

## **The (re)emergence of a religio-spiritual self-cultivation focus in Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain (1906-2009)**

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## **The (re)emergence of a religio-spiritual self-cultivation focus in Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain (1906-2009)**

This article presents one analytical theme emerging from a bibliometric and content analysis of an annotated bibliography, compiled by the first author, comprising 1,564 Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain between 1906 and 2009. The analysis reveals that the use of Asian martial arts and religio-spiritual self-cultivation practices, while very old in their indigenous South East Asian context, only appeared in published texts in Spain from the 1960s and this theme has been increasingly written about in the last two decades. In our analytical discussion we contextualise this shift from a socio-historical perspective, focusing on three aspects: First and second; how this shift in focus in Asian Martial Art publishing, fit with the patterns of societal secularisation in Spain, the rise of the New Age movement and counter cultural spiritualities across Western culture. Third; we comment on how, from this broader socio-historical context, Asian martial arts were well placed to fill ‘cultural spaces’ created by these changes.

Keywords: Asian martial arts; secularization; New Age; religion, spirituality; self cultivation

### **Introduction**

A variety of historical studies indicate that Asian martial arts were introduced to Western societies and began a process of cultural assimilation from the turn of the nineteenth century into the twentieth.<sup>1</sup> This ongoing process has resulted in Asian martial arts becoming popular and widespread practices attracting hundreds of thousands of lifelong practitioners in contemporary Western societies. This article contributes to understanding the process of assimilation and development by presenting findings from a bibliometric and content analysis of an annotated bibliography compiled

by the first author comprising 1,564 Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain between 1906 and 2009. A range of themes emerged through the analytical process as a whole, and have been discussed elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> One theme of central significance that we focus on here is how, increasingly, these assimilated Asian martial arts are being presented as vehicles for spiritual and religious self-cultivation. In what follows, first, we outline the methodological strategy used in the study. Next we show how the bibliometric analysis reveals the distribution of Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain per topic and decade. Third, we present findings from the content analysis that provides information on the frequency and percentage of religious and spiritual key words and themes included within the contents of monographs in the database. We then draw on these to present an analytical socio-historical discussion that situates this ongoing shift in the Asian martial arts away from the previous focus on utilitarian uses towards religio-spiritual self cultivation in the Spanish context.

## **Methodology**

The method used for this research followed a two stage process and involved several analytical techniques. The purpose of the first stage was to create a reliable database of Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain. For that purpose, (1) documentary analysis of form (bibliographic description) and (2) documentary analysis of content (indexing, abstracting and subject analysis) techniques were used. The second stage was specifically focused in obtaining results from the annotated bibliography through a quantitative analysis, in which (3) bibliometric and (4) content analysis techniques were employed. To our knowledge, the combination of these two methods, bibliometric and content analyses, as an intentional precursor for making socio-historical observations has not been done before and certainly not within the area of martial arts research<sup>3</sup>. Next, more detail about the whole process is given.

The data source for our analysis was a database of Asian martial arts monographs published in Spain (written in any of its official languages) between 1906 (the date of the first known Spanish language text published on the subject) and 2009. The data set collected comprised 1,564 first edition monographs (2,403 including reprints). References and metadata on these monographs were collected by Pérez-Gutiérrez and published as an annotated bibliography.<sup>4</sup> For the preparation of this bibliography, an intensive phase of data mining was undertaken between 2007 and 2011 that exhaustively searched the databases of the main national libraries, sports documentation centres, and Spanish publishers' catalogues. Significant private collections, foreign libraries, online databases and published martial arts and sport bibliographies were also consulted. The monographs obtained from these searches were directly consulted (2.9% of the references could not be accessed) for performing the documentary analysis of form and the documentary analysis of content on them.

Each of the references included within the database is composed of three different parts: (1) the bibliographic description, (2) keywords and (3) abstract. The techniques involved in the creation of each reference followed the procedural recommendations of the Spanish Association for Standardisation and Certification [Asociación Española de Normalización y Certificación – AENOR]. First, each monograph was consulted to determine its bibliographic elements and perform the documentary analysis of form.<sup>5</sup> The format and bibliographic elements chosen were as follows:

Author(s). Year. *Title*. Location: Publisher. Edition. Number of pages : illustrations ; size. I.S.B.N. Legal deposit. (Reeditions, years).

Example:

Corriente Basús, Federico (1982). *Estudios sobre el tao del jeet kunedo*. Barcelona: Alas. 1ª ed. 189 p. : il. ; 15x21 cm. ISBN: 84-203-0133-7. Depósito legal: B. 16793-1982. (2ª ed., 1987).

Second, documentary analysis of content was performed to abstract the contents and decide the most important content keywords of each monograph.<sup>6</sup> During this phase the main topic of the reference was also chosen in order to include the monograph in one of the categories and/or subcategories of the database. Due to the lack of any thesaurus of martial arts which could fit the requirements for this research,<sup>7</sup> the keywords were firstly assigned by the authors in a free indexing procedure, and then unified in a post-coordination process to avoid polysemy and synonymy.<sup>8</sup> For example, the keywords related to the martial arts technique can be *technique*, *techniques*, *skills*, *dexterity*, or *technical foundations*. In this case, we chose *technical foundations* as this term avoids the polysemy of the term *skills* – which could also refer to physical, mental or emotional skills –, and unifies the cited terms for avoiding synonymy.

