

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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■ EDITOR'S NOTES

On taking up the reins of *Figurations* again as Acting Editor, I decided to make some slight changes to the traditional format. I can't remember why, back in 1994, I decided to put the headings 'Recent Conferences' and 'Forthcoming Conferences' at the back of the newsletter – after the mass of information about recent publications – but it happened. I now reckon that readers are likely to want to read about them before tackling the bibliographical jumble. I also changed 'Conferences' to 'Events', since we now report on activities other than conferences, such as the recent online workshop for postgraduates, 'Thinking With Elias'.

As we are approaching the end of the Covid-19 pandemic – crossed fingers and touch wood – we are particularly pleased to be able to announce two important conferences at which we hope many old friends will be able to meet each other face to face in what feels to be a very long time. They are in commemoration of Johan Goudsblom in March 2022 (which was already announced in the recent special issue of *Figurations*) and another on the theme of the fantasy–reality continuum, at the beginning of September 2022: for details see below.

One more point: the mass of publications using Elias that are now coming to our notice makes it quite difficult to include everything.

If you are really keen to ensure your own recent publications are listed, it would be helpful to email us the title, bibliographical details and an abstract *as a Word file*. The reason is that extracting the information from PDF files or from HTML listings online can be a quite laborious task.

And finally, I am delighted that Alex Mack and Wai (Leon) Lau have volunteered to join the editorial team. The plan is that together we shall edit the next issue, no. 56, at the end of this year and then, who knows, maybe I can retire!

Stephen Mennell

■ NEW EDITORS

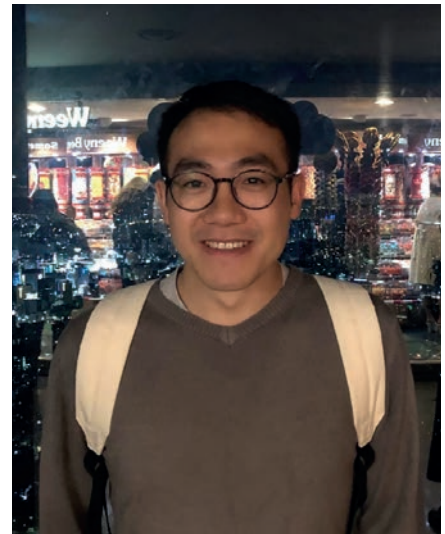
Alexander Mack

Alex holds a PhD from Aberystwyth University, Wales, though is currently based in Brisbane, Australia. He is interested in building bridges between process sociology and the risk sociology of Ulrich and Elizabeth Beck, through understanding the development of fortification processes and shared anxieties in human societies. In 2021, he has a forthcoming article in *Human Figurations* journal and a chapter in *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times* (edited by Florence Delmotte and Barbara Górnicka). Alex is also an enthusiastic portrait and street photographer (<https://alexandermack.photography>).



Wai Lau

Wai Lau is a sociologist researching and teaching at the University of Manchester, England. He is interested in using the works of Norbert Elias in an East Asian context. Currently, he is examining civilising processes in Japanese society and is the author of *On the Process of Civilisation in Japan* (coming in Autumn 2022). He is also known as 'Leon' and is a keen swimmer.



■ PEOPLE

Bart van Heerikhuizen has sent us a wonderful photograph of people skating under the Norbert Elias Bridge in the Vondelpark, Amsterdam, which he entitled 'Attachment and detachment'.



Irem Özgören has been promoted to the rank of Associate Professor by the Higher Education Council of Turkey. Her portfolio of publications was evaluated and approved by seven professors of political science (none of whom she knew). This means that within a year she will be offered a tenured position at her university, Katip Celebi University, Izmir.

Steve Loyal has been promoted to Professor in the School of Sociology at University College Dublin.

Jan Haut successfully completed his *Habilitation* at the Goethe Universität Frankfurt on 3 March 2021, with a public lecture on ‘Der Wandel des Sports zwischen Teilhabe- und Deutungskämpfen – oder: Warum es nicht egal ist, was Sport genannt wird’ [Changing sport: between struggles for participation and struggles for interpretation – or why it doesn’t matter what is called sport]. See Adrian Jitschin’s report, ‘One step further on the academic ladder than Norbert Elias’ below.

Farhad Dalal, who has done so much as a Group Analyst in Britain to forge links with Eliasian sociology, is also busy promoting Group Analysis in India. See for example the lecture ‘Ethics and the Bureaucratization of the Psychotherapy Professions’ (<https://youtube/f4SlRZ74bY>). Other talks can be found on the Group Analysis India YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLNIVKKGcRpTple6QxXN78gfwRpcAJPedT>.

■ IN THE MEDIA

Wilbert van Vree made a major contribution to the first episode of David Mitchell’s series of programmes about meetings – *Mitchell on Meetings* – on BBC Radio 4, starting on 13 March 2021. Mitchell is a prominent British comedian and public intellectual (a serious mixture), and Wilbert’s book *Manners, Meetings and Civilization: the Development of Modern Meeting Behaviour* (London: Leicester University Press, 1999) won the Norbert Elias Prize in 2001. The programme can

be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0v7BjWTFp4c&ab_channel=MontySkew

The programme, and Wilbert’s contribution, provoked considerable interest, and were also mentioned in the ‘Radio Choice’ column in the *Financial Times* on 13 March.

