

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

■ CONTENTS

People	1
From the Norbert Elias Foundation	
<i>Saskia Visser resigns as Secretary to the Foundation</i>	2
<i>The Norbert Elias Prize 2007</i>	2
<i>ISA Research Committee 20, Figurational Sociology Working Group</i>	3
Elias-I: From Listserv to Blog – <i>Robert van Krieken</i>	4
A Sociological Eye – <i>Saskia Visser</i>	4
The Sad Story of John Scotson's Thesis – <i>Cas Wouters</i>	5
Recent Work on Elias and Violence – <i>John Carter Wood</i>	6
Review Essay	8
Recent Books and Articles	10
Book Announcement	13
Bibliographical Retrospect	14
Work in Process	
<i>The Fecundity of Norbert Elias's Process Sociology for the Study of Gender Relations</i>	14
Recent Conferences	
<i>Marbach am Neckar, 14–15 September 2008: Conference celebrating the completion of the publication of the <i>Gesammelte Schriften of Norbert Elias in 19 volumes</i></i>	15
Forthcoming Conferences	
<i>Sports Coaching and the Sociological Imagination Conference Wednesday March 19th 2008</i>	17
<i>International Institute of Sociology (IIS) 38th World Congress of Sociology, Budapest, 26–30 June 2008</i>	18
<i>Control or Care of the Self – the Sociology of the Subject in the Twenty-First Century, University of Hamburg, 3–5 July 2008</i>	18
<i>International Sociological Association First Forum on Sociology, Barcelona, 5–8 September 2007</i>	19
<i>Research Committee 20, Comparative Sociology: Working Group on Civilising and Decivilising Processes</i>	
<i>On the Genealogy of the Civilising Process: Nietzsche and Elias, Berlin, 26–7 September 2008</i>	20
Obituaries	20

■ PEOPLE

Lost and found

Patrick Murphy recalls: In 1977 Ilya Neustadt gave me a copy of Johan Goudblom's book *Sociology in the Balance* as a birthday present. In the early 1980s I lent it to an unknown student who failed to return it. A few weeks ago I went on Amazon and purchased a second-hand copy for the princely sum of £7. Yes, it turned out to be my copy with Ilya's inscription inside and my notes in the margin. Having now reread it, I still think that it's an excellent book. I particularly like its unpretentiousness.

Jason Hughes and Chris Rojek at Brunel

Dr Jason Hughes, who only a couple of years ago left Leicester to move to a post in the Business School at Brunel University, London, has now been appointed Senior Lecturer in the School of Sociology and Communications at Brunel, where he joins another former Leicester hand, Chris Rojek, who recently moved from Nottingham Trent University to become Professor of Sociology and Culture at Brunel.

Assistant editors for *Figurations*

Florence Delmotte has agreed to assist in the editing of *Figurations* by dealing with French-language material for us. She is now a postdoctoral fellow in the Centre d'Études Sociologiques, at the Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis

(FUSL), Bruxelles. Her research deals with participative town planning in Brussels, and at the same time she is continuing to investigate Elias's work regarding identification in Europe, particularly concerning relative importance and evolution of emotions in the development of an hypothetic post-national political community.

Sofia Gaspar has agreed to assist in the same way for Spanish and Portuguese emanating from Iberia, and Tatiana Savoia Landini for the Latin American branches of those languages. Finally, Heike Hammer, who was a member of the Editorial Board of the recently completed *Gesammelte Schriften*, will take charge of German-language material.

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Saskia Visser

The Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation is sad to have to report the resignation of its Secretary, Saskia Visser, but wishes to place on record its gratitude for her invaluable contribution to its work over the years that she has held the post.



Saskia and Vitalis

Saskia has served as the principal administrator of the Foundation for more than thirteen years. When she told us of her intention to resign, our first reaction was that she is irreplaceable.

She began working for the Foundation in 1991, soon after Norbert Elias's death. At that time she was already superbly qualified for the job. As a student of anthropology at the University of Amsterdam she had served as an assistant to Norbert for a whole year in 1988–9. She has written a very perceptive memoir of her experiences during that year and her observations of Elias in his daily life and work in her essay 'Een sociologische blik' in

the book *Over Elias: Herinneringen en anekdotes*, edited by Han Israëls, Mieke Koman and Abram de Swaan, a translation of which we are delighted to be able to publish in this issue of *Figurations*.

After Elias's death, Saskia was responsible along with Rudolf Kniiff for sorting and cataloguing Elias's mass of books and papers before they were deposited at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach. This meant that she knows her way better than anyone else round Elias's variorum typescripts, and has an unrivalled skill in deciphering his *Fraktur* handwriting. This has proved enormously helpful to the various editors of the volumes of the *Gesammelte Schriften* and now the *Collected Works*.

In 1994 Saskia succeeded Rudolf Kniiff as the Foundation's Secretary. It is no exaggeration to say that she soon became the pivot around which the Foundation's activities were organised.

Saskia came to the Foundation's office three mornings a week, and handled all the administrative chores: the correspondence, the phone calls, the finances, preparing agendas and writing minutes for meetings of the Board, drawing up the annual reports, and assisting in the publication of *Figurations* – a mountain of responsibilities carried out with cheerfulness, accuracy, dedication, and loyalty.

We shall miss Saskia. As Joop Goudsbloom remarked when presenting her with the leaving present of a briefcase, 'We can only hope you will not turn out to be as irreplaceable as we now think you are'. For the moment, readers contacting the Foundation may find that our activities – or at least our efficiency – are somewhat curtailed, until new arrangements are made. We ask for forbearance.

We wish Saskia satisfaction and fulfilment in her new career, and every future happiness to her and Vitalis.

Johan Goudsbloom
Hermann Korte
Stephen Mennell

The Norbert Elias Prize, 2007

The fifth Norbert Elias Prize, for an author's *first* major book published between 1 January 2005 and 31 December 2006, has been awarded to Dr Georgi Derlugian of Northwestern University, USA, for his book *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus. A World-System Biography* (Chicago: University of Chicago press, 2005).



Wilbert van Vree presenting the prize to Georgi Derlugian

The Norbert Elias Prize is awarded every second year, 'in commemoration of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–1990), whose writings, at once theoretical and empirical, boldly crossed disciplinary boundaries in the social sciences to develop a long-term perspective on the patterns of interdependence which human beings weave together'. In previous years, the Prize has been reserved for European authors. On this occasion, the Board of the Elias Foundation has decided to open the prize to authors from other continents.

This year, the jury consisted of three previous winners of the prize (Wilbert van Vree, chairman, Nikola Tietze and Jason Hughes), along with Stephen Mennell representing the Board of the Elias Foundation. In presenting the prize to Dr Derlugian at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach am Neckar on 15 September 2007, Wilbert van Vree said: 'The jury of the Norbert Elias Prize 2007 had a very difficult task to fulfil, because a large number of excellent social scientists from different countries submitted their first books to us. Among these books were many well-written, interesting ones about various subjects, such as nationalism

and religion in post-communist Poland [Geneviève Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006)] and the sociology of the joke [Giseline Kuipers, *Good Humour, Bad Taste* (Berlin, Mouton de Gruyter, 2006)] – two books that were close runners-up to the winner. Besides these there were investigations on divorce; professional football; the relationships between men and women; democratic imagination; international activism; theatre; sociology and history; and globalization of the university – altogether proof of the vitality of the social sciences.

From all these books, we had to choose just one. After tough discussion we finally decided to award the prize to Georgi Derluguian for his book *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus. A World-System Biography*.

I am very glad that you are here, Dr Derluguian, in order for me to praise and congratulate you on behalf of the whole jury because of your 'impressive, in some aspects overwhelming and thrilling, overall relevant and remarkable' book, as the members of the jury designated it.

Although the title of your book might sound a little odd, the content is not so at all. Your book is a most engaging and deeply analytical guide to the knotty Caucasus region and even more than that. You are concerned with answering three major questions: Why did the Soviet Empire collapse? Why did it do so violently in some areas but relatively peacefully in others? And what accounts for the diversity of new

regimes that developed on its ruins? Your answers to these questions are as unconventional as the way you produced them.

You use the biography of a well-educated, Circassian rebel from north Caucasus named Musa Shanib (he is the secret admirer of Bourdieu) as both a vehicle and launching pad for a sweeping and convincing explanation of the complex processes underpinning the demise of the Soviet Union and what came after. As you express it, 'Musa Shanib's biography, suffused as it is with paradoxes and bitter disillusionments, seemed to summarise the trajectory of a whole generation of Soviet citizens who were born under Stalin, came of age in the expansive and wildly optimistic atmosphere of Khrushchev's Thaw, spent the long uneventful years of Brezhnev's "stagnation" in a kind of internal exile, and finally re-emerged during Gorbachev's perestroika in an ebullient surge of public activism that led, tragically, to a disastrous climax' (p. 2).

While you do not draw directly from Elias's work (you refer to it only once), your book is written very much in the vein and spirit of Elias's developmental approach to sociology. Elaborating on the 'world systems' approach of, in particular, Wallerstein; the sociology of Bourdieu which is at times a subject, at others, an object of the analysis; and the sociological-historical work of Tilly, you share with Elias the method of investigating micro structures by locating them in the encompassing macro structures and vice versa. In your words, 'Micro-processes and ground-level situations are but fine

grains caught up in the larger flows of historical trends and social configurations' (p. 10). As such, the life of Shanib, indeed, the demise of the Soviet Union that is etched into Shanib's biography, is used by you to forge broader arguments concerning highly relevant themes such as class and state (de)formation, globalisation, democratisation, nationalism, and terrorism. Your book, rich of new ideas and new knowledge, is a

scholarly example of balanced empirical and theoretical explanation. That is why everybody here should read it, if they haven't done so already. I am sure no one will regret it, all the more since the author shares another ambition with Norbert Elias: producing a book 'that is not only based on robust theories and enriched with empirical detail, but is furthermore capable of reaching the educated readership outside the walls of academia' (p. 311).

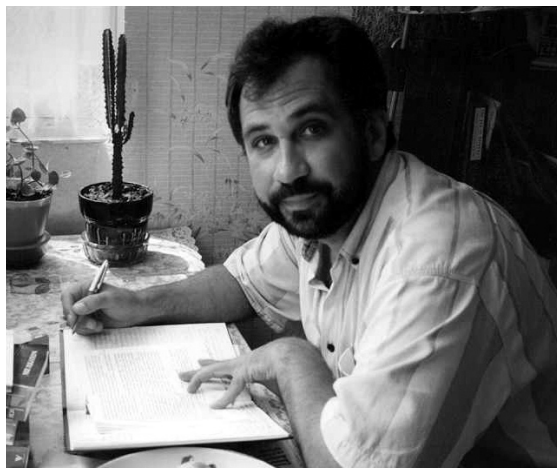
I am going to finish my speech by quoting you, Dr Derluguian, when you speak of the cultural dissidence during the early, hopeful, period of de-Stalinisation in the Soviet Union. You write that 'success invites emulation, emulation breeds competition, and competition drives the innovation that opens new positions in the field. The process eventually results in the transgression of boundaries delineated by the dominant field of power' (p. 99). The jury of the Norbert Elias Prize 2007 wishes and expects your excellent book to have the same effect in the sociological and historical field inside as well as outside the academic walls. That is why we award this prize to you. Hearty congratulations.

