence is the use and understanding of the term „aggression“. **„Aggression“ is used by many authors synonymously to "violence"**, at least in German, but also in English (or American). There is hardly any author who does not directly connect both words and speaks or writes about "violence and aggression" („*Gewalt und Aggression*“).³³ I think that it is generally a great loss, especially for sport science, if no clear distinction is made between "violence" on the one hand and "aggression" on the other hand.

Also for the term "**aggression**" I have developed a **definition**:

³².....Cf. Dunning (see note 13): „Gewalt“, p. 1131; „Violence“, p. 904.

³³.....Especially concerning the concept of "aggression", the state of research is, in my opinion, very inadequate, above all misleading, in both the German and Anglo-American language areas. This is due, among other things, to what I consider to be a completely superficial treatment of, in particular, Konrad Lorenz's theses which as early as 1969/1970 were convincingly rejected by Hannah Arendt (see note 16: *Macht*, pp. 87-93). Dunning (see note 13: "*Gewalt*", pp. 1132-1136; "*Violence*", pp. 905-907) also identified a deficit, but he did not offer a convincing solution himself. I addressed this and the contributions of Hartmut Gabler in a lecture titled "'Aggression' und 'Gewalt'. Ein Versuch, diese wichtigen Begriffe zu klären und sie so wieder in den sportwissenschaftlichen Diskurs zurückzuholen.": <.../VortragAggressionGewalt.pdf>. - Lorenz, Konrad: *Das sogenannte Böse. Zur Naturgeschichte der Aggression*. Vienna 1963. paperback edition: Munich 1983. - Gabler, Hartmut: (keyword) "Aggression". In: Grupe, Ommo & Mieth, Dietmar (Eds.): *Lexikon der Ethik im Sport*. Schorndorf 1998, pp. 22-30. - Gabler, Hartmut: (keyword) "Aggression". In: Röthig & Prohl: *Lexikon*, pp. 21-25. - Gabler, Hartmut: (keyword) "Gewalt". In: Röthig & Prohl: *Lexikon*, p. 226.

"Aggression" is part of the tribal-historical pattern of affect of animals and humans, which makes them react in (life-) threatening situations by attacking (instead of fleeing); in the course of human development this affective pattern has increasingly (but only within limits) become culturally malleable and individually shapeable.

The meanwhile old dispute whether aggression - or even "aggressiveness" as a (permanent?) psychological inclination to aggression - is innate *or* acquired is in my opinion superfluous: The question is asked wrongly, this alternative does not exist. Aggression is part of the basic animal - and thus also human - constitution, is phylogenetic heritage, anthropological fact. The way in which aggression is "used" or dealt with is - within limits - culturally malleable, acquirable; this can be "learned" and also "unlearned" again.

Whether this option (for acting) results in something constructive or destructive is also not determined from the outset. Animals, and even more so humans, can choose in a dangerous or threatening situation, for example between attack or escape (or feigning death); humans can decide in a much more differentiated way: They can even turn the other cheek to someone who strikes them on the right cheek. We humans are in any case responsible for how we deal with our behavioural disposition aggression.

Thus **"aggression" is first of all an ethically-morally neutral (or ambivalent) term.** Only in so far as we humans can decide *how we (want to) deal with* aggression does aggression become accessible to an ethical-moral assessment.

The (original) neutrality or ambivalence of the term "aggression" is also derived from the history of the word (etymology): The word "aggression" comes from the Latin verb "adgredi" or "aggredi"³⁴; it means first "to approach something or someone", then also "to attack someone or something" - from the originally simplest sense up to a fighting, warlike meaning. According to this original meaning, „aggression“ is only in the worst case the possible beginning of direct physical violence, which (without remotely effective weapons) can only be exercised in direct physical proximity. "Aggression" can also stand for an approach to someone that is not meant to become violent (e.g. when mating or teasing).