Stephen Mennell took part in Anthony Jeannot’s *Highbrow Drivel* podcast, entitled ‘All manner of manners with Professor Stephen Mennell and Jamie D’Souza’. Jamie, like Anthony, is a comedian. ‘It was’, says Stephen, ‘a novel experience!’ The podcast was published on 8 May and can be found at: <https://www.highbrowdrivel.com/all-manner-of-manners-with-professor-stephen-mennell-and-jamie-dsouza/>

Reinhard Blomert published an article in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 20 April 2020, right at the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, on ‘Händewaschen nie vergessen!’ – Never forget to wash your hands. The subtitle explained his thesis: ‘How will society change in the face of immunization stress? It is conceivable that we are currently experiencing a new spurt in civilization in Norbert Elias’s sense.’

■ FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Long-Term Processes in Human History: A Tribute to Johan Goudsblom

Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), Kloveniersburgwal 29, 1011JV Amsterdam, 17–19 March 2022.

Call for papers

Throughout his scholarly life, sociologist Johan Goudsblom (1932–2020) was occupied with the study of long-term social processes. For him, ‘historical sociology’ was not a special branch of sociology, but at the core of sociology in general. Recognizing the work of Norbert Elias as providing the foundations for a new, dynamic, processual and developmental approach in sociology and elaborating on Elias’s theory of civilizing processes, Goudsblom

also aimed to go ‘beyond Elias’ by extending the scope of study from a focus on European developments since the Middle Ages to human history as a whole. In *Fire and Civilization* (1992), he identified the control of fire as the first great ‘ecological transformation’ in human history, which gave human groups a decisive power advantage over other animals and was basic to two subsequent great ecological transformations – the transition from gathering and hunting to agriculture and pasture, and the invention and spread of mechanical industry. In this and other work, he synthesized sociology, anthropology and history, transgressing disciplinary boundaries. In later publications he extended the empirical and theoretical scope of study even further by linking human sociocultural developments to the biological evolution that preceded and accompanied these developments. Here, Goudsblom combined historical social science with insights from the natural sciences, particularly evolutionary theory.

In this endeavour, Goudsblom’s work can be regarded as part of an intellectual movement to integrate history, the social sciences and the natural sciences in order to enhance our understanding of human social life from a long-term perspective.

As a tribute to Goudsblom’s work, an international conference will be held in Amsterdam 17–19 March 2022, which will deal with basic problems concerning the explanation and understanding of long-term social processes. The approach will be theoretical, aiming at generalisations and explanations, rather than descriptive. Yet we prefer contributions in which the theorizing is firmly grounded in empirical data.

Basic questions to be dealt with are:

- What kind of regularities in human history can be assessed? What kind of variations? What kind of recurrent mechanisms may explain regularities and variations? What theoretical approaches are most fruitful to address these issues? For example, to what extent, and how, are the principles of Darwinian

evolutionary theory applicable to long-term sociocultural processes?

- How, and how far, is it possible to make predictions about the future on the basis of theories about long-term social developments? What, on the other hand, makes human social life irregular and unpredictable? In other words, how are regularities and irregularities in social processes to be conceived and understood?

Possible topics for paper presentations include:

- Civilising processes and their counterparts (decivilising and dyscivilising processes).
- Accumulation and distribution of power resources between and within human societies: a long-term view.
- Before and after the industrial era: ecological and technological 'revolutions' in human history.
- Biological and cultural Darwinism.
- Network theory, complexity, and social evolution.
- Matter, energy, and information.
- What about progress? Long-term trends in human well-being.
- The growth of knowledge and the (social) sciences.
- The expanding anthroposphere: changing interdependencies between humans and their 'natural' environment.

A selection of papers will be published in a special journal issue, which is planned to appear at the end of 2022.

The conference will start in the afternoon of 17 March, which marks the second anniversary of Johan Goudsblom's death. The first part of the conference will be devoted to Goudsblom's life and work. Stephen Mennell will give the opening address, to be followed by other contributions. On the next two days, Friday 18 and Saturday 19 March, various topics related to the conference theme will be discussed, both in plenary and in parallel sessions. Invited keynote speakers are, among others, David Christian, Randall Collins and John McNeill.

The conference will be held in the Trippenhuis, home of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), in the centre of Amsterdam.

All scholars and students who are interested in Goudsblom's work and the study of long-term social processes are invited to participate in the conference, whether by presenting a paper, as a discussant, or simply to join the audience and hear the proceedings – all are welcome.

Papers may deal with the life and work of Goudsblom (to be discussed on the first day) or with a topic related to the conference theme. Participants will be asked to pay a modest fee, which will be specified later.

We ask you to register for the conference and submit a paper proposal by 1 November 2021 to: <https://goudsblom-conference.com/>.

Please mention your full name, affiliation, and email address. If you propose to deliver a paper, indicate its content with a title and a short abstract.

Deadline for registration and paper proposals: 1 November 2021 to: <https://goudsblom-conference.com/>.

Organising committee:

Johan Heilbron
Kobe de Keere
Stephen Mennell
Arjan Post
Nico Wilterdink

The Fantasy–Reality Continuum: Science, Religion, Politics, Culture

University of Warsaw, 1–3 September 2022.

Call for papers

Papers are invited for an international conference in Warsaw on 1–3 September 2022 on the theme 'The Fantasy–Reality Continuum: Science, Religion, Politics, Culture'. Under the auspices of the Norbert Elias Foundation, the initial steering group for the conference consists of Marta

Bucholz, Katie Liston and Stephen Mennell.

Even at this late (we hope) stage in the Covid-19 pandemic, the date and other arrangements for the conference are a little tentative. We hope that by then it will be possible for us to travel internationally and at last to meet face-to-face once again, with few of the current restrictions. Nearer the time, however, we shall reconsider the possibility of some participation by online video.