[Note: The Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation has appointed Wilbert van Vree to chair the jury for the next two awards of the Norbert Elias Prize, in 2009 and 2011, and he will take over from Saskia Visser the administration of the prize competition.]

ISA Research Committee 20, Figural Sociology Working Group

As reported in *Figurations* 27, the International Sociological Association's Research Committee 20 (Comparative Sociology) has accepted Figural Sociology as one of its established Working Groups, which means that we now have a good forum in which to meet at the ISA World Congress in Göteborg in 2010, and, before that, at the ISA Forum in Barcelona in 2008 (see below, under Forthcoming Conferences).

It is now important that figuralists cement this welcome new relationship by joining the ISA and RC20. Member-



ship subscriptions can be made online through the ISA website: <http://www.isa-sociology.org>.

If you are already a member of the ISA, but not of RC20, you should fill in the form just for the Research Group membership, leaving blank the section regarding ISA membership. (This point is not made clear on the website, but we are told that it works if you follow this procedure.)

■ ELIAS-I: FROM LISTSERV TO BLOG

As far back as the early 1990s, when email was quite the latest thing, a Surf-net listserv discussion list called Elias-I was established, managed and moderated by Kitty Roukens at SISWO in Amsterdam. A number of developments – including the closure of SISWO and Kitty's retirement – have converged to make it sensible to shift the listserv to the new and improved format of a weblog, or blog as they generally get called. The blog format has a number of advantages, including visibility to a larger audience, better possibilities for links and uploads, and the fact that once people are signed up their posts don't need moderation. After a short period of trialling it, it now seems to work fine, with no loss of function from the listserv format. It can be found at <http://elias-i.nfshost.com/>

All the Elias-I listserv subscribers have been subscribed to the blog, and otherwise you can sign up in the dialogue box towards the top of the sidebar on the right. It can take on different appearances, so if you have any thoughts on the aesthetics, please don't hesitate to let me know (robertvk@usyd.edu.au) We may go through some experiments and see what people prefer.

Kitty Roukens worked far above and beyond the call of duty as the list's moderator, and everyone who has been involved in Elias-I would like to convey our warmest thanks to her. She created what has been a very important dimension of the community of Elias scholars.

Robert van Krieken
University of Sydney

■ A SOCIOLOGICAL EYE

Saskia Visser

The scene must have been enacted many times when I worked with Norbert Elias: he would come downstairs – often he was still upstairs when I arrived – I went to the corridor and waited for him at the foot of the stairs to greet him. 'Hello Norbert', I said aloud. 'Hello Saskia', he would answer. It was a fixed greeting ritual, a formula which through frequent repetition stands engraved in my memory: the words themselves, his intonation, the way he pronounced my name, the air of familiarity.

But it was not like this from the very beginning, nor did I immediately call him 'Norbert'. This was a question with which I felt confronted at once: how would I address him? The Dutch situation in itself was far from simple, since the formal *U* had gone out of fashion as a taken-for-granted form of address towards people who were older and in a superior position. The choice between *U* and *jij*, between first name and last name, often implied a careful navigating between my own preference and the sensitivities of the person addressed. These considerations, originating in native circumstances, were further complicated by the awareness that Norbert had been born and raised in Germany but had also spent a large part of his life in England. There was no precedent available: I had met an assistant who called him 'Professor' and one who addressed him as 'Norbert'. I decided to wait and see.

It was possible to avoid the dilemma for a short while. In English, and that is what we spoke almost exclusively, there is only one form for the second-person singular. Eventually I decided to call him 'Norbert' after all. His face, which I watched sharply that first time, betrayed nothing, no surprise, no disapproval, nothing. In view of his British background it may have been perfectly acceptable. But the few times we spoke German – my active command of the language was rather wanting – I addressed him as *Sie*.

Still, my dilemma did not arise merely out of uncertainty about what was thought to be appropriate within a par-

ticular language community. At least as important for my hesitant attitude was the fact that I found it hard to classify him within one of the categories into which, vaguely and half-consciously, I divided people: formal or informal. He seemed to escape from every simple division. Norbert was authoritative, but he did not strike me as an authority; he was a teacher without my feeling to be a pupil; he was an employer and yet I did not feel like an employee; he was physically old but amazingly young in thinking; he was personal without being directly intimate.

The dividing line between employer and employee was perhaps somewhat blurred because, in his old age, he was dependent upon others for ordinary, everyday affairs. For something personal such as a well-prepared breakfast, a good mutual understanding is even more important than in a work situation. But he was an employer, and we did work – always, in ill health or good health, on Sundays and public holidays as well. I did not mind the holidays so much, but it was often a tug-of-war to finish the work in the evening. Rarely did I come home before midnight. Eventually, however, I found the ideal way to put a limit to his working zeal and my working day: I had to catch the last tram which, I fibbed a little, left at twelve. Norbert agreed with that, for a woman could not walk in the street alone late at night.

Work was an important topic for conversation, and here his mastery was evident. He easily countered most objections, but he did not brush them aside and always took them seriously. He was always interested in new information, fresh empirical material that he could not assemble himself because of his limited eyesight. Always – except once or twice. A few times he cut me off by saying that he did not believe something, and against unbelief, as against belief, no argument can stand up: the discussion was closed. My reply consisted of a sulky silence. Those were exceptions, however: most conversations went on in good spirits. That most discussions about work were so relaxed was probably due to the differences in age and intellectual baggage: I felt no need to compete with him, nor did he feel the need to teach me a lesson.

Our conversations were not limited to the actual work we did. The themes ranged much wider: everything belonged to the domain of sociology, and therefore everything was interesting and a topic for conversation. Norbert was not just young in thinking; 'young' was not the correct word. For me he had, in spite of his old age, something ageless. In any case he did not cut himself off from things with which he had not become familiar before a certain age. The music of the Beatles was too tame, too gentle, we both found, but the Rolling Stones appealed to him (and me). His interest in current developments led me to relate all sorts of events that I had witnessed, and made me describe situations which he himself was unable to observe. He was always keen for more. Including on *that* Sunday.

That Sunday was the day of the final of the European soccer championships [25 June, 1988]. That was not my cup of tea, for I do not care much about soccer, and I was not sorry that I had to work. It was not necessary to have the radio or television turned on anyway: it was obvious that the Dutch team had won when the noise of honking cars and cheering people entered our room, and before we went out on the street I was already able to tell Norbert the result. On the way to the pizzeria the scene on the street was unusual: on the top of buses sat singing and yelling boys, hooting cars passed by decorated with orange ribbons, some passengers were leaning out of the windows. He found it splendid, and I had to describe everything for him. At the traffic lights we waited for the pedestrian light to turn green (traffic or no traffic, an ingrained habit commands me even now to wait obediently for the green light at this particular traffic light, the only one in Amsterdam). We had hardly begun to cross when a car narrowly missed us; I quickly took a step back, drawing Norbert along, to the safety of the pavement. Several cars drove at full speed through the red light. Norbert was not moved, nor surprised; he had not expected anything different in such a situation, so he told me. I missed the rest of his exposition, involved as I was with conducting him to the other side of the street through this exceptionally

busy and capricious traffic. 'Decontrolling of emotions', I vaguely picked up. Whereas I, still in the grip of fear, was panting with relief for our safe rescue, Norbert only saw his ideas confirmed. The habit of placing all experiences in a wider sociological context is something I learned to know and appreciate as a typical trait of Norbert's.

This attitude also applied to unpleasant things. That was what for a long time I found most mysterious and intriguing: his tempered and curbed emotions. These seemed incompatible with the other things I saw. Norbert showed a warm personal interest, and he was not by any means a closed book – even though he remained silent about some subjects. And yet there was something odd. It gradually dawned upon me that his entire way of behaving was permeated by his sociological insights. The rawness of the emotions was subdued and filtered by a detached sociological view. Once he made a complaint: seated in the kitchen he said that no one had ever told him what it was like to be old. Who could have told him? – all his friends and acquaintances were one or two generations younger than he was. As indignant as he then was I had never seen him before, with his feelings so open and naked. We more or less regularly talked about old age, and one day he said that he would write a book about growing old: the sociological eye was dominant again. However, that was not to be.

One more time I saw him descend the stairs: the stairs with the worn red carpet, Norbert in his woolly slippers, going slowly and carefully, his hand on the banister; once more we greeted each other. I saw and heard it all very clearly; but once I had woken up I realised it had been a dream. Norbert had been dead for more than a year and a half. Not long before this dream I had begun to make an inventory of a part of his legacy. Someone can hardly be more alive than when, day after day, you are putting his letters and manuscripts in order; someone is hardly more present than when, week after week, you see his life pass by before you. The only thing that was missing was he himself coming down the stairs, alive and kicking.

First published as 'Een sociologische blik', pp. 85–8 in Han Israëls, Mieke Koman and Abram de Swaan (eds), Over Elias: Herinneringen en anecdoten (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 1993). Translated into English by Johan Goudsblom.

■ THE SAD STORY OF JOHN SCOTSON'S THESIS

Cas Wouters

In *Figurations* 25, we appealed for information concerning the heirs of the late John L. Scotson, whose 1962 MA thesis we were trying to find. The appeal yielded no concrete information but, with the help of Gordon Fye of Keele University, Professor David Lockwood of the University of Essex, and the University of Leicester Archivist, we managed to piece together the following story.

The Established and the Outsiders: A Sociological Enquiry into Community Problems (London: Frank Cass, 1965) grew out of a study by John Lloyd Scotson of the suburban community of South Wigston, near Leicester, between 1959 and 1961. Scotson was a local schoolteacher and youth club organiser in South Wigston, and was registered as a part-time postgraduate student at Leicester, writing his Master of Arts thesis under the supervision of Norbert Elias. His original motivation in embarking on the research was to understand why there was a small minority of 'delinquents' among the young people of the community, but the eventual thesis had a more general title, 'A Comparative Study of Two Neighbourhood Communities in South Wigston'. The *viva voce* examination took place on 28 June 1962, with Elias as internal and David Lockwood as external examiner, and the degree was conferred at a degree congregation on 13 July 1962.

