

## **Temporary cyborgs: Digital scoring systems shape Taekwondo training**

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The introduction of body sensors in Olympic style Taekwondo competitions has changed its practice. To stay competitive, athletes are adapting their movement habitus to be detected by the sensors. Accordingly, outside of competition, the athletes (often) have to prepare without the costly equipment, relying on a self-produced image of the sensed body.

Having conducted visual anthropological research to explore practices of care that unfold in the realm of Taekwondo in Argentina, I accompanied the preparation of a research participant for their first internationally ranked competition. Analysing the preparation for the tournament and the event itself, I draw on “touching visions” that Puig de la Bellacasa conceptualised in her book on ethics of care in a more than human world to define the notion of the sensed body. This conveys to a discussion of the effects of the digital protector scoring system (PSS) used at a-level competitions on Taekwondo training.

Deploying variegated ethnographic methods may be considered to devise transdisciplinary approaches to research sporting communities of practice. For instance, the researcher learns in the role of a participant observer how oneself and of one's sparring partner learn to land scoring kicks and how to give feedback about the required energy and direction. Whereas, in the role of filming anthropologist, the visual feedback offers a platform to interpellate the anthropological ethos of participant observation, asking: to what extent the digital recording systems may bring discrepancies between the individual's perceptions and the actual action to the fore? Hence, the visual research techniques render themselves suitable for both – the scholar eliciting answers to their formulated questions and - the practitioner reflecting on their practice as much as conscientiously accessing embodied knowledge to enhance future learning

After describing the ethnography concerning the technological developments of competitive Taekwondo, the keynote addresses the research methods, utilising reflexivity to discuss the positionalities and possibilities of (social) researchers engaging with martial arts and combat sports in which digital technologies are omnipresent.