The topic

The idea of the fantasy-reality continuum plays a key part in Elias's sociological theory of knowledge and the sciences. The struggle to achieve relatively more 'reality-congruent' knowledge has been closely bound up with long-term civilising processes, and notably the gradual reduction of levels of everyday danger and corresponding fears. In Europe at least, the gathering pace of the natural sciences involved breaking the church's historic monopoly over the means of orientation. At the same time, the social organisation of the sciences brought with it relatively strong controls over the scope of fantasy. Elias recognised that the curbs on emotion and fantasy were relatively weaker in the realm of politics, and weaker still in the field of cultural creativity. Among the human fantasies investigated by Elias were utopias of politics, science, and literature. They were, he argued, 'desired or feared fantasy representations' of possible solutions to social problems, social tensions, and conflicts. And each utopia had a function. He said that he sought his own outlet for fantasy in his poetry. If he wrote less explicitly about religion it was, as Andrew Linklater has argued, because he subsumed it under culture – or, less statically, the group means of orientation – and the use of symbols in human life more generally.

This has suddenly become of great contemporary practical and political relevance. The curbs on the free exercise of fantasy have seemed suddenly to be much weaker. As indeed so have, in politics especially, the curbs on untruthfulness: it is

now more possible to get away with consciously telling lies, possibly with the intention of promoting fantastic beliefs for other people. The Trump presidency and Brexit are examples of world events in which it has not been as possible as before to take for granted the effectiveness of social controls over standards of evidence and truth in debates. Even scientific expertise has been affected, as witness, for example, the denial of climate change and the strength of ‘anti-vax’ fantasies.

In all this, the new social media have apparently played a decisive part. At first seen as a possible step towards greater ‘democracy’, they now appear to have fostered in some quarters an extreme individualistic belief that ‘anything goes’.

We hope this topic will stimulate the wide range of people working under the inspiration of Norbert Elias. It is anticipated that there will be five streams: on science, religion, politics, culture, as well as a general stream.

Science

- Are science and the democratisation of knowledge incompatible?
- How has the production and reception of scientific knowledge shifted in the current mood of ‘everything goes’?
- How are we to understand and explain current challenges to scientific expertise (for example climate change denial, distrust of vaccines)?
- What has Covid-19 taught us about the fantasy-reality continuum?
- What part do Freud and Group Analysis play in the development of Elias’s theory of the sciences?
- Is the link between the sciences and the arts as close as Elias depicted it in his study of Renaissance Florence?
- Does the production of reality-congruent knowledge matter if populations wish to ignore it?

Religion

- What is the role of fantasy in religion? Has it changed?

- Was the secularisation thesis in sociology a myth? Has there been a resurgence of religious practices?
- Is the nineteenth-century conflict between religion and science still relevant in the twenty-first century?
- How are major historical editions of the Bible affected by the political tensions, behavioural codes and sensibilities of a generation?
- How are we to understand the appeal of different kinds of religious and political extremism?
- Which religious organisations are still to some degree capable of maintaining a monopoly of the means of orientation?
- Should the Vatican be seen as the sole remaining court society in Europe, and does Elias’s *Die höfische Gesellschaft / The Court Society* help in understanding its functioning?

Politics

- How far can we move towards reducing the fantasy-content within political discourse?
- How far can we move towards reducing the fantasy-content within established-outsiders relations in general?
- What are the main challenges of moving towards more reality-congruent approaches to politics?
- Does the upsurge in magical-mythical thinking in politics constitute what Freud terms ‘a return of the repressed’?
- What role do the media/politicians or bureaucrats have in retaining public standards and distinctions between fantasy and reality?
- Why are conspiracy theories so alluring?
- What changing role do fantasy, wish-fulfilment and paranoia play in the Far Left and Right ideologies in times of social tension and disorder?
- What are the main challenges of moving towards more reality-congruent approaches to politics?
- Can process sociology provide us with tools to illuminate notions of ‘post-truth’?
- What effect will the politics of climate change have on the

fantasies of consumption and advertising: car ownership, air travel, tourism etc.?

Culture

- What role do fantasy and reality play in the production of culture?
- Are fantasy and imagination the same thing in cultural and artistic life?
- Elias’s interests included the utopian and dystopian aspects of science fiction for their insights into the collective fantasies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. How does twenty-first-century science fiction appear in the light of figurational sociology?
- To what extent do literary forms express the reality–fantasy tensions of our own time – ‘magical realism’ for example?
- Can Elias’s *Mozart* book serve as a model for applications in other areas of culture: authors, poets, painters, plays, films, etc.?
- How can Elias’s psycho- and sociogenetic approach illuminate contemporary culture such as heavy metal, hip-hop and rap?
- How can Elias’s psycho- and sociogenetic approach illuminate social media, Facebook etc.?
- Where are museums located on the fantasy–reality continuum: (i) as institutions dedicated to the conservation and display objects, they display *objectivity* and (ii) their objects encode fantasies about the past, present and the future.
- How far do the museums of our time contribute to the public understanding of science and truth, of history, and of the social sciences (for example, climate change)?
- What is the function of contemporary museums of anxiety, guilt, and terror (for instance, post-communist museums, South African museums, African-American museums, war museums, holocaust museums)?

General

- How can we build on, revise, or improve the idea of the fantasy–reality continuum?
- What shifts in socio-political

conditions or social figurations have allowed the flourishing of increasing degrees of fantasy-based knowledge?

- Are increasing levels of magical-mythical thinking linked to decivilizing processes?
- How was Elias affected by the various schools of Freudian psychoanalysis?
- What did he draw from Kant, Cassirer, Nietzsche (among others)?
- What was Elias's attitude towards ego-psychology? (Compare and contrast *On the Process of Civilization* and *Quest for Excitement* from that point of view.)