It would be interesting, were we able to compare the text of Scotson's 1962 MA thesis with that of the 1965 book, to know how much of the book is directly derived from Scotson's work and how much was added and reworked by Elias. It seems likely, for instance, that Scotson's hand is seen especially

in the very detailed evidence presented in chapter 8, on 'Young People in Winston Parva'. Unfortunately, such a direct comparison is no longer possible. Upon enquiry, it was found that there was no copy of the thesis either in the Leicester university library or in the Department of Sociology. John Scotson himself died in 1980, at the age of only 51. In 2006, Stephen Mennell attempted more than once to contact members of his family, to ask whether they still possessed a copy and to consult them about the question of copyright in the new edition, but he received no reply. He then contacted the University Archivist at Leicester, who provided copies of all surviving correspondence about the thesis, but not the thesis itself. It would appear that, in a time before photocopiers, there may have only ever been two copies of the thesis – the top copy and the carbon copy, though surely Scotson must have kept some sort of draft. In December 1962, Mr P. Edwards, a 'Senior Assistant' in the University of Leicester administration, contacted Scotson, because the university library had already received a request from someone to read the thesis. Scotson apparently said that both copies had gone astray and that he understood that the external examiner had retained the top copy. On 25 January 1963, Mr Edwards wrote to David Lockwood in Cambridge, asking whether he had it, and, if that were the case, would Dr Lockwood please return it for deposit in the library? Lockwood's reply is not in the file, but in conversation in 2007 he confirmed that he had not kept it, and had probably returned it to Elias as supervisor. The next letter in the file is one from Elias to 'P. Edwards, Esq.', dated 23 November 1964, in which Elias wrote:

'I have tried to remember what happened, and, as far as I can recollect, the copies have been handed over to the Library. I myself had in Ghana with me one copy of the Thesis, which Mr Scotson presented to me as his supervisor. I am sorry I have no recollection of the whereabouts of the two library copies.'

Four days later, Mr Edwards wrote again to Scotson. Part of his letter reads:

'You did mention in January 1963 that you had it mind to have a further two copies of the dissertation made. We did not take this up with you then because it was hoped that we should be able to recover the two original copies but this has not been possible and I am therefore writing to ask whether you would be prepared to release one or possibly two of them so they can be placed in the library here. If you were able to do this I think we must clearly meet any expense you incurred in the making of the copies because you clearly fulfilled your obligation to the University by submitting two copies when you were examined.'

Will you please give this matter some thought and let me know what you think. We should very much like to have your dissertation in the library particularly since people are beginning to ask to see it.'

But it would seem that Scotson took no further action.

We now think we know what happened to Scotson's dissertation and, alas, the story does not have a happy ending. After Elias's death in Amsterdam on 1 August 1990 his papers, together with those of the books in his library in which he had made manuscript annotations, were deposited in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv at Marbach am Neckar, Germany. The rest of his books were catalogued by a young male assistant and then sold *en gros* to a German second-hand bookseller. To our horror, in 2007 Saskia Visser found, in this catalogue, a vague reference to *two* copies of 'a thesis by Scotson'. It would seem that Elias had both copies after all, but he was not the best organised of people, and it is all too likely that he was simply unaware of having them. It is all too likely, as well, that the German bookseller destroyed the copies as having no value to him. It is possible, but unlikely, that they will be rediscovered. Their significance should have been recognised when Elias's effects were being disposed of, but it was not.

In the absence of the thesis itself, our best guide to its character is the brief examiners' report, signed by Elias and Lockwood, which reads:

'In his dissertation the candidate has set out the results of an empirical enquiry into the problems of social status in a Leicestershire community. His very intensive fieldwork consisted of systematic interviewing and participant observation. From it emerged a very convincing picture of the relationship between the two neighbourhoods and the way in which the local status system operated at the time of the enquiry. His discussion of the function of gossip in maintaining the selective perception of status differences is quite original.'

In formal respects the thesis complies with the regulations laid down with regard to length, presentation, relevance and style. Mr. Scotson's written papers were adequate, but do not indicate sociological knowledge beyond his specific field of studies. In his oral he gave satisfactory answers to the problems which the examiners raised.'

This does not mean, of course, that Scotson was solely responsible for ideas such as the discussion of gossip, which has become something of a sociological classic, because Elias will have contributed a good deal as supervisor to the drafting of the thesis.

What is certain is that, theoretically and textually, the book that appeared three years after the MA thesis is clearly from the hand of Norbert Elias. The three theoretical appendices to the book were signed 'N.E.', to indicate that he alone was responsible for these reflections.

■ RECENT WORK ON ELIAS AND VIOLENCE: HISTORY, EVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOLOGY AND LITERATURE

John Carter Wood
The Open University

Recent publications have addressed Elias's relevance to violence history, and they have in some ways reached rather different conclusions. Also, *Figurations* readers may be interested in noting an article of mine exploring whether approaches to the history of violence inspired by Elias can incorporate evolutionary psychology, and a conference paper seeking to apply the notion of

civilising and de-civilising processes to fictional violence in novels by J. G. Ballard.

Although I am not an Elias specialist, his concepts played a significant role in my book *Violence and Crime in Nineteenth-Century England: The Shadow of Our Refinement* (2004, reviewed in *Figurations* 23). I have since sought to deepen my understanding of Elias's work and apply it in innovative ways. This year, I contributed chapters that are (at least partly) related to civilising processes to Katherine Watson's *Assaulting the Past: Violence and Civilization in Historical Context* (2007) and Stuart Carroll's *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective* (2007). The essays in Watson's book are connected by an engagement with the civilising process, and Watson summarises the result by asserting the theory's general usefulness while also noting the necessity to expand upon, question and, when necessary, revise it in ways suggested by the contributors to her compelling edited volume.

In the introduction to his broad and fascinating collection of essays on violence Carroll offers a more critical view of the civilising process:

'It goes without saying that, Elias's theory, written from the point of view of a refugee from Nazi terror, is not really relevant to the history of France at all, but Germany, which is an unfavourably compared 'other'. Recent research suggests that in most respects Elias was wholly wrong about the French scene, as Michel Nassiet makes clear in this volume. French nobles, far from being transformed from uncouth warriors into scheming, foppish courtiers welcomed a strong monarch who could arbitrate their quarrels better and accommodate their political ambitions in royal service.' (p. 16)

Figurations readers will no doubt have their own views on these different perspectives, and both collections certainly represent high-quality scholarship and are relevant to be reviewed in these pages.

My efforts to come to grips with the relevance of Elias's theories (particularly with regard to violence) have led me in two rather different directions in recent

years: toward evolutionary theory and contemporary literature. Last January, I published an essay arguing that biological and evolutionary perspectives should play a greater role in social and cultural history ('The Limits of Culture? Society, Evolutionary Psychology and the History of Violence', *Cultural and Social History* 4: 1 (2007), pp. 95–114). In this essay, using violence as an example, I suggest that there are points at which a social history of violence inspired by Elias intriguingly overlaps with the arguments of evolutionary psychology: e.g., with regard to the connections between innate psychological structures and changing social environments or the importance of patterns of interaction among individuals in shaping overall cultural and social development.

In particular, I think that emerging approaches in evolutionary and cognitive psychology may be useful in developing the psychological aspects of Elias's theories. While Elias's vision of the human psyche was, I think, broadly accurate, it remained somewhat vague and was expressed in a Freudian language that has in many ways been superseded. It is worth considering whether more recent scientific approaches to psychology might lend a firmer and more specific grounding to the psychology underlying figurational approaches.

This possibility has recently received some encouragement from Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker. At the beginning of 2007, at the online magazine *Edge.com*, Pinker drew attention to anthropological and archaeological evidence that modern societies were less violence-prone than many earlier ones. Knowing of his interest in this topic (and having been inspired by some of his writing on the psychology of violence in his 2002 book *The Blank Slate*), I contacted Pinker to point out that historians too – partly influenced by Elias – had come to focus on long-term declines in violence. In 'A History of Violence', which appeared in the 19 March edition of *The New Republic*, Pinker incorporated historical references with perspectives from psychology and anthropology. (The essay is also available at http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/pinker07/pinker07_index.html).

Observing that explaining such long-term declines in violence requires broad and interdisciplinary approaches, Pinker points out:

'human nature has not changed so much as to have lost its taste for violence. Social psychologists find that at least 80 percent of people have fantasized about killing someone they don't like. And modern humans still take pleasure in viewing violence, if we are to judge by the popularity of murder mysteries, Shakespearean dramas, Mel Gibson movies, video games, and hockey.

What has changed, of course, is people's willingness to act on these fantasies. The sociologist Norbert Elias suggested that European modernity accelerated a 'civilizing process' marked by increases in self-control, long-term planning, and sensitivity to the thoughts and feelings of others. These are precisely the functions that today's cognitive neuroscientists attribute to the prefrontal cortex. But this only raises the question of why humans have increasingly exercised that part of their brains.'

I am unsure whether most Elias-oriented scholars view evolutionary psychology with enthusiasm, interest or abhorrence; however, my own readings of the 'human nature' posited by figurational sociology and evolutionary psychology suggests that some kind of mutually valuable dialogue between the two fields is possible.

My 'Limits of Culture?' essay received two detailed responses, which will be published alongside a further reply of mine later this year ('Evolution, civilization and history: a response to Wiener and Rosenwein', *Cultural and Social History*, 4: 4 (forthcoming 2007)). Alongside comments on evolutionary psychology and biological influences on behaviour, one of the responses was thoroughly hostile to Elias's view of history. Many of these criticisms were based on what I see as serious misunderstandings (e.g., claims that Elias thought societies automatically and irrevocably become more civilised or believed a previously absent super-ego was suddenly created sometime in the sixteenth century). In the limited space available, I sought to counter these

mistaken viewpoints as effectively as I could. In particular, I pointed to the emphasis in Elias's later writing (and the work of subsequent scholars) on the concept of 'de-civilising processes' and other ways in which the civilising process has come to be seen in subtle and complex ways. Indeed, I see the emphasis throughout Elias's work on the contingency, ambiguity and fragility of civilising processes to be one of the strongest points in favour of his approach.

Attention to such emphases has also led me recently to apply Elias's ideas (I believe for the first time) to the fiction of an author who has himself focused on the interconnections between unconscious drives, self control, violence and civilisation: British novelist J. G. Ballard. At a conference in May at the University of East Anglia devoted to Ballard's work, I presented a paper, "'Going mad is their only way of staying sane": The Civilised Violence of J. G. Ballard', in which I analyse two of his novels – *High-Rise* (1975) and *Super-Cannes* (2000) – from the perspectives of, respectively, 'decivilising processes' and the 'controlled decontrolling of emotional controls' that Elias and Dunning developed in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process* (1986). I am currently revising the paper for publication, possibly in a forthcoming volume based on the conference. The paper, I am pleased to say, was very well received: while most of the literature scholars and Ballard experts gathered at the conference had little knowledge of Elias's work, several found my historical-sociological approach a fruitful way to examine the two novels I considered.