Once the references were completed, the database was then organised into 17 categories of monographs, 10 of these categories were further subcategorised, creating a total of 33 subcategories. The process followed for organising the database had necessarily to consider several criteria due to the high number and heterogeneity of Asian martial arts monographs under study. The first criterion was chronological, creating a specific category for the small number of monographs (n = 14) published between 1906 and 1950. This period had a specific significance as it was the first stage in the development of Asian martial arts in Spain.<sup>9</sup> The second criterion was geographical, and added ten categories to the database according to the country of origin of the different martial arts (e.g., Karate – Japan, Taijiquan – China, Taekwondo – Korea). Finally, the third criterion was thematic and added six categories devoted to global aspects of martial arts such as “Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias”, “Classic

martial arts texts” or “Self-Defence”. The same thematic criterion was used for the establishment of the 33 subcategories, 30 of them referring to the different martial arts styles (e.g., Judo, Muay Thai, Boabom) and three referring to areas of self-defence (general, feminine and police and military).<sup>10</sup>

While the total number of monographs numbered 2,403; only first editions (n = 1,564) were considered for the next step of our research (bibliometric and content analysis) because the total number of reprints would have overestimated the appearance of themes within the published monographs.<sup>11</sup> In addition to the analysis of the total number of first editions, the eight categories or subcategories with the greatest number of first editions were also included in this study due to their relevance ([Table 1](#)).<sup>12</sup> These categories or subcategories represent respectively the 71,87% and 67,90% of the total number of monographs and first editions catalogued in the database.

### **TABLE I HERE**

The second stage of this study started with the bibliometric analysis. Pritchard defines bibliometrics as ‘the application of mathematics and statistical methods to books and other media of communication.’<sup>13</sup> Bibliometric methodologies are being used increasingly to assess the impact factor of journals and quantify the scientific production of academic research.<sup>14</sup> This usage has led to the technique being criticized in certain contexts.<sup>15</sup> However, bibliometric analysis has also been used by sport scientists across a range of disciplines, including sport sociology, sport management, sport sciences journals, and recently, martial arts and combat sports.<sup>16</sup> This latter body of work extends the use of bibliometrics in order ‘to analyze the historical development of a specific body of literature, especially its authorship, publication, and use.’<sup>17</sup> In what

follows, reference to the term bibliometric analysis refers to this use of the technique. According to López's classification of types of bibliometric analysis, this study was focused on productivity and subject analyses of the documentary data specifically on the distribution of monographs per category and decade.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, a content analysis technique was used. This analytical procedure is widely used across the humanities and social sciences.<sup>19</sup> We followed Krippendorff's definition that content analysis is a 'research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use.'<sup>20</sup> For our analysis, the information included in the Abstract and Keywords fields of the database were used. This was considered appropriate because as Bardin contends documentary analysis of content and content analysis share several similarities and processes.<sup>21</sup> In particular, the preparation of the abstract and keywords included within the documentary analysis is similar to the preparation of the coding units included within the content analysis. Therefore, keywords extracted from the documentary analysis of content were selected as coding units in the content analysis due to their relevance and relationship with the selected themes. Then, keywords were grouped in categories attending to their themes.

As mentioned above, the aspect of our analysis we focus on here is the theme of religio-spirituality.<sup>22</sup> Based on the list of keywords included within the annotated bibliography, terminology relating to several specific religions as well as the general term religion were included within the religious category. Bioenergetics, meditation and relaxation terms are typically related to the spiritual development of the martial practitioner, so they were included within the spiritual category ([Table 2](#)). Selected keywords were searched in the Abstract and Keywords fields of the annotated bibliography for data mining purposes. The content analysis focused specifically on the



frequency and relative percentage of the selected keywords (in relation to the number of first editions). The frequency and relative percentage of religious and spiritual themes as well as their distribution per decade.

### **TABLE II HERE**

#### **Findings: The (re)emergence of religio-spiritual self cultivation**

The bibliometric analysis of monographs per category and decade depicted different patterns of distribution as shown in [Table 3](#). While publications relating to Taijiquan, Philosophy/History/Education, Qigong, Classic martial art texts and Aikido categories show a progressive increase in the number of publications, most significantly from the 1980s onwards, the Wushu category presents a rise in its number of publications during the 1980s followed by a significant decrease. In the same way, the Karate category depicts an important bibliographic peak during the 1980s followed by a subsequent decrease and then another increase during the first decade of the twenty first century. Contrastingly, Judo/Jujutsu publications progressively increased throughout the period of study and a slight decrease at the beginning of the twenty first century. In spite of the decreases mentioned, in absolute terms, there has been a continuous increase in the total number of Asian Martial arts monographs published per decade.

### **TABLE III HERE**

The amount and percentage of appearance of the selected keywords are shown in [Table 4](#). Significantly, meditation and Zen keywords presented the highest relative percentage in relation with the number of first editions of Asian martial arts

monographs achieving 6.71% and 5.82% respectively. Gathering the selected keywords by theme, the appearance of the religious and spiritual contents in relation to the number of Asian martial arts monographs is similar with 10.29% and 12.15% respectively.

#### **TABLE IV HERE**

The distribution of religious and spiritual contents per decade showed a similar evolution with slight differences (see [Table 5](#)). The progressive rise in frequency of their appearance among the contents of the Asian martial arts monographs from the decade of the 1970s until the first decade of the twenty first century suggests a shift in content and focus was occurring. While the highest relative percentage of the religious contents (12.17%) is achieved during the decade of the 1990s, the spiritual contents have progressively increased for achieving their peak (16.36%) during the first decade of the twenty first century.