Submission of papers

Abstracts of no more than 300 words for the conference should be submitted to humanfigurations@me.com not later than 28 February 2022.

Abstracts should:

- address one or more of the conference themes and specify the preferred stream
- give not more than five keywords
- Include details of institutional affiliation
- Be written in English, since all presentations will be in English

Registration for the conference will open on 30 April 2022.

■ RECENT EVENTS

International Postgraduate Workshop – Thinking with Elias

On 7–10 June 2021, the Norbert Elias Foundation (NEF) and European Centre for the Study of Culture and Inequality (ECCI) organized an online PhD workshop under the title 'Thinking with Elias: Norbert Elias and Social Research'. The event brought together 23 early-career scholars working across social sciences and humanities, as well as a group of established Eliasian scholars, including Jason Hughes, Robert van Krieken,

Giselinde Kuipers, Stephen Mennell, Marta Bucholtz, Andreas Hepp, Aurélie Lacassagne, and André Saramago. In preparation for the workshop, these workshop leaders had recorded six podcasts. (Helmut Kuzmics also took part in one podcast, though he was unable to be present for the workshop itself.) The podcasts are still available online at: <https://open.spotify.com/show/1ksh5nDy3uyQmqFhQXAXh>.

The goal of the workshop was to enable participants to engage with Elias's contributions to the analysis of various theoretical and empirical problems at a relatively advanced level, and to relate those to their own fields of interest by engaging with the podcasts produced exclusively for the purposes of the event, along with assigned reading and video materials, and tailored discussion sessions chaired by the workshop participants themselves.

During the first three days of the workshop, early-career scholars and workshop coordinators engaged in a dialogue with regard to six core topics. In the first session entitled 'Thinking with Elias', the participants discussed key features of the work of Elias, the distinctive contributions of the 'figurational' approach, and the main obstacles to using the work of Elias. Workshop participants debated whether there is a need for defining what figuration actually is, and how to envision figuration as a lens and an alternative to the structuralist thinking, rather than a 'thing' out there that needs clear-cut definition. In the session 'Doing Sociology' – dedicated to the questions of the Eliasian method – workshop participants moved on to share their concerns with regard to what methodology we could distil from Elias's work and how we might go about applying Elias's approach to doing sociology in the field. One of the main conclusions of the session was that doing sociology in the Eliasian way required concepts to be destabilised and common understandings of social phenomena made non-obvious and unfamiliar for the researcher. It also means theorising through thick, historicised descriptions of how one particular thing under investigation has been

transformed in a *longue durée*. The following session – 'Communicative figurations' – required workshop participants to depart from the work of Elias himself and instead ask questions in relation to celebrity society and its mediatisation. The changing role of and the meanings of social media were of particular interest to the workshop participants. The fourth session that tackled an overarching topic of the 'relational turn' in social sciences allowed workshop participants to train and exercise their 'figurational' imagination and experiment with research questions by framing them in contrasting substantialist and relational ways. During the discussion the issue of units of analysis within the Eliasian perspective was raised and it also provoked the participants to think of the role that materiality and non-humans play in their relevant fields. The fifth session entitled 'International relations and human rights' likewise was built around the exercise on 'figurational' imagination and it invited workshop participants to reflect upon the role of international figurations in their own research. Finally, the sixth session was dedicated to the questions of state-formation, national we-feelings, and populism. Participants raised the topic of decivilisation, its definition, and its relations with populist movements across the globe.

On day 4, early-career researchers presented their own work and raised burning questions about the Eliasian perspective which remained unresolved. Each of the participants received personalised feedback from the senior Eliasian scholars, but they also helped each other with various theoretical and empirical concerns. As a result, workshop participants discussed what topics they were interested in for further podcasts in the 'Thinking with Elias' series, and formed topic-oriented groups for the future collaboration.

Participants in the workshop were:
Bryan Boyle, Vrije Universiteit Brussel
Malene Broch Clemmensen, Roskilde University
Hans Carrillo Guac, Universidade Federal de Goiás
Matt Deighan, University of Ulster
Alon Helled, University of Florence

Juliette Hill, Abertay University
 Andorra Lynn Jensen, University of
 Copenhagen
 Kaidong Yu, University of Manchester
 Adrianna Kapek-Goodridge, University
 of Huddersfield
 Katerina Zäch, University of
 Fribourg,
 Signe Engdal Larsen, University of
 Copenhagen
 Théo Leschevin, École des Hautes
 Études en Sciences Sociales, and
 Maynooth University
 Aleksandr Lutsenko, Moscow State
 University
 Akilah Maxwell, University of
 Leicester
 Robert Rode, Brandenburg University
 of Technology
 Emilia Sieczka, Graduate School,
 Polish Academy of Science,
 Diogo Silva da Cunha, University of
 Lisbon
 Michiel Stapper, Tilburg Law School
 Sune W. Stoustrup, Leibniz Institute for
 Research on Society and Space
 Kasja Weenink, Radboud University
 Ximing Fan, Loughborough University

The organizers would like to thank everyone who applied for the workshop, those who could and could not attend the event, and those who made the workshop possible. We are very much looking forward to the next opportunity to gather Eliasian scholars together in a similar format!

Anastasiya Halauniova
 University of Amsterdam

Second Symposium for Civilizing Processes in Panamazonia

A sizeable virtual conference took place from 9–11 June 2021. The meeting, organised technically from Manaus, was attended by 928 participants who were brought together by their fascination for processes of civilisation.

