

## **STANDING AND VIABILITY IN A PORT FULL OF PASSION REGULATION OF FULL CONTACT MARTIAL ARTS**

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Martial arts is a discipline that is often criticized; by some, it is called barbaric and is frequently connected to criminal circuits. In general, public opinion in the Netherlands is that there is a need for a ban, which is supported by some administrators. On the other hand, remarkably, there are also administrators who believe in the pedagogic value of martial arts and who see martial arts as an instrument in the upbringing of (problematic) youngsters. The criticism of full contact martial arts has increased in the last few years, and therefore, the government and martial arts sector are looking for a way to regulate the sport. From a cultural perspective, we have analyzed the cultural characteristics and power relations that maintain the current status quo. Research shows that problems concerning medical safety, pedagogical qualities of martial arts teachers and the entanglement of martial arts and criminal circuits cannot be solved in the present organizational context. The Dutch government prefers self-regulation, but the sector is hopelessly fragmented due to long-term conflicts, distrust, managerial incapacity and strong (financial) competition. Self-regulation will be difficult, as the sector is characterized as being a world of egos with a complex hierarchy of values. Only the passion for their sport unites the people active in this sector. All realize that without regulation martial arts may have no future. Only the government overrules all competing parties and can impose strict rules and sanction on them, in order to regulate martial arts to make the sport more safe for all involved.