■ REVIEW ESSAY

Sofia Gaspar

Universidad Complutense de Madrid

Fernando Ampudia de Haro, *Las bridas de la conducta – Una aproximación al proceso civilizatorio español* [The Bridles of Behaviour: An Approach to the Spanish Civilising Process] (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, n° 233, 2007) 202 pp. ISBN: 978-84-7476-422-2.

Written in a way that is reminiscent of

vivid and flowing literature, the new book by the Spanish sociologist Fernando Ampudia de Haro fills a gap not only within Spanish academia but also within Eliasian theoretical research as a whole. This is because, to my knowledge, no book has yet tackled such a large period of time – from the Middle Ages up to the present day – apart from Elias's *magnum opus*, *The Civilising Process*. There are, of course, well-known examples of an active approach to Elias's theory that explore some particular aspect European civilising processes (for instance: Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England*, 1998; Robert Muchembled, *L'invention de l'homme moderne: sensibilités, mœurs et comportements collectifs sous l'Ancien Régime*, 1988; Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from Middle Ages to the Present*, 1987). However, one of the strengths of Ampudia de Haro's book is that it tries to apply the micro dimensions of Elias's theory to the Spanish civilising process as a whole. This is, I believe, one of the main contributions of this book, since Elias himself had already sustained the fact that civilising processes could have national expressions with no prejudice to the overall civilisation process.

Although the author follows Elias's theoretical and methodological arguments in general, a certain epistemological distance is maintained as part of a critical awareness of Ampudia de Haro to the singularity of the Spanish case. The general objective of *Las bridas de la conducta* is to analyse the principal lines of transformation in civilised behaviour in Spain. This inquiry, which begins in the fifteenth century and comes right up to the contemporary period, focuses on several social codes of behaviour and the regulation of emotions, reconstructed through empirical Spanish sources such as treatises of courtesy, books of civility and urbanism, and more recently, self-help books which, in the author's opinion, are a substitute of the good manners books that were used in the past. All these changes lead to a gradual process of self-regulation in human conduct and emotions, a movement that changes over time from 'heterocontrol'

(*Fremdzwang*, external constraint) to self-constraint. At a micro level, this civilising process can be illustrated in changes occurring in some everyday behaviour (the way one sits on a table, the way one eats or drinks, the way one exhibits social skills, or the way one satisfies one's physiological necessities) which become progressively spontaneous and unreflective, and change to be part of – to use Elias's words – 'second nature' for the human being. This phenomenon cannot occur without the presence of a macro level of social transformation – the gradual control of social violence in hands of the state – which has the task of guaranteeing stability and social order.

These are the well-known main 'Eliasian' theoretical lines followed by Ampudia de Haro. But then again, the book is structured into three main sections, each one organised by the description of a particular social structure; the presentation of the empirical texts and books analysed and the delimitation of the corresponding good-manners social code of behaviour. After a detailed introduction in which some general ideas of the *theory of civilising processes* are explained, there comes a first section, 'The bridles that encircle', in which the author analyses the way medieval and modern courtesy and prudence are illustrated and take shape from the Middle Ages until the eighteenth century. In a second section entitled 'The bridles that fix', Ampudia de Haro explores how the *code of civilised behaviour* became established in nineteenth-century bourgeois Spanish society. Then, in a final section – 'The bridles that bind and unbind', the author tries to delimitate some theoretical arguments to explain the way nowadays we live according to the assumptions of a *reflexively civilised code of conduct* as a result of neo-liberal politics and the growth of self-help books.

These *social codes of behaviour* are defined, as can be seen, in the 'Spanish case' with some slight variations when compared to the ones identified by Elias in *The Civilising Process*. However, it is precisely in this last section where Ampudia de Haro tries to understand the emergence of a new code – *reflexive civilisation* – which has its expression

in self-help literature and represents a contemporary source of mental and emotional personal self-control. This idea is in line with Cas Wouters' suggestion of considering self-help literature a new substitute of the good-manners books and using them to analyse the social code of behaviour implicit in our conduct. For this reason, and in order to contextualise the theoretical relevance of this code, the Spanish author follows the sociological contribution of some Anglo-Foucauldians like Nikolas Rose, Pat O'Malley or Graham Burchell in their investigation of 'governmentality'; this last concept refers to a new form of social conduct where the individual has to be responsible of governing him/herself apart from the institutional protection of the State. This new condition creates a different kind of human being, totally concerned in his/her emotions and moral identity, and making every effort to guarantee his/her own self-security. As a result, this phenomenon gives rise to contemporary societies with a new sort of social behaviour – the *reflexive civilisation* – which necessitates a re-evaluation of Elias's assumption of the transformation of heterocontrol to self-control throughout the civilising process: what self-help books allow one to argue is that rationality and emotions are not such a separate domain as one might think. In fact, the recurring message of these books insist on teaching the individual to put in practice his/her own self-management, on expressing his/her emotions in a rational and conscious way, and on knowing how to understand and communicate coherently his/her feelings. They teach, in a few words, how to be self-responsible.

Although a subtle connection is consistently made throughout the book, it is only in the very final part that Ampudia de Haro makes a direct link between morality (or what he calls '*the ethics of behaviour*') and the nature of each *social code*. In his opinion, *medieval* and *modern courtesy* were both inscribed in what he considers to be an *Aristotelian ethics*, whereas the *civilising social code* and the *reflexive civilisation code* could be part of a *Kantian ethics of behaviour*. According to the Spanish author, in Aristotelian ethics, moral virtue can be acquired through

imitation of someone who represents a moral model of virtue; morality formation becomes tough, something active and practical since it necessitates a precedent action to acquire moral capacities as a human being. In this sense, both medieval and modern codes of behaviour fulfil this philosophical logic since they demand repetition and obedience to a superior rank and, in consequence, they lead through imitative action to the moral formation of one's character. On the contrary, according to a *Kantian ethics of behaviour*, moral reflection has to precede action, so it is necessary for the individual to develop this reflexive act to acknowledge his/her own morality. In this sense, the *social code of prudence* characteristic of the court society of the eighteenth century is located for Ampudia de Haro midway between these two moral ethics: the individual of the court society used to live according to the metaphor of *Theatrum Mundi*, an existing conception of human life as acting and of the human being as an actor. As a result, there was a divorce between what one was (human nature) and what one appeared to be (personal acting) which led to the idea that one's morality was sheltered by a good exhibition of social manners. Regarding the *civilising social code* and the *reflexive civilisation code*, both forms of conduct can be inscribed, according to Ampudia de Haro, in terms of Kantian ethics, as they are centred on a moral reflection of the individual who might lead to a certain action; this was what inspired behaviour in the nineteenth century, and it is what inspires behaviour nowadays through self-help literature. The individual is at the centre of his/her own reflection and should be able to analyse his/her own acts according to a self-conception of morality.

Although in the very beginning the author is quite aware of some limitations that arise from his perspective, it is important to point out some theoretical weaknesses that can be found in this book. First – and even though this also represents a virtue – Ampudia de Haro is too ambitious in the great time span that he covers. This situation leads sometimes to certain generalisations in the hypothesis analysed, and also implies a reduction in the complexity of

the social reality observed. Secondly, he does not explore 'the religious dimension', especially in a case such as the Spanish, where one could postulate the considerable weight that the Catholic Church (particularly in the modern period) might have had on the configuration of its civilising process and of its corresponding types of social behaviour. Finally, the author assumes that the macro level of analysis for Spain – state formation with the subsequently control of physical violence – follows the same general direction than that exhaustively studied by Elias in *The Civilising Process* (rise of social differentiation, functional specialisation and interdependence networks). Despite the fact that one could consider this deduction as legitimate, some particularities of 'the Spanish macro level' of inquiry could reveal and explain some singularities of its civilising process as unique in spite of being part of a wider Western historical movement.

To conclude, *Las bridas de la conducta* constitutes a thorough and clear text in which Fernando Ampudia de Haro develops an active approach to the 'Spanish case' of Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes. This alone could be sufficient to represent another useful development to Elias's sociological programme. However, the book raises very interesting questions about the Eliasian agenda, which develop Cas Wouters' suggestion of considering self-help books a contemporary substitute of good-manners books used in previous times, or the connection made between morality and a specific type of social code. These two new lines of research are, with no doubt, the most interesting contribution of this recent text, and one hopes that this contribution will have further theoretical and empirical applications, either in a Spanish context or some other social context.



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Helmut Kuzmics and Roland Axtmann, *Authority, State and National Character, 1700–1900*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. 363 pp. ISBN: 978-0-7546-3560-4.

This important book is a translation of *Autorität, Staat und Nationalcharakter: Der Zivilisationsprozess in Österreich und England 1700–1900* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich 2000), which was reviewed by Hugh Ridley in *Figurations* 15. Its translation is overdue, and its publication in English ought to be regarded as a major event.

One of the many interwoven *Leitmotiven* in Norbert Elias's work is a concern with 'national character', or national 'habitus' as sociologists are more likely to say today. This concern is obvious from the first part of *The Civilising Process*, the discussion of notions of *Zivilisation* and *Kultur* in Germany in contrast with *civilisation* in France. He returned to the subject very explicitly in *The Germans*. Many allusions to British habitus can also be found in *The Civilising Process*, and later, in two lectures to German audiences in 1959–60 on British public opinion (which will be published next year in English in volume 15 of the *Collected Works*), and in *Quest for Excitement*. In the 1960 lecture, he very neatly explains the differences in national character arising from the differing national experience of nations:

'These differences are precipitated in the language and modes of thought of nations. They manifest themselves in the way in which people are attuned to one another in social intercourse, and in how they react to personal or

impersonal events. In every country the forms of perception and behaviour, in their full breadth and depth, have a pronounced national tinge. Often one only becomes aware of this in one's dealings with foreigners. In interactions with one's compatriots, *individual* differences usually impinge so strongly on consciousness that the *common* national coloration, what distinguishes them from individuals of other nations, is often overlooked. First of all, one often expects that people everywhere will react to the same situations in the same way as people of one's own nation. When one finds oneself in a situation in which one is compelled to observe that members of different nations often react in a quite different way to what one is accustomed to at home, one mentally attributes this to their "national character".'

In comparing Britain and Austria, Kuzmics and Axtmann start exactly from the link between authority and 'affect-modelling'. The basic contrast is between the traditional images. The English one may be characterised as 'general control over his feelings, in which excessive displays are avoided and thought embarrassing – letting off steam is deemed a weakness, as is any demonstrative parading of strength' (p. 14). The Austrian civilising trajectory 'leads to a greater disparity between affects that are given free rein in private, or towards subordinates, and formal comportment that is required towards superiors and in "official" situations'. The authors proceed to show how these characteristics are related to state formation in the two countries, with the British case being marked by much greater continuity of develop-

ment and the emergence of more even power ratios between social classes.

