

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Elias Foundation website

The Foundation's new website (<http://norbert-elias.com/en/>) is still being extensively revised and updated. Unlike the old one, it contains in particular many valuable videos, including

lectures by and interviews with Elias and leading figurational sociologists.

During this transitional phase, some of the material on the old site has yet to be transferred to the new one, but Adrian Jitschin points out that it can all still be accessed if you go to <http://archive.norbert-elias.com/>.

For myself, I was particularly fond of the 'Classic essays' section (<http://archive.norbert-elias.com/network/essays.php>). 'Classic' is perhaps an overgeneralisation, since it contains quite a mixed bag of items either not published elsewhere or previously published in out-of-the-way places and thus difficult to obtain (such as the old *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift*, now sadly defunct). They range from Patrick Murphy's book-length in-depth examination of Elias's interpretation of the 'Medieval House-Book' drawings to Richard Kilminster's youthful unpublished *jeu d'esprit* 'Streaking: the naked truth'. There is Robert van Krieken's insightful essay on the Elias–Duerr dispute, published (very obscurely and not for any very obvious reason) in the Australian journal *Modern Greek Studies*. There are several papers by the late Joop Goudsblom that were published in Dutch but the English translation of which was not published. And much the same goes for Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh's 'Attribution of blame as the past and present means of orientation: the social sciences as a potential improvement', which though focused on international relations raises principles which I always thought were of wider relevance in sociology; the text on the old website is the only complete English translation.

I hope others find this useful.

Stephen Mennell

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■ IN THE MEDIA

Barbara Górnicka took part in a discussion of nudity in the BBC Radio 4 programme *Thinking Allowed*, hosted by Lawrie Taylor (Professor Emeritus, University of York) on 5 February. The programme can be heard (and downloaded) from <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000f07g>.

Nathalie Heinich wrote a short article in *Le Monde* about the confinement necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Entitled 'A quoi nous sommes reliés' [To what we are connected], it discusses the tension in these circumstances between what we often call 'external constraints' and 'self-constraints'. Heinich remarks that Norbert Elias would have said this process of the civilising of manners has built – for the best – Western societies, by educating humans for something other than the selfish satisfaction of their immediate desires and gross expression of their bodily needs. And no doubt he would have added that with this collective awareness of the 'interdependence' on which 'the society of individuals' feeds, we are also witnessing the decline of *homo clausus*, this spontaneous illusion according to which the man would be closed in on himself, defined before and independently of others.

https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2020/04/04/il-y-a-ce-a-quoi-nous-sommes-relies-nous-tous-confines-mais-interdependants-responsables-solidaires-et-fiers-de-l-etre_6035532_3232.html

John Goodwin has made a notable teaching video 'Live Sociology: Real-world research-informed teaching at Snibston Colliery'. He took a party of students to tour – under the guidance of retired miners – the now disused colliery near Leicester, which was famously studied as a working mine by Dennis, Henriques and Slaughter in the 1950s (see *Coal is Our Life*, 1956). John vividly brings out the distinctive features of sociology in Leicester, and of figurational sociology, without once mentioning Elias directly! See YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9bgSINGOpw>

■ FIGURATIONAL JOURNALS ONLINE

Human Figurations Journal Call for Papers 'Weber 101'

We would like to invite our readers to submit journal articles to commemorate the 100 th anniversary of death of Max Weber for the Special Issue of *Human Figurations*. The issue titled 'Weber 101' will be released in 2021, which will fall on the 101st anniversary, so the pun is very much intended!

Please forward your abstracts or completed papers to the journal editorial team at admhumfigs@gmail.com

Dossier Goudsblom in *Tijdschrift Sociologie*

The online journal *Tijdschrift Sociologie* has published, as one of its first issues, a 'Dossier Goudsblom' (<https://sociologie.scholasticahq.com/issue/2094>). The 'dossier' contains memoirs of Joop by both Stephen Mennell and Nico Wilterdink, and an unpublished essay by Joop himself, 'Gidsen op mijn weg naar Elias' [Guides on my way to Elias], originally a talk that he gave in Dublin in 2016. The fourth article is 'Virussen, armoede en 'beschaafde zeden': waarom we de ziektekiemen zijn gaan verjagen' by Chloé Leprince and Luc Vanmarcke, recalling Joop's notable 1986 essay on 'Public Health and the Civilising Process' (see <http://archive.norbert-elias.com/docs/pdf/Goudsblom-PublicHealth&CP.pdf>).

The new Dutch language, open-access journal is the outcome of a merger between the Dutch journal *Sociologie* and the Flemish *Sociologus*. Both of those predecessor journals have a history: *Sociologus* was previously called the *Tijdschrift voor Sociologie*, while *Sociologie* dated from a previous merger in 2005 between *Sociologische Gids* and our own, late lamented *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift*. Whatever its complicated ancestry, this new Dutch/Flemish journal looks extremely handsome on the screen, and we wish it every success.

■ 'WHY CAN'T WE BE LIKE A SISTER OR BROTHER?'

Die 'Ballade vom Armen Jakob' by Norbert Elias and Hans Gál is published by the Royal College of Music as part of the revue 'What a Life'

This year marks the eightieth anniversary of the internment in Britain of German and Austrian refugees from Nazi-persecution on the Isle of Man in the Irish Sea in 1940/41. Norbert Elias was one of them. Faced with the threat of an invasion and in fear of sabotage, the British Government embarked on a policy of mass internment of German and Austrian nationals. Jewish and other refugees became 'enemy aliens' and fell victim to hysteria and xenophobia fuelled by the press. The authorities took many months, in some cases years, to process each individual case before the internees could be released. While some were deported to Canada and Australia, most internees were housed in converted boarding houses on the Isle of Man. The organisation of the camps was poor initially, but the internees soon developed a hierarchy of self-administration. Leading scholars gave lectures which evolved into now legendary 'camp-universities', and the artistic life, often encouraged by the British authorities, was vibrant.