Thus the meanings of **"aggression"** are considerably wider than those of **"violence"**, and simply because of this, **equating the two terms or even replacing the term "violence" with the term "aggression" leads to significant confusion, not only in sport science.**

A general consequence of this misleading equation of "violence" and "aggression" is the exclusively negative ethical-moral charging of the term "aggression". The actually value-neutral concept of aggression³⁵ has - especially in the last decades - been "infected" and

³⁴ Not: "*aggredere*", as (not only) Gabler states repeatedly: Gabler: "Aggression / Gewalt", p. 25, and Gabler, Hartmut & Nitsch, Jürgen R. & Singer, Roland: *Einführung in die Sportpsychologie. Teil 1: Grundthemen.* With the collaboration of Jörn Munzert. Schorndorf 42004, p. 237. The infinitive is "aggredi"; this Latin verb is a deponent, in passive form it has active meaning; "aggredere" is the imperative singular present: "go (for it)" or "attack"!

³⁵ Cf. Hiss, Barbara: „Aggression und Gewalt: Psychologische Ansätze, insbesondere das höhere Lebensalter betreffend.“ In: Küchenhoff & Hügli & Mäder: *Gewalt*, pp. 115-128, 115, and Ciompi: *Grundlagen* (see note 19), pp. 100-102 and others.

changed by the ethico-morally rightly negatively charged concept of violence, both in everyday language and in the prevailing language of psychology³⁶. This altered connotation restricts the meaning of the concept of aggression and thus considerably reduces its analytical value. This is not only a loss in general, but especially for sport science.

Aggression is - in the sense of my definition - an essential, necessary part of the concepts of acting in many sports, especially of course in the so-called combat sports, but also in many ball sports. Without approaching the competitor(s) closely, directly (= Latin: *aggredi*), touching or grabbing him (them), one cannot physically grapple with him (them). In common parlance - in the language of the fans anyway, but also in the technical language of the trainers - the actual ambivalence of the term can therefore often still be recognised.

In many sports, coaches and spectators often enough expect and demand more "aggressive" behaviour ("go for it!") of the athletes; this jargon is in clear contrast to the currently predominant terminology of psychology and sport science with their currently prevailing (and in my opinion wrong) definitions. Because the more aggressive behaviour demanded is not supposed - at least in most cases, as I suspect - to lead to irregular, even harmful behaviour. Coaches and spectators alike only assume the simple fact that getting close to the body is a necessary prerequisite for a combative sporting confrontation - how else could I take the ball away from an opponent who has the ball?

This "grappling" (Latin: *aggredi*) does not necessarily cause athletes to behave violently, as long as they try to avoid everything that could harm others or themselves (in the sense of my definitions of violence and sport). To increasingly prevent this, rules have been invented and referees appointed in the history of many sports; and this characterises the (possible) cultural value of sport. In successful cases of physical, combative conflict, one speaks of a **"clean" sporting duel - with aggressiveness, but without violence**.

On the basis of the general definition of "aggression" given above, I would now like to specify what I mean by **"aggression in sport"**:

"Aggression *in sport*" is a very old pattern of affect that people in a rather young cultural field of activity have to deal with.

On the one hand, this field of activity (sport) offers some possibilities of connection to the situations for which this phylogenetically old affect pattern has developed (fight, threatening defeat, existential need). On the other hand, this field of activity has been culturally developed in such a way that the situations should have a strictly symbolic and not really life-threatening meaning (play character, as-if). Furthermore, this field of activity is regulated by mutual agreement among all participants in such a way that on the one hand a hard fight for victory within the framework of the accepted rules is to be fought for, but on the other hand nobody is to be harmed when fighting.

With this understanding of aggression in sport as well as of (interpersonal) violence, it is possible to take a closer look at and name the delicate area in which initially rule-abiding

³⁶..... The main representative is Nolting with his widely distributed book "Lernfall Aggression": Nolting, Hans-Peter: *Lernfall Aggression. Wie sie entsteht - wie sie zu vermindern ist. Eine Einführung*. (1978) Completely revised and expanded new edition November 2005. Reinbek 2005.

aggressive sporting behaviour can "derail" and "jump over" into rule-adverse violent behaviour.