The great richness of the book lies in the authors' extremely impressive use of literary evidence. I feel ashamed at their plainly having read more extensively in English literature than I have myself as a native British person.

The dates in the title, 1700–1900, should be noted. In a lecture since the publication of the book, I have heard Helmut Kuzmics refer to 'the collapse of British national character' in the later decades of the twentieth century. I think he is right. No doubt there are still traces of gentlemanly restraint in the upper reaches of British society – Buckingham Palace and Cambridge common rooms – but whether it is still apparent as a relatively widely-shared trait in all social classes is cast in doubt by the general yobbishness evident elsewhere in Cambridge or among the spivs in the City of London. Eric Dunning disagrees with my perception; whether he as a British resident or I as an expatriate have the sharper vision is an open question. And are radical changes equally apparent in Austria at the beginning of the twenty-first century? Am I, and for that matter are the authors of this book, indulging in a romantic view of the past? I think not, but these too are open questions.

Stephen Mennell

Florence Delmotte, *Norbert Elias: la civilisation et l'État – Enjeux épistémologiques et politiques d'une sociologie historique*. Brussels: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2007. 235 pp. ISBN: 978-2-8004-1394-5.

Florence Delmotte's 2006 doctoral thesis at the Université Libre de Bruxelles has now been published as a book. I gave an outline of the argument a year ago in *Figurations* 25, to which readers are referred. This is an important, well-written, and well-argued book, now made more easily available to those who read French. – *SJM*

Note also the following publications by Florence Delmotte:

'Les résistances à l'Europe au prisme de la sociologie historique de Norbert Elias', pp. 17–29 in R. Coman and J. Lacroix (eds), *Les résistances à l'Europe. Cultures nationales, idéologies et stratégies d'acteurs* (Bruxelles: Éditions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2007).

'Norbert Elias (1897–1990)', pp. 367–8 in S. Mesure, P. Savidan (eds), *Dictionnaire des sciences humaines* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006).

'Procès de civilisation et démocratie (post-)nationale', pp. 373–89 in F. Cheval (ed.), *Legitimationsgrundlagen der Europäischen Union, Region – Nation – Europa*, 27, Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005.

'Norbert Elias et l'Allemagne nazie', *Studia Politica: Romanian Political Science Review*, 5: 4 (2005), pp. 903–15.

'Norbert Elias et l'intégration postnationale', *Swiss Political Science Review*, 8: 1 (2002), pp. 3–26.

'Sur Norbert Elias : Engagement et distanciation', *Revue de l'Institut de Sociologie*, 1997: 1–4 (paru en 2000), pp. 205–11.

Giselinde Kuipers, *Good Humour, Bad Taste* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006). 293 pp. ISBN: 978-3-11-018615-4.

This book in English is an expanded version of the original Dutch one, which constituted Giselinde Kuipers's University of Amsterdam doctorate (her promoter was Joop Goudsblom). It was translated by Kate Simms, but an

additional chapter has been added on joke-telling and social background in the USA, the outcome of the author's having spent a year at the University of Pennsylvania. The result is a study in comparative sociology, and the book gains a great deal from this. Outside the Netherlands, few readers will have the kind of intimate familiarity with Dutch culture that is necessary to feel able to second-guess the author's account of Dutch jokes; but, for better or worse, we are all more or less familiar with American humour.

Kuipers states the kernel of her argument lucidly in the first two sentences: 'The importance of a shared sense of humour is made obvious by its absence. It is almost impossible to build a relationship with someone who never makes you laugh ...'. But still worse is someone 'who tries really hard to be funny but insists on telling the wrong jokes'.

Kuipers specifically studies jokes and joke telling, not the whole field of humour. Both the liking for jokes and skill in telling them vary between individuals, but they are far more than matters of individual taste. The taste for jokes also varies crucially between the sexes, between old and young, between countries, and very much between people of different educational levels. The myth that class has disappeared as a major line of division in Western societies is comprehensively exploded by Kuipers's evidence.

The evidence was gained, in the first instance, from questionnaire responses in 1997–8 by 340 Dutch people, 32 of whom were then selected for interview; four editors of joke books were also interviewed, and 'thousands' of jokes were collected from joke books, magazines, the Internet, and from friends, acquaintances and interviewees. The study carried out five years later in the USA was similar, though smaller in scale.

In the Netherlands, highly educated, professional, upper-middle-class people tended to disapprove of the joke *as a genre*. Joke telling, in other words, was largely a lower-class trait. That was not the case in the USA., but there were

nevertheless strong class differences in taste. To oversimplify Kuipers's complex conclusions (derived from, among other things, factor analysis, no less), the most highbrow and intellectual of Dutch jokes (cartoons from *NRC Handelsblad* for instance), did not go down well in the USA, but there was a clear highbrow/lowbrow division nonetheless. Political humour was popular among the more intellectual Americans, but thresholds of embarrassment and offensiveness were rather evident for many people, and there were extensive no-go areas such as sexuality and 9/11. 'Zany', or 'silly' humour appears to have been more highly appreciated within the home.

In summary, Kuipers writes:

'judgements of good and bad humour in America are based more on content than on form and genre. American highbrow humour is political, intellectual, meaningful, and very unlike the distanced, form-based, Bourdieian logic of the Dutch highbrow style. Gender differences ... were more closely linked with differences in moral sensitivity and tolerance of transgression. This sharper focus on content is related to the most prominent difference between Dutch and American humour styles: the string moral discourse on humour in the United States.' (p. 228)

Few of Kuipers's findings can be described as obvious – something fairly remarkable for a sociological study! One might, of course, have guessed some things. The savagery of British cartoonists – for instance Steve Bell of the *Guardian*, who *always* draws George W. Bush as an ape with opposable thumbs and forefingers on his hairy bare feet – shocks many Americans.

Kuipers notes that 'In Bourdieu's theory, the fact that a genre is less popular in a specific group would automatically set in motion mechanisms of exclusion and distinction. However, in the US, it seems the joke may be appreciated differently in different groups without having become a true *marker* of difference' (p. 228).

As will be apparent, even though a central concern is with a very Eliasian

concept, thresholds of embarrassment, Kuipers's book is somewhat more Bourdieuan than Eliasian. For my own taste, I would have liked to know rather more about the sociogenesis of different joke cultures and subcultures. But, by its nature, the joke (at least the verbally-told joke) leaves few historical traces, and the social context of the written joke may be difficult to decipher. Using more traditional sociological methods, Kuipers has produced a fascinating and revealing book, full of unexpected insights into a facet of everyday life with which we are all familiar.

Stephen Mennell

Andrew Linklater, *Critical Theory and World Politics: Citizenship, Sovereignty and Humanity*. London: Routledge, 2007. viii + 240 pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-39929-6 (hb); 978-0-415-39930-2.

A fistful of Andrew Linklater's articles have been mentioned over the last few years in *Figurations*, and now a selection of his essays – ranging in original date from 1982 to this year – have been collected together in this compelling book. If I may immodestly quote the puff I myself wrote for the back cover of the book, 'Kant's "citizen of the world" undertakes an intellectual journey through the pages of Andrew Linklater's outstanding book. Reaching the present day, it appears possible that humanity is undergoing a global "civilising process", in Elias's sense. If so, there is still a long road ahead. Can people be forced to live in peace without doing harm to each other? And can a global superpower resist the civilising pressures and the temptation to pursue its own interests through harming others?'

Linklater himself summarises his work as concerned with three problems:

1. The 'problem of community', which involves the relationship between the obligations that political communities have to their members and the duties they have to the rest of the human race.
2. The 'problem of citizenship', the question of whether the achievements

of national citizenship can be repeated on a worldwide scale.

3. The 'problem of harm', which revolves around the sociological question of how far human societies have made progress in creating global mechanisms that protect all persons from unnecessary suffering.

Linklater's own intellectual journey has evidently been from the strong influence of the critical theory of the Frankfurt School towards, in recent years, a strong interest in the relevance of Elias's work in the field of international relations. Implicit in his later writings is the view that, although it may be less overt, there is also a strong critical edge in Elias's theories – just as much as in the writings of 'them upstairs', as Elias probably thought of the Frankfurters during the early 1930s. I agree. Eliasians have often been somewhat overawed by the theory of involvement and detachment, and indeed Elias himself always discouraged any overtly political use of his ideas. But, having first made the detour via detachment, we should all at this juncture in world affairs pay due attention to what Elias called secondary re-involvement. In the words of Edmund Burke, 'All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing'. Or, equally relevant, from Auguste Comte, one of Elias's intellectual heroes: *Savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour pouvoir*.

SJM

See also: Andrew Linklater, 'Public spheres and civilising processes', *Theory, Culture & Society* 24: 1 (2007), pp. 31–7.

Simon J. Williams, 'The social etiquette of sleep: some sociological reflections and observations', *Sociology*, 41: 2 (2007), pp. 313–28

Abstract: This article provides a critical examination of the seemingly counter-intuitive sociological notion of the 'social etiquette of sleep': the socially appropriate and inappropriate, prescriptive and proscriptive, ways of 'doing' sleeping – that is to say, in everyday/night life. The first part of the article provides a brief discus-

sion of the rationale for a sociological engagement with sleep. The remaining sections then proceed to a detailed sociological account of the 'civilising' of sleep, the social uses and abuses of sleep, the socially attentive sleeper, the inconsiderate or selfish sleeper, and the anarchic, anomic, deviant or stigmatised sleeper. The article closes with some further sociological reflections on these dormative/normative matters. A sociological engagement with sleep, it concludes, is far from a contradiction in terms.

See also Simon Williams, *Sleep and Society: Sociological Ventures into the (Un)Known* (London: Routledge, 2005). The author can be contacted at the University of Warwick, s.j.williams@warwick.ac.uk.

Maarten van Bottenburg and Johan Heilbron, 'De-sportisation of fighting contests: the origins and dynamics of no holds barred events and the theory of sportisation', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 41: 3–4 (2006), pp. 259–82.

On the basis of an empirical analysis of the emergence, spread and transformation of No Holds Barred fighting contests since the beginning of the 1990s, this article suggests a more differentiated version of Norbert Elias's theory of sportisation. Although the martial arts in the twentieth century provide striking examples of sportisation and para-sportisation, the rise of No Holds Barred events in the 1990s represented an opposite trend, a process of *de-sportisation*. The analysis of No Holds Barred contests demonstrates that both sportisation and de-sportisation processes depend primarily on the interests of the organisers, and in particular on the degree to which they rely on the perspectives of practitioners, spectators, or viewers. The decisive factor for the predominance of the latter perspective in the emergence of No Holds Barred fighting was the formation of a new and poorly regulated market for visual material, which emerged with pay-per-view television. This allowed media entrepreneurs to commercialise non-sanctioned events, which depend primarily on the demands and fantasies of viewers who are less interested

in the specifics of particular sports or games than in the antinomian excitement produced by the transgression of the rules and conventions of ordinary life. The case of No Holds Barred fighting thus suggests that new markets for visual material are likely to become an important factor in the development of spectator sports and sport-like forms of entertainment. It also suggests that regulatory regimes are an essential feature for the actual outcome of the changes that these new markets may bring about. Public pressure eventually led to the disappearance of No Holds Barred events from the major US cable television networks and from the full contact fighting scene in most western European countries. In response, various initiatives worked towards a *re-sportisation* of the matches, a process that has led to the transformation of No Holds Barred tournaments into Mixed Martial Arts matches.