To mark the anniversary, the team of the research project 'Music, Migration and Mobility' at the Royal College of Music, which is generously funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, has been preparing the publication of the bilingual comic revue 'What a Life!' by Hans Gál (1890-1987). We are grateful to the Elias Foundation for permission to include the *Ballade vom Armen Jakob* by Norbert Elias. The revue was the brainchild of the film-producer Georg Höllering, who enlisted many talented fellow-internees to contribute to the project. Written to provide much needed comic relief, the musical numbers make fun of the barbed wire, the seagulls, the morning exercise, the cleaning routines, sharing double beds, porridge breakfasts, bad cooking and music practice in the camp. The piece was revised after the sold-out first

Baritone Simon Wallfisch (left) and tenor Norbert Meyn performing 'What a Life!' in November 2017

Photo:
Ensemble Émigré



performance in the 2000-seat Palace Theatre in Douglas on September 2, 1940. The addition of the substantial ballad by Norbert Elias (it is about 15 minutes long) raised doubts initially because it was entirely serious. It tells the story of the eternal wandering Jew, how he becomes a scapegoat when others fight with each other, and how he finally learns to forgive his enemies. Hans Gál, who was asked to compose a piano accompaniment for it in the style of a melodrama, also resisted at first because he 'basically hated the genre'. However, everyone was won over eventually by the quality of the work, and Gál's beautiful composition creates a special atmosphere for the story while avoiding too much descriptive characterisation. The piece was premiered in the second performance of the revue on 26 September 1940, by a speaker and a chorus from the youth group of the camp, with group scenes and shadow backdrops to illustrate the story. It was a great success.

The creation of the revue is described in great detail in the composer's diary *Music behind Barbed Wire!* which was published together with a recording (including one of the *Ballade* in the English translation by Anthony Fox) by Toccata Press in 2014. A planned performance of the revue with Ensemble Émigré and students from the

Royal College of Music at the British Museum in June had to be postponed because of Covid 19, but we hope it can happen at some point in the not too distant future. Performances of the *Ballade vom Armen Jakob* are possible with just one speaker and piano, but they can also involve a chorus, physical theatre or other visual representations as in the original production. The revue itself is scored for two singers, piano, flute, clarinet and string quartet and takes about 45 minutes to perform. Our edition also includes excerpts from the composer's diary that provide a context for the musical numbers.

In the next few years, the team of the 'Music, Migration and Mobility' project will build an online resource to highlight the stories and the compositions of many well-known and less well-known émigré musicians in Britain. It is our aim to capture this musical heritage, understand the significance of these musicians for British cultural institutions, perform their music and explore its significance for audiences today. Pieces like the *Ballade vom armen Jakob*, written by migrants with a global rather than national perspective, sometimes in response to injustice and xenophobia, provide valuable insights into the nature and cultural importance of migration and mobility. And of course,

as migration is happening on a much larger scale, these works are highly relevant today: 'Why can't we be like a sister or brother? We only have us. On this earth enough goodness grows, Fruit and wine and grain. Why should the weaker suffer pain from the stronger's angry blows?'¹

Information about events, performances and publications will be available on the project website, where you will also find links to further resources and a blog. You can join our journey by subscribing to our mailing list. Please visit www.musicmigrationmobility.com or send an email to norbert.meyn@rcm.ac.uk to get in touch and request your free PDF copy of the RCM Edition of 'What a Life!'.

Norbert Meyn
Principle Investigator, 'Music, Migration and Mobility', Royal College of Music

1. Norbert Elias, *Ballade vom Armen Jakob*, translation by Anthony Fox, published in Hans Gál, *Music Behind Barbed Wire*, London, Toccata Press, 2014



Abram de Swaan, *Tegen de vrouwen*
[Against women] (Amsterdam:
Uitgeverij Prometheus, 2019).

In the past half century, education has expanded at all levels around the world at breakneck speed, especially for girls and young women. This changed the male-female relationships accordingly. Women marry later, have fewer children, work longer and earn more.

That gain in knowledge, income and also in power is difficult for many men to accept. Women now need men less as protector or as financial support. According to Abram de Swaan, this undermining of male domination leads to social and psychological tensions that can be traced to the injury of the male sense of honour: a collective and personal “narcissistic” offense. De Swaan sees the rise of the new extreme right, Christian fundamentalism and persistent jihadism as a response to the global emancipation of women that apparently is so threatening for so many men. Will these movements continue, or are they the last convulsion of a doomed patriarchy?

English edition, *Against Women: The Worldwide War by Rightists and Jihadists against Liberation*, and French edition (Paris: Le Seuil), forthcoming 2020.

Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley, *State Power and Asylum Seekers in Ireland: An Historically Grounded Examination of Contemporary Trends*
(London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018). 190 pp. ISBN: 978-3-319-91934-8 (hb); 978-3-319-91935-5 (ebook).

Detailing the reception, treatment and, sometimes, eventual deportation of asylum seekers in Ireland, Loyal and Quilley discuss contemporary immigration issues in the light of the overall social, historical and economic development of Irish society and state immigration policy. Migration is an emotive and politically explosive topic, but the authors stand back and detachedly set it in historical and global context. They focus especially on Ireland, which went abruptly from nearly two centuries of being a land from which people emigrated to being one to which they immigrated in substantial numbers. This makes for a fascinating read of international interest.

John Connolly and Paddy Dolan, *Gaelic Games in Society: Civilising Processes, Players, Administrators and Spectators*. (Cham, Springer Nature Switzerland/ Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 213pp. ISBN: 9783030316983.

In this book John Connolly and Paddy Dolan illustrate and explain developments in Gaelic games, the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), and Irish society over the course of the last 150 years. The main themes in the book include: advances in the threshold of repugnance towards violence in the playing of Gaelic games, changes in the structure of spectator violence, diminishing displays of superiority towards the competing sports of soccer and rugby, the tension between decentralising and centralising processes, the movement in the balance between amateurism and professionalism, changes in the power balance between ‘elite’ players and administrators, and the difficulties in developing a new hybrid sport. The authors also explain how these developments were connected to various social processes including changes in the structure of Irish society and in the social habitus of people in Ireland.

Jenny Pearce, ‘The Monopoly of Violence: From Affect Control to Biopower’, in book: *Politics without Violence? Towards a Post-Weberian Enlightenment*. (Cham, Springer Nature Switzerland AG, November 2019). 342 pp. ISBN: 9783030260811.