The introduction took the form of a tribute to Johan Goudsblom, in which Nico Wilterdink and Ademir Gebara remembered the great sociologist. Hermann Korte, who had known Norbert Elias since 1965, reported on his personal experiences with him and on the difficulty of creating a major sociological theory. In his lecture, which he called ‘Sometimes on rainy days’, based on a poem by Elias, he showed how difficult it was for Elias to maintain his course, which was in the way of political and social circumstances for his academic career. Finally, Adrian Jitschin examined the classification of Norbert Elias in the academic schools of Europe. He emphasised Elias’s roots in German philosophy and psychology. For a deeper understanding of Elias’s theory, it is helpful to understand to which thinkers he was attached and how he was required to differentiate himself.

The particular importance of the Amazon region as a sociological figuration was examined in further lectures. The Panamazonian areas are characterised by many language constellations that determine social participation. Conflicts between indigenous people and newcomers appear in a diversity of forms. The environment’s design as a social space between tradition and culture, on the one hand, state centralism and economic interests on the other, were objects of investigation in the lectures by Nilton Paulo Ponciano and Souza Ribeiro. The effects of the pandemic were discussed in panel discussions in which numerous speakers took part. How can health management take place in such a vast region? How do education and political power relate to the changes that are required? Finally, in a lecture, Gláucio Campos examined how the Amazon region had changed under the ‘prism of technology’.

A total of 64 lectures were given over the three days, covering a wide range of Panamazonian issues, and there were multitudinous contributions to the wide-ranging discussion workshops. When on the third day Ademir Gebara gave his final lecture on Norbert Elias and globalisation, all participants had received a full spectrum of new



Ademir Gebara



Hermann Korte



impulses for their research that will shape and influence their further academic life.

Once again, it has been shown that the Elias research community is international and culturally broad. Despite different languages and fields of research, we have in common that we look at social processes from the macro perspective of changes in human civilisation. By observing other contributions, we get more pieces of the puzzle that complete our view of the social world's development.

Adrian Jitschin

Norbert Elias Foundation

■ ONE STEP FURTHER ON THE ACADEMIC LADDER THAN NORBERT ELIAS!

The Elias Community has had a joyful event: Jan Haut has reached the rank of Privatdozent. In the German university system, it is the last stage before a professorship, comparable to a second doctoral procedure.

Like Norbert Elias, he sought this procedure at the University of Frankfurt. Elias wrote the first version of what is now known as *The Court Society* for this examination. However, the accession of the Nazi regime meant that Elias could never finish his presentation at Frankfurt, a success that Jan has now achieved.

After his successful habilitation thesis on 'Sociological effects of elite sport', Jan presented his inaugural lecture on 'The change of sport in participation and meaning' on a video link on 3 March, 2021, so that he could complete this procedure.

The talk was about 'Why it does matter what is called Sport?'. Jan explained what sport can mean and how this interpretation has changed in Germany over the last century. Even if not so many people took part in sport in the past, they were no less active. In Germany what is called sport today was primarily occupied by 'gymnastics' (*Turnen*) or 'physical exercises' (*Leibesübungen*).

If one looks at statistics from the 1950s to 2010s, the number of members in sports clubs has increased tenfold.

Although this is not a broad database, the trend is clear: both the definition of those physical activities, which are called sport, and people's participation in such activities have multiplied. Up to the 1970s, sports would have been primarily an activity of young males. Then the sport became 'de-sported': fitness, walking or parkours [a form of obstacle-course running] are examples of activities that are now considered as sport in Germany. Disabled people, women and the elderly would nowadays take part in activities they would call sport. The proportion of women in society who regularly engage in sport is now almost the same as the proportion of men. This diversification of people can also be seen in the kinds of sports that are practised. In the 1960s and 1970s, the most popular sports would have been well-known competitive sports. Since the 2000s, recreational sports such as fitness, recreational cycling, walking or running have been prevalent.

All in all, sport today in Germany is primarily defined by physical exercise and less by rules and competition. Thus sport forms an open space with various accesses. Jan explained these trends in terms of Elias's theory of diminishing contrasts and increasing varieties: whilst the German notion of sport followed a narrow understanding of sport as a physical contest up until the 1960s, the meaning of sport became more open and differentiated when new groups (women and elderly) entered the figuration. Jan pointed to the similarities between this process and sportisation in nineteenth-century Britain when the old notion of (field) sports – as defined by the landed upper classes – was gradually replaced by the more modern understanding of sport (including athletics and ball games), as favoured by rising urban middle and working classes.

Adrian Jitschin

Norbert Elias Foundation

■ REVIEW ESSAY BY DENNIS SMITH

Lars Bo Kaspersen, *War, Survival Units and Citizenship. A neo-Eliasian processual-relational perspective* Routledge 2020, Abingdon (UK) and New York, NY (USA).

LCCN 2020021240,
OCLC1164818224, DOI
10.4324/9781315547695.

Professor Lars Bo Kaspersen's interesting book entitled *War, Survival Units and Citizenship* is a revision of his doctoral dissertation. This work will hopefully add urgency to the current debate about the tension between the commercial and warlike tendencies of states. Especially relevant at a time when the EU, founded as, in large part, a peace movement, shows signs of crumbling.

This work pays a great deal of attention to Germany, France and England in early modern Europe. Why there? Why then? Because, of course, these European societies and this historical period were central to Norbert Elias's highly influential book *On the Process of Civilization*.

Kaspersen's book is an attempt to 'rethink Elias', hence the subtitle: *A neo-Eliasian processual-relational perspective*. Apart from Elias, Kaspersen also calls upon theorists such as Clausewitz, Boserup, Simmel, Schmitt, Gierke, Brubaker and Marshall. Like Elias, Kaspersen locates himself mainly but not exclusively within a neo-Hegelian tradition. His book takes us from Gumplowicz to Hintze but also far beyond, encompassing Skocpol, Mann, Poggi, Tilly and many others.