Michael Krüger, 'Doping im Radsport – zivilisationstheoretische Anmerkungen zu einer langen Geschichte' [Doping in cycling – Comments from the theory of civilising processes in long-term historical perspective], *Sport und Gesellschaft/Sport and Society* 3: 3 (2006), pp. 324–52.

Summary: The history of doping in cycling is generally seen as a matter of moral decline. The media contribute considerably to this impression. However, an approach to the history of cycling from point of view of the theory of civilising processes offers a different perspective. Public sensibility towards cases of doping in cycling has grown significantly, as has the moral judgement of the use of performance-enhancing drugs. The hypothesis is tested on the basis of an analysis of the development of anti-doping rules in cycling, which is also an indicator of the growing influence of international sports organisations, in this case the UCI. However, because of the latest spectacular doping cases (especially in cycling), this influence is limited again by governmental intervention.

Andreas Pickel, 'Homo Nationis: The Psycho-social Infrastructure of the Nation-state Order, *Global Society*', 18: 4 (2004), pp. 325–46.

Abstract: The central argument of this article is that the global expansion of sovereign nation states has been accompanied by the emergence of a particular type of modern individual, *homo nationis*. The general significance of this argument lies in the fact that this personality type, which is either taken for granted (untheorised) or ignored, constitutes an integral component of modern social order. That is, in addition to the constitutional and institutional foundations of the state and its political economy, the nation-state has a psychosocial foundation – a "national habitus". The concepts of *homo nationis* and national habitus underscore the notion that modern individuals are historical individuals, i.e. they have personality structures that are unlike those of individuals in other historical epochs, and that they should be explicitly conceptualised as such, rather than as a transhistorical *homo oeconomicus* or *homo sociologicus*. Many fundamental social processes, including those discussed under globalisation, can be better explained with such a conception. The historical-structural context for *homo nationis* is the world order of nation-states that has only recently finished formally incorporating all other social formations from tribes to the remnants of empires, as well as the specific state society to which the individual belongs. The article notes the interest that Durkheim and Weber had in habitual behaviour and draws on the exemplary work of Norbert Elias on national habitus to sketch its conception of *homo nationis*. The article then assembles further evidence for the existence and significance of national habitus by perusing a diverse set of scholarly literatures, including national culture in business studies, national economies and economic nations, nationalism, comparative sociology, and normative political theory.

Stefan Bargheer, 'The Fools of the Leisure Class: Honour, Ridicule, and the Emergence of Animal Protection Legislation in England, 1740–1840', *Archives européennes de sociologie*, 47: 1 (2006), pp. 2–35.

Abstract: The paper analyses the emergence of the moral concern for animals in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-

century England. The currently dominant interpretations of this historical development are based on the notion of class interest, either in form of the concept of *discipline* put forward by Marxist historians such as Christopher Hill and E. P. Thompson, or as a version of the concept of *distinction* as formulated in the work of Thorstein Veblen and Pierre Bourdieu. It is argued against both interpretations that the emerging moral concern for animals was not fuelled by a bourgeois notion of discipline, but by a developing aristocratic discourse on civility that was accompanied by a drastic increase in the factual visibility of violence inflicted on animals in the growing cities. The new aristocratic discourse and the new experience in the cities were both far from commonly shared. Early animal protectionists did in consequence not further their status and prestige, but became the frequent target of mockery and ridicule. The paper thus elaborates the way in which the emergence of the moral concern for animals was class-structured without being class-interested.

■ BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

Tim Newton, *Nature and Sociology*. London: Routledge. August 2007: 212pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-366847 (hardback, £65); ISBN: 978-0-415-36683-0 (paperback, £22.99)

Nature has become increasingly central to social thinking. From the social implications of environmental degradation to the plethora of issues raised by biotechnology, neuroscience, the body and health, the 'natural' world is increasingly difficult to ignore for sociologists and social scientists. In addition to a wide-ranging treatment of this field, this groundbreaking text presents fresh perspectives that challenge the way we think about the relationship between 'time', 'nature' and 'society'.

Although the natural and social are inevitably intertwined, Tim Newton argues that we should be open to the possibility of difference between our perception of the natural and social world. In so doing, he contests accepted tenets, such as an overriding need for anti-dualism, and underscores the limi-

tations of existing approaches such as social constructionism, critical realism and actor-network theory. In addition, he engages with the burgeoning debates on new genetics and neuroscience, takes the material world and the biological body seriously, and addresses the issues of interdisciplinarity that are likely to arise in any longer term attempt to work across the social and natural world.

In his thought-provoking discussion, Newton draws especially on the work of Norbert Elias. Newton argues that Elias's work on symbolisation and temporality remains central to understanding the interrelation between the natural and social domain. In addition to detailed examination of Elias's thought, *Nature and Sociology* pays particular attention to Ian Hacking's study of 'interactive and indifferent kinds', as well as the Spinozist discussion found amongst writers such as Damasio, Connolly, Ricoeur and Changeux. Working across these debates, *Nature and Sociology* presents a new approach to understanding the relation between the 'nature' and 'society', and the natural and social sciences. At the same time, it draws attention to the politics of nature, including environmental degradation; health, emotion and the politics of the body; and the dystopian anxieties concerning 'new genetics' and genomics.

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

This is an excellent study in early modern English history and, as the title and especially the subtitle imply (although the static use of 'civility' sounds a warning note), it is of considerable interest to anyone interested in civilising processes. Peltonen refers to Elias with approval on page 65: 'Many scholars have argued that the new theory of civil courtesy went hand in hand with the building of an absolutist state. Underlying such accounts is Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes and the duel's role in it. ...'.

He then footnotes *The Civilising Process* and *The Court Society*. But what better testimony can there be to the historians' typical boundedness by their 'period' and country than that Peltonen fails to make any reference to Elias's major discussion of duelling, in the long essay 'Duelling and Membership of the Imperial Ruling Class: Demanding and Giving Satisfaction' (or *Satisfaktionsfähige Gesellschaft* in German) in *The Germans*. There, Elias was writing about the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries – but surely that essay is relevant to any comparative understanding of duelling? It is frustrating that widespread knowledge of Elias's writings still appears to be largely confined to *The Civilising Process* and *The Court Society* (and, perhaps, among sociologists of sport, *Quest for Excitement*). – SJM.

■ WORK IN PROGRESS

The Fecundity of Norbert Elias's Process Sociology for the Study of Gender Relations

Stéphane Le Lay

Laboratoire Genre, Travail, Mobilités, CNRS/Universités de Paris VIII–Paris X

The following is an abstract of a longer paper written by Stéphane, who would welcome contact with and comments and suggestions from others who are interested in this field. He can be contacted at: rfs@iresco.fr.

The aim of this article is to examine the work of Norbert Elias by the yardstick of research on gender. Elias's interest in the relations between men and women can clearly be seen in his constant introduction of empirical evidence about the sexes in grasping precisely how the 'balance of power' has evolved through successive transformations – not necessarily either linear or uniform – in the differential distribution of power between human groups in given socio-historical figurations. Elias is thus dealing with a universalist path, where men and women are equally subject to external constraints and driving self-constraints, which allow them to undergo the work of individuation more or less happily. However, the universal charac-

ter of this movement, which seems general in western societies (individuation is linked to increasing complexity in social figurations), becomes fragmented when the balance of power is unfavourable to certain groups, whether all women together, working-class women, or whatever.

Nevertheless, Elias's work has some limitations. Even though these limitations do not really undermine its global coherence, they deserve to be pointed up and discussed, for instance Elias's conception of social organisation of ancient societies. Elias adopted indeed the palaeontological *clichés* available at the period he wrote. Following these views, in Palaeolithic and Neolithic societies afterwards, male domination over women was to be explained by the differential in physical strength and by a strict sexual division of functions partly due to motherhood. From such presuppositions, Elias was sometimes tempted to universalise rather quickly some (aggressive) trends, which are actually typical of European state figurations. The consequence is that his analyses often tend to give a preponderant role to men.

Elias's work is far from being gender blind. On the contrary, one can point out that he was part of the intellectual movement that considered physiological differentiation between sexes as insufficient to explain social differentiation. However, he did not deal with gender in its most contemporary form. Moreover, he always refused to involve his academic work in any political direction. These two features inevitably took him away from the most elaborated gender studies: at the same time, female researchers began to consider the epistemological impossibility of coherently linking an approach in terms of figurations with a feminist approach. A debate among Anglo-Saxon sociologists of sport thus insists on the deep discords about the (conceptual) definition of social interdependencies and their application to gender relationships. On the other hand, the discussion also focuses on discrepancies related to the question of the involvement–detachment dialectic, Elias being criticised for his assumed wish for sociological objectification.

To conclude, it might be possible, from discussions that Elias dedicated to developmental stages of consciousness, to advance the hypothesis that the work of 'queer theory' is part of a detachment–involvement movement at scientific level. This movement would participate in a better and, *at the same time*, different (enlarged and refined) cognition in perceiving the self-awareness and consciousness of others, less strongly shaped by the Occidental andro- and hetero-centred rationality.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Marbach am Neckar, 14–15 September 2008: Conference celebrating the completion of the publication of the *Gesammelte Schriften* of Norbert Elias in 19 volumes

Reminiscences and latest research
On Friday and Saturday, 14–15 September, the international Elias community celebrated the completion of the German Edition of the *Collected Works* of Norbert Elias. The setting was the picturesque South German town of Marbach which houses the Elias Archive in the renowned 'Archive for German Lit-

erature'. Whereas Friday was dedicated to reminiscences of Elias and his work and life, Saturday focused on recent research in Elias' sociological tradition.

The celebration started with a guided tour of either the *Archive for German Literature* or the *Museum of Modern Literature* set on the hill overlooking the valley of the river Neckar. It continued with the presentation of the *Collected Works*. Ulrich Raulff welcomed the guests on behalf of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach, reminding us of how the works of Elias got to the Archive – beginning with a phonecall by Hermann Korte in 1993 and pointing out the fact that the Archive houses the papers of many other great twentieth-century German philosophers and social scientists – such as Hannah Arendt, Siegfried Kracauer, Martin Heidegger and Karl Löwith.