The monopolization of violence has long been accepted as defining the modern



Paddy Dolan, Stephen Mennell and Johnny Connolly at the book launch

State, building on the European story outlined in the previous chapter. That chapter argued that the monopolization process was, at its heart, a process of violence ‘ordering’, which begins with the ‘military monopoly’ established through violent ‘elimination contests’, enabling in turn the taxation required to strengthen the state’s armed capacity. Evidence shows that as the state centralized and concentrated the use of violence, interpersonal male on male public violence began to decline. The capacity of the state to monopolize all violences remained incomplete, however. And Weber acknowledged the dangers of the ‘particularly intimate’ relation between the State and violence (Weber, *The Profession and Vocation of Politics*. In P. Lassman and R. Speirs (eds), *Weber: Political Writings* (pp. 309–369). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010: 310), while insisting that violence is intrinsic to any political association or state. The State has to use violence to enforce its claims to monopoly over a given territory. It also expands this territory through violence. War and collective violence have played a significant role in establishing and defining ‘territory’, who does and does not belong to it. In this chapter, we aim to go beyond the ‘military’ aspects of monopolization and explore theories of how monopolization contributes to violence *decline*, through unintended effects and new technologies of power. The first of these connects monopolization to the transformation of elite behaviours in Europe and sensibilities towards violence, gradually rolling out a process of what Norbert Elias calls ‘affect control’ to other sectors of society. Secondly, it will discuss how Michel Foucault provides an alternative set of tools for bringing into view the historical violences of the monopolization process and the foundation of the state. He then provides his own explanation of violence decline by tracing the shifting repertoire of the power of the modern state away from death and towards the administration of life or biopower. In both theories, violence itself is treated rather selectively and fades into the background. Giorgio Agamben brings sovereign power as violence back into the biopower discussion. He argues that the inclusion of life as an exclusion

(or bare life), is foundational to (bio) sovereignty and not an evolution of the modern state. Whereas Hannah Arendt understood politics as a realm which is not reducible to the biological (and violent) survival of humans, Agamben argues these were never separated. As a result, politics has suffered ‘a lasting eclipse’. Sovereign power bound law and thus violence to life, through the inclusion by exclusion of life that is not worthy of politics, or ‘bare life’. From the global South, Achille Mbembe (2003) coined the term ‘necropolitics’, to show how sovereignty in post-colonial Africa resides in the power and capacity to decide who can live and who must die. Thus, violence reducing affect control is juxtaposed to arguments about the violent and non-violent forms of control of the body with the emergence of the violence monopolizing sovereign State.

Andrew McKinnon, ‘The sacramental mechanism: religion and the civilizing process in Christian western Europe with particular reference to the peace of god movement and its aftermath’, ch. 5 in Andrew McKinnon and Marta Trzebiatowska, eds, *Sociological Theory and the Question of Religion*.

Abstract: Norbert Elias marginalises the role of the church in his important account of *The Civilizing Process*, treating it as largely epiphenomenal to social change. Given the range of Elias’s magnum opus, an assessment of all of the relevant points at which the role of the church ought to have been considered is not feasible. Here I take one moment in Elias’s story – more or less the beginning – and show how a fuller consideration of religious institutions and practices could have contributed to the theory of the Civilizing Process. This paper analyses the role of the Pax Dei movement (ca 970–1040) and its later institutionalisations to show the Church’s contribution to the constraining, shaping, and channelling the warrior elite’s drive to violence. I argue that the monopoly mechanism and the royal mechanism need to be considered alongside, and in interaction with a force I refer to here as the sacramental mechanism.

Florence Delmotte, ‘Norbert Elias, Catherine Deneuve and gender equality’, *Books & Ideas* March 2019. <https://booksandideas.net/Norbert-Elias-Catherine-Deneuve-and-Gender-Equality.html>

The original French version of this essay was listed in *Figurations* 49. This translation appears on the *Books & Ideas* website, the English-language mirror of *La vie des idées*, which is sponsored by the Collège de France.

There is no abstract, but Florence Delmotte’s line of thought can be captured by listing the sub-headings in the essay: The civilising process and gender equality; A detour via marriage in Rome; The state and the law, social conditions of emancipation; Values and norms, nature and culture; The delicate matter of progress; From Gainsbourg to Maggie Nelson, censorship and self-censorship; A civilisation in the making. Delmotte concludes this model demonstration of how historical sociology is relevant to so recent a phenomenon as the #MeToo movement by quoting Cas Wouters on the long-established pattern of reaction to sexual harassment: ‘No longer are these feelings almost automatically silenced by feelings of shame, but now shame is increasingly silenced by them’. And she herself remarks, ‘At the end of the day, the message is clear: we are not as civilised as we think, and we should not forget where we come from’.

İrem Özgören Kınlı, ‘Norbert Elias ve Figürasyonel Sosyoloji’ye giriş, *Turkish Studies – Social*, 15: 3 (2020), 1377–94. <https://dx.doi.org/10.29228/TurkishStudies.41865>

Because this article presents one of the fullest introductions available in Turkish to Elias’s theoretical standpoint, we here quote the longer ‘structured abstract’ that is given.

Abstract: Norbert Elias developed a particular sociological perspective, which has come to be known as ‘figural sociology’, or, as it is sometimes called, process sociology. Figural sociology offers a synthesis of classical and modern sociology. According to this sociological perspective, individuals

are interdependent with each other; they form figurations, and also, they are shaped by continuously changing figurations.

The main aim of this article is to introduce Norbert Elias's sociology through his concepts, methods and principles. The first part of the study gives information about Elias's personal and academic life. Marx, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel, Sombart, Veblen, Mannheim and Freud occupy a central place in Elias's sociology.

The second part attempts to clarify the meaning of figuration in Eliasian sociology. The concept of figuration, which was widely used by Elias from the 1960s, points out the nature and the extent of the interdependencies that change constantly over time. It is an analytical concept that emphasizes interdependency between individual and society. It describes changing human networks and long-term processes in which people are interrelated to each other.

According to Elias, individuals cannot be imagined without their societies and societies without their individuals. Defined by networks of small groups and large societies by people who are interdependent to each other, figurations are characterized as constantly changing and fluid balance of power. Elias developed the concept of figuration in order to eliminate the accepted dualist approaches in sociology such as structure/actor, individual/society, subjectivity/objectivity, and to show that individuals are always connected with each other through direct or indirect ways.

For Elias, the difference of the concept of figuration from the concept of the system is that figuration as a concept does not create an inherent expectation of harmony. In this sense, figuration is a neutral concept. It can address tense and hostile relations between people as well as harmonious, peaceful and friendly relationship between people. According to Elias, the concept of figuration is functional in sociology when it addresses the problem of interdependence among individuals, groups and societies.

The third part of this article discusses the basic assumptions and methodology of figuration sociology. The chief characteristic of figuration sociology is its focus on relations and processes. It gives emphasis to the significance of long-term processes, although it does not correspondingly ignore the short-term processes. The main aim of figuration sociology is to demonstrate the functional interdependence of people who come together at a multi-layered level during the unplanned social processes that they create with each other.