This book is part of a longer-term project, shared with Dr Norman Gabriel. The latter's expertise is in relational psychoanalysis and the sociology of childhood. This chimes well with the section of *The Civilizing Process* often labelled as *The History of Manners*. Here Elias traces upward shifts in the degree of repugnance elicited by shamefully indiscreet behaviours at the dinner table and, more generally, in polite society.

In *War, Survival Units and Citizenship* Kaspersen focuses on two things: firstly, survival units, ranging from households to states and beyond; and secondly, figurations, that is, relatively flexible and durable networks of interdependence within and between human groups.

Kaspersen examines warfare's role in the formation of states and the development of citizenship. The pursuit of recognition by would-be citizens within states has obvious parallels with the demand for acknowledgment by new states pushing their way into the international realm.

Kaspersen dismisses retrospective analysis of highly developed modern states or their immediate predecessors under absolutist regimes. Instead, like Charles Tilly, he advances a mainly prospective approach. In other words, he takes as his starting point an early phase in state formation, beginning amongst a complex inter-tangled array of political forms ranging from city leagues to empires. That is in the fifteenth century, long before it becomes clear which types of political venture would prosper and succeed, and which would weaken and fail.

Kaspersen traces over time the interactions, transformations and, in some cases, disappearances of these political forms, culminating in the emergence of a few dominant examples of centralized *Standestaat*. These are polities oriented around a hierarchy of nation-wide and localized assemblies representing aristocrats, urban merchants, guilds and so on.

In parts two and three of *War, Survival Units and Citizenship* Kaspersen illustrates the maxim that the 'character and organization of internal social structures is a function of external structures'. This is due to the 'compulsion they exert over each other because of their interdependence' (p.56). This approach is deployed over several chapters in a sustained comparative-processual-relational presentation running through to the Treaty of Westphalia (1648).

This brief summary of Kaspersen's work only scratches its surface. It has not done justice to its many complex and subtle arguments, as readers will easily discover. Not least, a heavy dose of scepticism is directed at various claims to have spotted a 'military revolution' in the three centuries covered. The overall outcome is the outline of a possible neo-Eliasian political theory in which survival units, figurations and warfare play a central part.

I would like to add two comments. The first is that a major source of Elias's vision in *The Civilizing Process* is neither Germanic nor neo-Hegelian. I am thinking of the great influence of French historian Marc Bloch's *Feudal Society* (1939). Both Elias and Bloch were interested in the continuing human struggle to find viable survival units under conditions of vulnerability and uncertainty. Elias found Bloch's scholarship a valuable source for his own analysis of medieval society, as his footnotes show (eg Elias 2012:237, 245, 257, 332).

Bloch was a product of the French *Annales* school of historians. In his work on feudal Europe, he adopted the approach typical of this school. In other words, he compared both the *mentalités* (crudely, frames of mind) and the networks of human interdependence characteristic of human populations in different periods.

For Bloch, exploring differences between periods took priority over accounting for the long term socio-historical processes that linked them. Change was certainly not neglected but special attention was given to aspects of the human condition that persisted relatively unchanged during the *longue durée*.

The other comment I want to make is that when looking beyond *The Civilizing Process* we soon encounter other highly relevant works by Elias. These may be drawn on to enrich our understanding of the interplay of relevant survival units, figurations and warlike events in early modern France, England and Germany. For example, there are the analyses contained in *The Court Society* (1970) on France, *The Genesis of the Naval*

Profession (2007) on England and, obviously, *The Germans* (1997). Neither of these points will be unfamiliar to the author of *War, Survival Units and Citizenship*. Nor do they diminish in any way the book's interest within either Eliasian studies or political theory. In the meantime, the energies of Eliasians, neo-Eliasians and, not least, non-Eliasians might be profitably engaged in absorbing Lars Bo Kaspersen's challenging analysis.

Dennis Smith
Loughborough University

■ A VIRTUAL DUNNING

The *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* has started publishing 'Virtual Special Issues' and its editor, Dominic Malcolm writes that 'I've (ab) used my position to devote the first VSI to Eric Dunning. It consists of a brief introduction from me and then contains open access links to all eight of the articles Eric had published in the IRSS, plus 4 reviews of books which he co-wrote or edited.' They can be found at:

[Eric Dunning: His career and contribution to the sociology of sport: International Review for the Sociology of Sport: SAGE Journals \(sagepub.com\)](#)

■ FIGURATIONAL JOURNALS ONLINE

Human Figurations – Long-term Perspectives on the Human Condition

Volume 9, Issue 1 (Summer 2021)

Articles

The Redefinition of Legitimate Violence in Combat Sports: The Case of MMA in USA and Europe – Raúl Sánchez García, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid-INEF

Turning Against Neighbours: The Fortification of the United Kingdom in representations of European Union migration during the early 21st century – Alex Mack, Aberystwyth University

Gossip, Control and Community: Figurational Explorations in Sociological Criminology – Rachel Swann, Steve Meredith and Gordon Hughes, Cardiff University

More than a single footnote: Connecting Alexis de Tocqueville and Norbert Elias – Wiebren Boonstra, Uppsala University

Reflections

What does disability bring to sociology? – Dan Goodley and Katherine Runswick-Cole, University of Sheffield
What are you looking at? – Tom Shakespeare, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine – Radio 4 *Thinking Allowed* transcript