#### **TABLE V HERE**

The distribution of religious and spiritual contents per category is shown in [Table 6](#). Regarding the religious contents, the Philosophy/History/Education (31.45%) and Qigong (19.35%) categories presented the highest percentages, while the Classic martial art texts (2.22%) and Judo/Jujutsu (2.64%) categories depicted the lowest percentages. On the other hand the Qigong (44.09%) and Taijiquan (28.19%) categories presented the highest percentages of spiritual contents. In contrast, Classic martial art texts (1.11%) and Judo (2.64%) categories showed the lowest percentages of spiritual contents.

## **TABLE VI HERE**

### **Discussion: Contextualisation**

The following analytical socio-historical discussion builds on the findings presented by Pérez-Gutiérrez and Gutiérrez-García.<sup>24</sup> It develops the idea emerging from the bibliometric and content analysis that there has been a relatively recent and significant shift in the focus of martial arts monograph publications in Spain from a utilitarian and/or sporting focus either towards, or to accommodate a religio-spiritual self-cultivation focus. In the remainder of this article, we contextualise and interpret these findings. We do this by making three specific observations: How these shifts fit with the patterns of societal secularisation in Spain, the rise of the New Age movement and the way in which Asian martial arts were well placed to fill ‘cultural spaces’ created by these changes.

#### ***‘Oleadas’ or overlapping waves of Spanish Secularisation***

Notwithstanding the very significant legacy of the early Moorish culture on the Iberian Peninsula (circa 711-1610), Spanish society has been shaped most profoundly by a Catholic religious tradition. In contemporary times, this tradition reached its zenith under the Franco regime (1939-1975). As Suárez et al. articulate, Franco’s dictatorship was underpinned by catholic religious beliefs, succinctly summarised in the well-known motto ‘Religion, Patria y Familia’ (Religion, Fatherland and Family).<sup>25</sup> However, Franco’s forced Catholicist regime was in part an effort of resistance against a creeping process of secularisation that had its roots in nineteenth century Spain and was also taking place immediately beyond its borders in neighbouring European countries, and

more generally across Western culture during the middle of the twentieth century.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, Pérez-Agote contends that within Spain this process of change can be understood as having emerged through three identifiable *oleadas* (overlapping waves) of secular development.<sup>27</sup>

The first oleada took place from the end of the nineteenth century to the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) in what has been characterised by Parra and Suárez as an active (and occasionally violent) attitude against the Catholic Church. This activism was promoted by anticlerical sectors of Spanish society including republican, socialist, communist and anarchistic-inspired labour movements. It resulted in some dramatic events such as the Tragic Week in Catalonia (1909), the burning of convents (1931) and religious persecution in the Republican zone during the Civil War.<sup>28</sup>

By contrast, the second and third oleadas were both manifest through passive attitudes and behaviours, resulting in a national catholic culture characterised by an increasing loss of interest and ignorance about the Catholic Church.<sup>29</sup> The second secularization oleada began in the 1960s during a particularly tense period in Franco's regime due to the increasing number of social protests, labour disputes and the appearance of several opposing forces, notably including university students and trade union movements.<sup>30</sup> This oleada was overlapped during the 1980s by a third oleada, a point when Spain had already made the transition to democracy. Spanish religious self-identity and practice was changing dramatically during the 1970s and the 1980s from society in which 74% were catholic practitioners in 1975, to 44% in 1985 and 43% of catholic believers but non-practitioners.<sup>31</sup> Pérez-Agote further considers that the third oleada continued (at least) until the turn of the twenty first century by which time the Spanish Catholic/Other balance was estimated at 32% Catholic practitioners, 51%

Catholic non-practitioners, 13.2% non-believers and 1.9% of Others and Not-available respectively.<sup>32</sup>

In numerous Western contexts secularization processes have been connected with the introduction of new recreational and sporting practices.<sup>33</sup> Similarly in Spain, the rise of a secular Spanish society created new lifestyle and leisure spaces that were filled by a range of alternative physical cultural/spiritual/secular practices and interests. These secular leisure activities were greatly aided by the uptake of supranational (European) initiatives such as the Sport for All policy developed by the Council of Europe by successive Spanish government's (beginning in 1980) at the national level.<sup>34</sup> These sport for all policies served as a catalyst for the emergence of outdoor sports practices, such as snowboarding, kayaking, surfing or paragliding to name a few, but also created opportunities for revised interpretations of martial arts practices in Spain as well.<sup>35</sup>

García-Ferrando documented how from the beginning of the 1980s there was growing interest in practicing sport in nature and, in addition, an emergence of a secularised concern for personal equilibrium (in terms of work/life balance, personal health and wellbeing etc).<sup>36</sup> Many of the new 'recreational sports' were considered to nourish such needs. In subsequent decades, the amount of sport practitioners involved in recreational physical activity (i.e., without a competitive aim) increased significantly, (for example, from 63% in 1995 to a 74% in 2010) depicting the rise of an increasing variety of secular recreational sporting activities promising pleasure, fun, evasion, relaxation, adventure, health and even body self-construction / reconstruction.<sup>37</sup>

This context is consistent with the changing publication and content patterns of Judo, Karate and Wushu monographs (see [Table 6](#)). While a less relevant percentage of monographs on these arts indicated a shift towards religion and spirituality than some of

the 'new' martial arts, such as Tai Chi, nevertheless this pattern still appears. The most interesting pattern however, is the year of publication and distribution of these changing contents. At the beginning of the 1970s, most established martial arts in Spanish society were approached as utilitarian activities but were starting a process of change in order to align themselves with the increasing promotion of recreational sports and self-actualising activities for a broader population in society.<sup>38</sup> In an increasingly open secular context, there were increased opportunities for a greater awareness of and interest in the history, nature and purpose of these Asian martial arts practices in their indigenous contexts.