One of the original features of figuration sociology comes from its focus on relationships rather than situations. Elias prefers to examine the relationships between individuals and social phenomena not solely through power relations between individuals, groups or institutions, but through the ever-changing power balances. In order to examine social structure and social relations, figuration sociology adopts a long-term historical research methodology. The third part of the article also focuses on the differences of figuration sociology from other sociological approaches. Elias opposes both the structural-functional and methodological individualist paradigms in sociological theory and presents a new unique paradigm in terms of sociological thinking.

In the last part, this study presents the conceptual tools frequently used by figuration sociology such as the balance of cooperation and competition; balance of external social control and self-control; balance of power; the balance of formalization and informalization; the We-I balance between established and outsider groups (We/They); the balance of involvement and detachment.

The balance of cooperation and competition is a useful analytical tool in order to determine the levels of social and global interdependencies as well as the levels of differentiations. Different levels of development can be determined by the balance of social control and self-control. The balance between external control and self-discipline has gradually

shifted towards the latter with the monopolization of physical force by the nation state. The balance of power is a helpful tool for figuration sociology in order to analyse power ratios between different social classes, sexes and generations. The balance of formalization and informalization helps to analyse shifting patterns of emotion management. The We-I balance helps to demonstrate the dynamic configurations of self-awareness within a changing society. Correspondingly, state formation processes give direction to the We-I balance of individuals. The We-I balance between established and outsider groups (We-They) is a conceptual tool for explaining diverse interdependencies between various groups, which may trigger conflicts and tensions. The balance of involvement and detachment demonstrates how an increased level of knowledge of nature produces a greater detachment from their affective involvement of fearful fantasies.

Artur Bogner and Gabriele

Rosenthal, *KindersoldatenInnen im Kontext: Biographien, familien- und kollektivgeschichtliche Verläufe in Nordunganda* (Göttingen: Universitätsverlag Göttingen, 2018). 127 pp. ISBN: 978-3-86395-377-5.

The project is concerned with the reconstruction of the reintegration processes and biographies of former child soldiers and their underage kidnappings by the rebels of the Lord's Resistance Army, as they interweave with family biographies and the local history of the former war zone in northern Uganda.

In contrast to previous research, the biographical self-thematization of child soldiers in data collection and data analysis is embedded in the context of the stories of their families and their local social environment and interpreted in these diachronic contexts. The methodological design of the study is based on the principles of sociological biography research, supplemented by a family history dimension that is increasingly being considered in this research area. The interactions of self and external interpretations, self-thematization and collective discourse form a focus.

Narrative interviews on the life and family history of former child soldiers and their family members are presented as the central instrument of data collection, ideally with representatives of at least three generations in each family examined.

This survey method was tested in a pilot study on site and in the neighbouring region. The interviews mentioned are supplemented by surveys of informants, mainly from the local environment, including employees of the non-governmental and governmental organizations dealing with former child soldiers. On this basis, family histories and family biographical work of the families as well as the intergenerational interactions and processes in their importance for the life courses and biographical (self) thematization of the child soldiers are reconstructed. The aim is to combine the (family) biographical case reconstructions with analyses of the internal and external family discourses and their historical change. Sampling is based on the visible interpersonal or intergenerational conflicts, on the one

hand, and tensions between divergent interpretations regarding the transitions from the position of the rebel fighter to a civilian existence and from adolescence to adulthood.

Based on the findings and data from a previous project on the post-conflict process in the neighbouring region of West Nile, comparisons with the course of reintegration of former (mainly older) rebel soldiers there are also planned. In this way, as well as the context of northern Uganda general conclusions for practical measures of support are to be gained and the instruments of research and advice for the reintegration of child soldiers are further developed.

An English translation of this book will be published shortly.

Helmut Kuzmics, Dieter Reicher and Jason Hughes, eds, *Emotion, Authority and National Character: Historical–Processual Perspectives*, Special Issue of *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 45: 1 (2020). 329 pp.

In their introduction, the editors explain that the central concerns of this special issue of *Historical Social Research* – emotion, authority and national character – are arguably among the most pressing issues facing social researchers in the current geo-political context. By contrast to the global political climate of the early 1990s – when the Eastern bloc was collapsing, when Europe was still in the Euphoria of its expansion, and when a largely US-fuelled renewed wave of globalisation had not yet met with substantial nation-state resistance – the past few years have seen a growing number and range of counter-reactions that are often characterised as undemocratic or even authoritarian. This paper discusses the weakness of concepts like ‘national identity’ or of normative notions of ‘nationalism’ that are commonly used in order to understand prevailing national we-feelings in the modern world. Instead we advocate a focus on historical long-term processes and on the various relationships between the formation of ‘survival units’ like states and the make-up of the personality structure of its members in different nation-states. It will be argued that Norbert Elias’s concept of ‘national habitus’ may be helpful in approaching these relationships. Thus, this approach will be helpful for better understanding of we-feelings in modern state-societies. Furthermore, methodological and theoretical problems that are related to the concept of ‘national habitus’ will be discussed from the viewpoint of Historical Sociology. Second, this article summarises the arguments of the contributions assembled in this Special Issue. By doing so, these articles will be grouped in two different ways. The first type of grouping is related to the common characteristics of arguments found in all the papers. They cover an area comprising Western, East Central, and South-eastern Europe, the Middle East, the USA and Japan.



The second type of grouping is concerned with dissent in their approaches and arguments.

1. State, Emotion, Authority, and National Habitus. State-Related Problems of Our Time and Methodological Discourses in Sociology and Historical Sociology, *Helmut Kuzmics, Dieter Reicher and Jason Hughes*.
2. Processes of the State and Habitus Formation in Iran in the 19th and early 20th Centuries: The Socio- and Psychogenesis of the Constitutional Revolution in 1906, *Behrouz Alikhani*.
3. Is Every Turk Born a Soldier? A Historical-Processual Analysis, *Onur Kınlı & İrem Özgören Kınlı*.
4. The Uncanny: How Cultural Trauma Trumps Reason in German Israeli Scientific Collaborations, *Gad Yair*.
5. Greek Nationalism as a Case of Political Religion: Rituals and Sentimentality, *Nicolas Demertzis & Hara Stratoudaki*.
6. The Culture of Distrust. On the Hungarian National Habitus, *Miklós Hadas*.
7. Schengen and the Rosary: Catholic Religion and the Postcolonial Syndrome in Polish National Habitus, *Marta Bucholc*.
8. The Creation of Modern Denmark – A Figurational Analysis, *Lars Bo Kaspersen*.
9. Nationalistic German Gymnastic Movements and Modern Sports. Culture between Identity and Habitus, *Dieter Reicher*.
10. State Formation, Habitus, and National Character: Elias, Bourdieu, Polanyi, and Gellner and the Case of Asylum Seekers in Ireland, *Steven Loyal & Stephen Quilley*.
11. Power, Habitus, and National Character: The Figurational Dynamics of Brexit, *Michael Dunning & Jason Hughes*.
12. The Sociological Analysis of Ekiden, Japan's Long-Distance Relay Road Race, *Akira Ohira*.
13. Power, Individualism, and Collective Self Perception in the USA, *Stephen Mennell*.