As acting human beings - even in the field of sport - we do not have perfect "control" of the complex events, neither of the external circumstances (unfortunate coincidences) nor of the internal regulation of actions (psychological breakthroughs in pressure situations). And even more so, as external observers of sporting events or even as scientists who analyse them afterwards, we can rarely understand this complex structure of action in detail. Without a clear conceptual distinction between violence and aggression, however, we can neither ethically shape sporting situations ourselves nor accurately judge them from the outside.

Finally, I would like to explain the importance of such clarification of terms, particularly for the history of sport, with three remarks.

The fact that, according to my understanding of the term, gladiature („ludi gladiatorii“) in the ancient Roman Empire, for example, could not be understood as a "sport" is already apparent from my concept of sport; for one's own damage to life and limb or that of another person was essential for gladiature, even if a gladiator carried out this activity voluntarily (which did indeed happen), and even if serious damage did not really occur in every fight.

The basic purpose of this cruel "game" presentation (Latin: "ludus" = game) was to offer the audience a (only partly) regulated spectacle in which people were supposed to kill and die in front of the public. Sport historians who overlook this, implicitly use a concept of sport that is ethically questionable.³⁷

Secondly, it also follows from my concept of violence that the so-called field of research "Violence *in* Sport" should be characterised differently by sports historians, political scientists and sociologists than it has been so far: The manifestations of violent behaviour *in connection with* sports events - main example: Hooliganism - are only *indirectly* related to sport; this violence does not take place in sport, is *not part of* the sport activity. The possible links between, for example, hooliganism and sport could only be examined and named more precisely if sports scientists used clearly defined terms instead of their all too broad ones.

Then thirdly, a **polemic about the significance of violence in the history of sport**, such as the one recently held **between Diethelm Blecking and Simon Geissbühler** in the magazine

³⁷.... Ramba and Decker understand the gladiature ("ludi gladiatorii" or "munera") explicitly as a sport. Ramba, Dietrich: „Gladiatur - Gegenstand sporthistorischer Betrachtung.“ In: Buss, Wolfgang & Krüger, Arnd (Eds.): *Sportgeschichte: Traditionspflege und Wertewandel. Festschrift zum 75. Geburtstag von Prof. Dr. Wilhelm Henze*. Duderstadt 1985, pp. 53-61; Decker, Wolfgang: *Sport und Spiel im Alten Ägypten*. Munich 1987, p. 10; Decker, Wolfgang: „Sport - eine Bezeichnung für die griechische Kultur?“ In: Deutsches Olympisches Institut (Ed.): *Jahrbuch 2000*. Berlin ²2001, pp. 83-92. Other sport historians do this indirectly by including gladiatorship in their descriptions without conceptual discussion. One of the few who expressly reject this is Thuillier: Thuillier, Jean-Paul: *Sport im antiken Rom. (Le sport dans la Rome antique*. Paris 1996) Transl. from French by W. Decker. Darmstadt 1999, p. 8: "But our own view of the sporting world does not allow us to classify these gladiators, who fought for life and death, between charioteers and athletes". (*transl. by me, CT*); in German: „Aber unsere eigene Auffassung von der sportlichen Welt erlaubt uns nicht, diese Gladiatoren, die um Leben und Tod kämpften, zwischen Wagenlenker und Athleten einzuordnen.“

"SportZeit(en)"³⁸, could be much more illuminating. Unfortunately, both got stuck in the fog of their unclear terms.

In his journalistically conceived contribution, **Blecking** does not distinguish between the obvious acts of violence committed by football fans, which in my understanding are only indirectly related to sport, and other aspects of the "relations between sport, violence and politics"³⁹. As examples from the history of sport, he too chooses Arrhichion's victory in dying in the Pankration at the 29th Olympic Games of antiquity⁴⁰, as already mentioned by Norbert Elias, and - without further explanation - the Roman "gladiator games"⁴¹. With the examples of "blood sports" and "hurling" he proves his thesis: "Violence is a part of the history of sport even in its English version".⁴² The other examples also illustrate "the increasing violence"⁴³ - from Blecking's point of view *in* sport or *of* sport(!). However, the reasons for this were not related to sport: "the closing tendencies of industrial societies"⁴⁴.