### ***The New Age movement and counter-cultural spiritualities***

Forms of secularisation described above can also be seen as de-traditionalisation. Weber famously argued that modernisation processes emerging from protestant capitalist culture contained one such de-traditionalising influence: A heavy shift in emphasis towards Zweckrational action (goal oriented or instrumental rational action). This logic came to undermine the previous cultural dominance of Wertrational (value rational action based on fixed beliefs such as for example, Roman Catholicism in Spain).<sup>39</sup> The influence of instrumental rational action on subsequent modernising processes of industrialisation and bureaucratisation have been well documented by sociologists such as Giddens and firmly connected with secularisation in general societal terms and to sport.<sup>40</sup>

In his bleak depiction of the 'iron cage of modernity,' Weber argued that overemphasis of instrumental rationality in modernity led to an impoverishment of the human condition. As Giddens' puts it, radical de-traditionalisation and reflexive modernisation 'extends to the core of the self' and can be 'existentially troubling'.<sup>41</sup> This 'feeling' (partially articulated by social theorists through concepts such as

alienation, anomie, identity crisis, ontological insecurity etc.) has according to Sweetman become a disposition of 'dis-ease' (a reflexive habitus) and is now widespread across de-traditionalised free-market consumer capitalist societies.<sup>42</sup>

Many international historical events simultaneously contributed to and illustrated this 'dis-ease'. For example, in the United States the widespread public rejection of Vietnam war (1964-1975); the 'student' riots and general strikes in France of May and June 1968; the Mexican student movement against the Partido Revolucionario Institucional's oppression and the international campaign for nuclear disarmament.<sup>43</sup> In Spain, the celebration of the first democratic elections following the fall of Franco's regime in 1977, the opening of Spanish society to the international markets along with the rapid adaptation away from supply side economics to harmonise with an emerging global economic system, and, in terms of physical culture, the increasing number of sports practitioners from 22% in 1975 to a 34% in 1985 were culminations of rapid de-traditionalisation in Spanish society beginning around 1930 and continuing until the present day.<sup>44</sup> As discussed above, such changes leave many individuals feeling 'dis-eased' as traditional, absolute meanings and actions in Spanish life are removed and replaced with institutionally legitimised uncertainty.

Internationally, the New Age movement is one cross-cultural response to the dis-ease of modernity and the inherent uncertainty of instrumental rationality. Arising out of the 1960s, significant numbers of people began exploring alternative knowledges, practices and lifestyles in ways that simultaneously rejected the rigid structures of traditionalism and the uncertainties of modernity. The term 'New Age' is typically symbolised by the idea that a significantly better way of life is dawning and as Heelas notes, a number of 'new' or emergent religio-spiritual movements are potentially contained in the term.<sup>45</sup>

Hannegraaf maintains that the New Age movement has a counter-cultural logic that focuses on an individualised and/or privatised spirituality, centred on search for a deeper understanding of the self.<sup>46</sup> This de-traditionalization of the self, outlined by scholars such as Bellah and Berger, initially combined the rise of the new age movement and counter cultural spiritualities through the 1960s and 1970s and converged on the idea of the individual as a self-directing, authorial agent, relying on their own sources of authority, control and responsibility.<sup>47</sup> As Heelas and Campbell both argue this was bound with a popular rejection of consumer capitalist materialism rising from the realisation that ‘having no hope of improving their lives in any of the ways that matter, people have convinced themselves that what matters is psychic self-improvement’.<sup>48</sup> Under these circumstances, spiritually-oriented Asian martial arts have proven highly alluring as a ‘project of self (cultivation)’.<sup>49</sup>

***Filling the gap: Asian Martial arts and the promise of religio-spiritual self cultivation***

In the Western societies such as Spain, the Asian martial arts, strongly influenced by South East Asian philosophies and religions such as Mahayan/Zen Buddhism and Taoism, interpellate strongly with the New Age movement since a number of their goals for practice are closely aligned and provide New Age imaginaries with a cultural ‘template’ of discourses and practices to adapt. For example, the idea of cultivating the ‘harmonised’ body-mind relationship through martial movement forms is typical of Mahayan/Zen and Taoist inspired arts and strongly compatible with Hannegraaf’s definition of New Age principles that sees every human being as ‘a unique, wholistic independent relationship of body, mind, emotions and spirit’.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, these ideas are also compatible with Heelas’ description of New Age movement spirituality as holistic, in which ‘those who maintain that inner spirituality –embedded within the self



and the natural order as a whole- serves as the key to moving from all that is wrong with life to all that is right'.<sup>51</sup> Indeed, Dole, Langone and Eichel articulate the New Age movement as 'an eclectic collection of psychological and spiritual techniques that are rooted in Eastern mysticism, lack scientific evaluative data, and are promoted zealously by followers of diverse idealised leaders claiming transformative visions'.<sup>52</sup> These connections are central to Campbell's Easternization of the West thesis and is abundantly illustrated within the commentaries of authors such as Draeger in the field of popular, practitioner based martial arts publications.<sup>53</sup>

All of these disciplines are complicated, intricate challenges in the pursuit of a better way of life and are based on the firm conviction that no man [sic] is as complete a human being as he can be after sufficient experience with the "do".<sup>54</sup>

More specifically, the link between these 'do' based martial arts goals and the pursuit of a better way of life is highlighted by Yang and Nagashima respectively:

Although Tai Chi Chuan can give you a relaxed body and a calm mind, the most important benefit you can gain is a higher level of understanding of life and nature ... This is the way that leads to the physical, mental and spiritual health. Once you have achieved this, how can you wonder about or be unsure of the meaning of life?<sup>55</sup>

What does Budo contribute to our lives? For me, Budo is more than a life style, is a part of my life, never better said, because with Budo I found the WAY, I found THE LIFE... Today I feel proud to say 'I SUFFERED BUT WON', and I can say: 'I beat the cancer because I fought against it from my inside with the power of Budo, and always together with my LOVED ONES'.<sup>56</sup>

As Draeger, Yang and Nagashima's comments above highlight a spiritual focus in the martial arts interpellate with Heelas' summary of the three core elements of the New Age narrative, which are 'Your lives do not work', 'You are Gods and Goddesses in exile', and 'Let go/drop it'.<sup>57</sup> The promise of self cultivation was very noticeable within

the Philosophy/History/Education category of our analysis, the religious and spiritual contents appeared in 31.45% and 22.58% of its total amount of first-edition monographs respectively. The book titles extracted from Philosophy/History/Education category clearly stated their goals, but their contents also explicitly refer to enlightenment experiences and self-cultivation processes. Examples include; Paniagua's *El equilibrio cuerpo mente* [Body-mind balance]; Payne's *Artes marciales: la dimensión espiritual* [Martial arts: the spiritual dimension]; Nalda's *Wa-shin-tai: armonía-cuerpo-mente* [Wa-shin-tai: body-mind-harmony] and Tohei's *El libro del ki: armonizando la mente y el cuerpo en la vida diaria* [Book of Ki: Co-Ordinating Mind and Body in Daily Life].<sup>58</sup>

Moreover, this appears to have been done in the Japanese arts with a re-  
invigoration of one of the most influential codes shaping martial practitioner's training and behaviour: *bushido*, which Cleary defines as:

The culture of the samurai, incorporating elements of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Shinto, along with the martial arts and military science essential to their original profession, came to be referred to as budo, the warrior's way; or shido, the knight's way; and finally bushido, the way of the warrior-knight.<sup>59</sup>

The promise of these martial, religio-spiritual and meditative cultures combined is also indicated by the high percentage of reprints (see [Table 1](#)) present within this category of books classified as Classic martial art texts (translated into Spanish), including texts such as Sun Tzu's the *Art of War*, and Miyamoto Musashi's *The book of Five Rings*. Furthermore, these have been interpreted and modified with the promise of informing, not only one's martial arts practice, but also one's social comportment or even management strategy.<sup>60</sup>

Brown, Jennings and Molle highlight three often observed relationships between religion and spirituality in Asian martial arts practised in the West. They can be, i) a gateway to established (Asian) religions: Through martial practice, experiences might

emerge that are then interpreted through established (East) Asian religions. ii) spiritual exercises: Through martial practice experiences emerge that are attributed spiritual significance but not attached to any particular religious doctrine: and iii) secular religions: The art itself (and its component artefacts and practices) are rendered a sacred practice.<sup>61</sup> Brown et al. concluded that in Western contexts traditional Asian martial arts appear to fulfil each of these functions according to the subjectivities of the teachers and practitioners involved.<sup>62</sup> This process of subjectivisation of these arts relates closely the New Age orientations of individualism, private symbolism and eclectic self-cultivation mentioned above. These relationships clearly emerged in the content analysis phase of the study and although there is limited space to document them here, some illustrations will be presented to highlight how subjectivation is nevertheless interpellated by both the New Age narrative and a range of South Asian philosophies.

Pedro Valencia's biography tells a story of martial arts being a gateway to established Asian religions and traces the process of how he began training for deeper understandings:

His first Tai Chi Chuan master also instilled him the devotion to Buddhism. In 1992, Pedro Valencia set a friendly trap with the Lama who was in charge of the Tibetan Buddhism Monastery located in Huesca province, Drudyu Tempa Lama. Since then, he follows the teachings of the Lama masters living in the Monastery and of the great rimpoché invited to the Monastery as well as the XIV Dalai Lama who has visited Spain several times.<sup>63</sup>

The percentage of Qigong and Taijiquan books including spiritual contents was 44.09% and 28.19% respectively, while 19.35% and 13.42% were dedicated to explicitly religious themes. The mix of spiritual and philosophical contents in Chinese martial arts books is clearly illustrated by Chia and Li:

Tai Chi Chi Kung teaches us to move in harmony with the principles of the Tao. It is based on classical Taoist philosophy as presented in the I Ching, in the Tao Te Ching, in Chuang Tzu and Lieh Tzu, and in Sun Tzu's The Art of War. Its principles are also rooted in the esoteric Taoist teachings of inner alchemy as taught by the greater immortals Ko Hung, Lu Tung-Pin, and others.<sup>64</sup>

Martial arts as spiritual exercise is also readily apparent, as Brown et al. cite Aikido is often presented as spiritual exercise because it makes no claim to forward a particular religious belief but does make explicit a series of spiritual priorities including 'commitment to self development and spiritual achievement ... peaceful and spiritual resolution of conflict ... and to self-improvement through Aikido training and rituals.'<sup>65</sup> Our data reflected this relationship with 4.84% and 9.68% of Aikido monographs including explicit reference to religious and spiritual contents respectively. However, it is not only Aikido that illustrated how martial arts were being considered as spiritual exercise. Isidro contends that practicing martial arts alters our self perception, 'through reflection, each one must reconcile with his [sic] own conscience and, eventually, become aware of life and of what was lived, to improve ourselves, because only then we will find inner peace and happiness.'<sup>66</sup> Similarly, Tucci claims that:

The mystique of the warrior lies in his [sic] effort in grasping what cannot be grasped, in concreting the universal, in understanding through experience. He develops his senses and physical aptitudes instead of denying them, living with the paradox of being able to get rid of their messages to conclude in reading in an inner code of infinite wisdom. A code that will act as a bridge, as a nexus between the individual and the universal, to turn the heart of the universe in his own heart; that is the way of the warrior.<sup>67</sup>

Lastly, the notion of secular religion is also strongly present. In terms of Ashworth and Vaidyanath's definition these are secular religions because 'the reverence vested in the ends may devolve to the means'.<sup>68</sup> The following extracts, each exemplify how the

focus of attention and reverence is, for some practitioners, turned onto the art itself and / or the conception of Budo/Bushido that the art's practice is based upon. The illustrations below highlight how, the *profane* martial practices of Karate and Iai-do in and of themselves become imbued with religio-spiritual relevance and sacred attachment to the art, its artifacts (especially the Budo code), practices and its founders.

Thomas Barro Mitose, at present 22<sup>nd</sup> descendant of The Founder; head and Great Master of all Kenpo-Karate (Kosho-Shorei) Temples and Schools, has reorganised these teachings to restore the discipline, the prestige and the harmony on the Kenpo-Karate International community. He is the star that, since the dawn of time, stopped in this century, illumines with its light the way to follow for this young society that has ancestors smell, which emerges under the auspices of a great universal fraternity, guiding all who gathered in the same ship, follow a clear course, towards promising horizons that will open to us the knowledge of the truth, the quality and the friendship, and therefore, guided by the Master, pilot this ship with proficiency, honesty and happiness, to the future, avoiding with all our power that dispersion and interpersonal antagonism provoke a wreck that could result in a irreversible catastrophe, losing a wealth of knowledge, zealously kept since the beginnings of our ancestors.<sup>69</sup>

Nevertheless, I have come to discover, through the inner and outer pilgrimage, that the Martial Arts, on the condition of being studied and practiced mainly with spiritual goals, are extraordinary means for the reencounter with the reality of the self. Budo Masters came to name Seishin-Tanren the successive stages of forging and tempering of the being, that forge the soul of a man to a point to confer to it the pureness, the beauty and the edge of a Japanese sword. Such is the plan and the final goal of Budo: the development, by means of the subtle alchemy of the Being, of the Great Inner Work ... Basically based on the Sacred Art of the Sword (Iai-Do), [this book] has been conceived as a guide for the sincere seekers, for the free men [sic], for those who dare to walk alone, without lord, without fortress, without school, without honors, without master and even, without weapons.<sup>70</sup>

### **Closing comments**

The bibliometric and content analysis provides an alternative method avenue for

developing understandings of socio-historical change. Our analysis suggests that the relationship between Asian martial arts and religio-spiritual self-cultivation in Spain started to become either accommodated within or the focus of new martial arts books from the 1960s onwards (Although the distribution of spiritual and religious contents between the categories of martial arts books studied is slightly different). Our discussion builds on these findings and provides further contextual evidence of three factors supporting this shift. We pointed to three historical ‘Oleadas’ (overlapping waves) of Spanish secularisation, to the rise of the New Age movement and counter-cultural spiritualities and finally to how a number of Asian Martial arts have been interpreted as filling the gap left by traditional religious practices offering and the promise of religio-spiritual self cultivation that take on a number of nuanced yet subjectively selected forms. It is hoped therefore, that these findings can contribute to enhancing understanding of the overlapping socio-historical processes of assimilation, (re)invention and adaption of East Asian martial arts cultures in Western contexts.

## Notes

1. See Bowen, *100 years of judo*, vol. I; Brousse, *Les racines du judo*, 77-153; Brousse & Matsumoto, *Judo in the U.S.*, 19-41; Gutiérrez-García, *Introducción y desarrollo del judo*, 93-146; Svinth, “Chronological History”, 822-825.
2. See Pérez-Gutiérrez, *Repertorio bibliográfico, análisis bibliométrico*, 269-402.
3. This statement must be confined to studies published in Spanish, French, English, Italian and Portuguese languages.
4. Pérez-Gutiérrez, Gutiérrez-García and Álvarez, “Annotated bibliography about Asian”, 31-430.
5. AENOR, *Referencias bibliográficas*, 6-15.
6. AENOR, *Documentación, preparación de resúmenes*, 3-4; and AENOR, *Documentación: métodos para el análisis*, 3-6. See also Pinto and Gálvez, *Análisis documental de contenido*, 52-53.