Helmut Kuzmics, 'Gefühl und Vernunft, Natur und Kultur in Laurence Sternes Tristram Shandy: eine Studie zur historischen Anthropologie, *Archiv*

für Kulturgeschichte, 100: 1 (2018), pp. 191–222.

Laurence Sterne's literary work, especially his novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* (1759–67), has attracted a lot of attention, not just in his native England. That is no surprise, because in the course of his life Stern was in contact with the most illustrious figures of the age, and read the latest works of literary figures and philosophers on the highest level of the British branch of the Enlightenment. The novel breaks numerous conventions; pretending to be the biography of Tristram himself, it is famous for its endless digressions and *doubles entendres*. Readers familiar with the work of Helmut Kuzmics will not be surprised to find that he brings the ideas of Norbert Elias powerfully to bear in his interpretation of Stern.

Jason Hughes, Kahryn Hughes, Grace Sykes and Katy Wright, 'Beyond performative talk: critical observations on the radical critique of reading interview data', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (2020). DOI: 10.1080/13645579.2020.1766757.

Abstract: We centrally consider the question of what interview data can be used to 'say' through a dialogue with advocates of the 'radical critique' of interview studies. We propose that while the critique has considerable utility in drawing to 'the social life of interviews' and the pervasiveness of notions of the 'romantic subject', it simultaneously goes too far in its reduction of interviews to narrative performance, and not far enough in its own critical departure from core characteristics of the romantic subject. We show how the critique leaves intact imagery of a seemingly unbridgeable divide between the experienced and the expressed, and involves a related conflation of what can be said at interview with what interviews can be used to say. We explore how the radical critique might productively be built upon via more 'synthetic' forms of research engagement, outlining alternative modes of apprehending interview data through a further critical departure from the romantic subject. Accordingly, we advance a

move beyond a sole engagement with questions of how data are constructed and produced and towards how such data might otherwise be used to speak about the social world beyond the social nexus that constitutes an interview encounter.

Note: the above article is one of several in a special issue of the journal edited by Jason and Kahryn Hughes. The influence of Elias is most explicit in this one, but the others include:

Kahryn Hughes, Jason Hughes and Fabienne Portier-Le Cocq, 'Introduction: making the case for qualitative interviews', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* (2020). DOI: 10.1080/13645579.2020.1766756; and Kahryn Hughes, Jason Hughes and Anna Tarrant, 'Re-approaching interview data through qualitative secondary analysis: interviews with internet gamblers', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, DOI: 10.1080/13645579.2020.1766759

Stefan Kramer and Peter Ludes, eds, *Collective Myths and Decivilizing Processes* (Zürich: LIT Verlag, 2020). 205 pp. ISBN 978-3-643-91129-2 (pb); ISBN 978-3-643-96129-7 (PDF). This important collection of essays is replete with references to and inspiration from Elias's work, as will be evident from several of the chapter titles. The book also serves to illustrate the fact that, as Elias often proclaimed 'I am not an *historical* sociologist', but rather that his ideas have direct relevance to the world of today, often precisely because they do avoid 'the retreat of sociologists into the present'.

- 1 Introduction, *Stefan Kramer and Peter Ludes*
- 2 Decivilizing Processes and the Emergence of an All-steering State, *Peter Ludes*
- 3 China's Social Valorization System, Guoxue, and the Individual Self-cultivation Narrative, *Stefan Kramer*
- 4 Economics as a Collective Myth of 21st Century Modernity: The Decivilizing Power of Market Utopia, *Carsten Herrmann-Pillath*
- 5 National Selfies: Reflections on the Technological Process of Civilization, *Peter Gendolla*

6 Cultural Essentialism, Generic Tropes, and Transmedia Aesthetics in the TV Series Fearless (Huo Yuanjia), *Tim Tausch*

7 Historicizing Religious Myths in India: Nationalism, Memory and the Media, *Keval J. Kumar*

8 ‘Making America Great Again’: The Sociogenesis and Psychogenesis of the Rise of Donald Trump, *Behrouz Alikhani and Luigi Droste*

9 Trump’s Afghanistan Policy: How Afghan Mainstream Media Borrowed Official US Narratives to Frame the Myth of Peace, *Sher Baz Khan*

10 Collective Myths and Decivilizing Politics in Turkey, *Mine Gencel Bek*

André Saramago, (2020) ‘Reality-congruence, emancipatory politics and situated knowledge in International Relations: A process sociological perspective’, *International Relations* 34: 2 (2020), pp. 204–24. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117819879473>.

Abstract: Recent discussions of the epistemological and political implications of the situatedness of knowledge in International Relations (IR) have raised important questions regarding the future development of the discipline. They pose the challenge of understanding under what conditions human beings develop more or less reality-congruent knowledge about world politics and what are the implications of such knowledge for emancipatory political activity. This article argues that process sociology should be understood as a relevant complement to these discussions. Assuming a fundamentally ‘realist’ orientation, process sociology provides a sociologically informed analysis of the material, ideational and emotional forces shaping the development of knowledge. As such, it can help those concerned with the implications of the situatedness of knowledge in IR reinforce their capacity to both understand the social conditions under which it is possible to develop more detached and reality-congruent knowledge about the world and better identify and explain the historically emergent values that should orientate the emancipatory transformation of world politics.

Marcelo Weishaupt Proni and Thaíssa Tamarindo da Rocha Weishaupt

Proni, ‘O papel civilizatório dos direitos humanos: diálogos com Bobbio e Elias’, *Direito, Estado e Sociedade* n.51 (2017), pp. 161–94. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17808/des.51.921>

Abstract: In several branches of Law, the need for effective laws and the improvement of legal institutions are often emphasized for civilizing progress. The belief prevails that respect for universal rights is capable of uniting peoples (humanity) around a more civilized coexistence pattern. However, 70 years after the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly, it is easy to note there remains a deep inequality among nations in the regards the guarantee and protection of human rights, as they are currently understood.