Hermann Korte welcomed participants on behalf of the Norbert Elias Foundation, relating its history as sole heir of Norbert Elias and expressing its thanks to the many people who contributed to the *Collected Works* – to editors, translators and advisors, to the Suhrkamp

Verlag and its editors Friedhelm Herborth, Alexander Roesler and Bernd Stiegler, and to the Thyssen Foundation which generously supported the publication of Elias's works.

Annette Treibel, who spoke on behalf of the Editorial Board of the *Collected Works*, also took us back to the 1990s, to the constitution of the Board and its initial discussions of basic principles for the *Gesammelte Schriften*. One example of the many discussions was the order of the texts in the essay volumes. The Editorial Board's major aim and leading principle was to present a user-friendly collection of Elias's works. The completed edition includes all of Elias's written works that were already published or ready for publication when he died, and offers new insights by including works and essays hitherto not published in German.

Raimund Feller highlighted the relationship between Norbert Elias and Suhrkamp's famous publisher the late Siegfried Unseld, stressing their co-operation as well as the importance of the first editor of Elias at Suhrkamp, Friedhelm Herborth, who not only



managed to organise the publication of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* as a paperback in the series stw (suhrkamp taschenbuch wissenschaft), but was also responsible for collaborating with Michael Schröter in the publication of many of Elias's works in German. Cooperation with Elias proved to be difficult, with his many planned projects and his reluctance to let go of his manuscripts. Raimund Fellingner stressed that, for Suhrkamp, the *Gesammelte Schriften* are a step in the process of publishing Elias's works, and not its endpoint – he envisaged the publication of works slumbering in the archive in Marbach.

Wolf Lepenies spoke on behalf of the Thyssen Foundation, which, over the years, promoted many projects of the publication of Elias's works, but there are many other links to Elias and his work. It was Wolf Lepenies who gave the laudatory talk when Elias received the Adorno Prize in 1977. As an assistant to Dieter Claessens, he was given the task of shortening Elias's manuscript of *Was ist Soziologie* when Elias had handed in a lot more than the required 120 pages. Wolf Lepenies praised *The Court Society* as Elias's best introduction to sociology, and delighted us with a description of Elias at the 1970 World Congress of Sociology in Varna, Bulgaria. Unimpressed by the many secret police officers around

him, Elias went up to Bulgarian dictator Todor Zhivkov and introduced himself: 'I'm Norbert Elias. I'm glad to be in Bulgaria.'

Wilhelm Voßkamp's talk on 'Wunschtraum und Albtraum: Arkadien und Utopie bei Norbert Elias' (Wishdream or nightmare: Arcadia and utopia in the work of Norbert Elias) concluded this part of the celebration. Voßkamp – in whose research group on utopias Elias took part – highlighted both Elias's definition of utopia and his way of using them as data to analyse the times they have originated in with the example of *L'Astrée*, Thomas More and Watteau, thus illustrating the interdisciplinary approach of Elias's work. In his conclusion, Voßkamp added another function which Elias attributed to utopias: their possible role of helping to shape the future. In his introduction he also referred to Elias's very personal utopia expressed in the conclusion of *The Civilising Process*, 'Then it need no longer be the exception, then it may even be the rule, that an individual person can attain ... that condition to which one so often refers with big words such as 'happiness' and 'freedom': *a more durable balance, a better attunement, between the overall demands of people's social existence on the one hand, and their personal needs and inclinations on the other.*'

After a reception given by Suhrkamp,

the day culminated with a performance of *Die Ballade vom Armen Jakob* ['The Ballad of Poor Jacob'], with text by Norbert Elias and music by the composer Hans Gál, the first production of which took place on 26 September 1940 in the internment camp on the Isle of Man, where Elias, Gál and many other Jewish and non-Jewish refugees were confined as supposed 'enemy aliens' (that is, citizens of countries with which Britain was then at war). After an introduction by Hermann Korte, who gave us a vivid description of both the life in the camp and the feelings of the prisoners, members of the Staatstheater Stuttgart – Jens Winterstein (speaker) and Stefan Schreiber (piano) – gave an impressive performance. The event was honoured with the presence of Hans Gál's daughter who, for the first time, saw her father's work performed.

On Saturday, the presentation of the latest research started with the presentation of the Norbert Elias Prize, to Georgi M. Derlugian for his book *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography* (see separate report above). As Georgi Derlugian himself claimed, he had attempted 'to bypass the discipline and write something outrageous!'

The research topics covered by the following workshop moderated by Stefanie Ernst (morning session) and Annette Treibel (afternoon session) ranged from ethnological work in India to a dissertation project on Elias as a poet.

Ward Berenshot introduced us to his fieldwork in Gujarat, India. In his talk, 'The Coming of the Chamchas: State Formation and Neighbourhood Politicisation in Gujarat, India', he described the consequences of state formation on neighbourhoods in an Indian city and argued for putting more stress on aspects like the provision of services when looking at the processes of state formation. Nina Baur gave us an overview of her work on 'Markets as Figurations'. With her conceptualisation of markets as figurations she aims to find solutions to some of the open questions of market sociology, for example the role of stability and change or the segmentation of markets into either competitors or into suppliers and consumers.



Faces at Marbach: Gabriele Klein, Johan Heilbron, Giseline Kuipers and Annette Treibel (backs to camera), Wilbert van Vree, Jason Hughes, Eric Dunning.



Cas Wouters and Søren Nagbøl

Jason Hughes, the immediate past winner of the Norbert Elias Prize, gave a short account of the argument of his book *Learning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West* (2003). Using Elias's theory of civilising processes as a framework for his research, he presented us with many insights on smoking and with a lot of evidence in support of the theory, one of them being the fact that the sociogenesis is repeated in the psychogenesis of individuals, in this case the smokers: nowadays smokers' experiences develop from that of smoking as a 'headrush' to its use as a civilising force – to relax or calm down or to be able to concentrate during work, thus repeating the historical development of smoking from being a way of losing control to its use as a civilising force.

The afternoon session began with two talks working with Elias's theory of established-outsider relations. Anke Barzantny used the model in her research on the effect of mentoring programmes in academia. Bowen Paulle offered desegregation as a way of re-establishing schools as civilising institutions for lower-class children, hoping that the established might be pushed into action by feelings of fear, shame and disgust incited by processes related to the formation of ghettos.

Giselinde Kuipers presented us with another tradition found in Elias's work – the comparison of different cultures. Her talk – based on her book *Good Humour, Bas Taste* – dealt with 'The Sense of Humour and the Self: On Variations and Fluctuations in the

Evaluation of Humour'. The amusing summary of her study illustrated different humour styles in the Netherlands and the US, stressing the moral value of humour in the US.

The session concluded with a scientific reprise of the 'Ballad of Poor Jacob'. In her talk 'Warum können wir uns nicht vertragen? (Why can't we just get on (together?)) The Ballad of the poor Jacob as an Example for the Poetic Reflection on Human Behaviour by Norbert Elias', Tabea Dörfelt set out to prove that we are not to see Elias's poetry 'as an appendix to his sociological work' or as the outcome of 'an old man overestimating his writing capacities', but must value it as an additional mode for the expression of his experience of which he became a master.

Credit cannot be done here to these talks – we are looking forward to the planned book in which they will be published.

Heike Hammer
Stuttgart

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Sports Coaching and the Sociological Imagination Conference
Department of Exercise and Sports Science
Centre for Social Change & Well Being (RIHSC)
MMU Cheshire
Wednesday March 19th 2008

Call for Papers

The sociological imagination invites us to explore the entwinement of our lives in historical processes and to understand our, and others, successes and failings in connection with the ebb and flow of history and the institutions of society. Following C Wright Mills, our task, as intellectual craft workers, is to bring together the intimate and private with the impersonal and public so that we can gain insights into, and engage with, the points of interconnection between ourselves, others, history and society.

Drawing on the sensibilities of the sociological imagination, this conference will explore and map the intersections between coaches' biographies and the historical formation of the organisation of sport. The conference will focus on three critical questions that emerge from a reading of sports coaching through the use of our sociological imagination:

What is the structure of a particular sport, or community, and its coaching practices and how do they differ from other sports, or communities, and their coaching practices?

Where do coaching practices stand in the history of sport, how have they changed, or are changing, and what do these practices mean in relation to the development of sport?

Who are the women and men who coach sport at different periods of time and which women and men have prevailed or are prevailing as coaches?

The conference welcomes abstracts (200–300 words) that address one of the above issues.

Abstracts should be sent before Friday January 11th 2008 to:

Ian Atkin
Department of Exercise and Sport
Science
MMU Cheshire
Alsager Campus
Hassall Road
Alsager ST7 2HL
Cheshire, England
Telephone 00 44 161 247 5151
e mail i.atkin@mmu.ac.uk

International Institute of Sociology (IIS) 38th World Congress of Sociology, Budapest, 26–30 June 2008

The 38th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology will take place at the Central European University in Budapest, starting on Thursday evening, 26 June 26 and closing at noon on Monday, 30 June 2008.

The theme of the Congress is:
'Sociology Looks at the Twenty-first Century: From Local Universalism to Global Contextualism'

Several 'General Sessions' have been proposed by figurationally-orientated sociologists:

Stephen Mennell and Robert van Krieken, Civilising and Decivilising Processes: Key Trends of the Twenty-First Century (Stephen.Mennell@ucd.ie)
Tatiana Savoia Landini and Cynthia Andersen Sarti, Violence: Is It Possible to Connect the Local to a Universal Perspective of Analysis? (tatalan@uol.com.br)

Stefan Bargheer, Inquiries in the Sociology of Morality: Past, Present, and Future (bargheer@uchicago.edu)

It is expected that these sessions will be co-ordinated when offers of papers are received.

Abstracts of papers should be sent to the session organisers not later than 15 January 2008.

Selbstregulierung oder Selbstsorge – Zur Soziologie des Subjekts im 21. Jahrhundert

Control or Care of the Self – the Sociology of the Subject in the Twenty-First Century

University of Hamburg on 3–5 July 2008.

Call for Papers

The beginning of the twenty-first century is characterised by fundamental social changes: in addition to demographic changes and to the globalisation of economic flows the transformation of an industrial-Fordist society to a non-industrial service society is worth mentioning. For more than twenty years, these major trends and their inherent chances and risks have been of the topic of vivid discussions in all the social sciences. Keywords have been 'risk-society' and 'post-industrial society', but also 'knowledge-society' and 'information-society'.

We want to concentrate in particular on the following trends:

- The erosion of so-called standardised employment and the move towards a growing variety of precarious work forms like secondary work, temporary work, casual labour, low paid work etc.
- The increasing subjectivation of work and the blurring of the borderlines between working life and home life, especially considering the zone of inclusion and the opportunities to participate in the civil society.
- The erosion of the traditional nuclear family, its transformation towards so-called patchwork-families and the interdependent effects on modelling patterns of emotion regulation.
- The changes pertaining to the hierarchical division of labour and the balance of power between the sexes, especially with respect to the blurring of the boundaries between working life and private life.