Foreword to William McNeill, *Plagues and Peoples* – Joop Goudsblom

■ PUBLICATIONS IN LATVIAN

Aleksejs Šņitņikovs has written several articles in Eliasian vein for the Latvian *National Encyclopaedia*, which is online. The encyclopaedia is an ongoing state-funded project with permanent editorial staff. Information about it can be found at <https://enciklopedija.lv/par-enciklopediju>. The articles are:

Habitus: <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/62002-habitus>

Figuration (Figurācija): <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/61622-figur%C4%81cija>

Theory of the civilizing process (Civilizācijas procesa teorija): <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/88933-civiliz%C4%81cijas-procesa-teorija-sociolo%C4%A3ij%C4%81>

Historical sociology (Vēsturiskā socioloģija): <https://enciklopedija.lv/skirklis/1226-v%C4%93sturisk%C4%81-sociolo%C4%A3ija>

■ GÖTTINGEN UNIVERSITY PRESS – OPEN ACCESS BOOKS

Gabriele Rosenthal has notified us of two recent publications in her series Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research, which, she points out, are quite figurational in orientation. Moreover, all Göttingen University Press books are open access publications.

Miriam Schäfer, *Polizist*in werden – Polizist*in sein: Strukturen und Widersprüche polizeilicher Arbeit* [Becoming a police officer – Being a police officer. Structures and contradictions of police work] (Göttingen University Press 2021) <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2021-1579>

In public discourses in Germany, the police as an institution is presented on the one hand as our ‘friend and helper’ and the guarantor of law and order, and on the other hand as an organization with a monopoly on violence that (illegally) practices violence. Police officers are presented correspondingly as actors in the sphere of security and prevention of violence, and as victims or perpetrators of illegitimate violence. Beyond reflecting on these complementary images, this sociological study looks at the everyday work of the police and reconstructs this complex field of action. Using a combination of theoretical approaches from biographical research, social constructivism and figurational sociology, this empirical study of the work of uniformed police officers in Lower Saxony shows how their actions are processed in the context of specific organizational conditions and the biographical experiences of the individuals concerned. It is found that the structural features of police actions and interpretations are located at the interface between organization and biography: organizational orientations for police action and their interactive implementation in concrete situations and in the daily routines of the organization are closely intertwined with the biographies of the police officers concerned. The study shows that concrete police practices are not only influenced by socialization within the organization, but are also linked to biographical experiences and stocks of

knowledge. This study thus contributes to our understanding of careers in the police, police work and everyday practice. Beyond this it provides general insights into the interrelationship between organizations and biographies.

Eva Bahl and Johannes Becker (eds), *Global Processes of Flight and Migration: The explanatory power of case studies / Globale Flucht- und Migrationsprozesse: Die Erklärungskraft von Fallstudien* [Partly in English] (Göttingen: Göttingen University Press, 2020). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2020-1310>.

The case studies in this volume illustrate the global dimension of flight and migration movements with a special focus on South-South migration. Thirteen chapters shed light on transcontinental or regional migration processes, as well as on long-term processes of arrival and questions of belonging. Flight and migration are social phenomena. They are embedded in individual, familial and collective histories on the level of nation states, regions, cities or we-groups. They are also closely tied up with changing border regimes and migration policies.

The explanatory power of case studies stems from analysing these complex interrelations. Case studies allow us to look at both ‘common’ and ‘rare’ migration phenomena, and to make systematic comparisons. On the basis of in-depth fieldwork, the authors in this volume challenge dichotomous distinctions between flight and migration, look at changing perspectives during processes of migration, consider those who stay, and counter political and media discourses which assume that Europe, or the Global North in general, is the pivot of international migration.

Eva Bahl, *Entangled Histories in a Postcolonial Border Region: Biographies, Belongings and Memory Practices in Ceuta and Melilla* (Göttingen: Göttingen University Press 2021). (Göttingen Series in Sociological Biographical Research). <https://doi.org/10.17875/gup2021-1600>
Geographically Ceuta and Melilla are on the African continent, but they are part of the national territory of Spain and thus in the European Union.

Both cities came under European domination in the context of the so-called Reconquista in the fifteenth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, they became centres of the Spanish colonial project in Morocco, and played an important role in the seizing of power by fascists who supported the later dictator Francisco Franco. Today, they are frequently in the news due to the fact that they are surrounded by EU external borders, and significant social transformation processes are taking place among the local population. These two cities and the border spaces around them are focal points where manifold processes of today's globalized world can be observed: post-colonial dynamics, North-South inequalities, migration. This book is a sociological study of figurations between groupings that have resided for a long time in this border zone between Spain and Morocco, and reconstructs transformation processes in a post-colonial border space. These processes are accompanied by slowly changing power balances in which belongings and views of history are constantly being renegotiated. The author studies different actors in the border space from the perspective of figurational sociology, the sociology of memory and biographical research. Four detailed case analyses serve to illustrate the complexity of local social realities. These are embedded in historical and present-day social constellations in this border space between Spain and Morocco, and it is made clear that constructions of belonging and power relations in Ceuta and Melilla can only be understood in the context of colonial and post-colonial processes and events. One result of the empirically based analysis is a typology of border interpretations or uses. It takes the different constructions of belonging and history, and places them in relation to the historical and everyday understanding of the border of the different groups and groupings.

1. The border as a frontier: old-established Christian Spaniards who preserve memories of local history
2. The border as workplace and as a place to be defended: members

of the paramilitary Guardia Civil police force

3. The border runs through biographies: Spaniards with a Moroccan family history
4. The border as everyday routine: young Moroccans in the border space between Spain and Morocco

Other important conclusions are that memory practices depend on social power relations (and their transformation) in Ceuta and Melilla, and that belongings are frequently constructed in terms of historical self-positionings.