In contemporary Brazil, there are multiple examples of conducts that violate the civility rules: violent unpunished deaths, domestic aggressions, fights between soccer fans, traffic violations, heinous crimes, police violence, overcrowded prisons, racism, homophobia. In this sense, there are good reasons to doubt that there has been a significant advance in the civilizing stage in the country after the expansion of human rights in the Federal Constitution of 1988.

The paper intends to put the topic under discussion through a dialogue with the theoretical approaches of Norberto Bobbio and Norbert Elias. The points of convergence and divergence between their approaches are emphasized, especially regarding to the correspondence between the promotion of human rights and the raising in the civility standard. The combination of the two approaches shows that human rights are a result and, at the same time, a condition for civilizing advance, although their effectiveness is neither automatic nor inexorable. It is argued that law’s coercive power is only fully effective in regulating the conduct of individuals when reinforced by shared moral rules and a culture of tolerance.

The article consists of five sections, in addition to the introduction. The first

section provides a brief explanation of the relation between Law and civilization. In the second, the civilizing role of human rights is examined from Bobbio’s perspective. Then, the main propositions presented by Elias on the civilizing process are explained. The following section contrasts these two interpretations to discuss the argument that the expansion of human rights presupposes and, simultaneously, induces a more advanced civilizing pattern. The final section brings considerations about the challenge of put into practice human rights in contemporary Brazil.

Neil Gong, ‘How to fight without rules: on civilized violence in ‘de-civilized’ spaces’, *Social Problems*, 62: 4 (2015), pp. 605–22, DOI:10.1093/socpro/spv014.

Abstract: Sociologists have long been concerned with the extent to which ‘civilizing processes’ lead to the increasing salience of rationalized behavioural guidelines and corresponding internal controls, especially in social situations characterized by violence. Following Norbert Elias’s identification of a civilizing process in combat sports, sociologists have debated, though not empirically established, whether emerging ‘no-holds-barred’ fight practices indicate a rupture in the historical civilization of leisure time violence. Using a critical case study of a no-rules weapons fighting group, where participants espouse libertarian values and compete in preparation for hypothetical self-defence encounters, I ask how the boundary between violence and social regulation is negotiated in an arena that putatively aims to remove the latter. Drawing on more than three years of ethnographic fieldwork, I specify the mechanisms that moderate action: (1) the cultivation of a code of honour and linked dispositions to replace codified rules; (2) the interactional hesitance that arises when participants lack clear rules or norms to coordinate action; and (3) the importation of external rule sets, such as self-defence law, to simulate the “real” world. Contrary to surface readings of ‘no-rules’ discourse, I conclude that the activity

is deeply embedded in larger societal norms of order. Participants' ethos of honourable self-governance, 'thresholds of repugnance' when exposed to serious injury, and aim of transforming emotive, violent reaction into reflective, instrumental action all indicate that the ostensibly unrestrained violence is, in Elias's technical sense, precisely civilized.

[We regret that this article, emanating from University of California Los Angeles, has not been listed before: Elias-inspired articles from the USA are too valuable to be overlooked!]

Christoph Egen, *Was ist Behinderung? Abwertung und Ausgrenzung von Menschen mit Funktionseinschränkungen vom Mittelalter bis zur Postmoderne*. (Transcript Verlag, 2020). 270 pp. ISBN: 9783837653335.

The term of disability does not adequately reflect human diversity, but rather conveys the image of an apparently homogeneous group of people, which is symbolically reduced to the pictogram of wheelchair user. Christoph Egen examines the questions of what 'disability' is and how the social view of people with functional restrictions has changed from the Middle Ages to the present. In doing so, he uses the process sociology of Norbert Elias to examine the devaluation and exclusion processes of people - and thus makes a valuable contribution to the interdisciplinary discussion. Disability is a ubiquitous - natural and social - phenomenon that raises awareness of the fragility and uncontrollability of life.

Christoph Egen works as a clinic manager and researcher in the Department of Rehabilitation Medicine

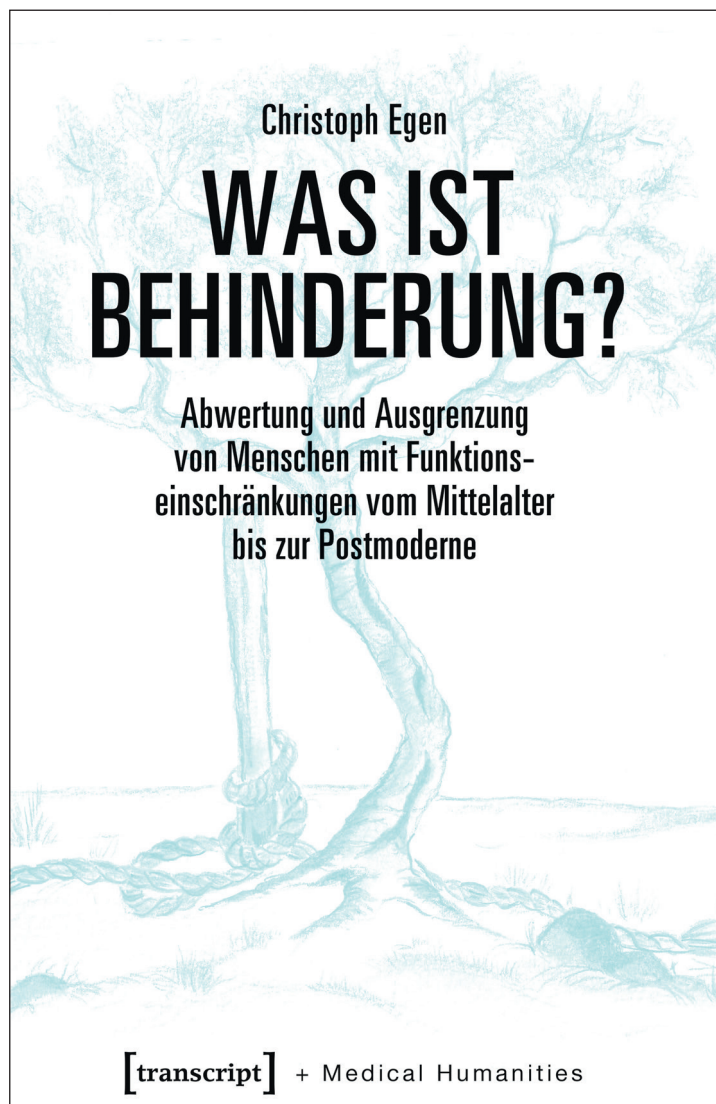
at the Hannover Medical School as well as a lecturer at the Department of General Special Education and Sociology at the Leibniz University Hannover. In 2017, as part of his sociological doctorate, he received a Norbert Elias grant to research unpublished works by Norbert Elias in the German Literature Archive in Marbach.