Implications of these developments are also reflected in the challenge of the traditional, hegemonic and rational understanding of subjectivity. Against the background of these great social changes, several factors also indicate that the forms of self-regulation or self-governance are being transformed too. A one-sided concentration of the *homo*

economicus and its varieties tends for example to under-estimate certain non-rational forms of self-perception and self-reflection as well as non-rational practices of self-management and subjectivation.

This debate suggests that social sciences cannot do without a clear definition of human beings nature and their essential traits. Moreover, facing the biogenetic challenges in the twenty-first century the basic fundament of what is making up humankind has at least been highlighted.

The question what these transformations mean to individuals has not yet been clarified. In-deed there is a discussion about whether individuals will be forced to create their own biography and to work on their identity. Others point out that completely new forms of subjectivity are developing. But these considerations have not yet led to empirically or theoretically saturated and deeply reflected conceptions. Therefore it seems to be the great task of the twenty-first century to define the role of the individual in a fundamentally changing society.

The aim of the planned conference therefore is to discuss the question, of how far the relationship to oneself and relationships towards others in (post-) modern societies are being transformed. The perspectives offered by Norbert Elias's figurational sociology as well as by Michel Foucault's post-structural theory seem to be promising because they appear to have been the first researchers consistently and convincingly analysing the nature of individuals by reflecting upon their long term historical processes of transformation. The two have different visions but similar concerns. Both bodies of work deal with structures of control that exist within society and within the individual.

As the two most prominent sociologists concerned, at an early stage of research Norbert Elias and Michel Foucault offered concepts for the debate on the position of individuals in society, with the aim of clarifying the interwoven socio- and psychogenetic development of modern societies. Within individuals is mirrored the social interdependency of complex formations of power.

In describing the mechanisms of self-controls (*Selbstkontrollapparatur*) or the techniques of normalisation (Foucault), both dealt with the hidden structures of social rationalisation, but without specifying or using an explicit definition of the subject.

We think that these brief thoughts prove that there is enough reason for bringing these different but similar sociologists, Elias and Foucault, together. In view of recent social changes we consider it worthwhile to discuss their theoretical and empirical potential. Questions whether a new kind of life-style or a 'self-regulating form of subjectivity' come to exist with a new social character should be discussed. On the other hand, we want to discuss whether a completely new form of subjectivation occurs, or whether the tendency towards self-care creates a new relationship to oneself. Has the old search for identity and self-realisation become obsolete and a dangerous pitfall? What could be an adequate term for the subject accurately describing the processes of social transformation? The planned conference will conclude with keynote speeches (already fixed) about the nature of the subject, techniques of self-regulation and self-care, and a fixed closing discussion forum. The parallel sessions of discussion are oriented towards theoretical and empirical research results of the following fields:

Work: What are the chances and risks of the increasing subjectivation? Individualisation and in-creasing constraints of self-regulation are the keywords of this session.

Body: Here we want to focus on the body as a representation of the social, as a symbol and indicator of status and subjectivation.

Desire: What are the alternatives against the normalising of identity politics, especially focusing on the sexual identity politics?

Time and space of action: What varieties of subjectivation and differentiation could be observed in its material, spatial and temporal figurational dimension?

Papers are invited in any of the above fields. More concretely, anticipated themes for papers include:

Elias and Foucault and current theories of the body,
Elias and Foucault and the study of organisations,
Elias and Foucault and sexuality/identity
Elias and Foucault, time and space.

Proposals for papers are invited on these or any other related topics *before January 15, 2008*.

The conference organisers are keen to promote cross-disciplinary and cross-paradigmatic dialogue and debate.

Abstracts (no longer than 300 words) should be submitted by to

PD Dr. Andrea D. Bührmann
Institut für Soziologie
LMU München
Konradstr. 6
D-80801 München

Prof. Dr. Stefanie Ernst
Department Wirtschaft und Politik Universität Hamburg
Von-Melle-Park 9
D-20146 Hamburg

Please include with the abstract: institutional affiliation, e-mail address, telephone number, and postal contact details.

Any enquiries can be addressed to the conference organisers:
Stefanie Ernst: Stefanie.Ernst@wisso.uni-hamburg.de
Andrea D. Bührmann: Andrea.Buehrmann@soziologie.uni-muenchen.de

International Sociological Association First Forum on Sociology

**Barcelona, 5–8 September 2007
Research Committee 20, Comparative Sociology: Working Group on Civilising and Decivilising Processes**

As Robert van Krieken announced in *Figurations* 27, the Ad Hoc Group on Figurational Sociology that met at the ISA World Congresses in Bielfeld 1994, Montreal 1998 and Brisbane 2002 (as well as at the IIS World Congress in

Stockholm in 2004) has now been formally accepted as an established Working Group within Research Committee 20, Comparative Sociology. This will give a much more secure and continuing framework for our international collaborations and discussions. Robert van Krieken and Stephen Men-nell are acting jointly as provisional chair-cum-secretary of the Working Group, pending the election of officers at the first opportunity.

The first opportunity has come earlier than we expected. Robert said that we were already planning for the next ISA World Congress in Göteborg in 2010. However, we do not have to wait until 2010 to begin working with RC20, because the ISA is for the first time also organising a 'Forum on Sociology' halfway between its main World Congresses, and this will take place in Barcelona, 5–8 September, 2008.

The idea of the Forum is to promote dialogue between the various ISA Research Committees, and the figurational point of view should prosper in this context: whatever else we are, we are not narrowly specialised in any of the traditional sub-disciplines of sociology.

The general theme of the Forum is Sociological Research and Public Debate, and one objective is to involve the media and general public. There will be a series of debates, open to general public, amongst prominent sociologists and representatives of cognate disciplines.

Call for Papers

We should like to hear from all readers of *Figurations* who wish to present their work and participate in the discussions in Barcelona. The list of general areas within the Working Group's remit is reprinted below, but please do not feel constrained by it.

- a) the question of processes of civilisation in stateless societies, and such an analysis might enrich contemporary social anthropology;
- b) the analysis of the current dynamics of processes of civilisation, and the extent to which it should be understood as improving control over human rela-

tions, in areas such as the sociology of emotions, the sociology of sport, media and communications, education, etc.; c) the study of the 'barbarism of civilisation', decivilisation or 'dyscivilisation', the analysis of totalitarian states, genocide, colonialism and post-colonialism; d) comparative studies of civilisation around the globe, in relation to the wide diversity of forms of state formation and cultural development, in regions such as Asia, South America and Africa, as well as the social scientific analysis of globalisation and the expansion of a 'world society'.

Stephen Mennell would in particular like to organise a session in Barcelona on *The United States: Civilisation and Empire in Long-term Perspective*.

For Göteborg in 2010, Peter Burke and Stephen Mennell hope to organise a mini-conference under the auspices of the Working Group on *Civilising and Decivilising Processes in Non-European Contexts*.

Please send expressions of interest by 15 January 2008 to:

Stephen.Mennell@ucd.ie and
robertvk@mail.usyd.edu.au

Zur Genealogie des Zivilisationsprozesses: Friedrich Nietzsche und Norbert Elias

Humboldt University, Berlin, 26–7 September, 2008.

This conference is being planned by Friederike Günther (Technische Universität Berlin), Angela Holzer (Princeton University), and Enrico Müller (Berlin). Those interested should contact Angela Holzer at acholzer@princeton.edu.

■ OBITUARIES

Frank Cass, 1930–2007

The *Guardian* (29 October 2007) described Frank Cass as an 'eclectic publisher with an eye for opportunity' who 'particularly enjoyed his role as unofficial publisher to the Anglo-Jewish community'. Cass had warm

relations with Norbert Elias in the 1960s and early 1970s, and among the many opportunities he seized was to appoint Elias editor of a series of studies in sociology, the first of which was Elias and Scotson's *The Established and the Outsiders*. Other titles in the series included *The Sociology of Sport: A Selection of Readings*, edited by Eric Dunning (1971) and *The Sociology of Community: A Selection of Readings*, edited by Colin Bell and Howard Newby (1974), in which appeared Elias's own essay 'Towards a Theory of Communities'.

Professor Richard Kemp Brown, 1933–2007

Professor Richard Brown died on 31 May 2007. Richard was Professor Emeritus of Sociology at the University of Durham, but he had started his academic career as a Research Fellow at Leicester in 1960, in the days when Ilya Neustadt and Norbert Elias were creating a large and outstanding Department of Sociology. Although he never referred much to Elias's work, he used to reminisce with affection about those days. In *What is Sociology?*, Elias adds a note to the table in the Game Models chapter showing the increase in the number of possible relationships as the number of people in a web increases. It reads: 'My colleague Richard Brown of the University of Durham, who was kind enough to read this part of the manuscript, drew it to my attention that calculations of this kind have already appeared in E.F.L. Brech, *Organisation* (London: Longmans, 1957), pp. 77 ff, even though in the context of rather different theoretical problems'. (Elias might have added that, as one of my students once pointed out to me, the same calculations are involved in working out accumulators when betting on a series of horse races.) Richard was an outstanding contributor to British sociology, President of the British Sociological Association in 1983–5, and editor of the journal *Work, Employment & Society*, 1987–9. He was universally liked. – *SJM*

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in May 2008. News and notes should be sent to the Editors by 1 April 2008.

Editor: Stephen Mennell
Editorial Address: Department of Sociology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.
Tel. +353-1-716 8504; Fax: +353-1-706 1125.
E-mail: Stephen.Mennell@ucd.ie

Associate Editor: Dr Katie Liston, Department of Sport and Exercise Sciences, University of Chester, Parkgate Road, Chester CH1 4BJ, United Kingdom.
Tel. +44-1244 513430; Fax: +44-1244 392889
E-mail: k.liston@chester.ac.uk

Honorary Assistant Editors: Florence Delmotte, Brussels (French); Sofia Gaspar, Madrid (Spanish and Portuguese); Heike Hammer, Stuttgart (German); Tatiana Savoia Landini, São Paulo (Spanish and Portuguese, Latin America).

Contributions should preferably be e-mailed to the Editor in the form of MS Word (.doc), Rich Text (.rtf) or and plain text (.txt) files. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly.

© 2007, Norbert Elias Stichting, J.J. Viottastraat 13, 1071 JM Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Graphic Design and Desktop Publishing: Annette van de Sluis.
Printed by MultiCopy, Weesperstraat 65, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Figurations is distributed free of charge on request to researchers, institutes or libraries. To be added to the mailing list, please write to the Secretary, Norbert Elias Stichting, J.J. Viottastraat 13, 1071 JM Amsterdam, Netherlands.