7. To our knowledge only one specific thesaurus of martial arts has been published to date (Brakel, "Thesaurus of martial arts", 2-27). Nevertheless, this work was considered as too generic for our research.
8. See Moreiro, *El contenido de los documentos textuales*; García-Gutiérrez, *Lingüística documental*.
9. Gutiérrez-García, *Introducción y desarrollo del judo*, 93-179.
10. For more detailed information on this process see Pérez-Gutiérrez, Gutiérrez-García and Álvarez, "Annotated bibliography about Asian", 25-27.
11. For example, Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* has been reprinted 36 times with the publisher Edaf. Therefore, in this case, its keywords would have been overestimated 36 times.
12. The categories included were Philosophy/History/Education and Classic martial art texts (there is no subcategorisation into these categories), while subcategories were Judo/Jujutsu, Karate, Aikido (main category: Japan), Taijiquan, Wushu and Qigong (main category: China). The category Classic martial art texts includes monographs that reprint, extend, reinterpret, annotate or apply to different contexts texts usually considered as classics by martial arts practitioners and researchers due to their historical importance. That is the case, for example, of Sun Tzu's *the Art of War*, Miyamoto Musashi's *The Book of Five Rings*, Tsunetomo Yamamoto's *Hagakure*, or Inazo Nitobe's *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. On the other hand, 12 and 2 references were added to Judo/Jujutsu and Classic martial art texts categories respectively, moving from Books published before 1950 category because of their contents.
13. Pritchard, *Statistical bibliography or bibliometrics?*, 349.
14. King, "A review of bibliometric", 261; and Luukkonen, "Research evaluation in Europe", 81.
15. See Seglen, "Why the impact factor", 498-502; Simons, "The Misused Impact Factor", 165.
16. See Loy, "Exploratory analysis", 97; Quatman and Chelladurai, "The Social Construction", 656-663; Tsigilis et al., "Impact factors", 84-86; Cihounkova and Reguli, "A search of literature", 19; and Pérez-Gutiérrez, Gutiérrez-García and Escobar-Molina, "Terminological recommendations", 160.
17. ODLIS, *Bibliometrics*.
18. López, *Introducción a la bibliometría*, 48-63.
19. Kennedy and Hills, *Sport, Media and Society*, 13-32; and Mayring, "Qualitative Content Analysis", 266.

20. Krippendorff, *Content analysis*, 18.
21. Bardin, *El análisis de contenido*, 34-35.
22. There were a range of other themes emerging that will be explored elsewhere.
23. The religious nature of Confucianism has been and still is a topic of much discussion and debate. After careful consideration of the pros and cons of including this keyword / coding unit under Religious category, we found a solid support in the recent book *Confucianism as a World Religion: Contested Histories and Contemporary Realities*, by Anna Sun. Taking Confucianism into account allowed us to include one of the most important philosophical, ethical and religious/spiritual influences on martial arts (see e.g., Bodiford, "Belief Systems: Japanese Martial Arts and Religion before 1868.", 376-378; Simpkins and Simpkins, "Confucianism and the Asian Martial Traditions.", 46-53).
24. Pérez-Gutiérrez and Gutiérrez-García, "Estudio bibliométrico", 30-31.
25. Suárez et al., *Historia general de España*, 42.
26. Pérez-Agote, *Cambio religioso en España*, 15-16.
27. Ibid., 35-36. Oleada can be translated literally as wave, however, importantly it also conveys the idea of a movement or process that is followed and overlapped by other waves or movements, hence we have left the term in Spanish.
28. Parra and Suárez, *El anticlericalismo español contemporáneo*, 168-185.
29. Pérez-Agote, *Cambio religioso en España*, 112-134. Pérez-Agote defines a catholic culture through different dimensions, such as the maintained social significance of the catholic rituals; the high faith levels in God and the Virgin; a progressive disappearance of some catholic beliefs (sin, Heaven, life after death, Holy Ghost, Angels, miracles, Hell, purgatory, Devil); religion and the Church lost their social influence on sexuality, politics, work and profession; and the persistence of some popular religion traditions. He also states that in contemporary Spain institutional religion and the Church are something strange, distant, unknown, and separate from everyday lived of young Spanish people.
30. Biescas and Tuñón, *España bajo la dictadura*, 337-392.
31. Pérez-Agote, *Cambio religioso en España*, 114.
32. Pérez-Agote, "El proceso de secularización", 70.
33. See Guttman, *From ritual to record*, 16-26; and Hoffman, *Sport and religion*, 35-42.
34. Council of Europe, "Resolution (76) 41", 2.
35. Olivera and Olivera, "La crisis de la modernidad", 17-25.



36. García-Ferrando, "Popular sport and sociocultural change", 20.
37. García-Ferrando and Llopis, *Ideal democrático y bienestar*, 80.
38. Bielsa and Vizuite, "Historia de la organización deportiva", 4-5; Cagigal, *El deporte en la sociedad*, 65; and Council of Europe, "Resolution (76) 41", 2.
39. Weber, *The Protestant ethic*, xxviii-xlii.
40. Giddens, *Capitalism and modern social*, 119-184; Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity*, 70-108; Berger, *The sacred canopy*, 105-174; and Guttmann, *From ritual to record*, 45-47.
41. Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity*, 10-34.
42. Sweetman, "Twenty-first century dis-ease?", 537-542.
43. Garí et al., 1968, *el mundo*, 359-367; and Otero, *Verdes y alternativos*, 21-39.
44. Tusell, *Historia de España*, 265-278; Cortés, "La modernización", 57-76; and García-Ferrando, *Postmodernidad y deporte*, chapter 3.1.
45. Heelas, *The New Age movement*, 15-40.
46. Hanegraaf, *New Age religion and Western*, 10-20.
47. Bellah, "Religious Evolution", 370-374; Berger, *The sacred canopy*, 105-174; and Heelas, *The New Age movement*, 15-40.
48. Heelas, *The New Age movement*, 142; and Campbell, *The Easternization of the West*, 68-111.
49. Giddens, *Modernity and self-identity*, 218.
50. Hanegraaf, *New Age religion and Western*, 54. See also Brown, "Seeking spirituality", 6-7.
51. Heelas, *The New Age movement*, 16.
52. Dole, Langone and Eichel, *New Age Movement*, 69.
53. Campbell, *The Easternization of the West*, 68-144.
54. Draeger, *The Martial Arts and Ways*, 25.
55. Yang, *The essence of tai chi*, 13-14.
56. Nagashima, *Vencer sin combatir*, 211.
57. Heelas, *The New Age movement*, 18-20.
58. Paniagua, *El equilibrio cuerpo mente*, 219-259; Payne, *Artes marciales*, 30-36; Nalda, *Washin-tai*, XXVI; and Tohei, *El libro del ki*, 93-112.