Stephen Cummins and Laura Kounine, 'Introduction: Confronting Conflict in Early Modern Europe', in Cummins and Kounine (eds), *Cultures of Conflict Resolution in Early Modern Europe* (London: Routledge, 2016; ebook 2017, DOI 10.4324/9781315563121), 304 pp.

Introducing this useful collection of essays by early-modern historians, Cummins and Kounine make extensive reference to Elias and subsequent literature in his tradition.

Mark Horsley, Justin Kotze and Steve Hall, 'The maintenance of orderly disorder: modernity, markets and the pseudo-pacification process', *Journal on European History of Law* 6: 1 (2015), 18–29.

Abstract: In contrast with the rather violent and unstable period between the collapse of the Roman Empire and the rise of Plantagenet monarchy, the earliest phase of England's market economy coincided with a remarkable attenuation of brutal interpersonal violence. While, for some, this diminution of aggression is indicative of a 'civilizing process', this paper sets out to advance our theorization of the shift from physically violent to pacified socioeconomic competition in England and Western Europe between the late fourteenth century and the mid-twentieth century. In this pursuit we draw upon the more critical theory of the 'pseudo-pacification process' to explain how physical violence was sublimated and harnessed to drive the nascent market economy, which established and reproduced an economically productive condition of pseudo-pacified 'orderly disorder'.



■ FROM THE AUTHOR

Reconfiguring figurational Sociology

I have worked within a figurational framework for most of my academic career and done so alongside my much lamented friend and colleague Eric Dunning. At the same time I have also harboured certain reservations about aspects of Elias's work. Nevertheless, I felt and still feel that the insights he has provided far outweigh any shortcomings. While I have been ruminating on what I see as the problematic issues for some forty years, it is only since retirement that I have begun to explore them in greater depth. I began tentatively with the publication of a joint paper with Daniel Bloyce, a critical reassessment of Elias and Scotson's book *The Established and the Outsiders* (*Irish Journal of Sociology* 2007). The intention was to explore the extent to which Elias was prone to select evidence which supported his theories. It is, of course, for others to judge, but I think our initial feelings of unease were shown to have some foundation. In light of this finding I wanted to press on and see whether his solo publications exhibited a similar pattern.

With this in mind I focused on his use of the Medieval Housebook in *On the Process of Civilisation* [pp. 199–209]. The resultant monograph was published on the Norbert Elias Foundation website in 2015 [<http://archive.norbert-elias.com/docs/pdf/BlameAttribution.pdf>]. Again I think I was able to demonstrate the existence of the tendency for Elias to set out to prove rather than test his theories. To my disappointment, as far as I know this publication has attracted little or no attention. It has remained in the academic equivalent of an elephant's graveyard. I always viewed both of these reassessments as building blocks en route to a consideration of two of his major works – *On the Process of Civilisation* and *Involvement and Detachment*. I have now completed the former project, in the course of which it was also necessary to touch upon the latter thesis. I should add that while Eric didn't agree with my reservations, he always urged me to put them in

print. I have entitled this re-assessment of the civilising thesis *Reconfiguring Figurational Sociology*. This may strike the reader as audacious title, but it is one that seems appropriate because, while I identify the considerable ground I share with Elias, I also hold that, on a number of occasions, he strayed from his own figurational principles. I further argue that he did so in order to accommodate the heteronomous concerns that preoccupied him, namely, his hatred of violence and his aspirations for a more pacified world order. The broad means by which he attempted to sustain the visibility of this vision was his civilising thesis and the more specific means was his employment of his Neo-Freudian model. In an immediate sense, all the various compromises he made can be understood in terms of his commitment to this model. In this context there is insufficient space to spell out what I have characterised as his compromises. Suffice to say in the book I attempt to show how these compromises flow into one another and how they detract from the sociological benefits to be derived from a consistent application of figurational principles.

In addition, I propose two innovations. The first one is the need for a more appropriate antonym for civilising processes at the level of the individual than 'decivilising processes'. The need is for a concept which opens up the possibility of a brutalising element pervading the early socialisation of humans. Secondly, I argue for the rejection of Elias's triadic model and for it to be replaced by one based on our bio-psychological dependency on developing various blends of involvement and detachment. In my view adopting this approach renders his Neo-Freudian model redundant. It is important to point out I am of the view that for the most part the compromises Elias made were at a subliminal level. At the same time the way in which they interlink and support one another does seem to have required a degree of awareness.

For those who do not have the time to read an admittedly long book, I have written a synopsis. Both the book and the associated paper are available ...

My hope is that those who read the paper will find it of sufficient interest to encourage them to tackle the book. I am happy to send electronic copies of the paper and/ or the book to anyone who requests it/them. – pjmmainstreet@gmail.com.

Patrick Murphy

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Sam Binkley, Paddy Dolan, Stefanie Ernst and Cas Wouters, 'The Planned and the Unplanned: A Roundtable Discussion on the Legacies of Michel Foucault and Norbert Elias', *Foucault Studies*, 8 (2010), pp. 53–77.

It is rather scandalous that *Figurations* somehow overlooked this excellent roundtable discussion when it first appeared a decade ago. The encounter began at the 2008 conference on Elias and Foucault hosted by Stefanie Ernst at the University of Hamburg, but the conversation transcribed here took place in Amsterdam a year later. There are many good things in it, but Cas Wouters perhaps hit the nail on the head when he remarked: 'I agree entirely with your suggestion that we should refer to the similarities between these two great figures – they're both historical, they're both focused on power, and on the history of what Foucault calls 'the subject' and so on. But on the question of Foucault's insistence that any mention of the psychological processes by which subjects are shaped amounts to a reification of historical categories, I would say not only is this anxiety unnecessary, but that this insistence has led Foucault to a great oversight and simplification regarding the psychic processes of individuals. The formation of "subjectivity", whether viewed from a broad historical perspective or in the case of the history of one individual from birth to adulthood, is a psychic process that is embedded in complex social processes.'