Concerning the "fascination of the cultural phenomenon 'sport'", Blecking casually formulates some enlightening theses: "the game with the risk on all levels" guaranteed the "gain in pleasure"; "football is of course controlled violence, but for this very reason, and as long as it is staged on a captivating athletic and choreographic level, it is highly exciting." "The fact that control over the potential for violence in competition is extremely fragile is what makes it so appealing."⁴⁵

These theses, presented in a sarcastic-ironic style, have prompted Simon **Geissbühler** to take a counter-polemic position. When he rightly criticises Blecking for failing to introduce "coherent definitions and theses"⁴⁶, this accusation also falls on himself. In many alleged counter-arguments, Geissbühler bypasses Blecking or opens up open doors; Blecking has sarcastically pointed this out in his reply.

Geissbühler's statements, which were presented in the manner of a head teacher and with a declared effort to be "politically correct"⁴⁷ (!) culminate in what I consider to be a naive thesis, "that violence in all social subsystems is primarily due to a lack of reflection and values". "To be able to control and contain violence (in sport) would presuppose that the individual himself finds balance, harmony."⁴⁸ His "conclusion": "Violence is certainly also a challenge for modern sport. However, violence in sport is - as I have shown - not a new phenomenon, but has been present in sport and all other social subsystems within living

³⁸Blecking, Diethelm: „Sport, Politik und Gewalt - Vom antiken Olympia zur XFL-League.“ In: *SportZeit* 3, 2001, pp. 57-67; Geissbühler, Simon: „Gewalt im Sport - Eine (ebenfalls polemisierende) Replik.“ In: *SportZeiten* 2, 2002, pp. 75-83; Blecking, Diethelm: „Sport tut Deutsch-Südwest gut. Frei vagabundierende Gedanken zu Simon Geissbühlers Replik.“ In: *SportZeiten* 2, 2002, pp. 84-89.

³⁹Blecking: „Sport“ (2001), pp. 58/59 and others.

⁴⁰Cf. note 26!

⁴¹Blecking: „Sport“ (2001), p. 61; he also counts them among the "ancient roots of sport"!

⁴²Blecking: „Sport“ (2001), p. 62.

⁴³This observation - if true - contradicts the thesis advocated by Norbert Elias and his supporters of a general reduction / containment of violence in society and sport.

⁴⁴Blecking: „Sport“ (2001), p. 62.

⁴⁵All quotations from Blecking: "Sport" (2001), pp. 63-65 (grammatically tacitly improved, CT).

⁴⁶Geissbühler: „Gewalt“, p. 76.

⁴⁷Geissbühler: „Gewalt“, p. 79, note 8.

⁴⁸Geissbühler: „Gewalt“, p. 77.

memory".⁴⁹

*"Difficile est satiram non scribere."*⁵⁰ It is - also for me - difficult not to take a satirical stand on such statements. Diethelm Blecking has given in to this temptation and added some current examples to his "highly subjectively meant Philippika"⁵¹. But it does not help: we (also) have to make a serious effort to clarify the central concepts, the instruments of analysis with which we handle in our science, even if we sometimes express ourselves in satirical form for understandable reasons.

Nobody seems to seriously deny that **fight, violence and aggression** are central concepts in the history (and present) of movement culture and sport. However, I perceive **a very widespread basic attitude among sport historians, generally among sport scientists, and even more generally among social scientists, to leave (not only) these terms in obscurity.** It was my intention in this contribution to identify these **conceptual deficits** and to **give suggestions for overcoming them.**

⁴⁹ ... Geissbühler: „Gewalt“, p. 81 (grammatically tacitly improved, CT).

⁵⁰ ... Decimus Junius Juvenal(is): Satira 1, 30.

⁵¹ ... Blecking: „Sport“ (2002), p. 85.