59. Cleary, *Training the samurai mind*, 1.
60. See Chin-Ning, *El arte de la guerra*, foreword; Ortemberg, *El arte de la guerra*, foreword; Salazar, *Cómo triunfar*, 1-7; Krause, *El libro de los cinco*, foreword; and Michaelson, *Sun Tzu*, 17-20.
61. Brown, Jennings and Molle, “Exploring relationships between”, 47.
62. *Ibid.*, 48.
63. Fundación Hun Yuan Taichi, *Biografía del maestro Pedro*, 8.
64. Chia and Li, *The inner structure of tai chi*, ix.
65. Brown, Jennings and Molle, “Exploring relationships between”, 5-6.
66. Isidro, *Reflexiones de un guerrero*, back cover.
67. Tucci, *El último horizonte del budo*, 14.
68. Ashworth and Vaidyanath, *Work organizations*, 364.
69. Gutiérrez, *Kenpo karate*, 15.
70. Ríos, *Ronin*, 17-18.

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Table 1. Number of monographs within the eight selected categories or subcategories, and total number of monographs included in the database.

Cat.	Judo/Jujutsu	Karate	Taijiquan	P.H.E.	Wushu	Qigong	C.M.A.T.	Aikido	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> eds.	227	206	149	124	113	93	88	62	1,564
1 <sup>st</sup> eds. + Reprints	347	338	239	155	174	132	223	119	2,403

Note: Cat. = category. P.H.E. = Philosophy/History/Education category. C.M.A.T. = Classic martial art texts category. 1<sup>st</sup> eds. = total number of first editions. Total: includes all the categories (n = 17) and subcategories (n = 33) of the database.

Table 2. Coding units included in the religious and spiritual categories

Categories / Contents	Keywords / Coding units
Religious	Buddhism, Confucianism <sup>23</sup> , Daoism, Hinduism, religion, Shintoism, Shugendo, Zen
Spiritual	bioenergetics, meditation, relaxation, spirit

Table 3. Evolution of monographs per decade, selected categories and total.

Period	Judo/Jujutsu		Karate		Taijiquan		P.H.E.		Wushu		Qigong		C.M.A.T.		Aikido		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1900-49	12	.77											2	.13			14	.90
1950-59	22	1.41															26	1.66
1960-69	34	2.17	9	.58			1	.06	1	.06					2	.13	55	3.52
1970-79	35	2.24	60	3.84	2	.13	2	.13	10	.64			2	.13	4	.26	155	9.91
1980-89	41	2.62	36	2.30	10	.64	14	.90	65	4.16	7	.45	8	.51	6	.38	294	18.80
1990-99	44	2.81	32	2.05	48	3.07	28	1.79	17	1.09	35	2.24	15	.96	17	1.09	378	24.17
2000-09	39	2.49	69	4.41	89	5.69	79	5.05	20	1.28	51	3.26	63	4.03	33	2.11	642	41.05
TOTAL	227	14.51	206	13.17	149	9.53	124	7.93	113	7.23	93	5.95	90	5.75	62	3.96	1,564	100

Note: P.H.E. = Philosophy/History/Education category. C.M.A.T. = Classic martial art texts category. % = percentage relative to the total of monographs (n = 1,564). Total: includes all the categories (n = 17) and subcategories (n = 33) of the database.

Table 4. Frequency and relative percentage of religious-related and spiritual-related keywords

Keyword	n	% rel.
Religious	161	10.29
Buddhism	26	1.66
Confucianism	10	.64
Hinduism	1	.06
Religion	40	2.56
Shintoism	5	.32

Shugendo	1	.06
Daoism	47	3.01
Zen	91	5.82
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Spiritual	190	12.15
Bioenergetics	2	.13
Meditation	105	6.71
Relaxation	46	2.94
Spirit	75	4.80

Note: n = frequency. % rel. = percentage relative to the total of first editions (n = 1,564).

Table 5. Frequency and relative percentage of religious and spiritual contents per decade

Period	Religious		Spiritual	
	n	% rel.	n	% rel.
1900-1949				
1950-1959			1	3.85
1960-1969	1	1.82	2	3.64
1970-1979	7	4.52	10	6.45
1980-1989	31	10.54	31	10.54
1990-1999	46	12.17	41	10.85
2000-2009	76	11.84	105	16.36
TOTAL	161	10.29	190	12.15

Note: n = frequency. % rel. = percentage in relation with the total number of first editions published in that decade.

Table 6. Distribution of religious and spiritual contents per selected categories.

Category	Religious		Spiritual	
	n	% rel.	n	% rel.
Judo/Jujutsu	6	2.64	6	2.64
Karate	12	5.83	14	6.80
Taijiquan	20	13.42	42	28.19
P.H.E.	39	31.45	28	22.58
Wushu	18	15.93	8	7.08
Qigong	18	19.35	41	44.09
C.M.A.T.	2	2.22	1	1.11
Aikido	3	4.84	6	9.68

Note: n = frequency. % rel. = percentage relative to the total of first editions (n = 1,564). P.H.E. = Philosophy/History/Education category. C.M.A.T. = Classic martial art texts category.