Roderick Campbell, ed., *Violence and Civilization: Studies of Social Violence in History and Prehistory*. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2013). ISBN 13: 9781782976202/

This collection of essays begins with the premise that violence, in its relationship to order, is a central element of history, and in his introduction Campbell makes extensive reference to the work of Norbert Elias. Taking a broad definition of violence, including structural and symbolic violence, the contributions move beyond the problematic of civilization's mitigating or foundational role, instead seeing violence as inherently social, and, perhaps, socially inherent (if variable). The question then becomes what forms of harm are authorized or banned in which social orders and how they change over time. Beginning with a theoretical introduction, this interdisciplinary volume includes seven papers representing cultural anthropology, history, archaeology and international relations. The papers range from China to the Americas and from the second millennium BCE to the twenty-first century CE. Some deal with long-term developments while others focus on a single time and place. Many treat the issue of the visibility/invisibility of violence, while all in one way or another deal with the role of violence in the re-production of community. Together, the volume aims to paint, with a few strokes, the outlines of a deep historical anthropology of social violence. The volume is based on the proceedings of a symposium hosted at Brown University.

Robert van Krieken, 'Crime, government and civilization: Rethinking Elias in Criminology', 2006, <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/handle/2123/916>

This paper was recently flagged up in the University of Sydney Research Repository. Robert van Krieken says that it was not published in this form, but was rather a source from which he quarried several of his later publications – and is therefore of some interest.

Abstract: The placement of criminal law under the control of the public authority of the sovereign or the state has always been part of an attempt to civilize its operation, both restraining the workings of law on those inflicting particular kinds of harms, and rendering those workings, supposedly, more

effective. However, the reconfiguration of the authority of the state in relation to criminal law since the 1970s has led most criminologists to reject the whole notion of a long-term civilizing process encompassing criminal law, turning instead to analyses of the inner logic of the various new responses to crime characterizing advanced liberal societies over the past three decades. This article outlines the major features of contemporary crime control and punishment identified within this approach: the transition from disciplinary modes of exercising power to 'governing through freedom', the emphasis on 'designing out crime' or actuarial justice, and the changed place of emotions in 'affective governance', including a turn to popular punitiveness. It then identifies some central empirical and conceptual problems shared by these accounts of contemporary crime control, and outlines the contribution that Elias's work on long-term processes of civilization and decivilization can make not just to understanding the historical development of punishment, but also current developments across the whole field of criminal justice, focusing on the examples of restorative justice and popular punitiveness.

Chih-Chieh Tang, 'Literatization vs. Civilization: A Preliminary Comparison of the Development of Sport in China and the West with a Focus on Violence'.

The author is affiliated with the Institute of Sociology, Academia Sinica, and this article was to have appeared in the German journal *Soziale Systeme* around 2014; we could not access the journal, but the article is of some interest and can be found at: https://www.academia.edu/9721021/Literatization_vs._Civilization_A_Preliminary_Comparison_of_the_Development_of_Sport_in_China_and_the_West_with_a_Focus_on_Violence It begins: There is a near consensus that modern sport originated in England and spread to the rest of the world around the nineteenth century (Elias/Dunnin g 1986, Ch. 3; Guttmann 1993; 1994). The globalizing process, however, induced a sportization of various local games

and bodily practices (e.g. Kiku 2004). Simultaneously, sport became a general concept. People began to not only rewrite their histories from this new perspective, but also to challenge the dominant Western notion of sport from the perspective of social constructivism, and to search for alternative definitions or body cultures (Coakley 2007, 5ff.; Eichberg 2010; Eisenberg 2002; Tang 2009). The development of sport in the modern world society can thus be summarized as 'diminishing contrasts' and 'increasing varieties' between different strata, nations and civilizations, just like Elias's civilizing process (Elias 2000, 382ff.; Maguire 1994). The differentiation of sport in world society did not lead to a homogenization of sport despite the diffusion and imitation among centres and peripheries, and despite the fact that functional differentiation became an unavoidable and undeniable fact in all regions.

Nathaniel Wolloch, 'The Civilizing process, nature, and stadial theory', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44: 2 (2011), pp. 245–59.

The current environmental crisis has led to a wide range of relevant research in various fields, not least among scholars attempting to better comprehend the historical roots of the modern attitude toward nature. One of the most controversial and influential interpretations of this topic in recent years has been the claim that the Scientific Revolution was responsible for shaping Western civilization's irresponsible attitude toward nature. This criticism consequentially applies also to the Enlightenment ... The present discussion is concerned with one particularly important chapter in this history – the ideological continuum between Enlightenment stadial theorizing and its modern version, as exemplified in Norbert Elias's famous book *The Civilizing Process*.

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

Virtual Symposium: XVIII International Symposium on Civilizing Processes 2020: Interdependencies in process

17, 18, 19 and 20 November 2020
Bogotá, Colombia time: 08h30 to 18h00

sipc2020english.wordpress.com

The presence of the coronavirus, especially in Latin America, generated changes in academic activities that involved the participation of a significant number of people. With respect to the XVIII SIPC 2020, we discussed three alternatives: to reschedule it for the following year, to carry it out by combining presential and virtual activities, or to carry it out only in a virtual way. In assessing the situation, and in consulting with those interested in participating, the organizers made the decision to hold the event virtually. In spite of the difficult circumstances we are experiencing in most countries in the region, academic activities continue and SIPC was created as a space, in addition to presenting research results, to discuss or analyze problems, concerns and social facts that involve us all. The SIPC continues as a space for dialogue, interaction, and strengthening the ties that we have been weaving for two decades.

In this document, you will find the *New Modalities for Submitting Abstracts*, the *Functioning Rules of the Event* and the structure of the *General Programme* of the event. For any questions, please write to David Sierra, at davidsierrag86@gmail.com.

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Submission of abstracts

The deadline for *submitting abstracts* of papers is 10 August 2020. The Scientific Committee will notify its *acceptance* of papers on 10 September 2020. All participants must then confirm their participation by *registering* for the Symposium from between 11 and 30 September. *There will be no registration fees.*

How it will work

Obviously, this is a novel form of conference, which will be conducted in novel ways. These are outlined in a comprehensive document which has been posted on the Norbert Elias Foundation website: see <http://norbert-elias.com/virtual-symposium-interdependencies-in-process/>

For further details, please contact David Sierra.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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