■ THOUGHTS ARISING FROM A REVIEW

Richard Kilminster, Review of Eric Royal Lybeck, *Norbert Elias and the Sociology of Education* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 2021 DOI: 10.1080/01425692.2021.1890407.

We would not normally list a book review, but this review of Eric Lybeck's valuable textbook (mentioned in its own right in *Figurations* 52) sparked an email conversation between Richard Kilminster and me that raised broader questions.

Although generally favourable towards Eric's book, Richard commented that 'Of necessity, Lybeck's ecumenical, radical and tolerant sensibilities compel him to adopt a form of sociological eclecticism throughout. This move has a levelling effect across the schools of thought, conceptual schemes, traditions and theoretical-political tendencies into which he selectively absorbs elements from Elias's framework.'

This prompted me to say to Richard that 'I really found myself thinking about what you said about the "social theory perspective" having a flattening effect. Maybe you've said it before, but it really struck me. Myself, I have often complained about the sequence of fads and fashions, under which during our academic lifetime one damn "theorist" after another was the flavour of the year. Even Norbert had his brief

time in the *Theory, Culture & Society* sun in the 1980s. But your idea of "flattening" is far more insightful than the sequential view.' (I said 'flattening', having mis-remembered Richard's 'levelling', but perhaps 'flattening' is more dramatic!)

To this, Richard responded: 'You wanted to add some thoughts in *Figurations* about the unfortunate "levelling effect" of eclecticism which I mention. There is a relevant article by Jason Hughes, 'Norbert Elias and the Habits of Good Sociology', in *Human Figurations* 2: 1 (2013), which might be useful to mention (see <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0002.107/--norbert-elias-and-the-habits-of-good-sociology?rgn=main;view=fulltext>).

There he argues that not only does Elias run counter to intellectual fashions but he also generally transgresses dominant codes of sociological etiquette, sociological sensitivities similar to those of "polite society". For example, Elias's idea of developing a "central theory" for sociology might violate some important axiomatic sociological mores, which people might find offensive. This diagnosis certainly makes sense of my own experiences of people's outrage at Norbert's brutal dismissal of philosophy and philosophical arguments. He could come over as a coarse outsider. One of the habits is relativistic egalitarianism, a tolerant sensibility which shows itself as eclecticism. All this partly explains the patchy character of the groups of Eliasian researchers.'

Stephen Mennell

■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Nico Wilterdink, 'Increasing and decreasing inequalities of power: a processual view – a response to Cas Wouters, and a proposal for clarification', *Historical Social Research*, 45: 3 (2020), pp. 347–74. DOI: 10.12759/hsr.45.2020.4.347-374

Abstract: [Zunehmende und abnehmende Machtungleichheiten: eine prozess-soziologische Perspektive. Eine Antwort auf Cas Wouters und

ein Vorschlag zur Verdeutlichung]. Responding to an essay by Cas Wouters in this journal, this article aims to clarify historical trends of increasing and decreasing power inequalities. It criticizes Wouters's rejection of the notion of 'functional de-democratisation', his claim that 'functional democratisation' was a dominant trend in the whole of human history, and his idea that this process results from long-term trends of differentiation and integration. This paper specifies when and under what conditions processes of functional democratisation did occur, and when and under what conditions developments in the direction of growing power inequality were dominant. Explanations for trends in these different directions are advanced. The paper's final section argues that for the past 40 years processes of both functional democratisation and functional de-democratisation can be discerned, which take place on different integration levels and along different axes.

Steven Loyal and Siniša Malešević, *Classical Sociological Theory* (London: Sage, 2021), 269 pp. ISBN 978-1-5297-2571-1 (pbk), and *Contemporary Sociological Theory* (London: Sage, 2021), 462 pp. ISBN 978-1-5297-2573-5 (pbk).

Long awaited, these two hefty volumes by Steve Loyal and Siniša Malešević of University College Dublin provide the definitive guide to the most significant sociological theorists, from ancient times to the present day. They are admirably comprehensive, accessible and useful reference books both for students and for professional sociologists. The very titles of the books are welcome: they refer to *sociological theory*, rather than the more recently fashionable 'social theory', which usually indicates a humiliating subservience to the wafflings of philosophers and a belief that over-abstraction will impress people.

The first volume, *Classical Sociological Theory*, begins with Plato and Aristotle and ends with Du Bois and Mead. In between, it is especially

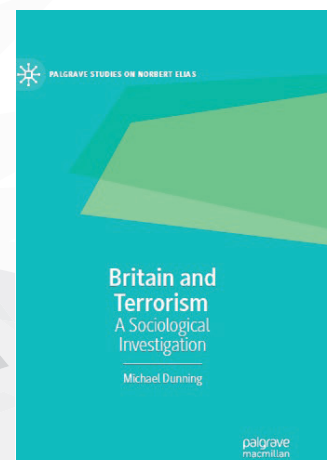
good to see the usual Western bias counteracted by the inclusion of Confucius and Ibn Khaldun. Alongside Alexis de Tocqueville is Harriet Martineau – admittedly the only woman in this volume, but good to see just the same. (Martineau, among other things, translated Comte into English, and visited the United States in the 1830s just after Tocqueville. She was so well connected an intellectual figure of the time that her first social call in Washington DC was on the by then elderly former President James Madison.) Besides all the obvious figures in the standard histories of sociological theory, it is good to see a chapter on Pareto, Mosca and Michels, who used to figure in the story but who largely disappeared from view in the narrowing of the field since the 1960s. The same can be said, even more emphatically, of the chapter devoted to Otto Hintze, Ludwig Gumplowitz, Gustav Ratzenhofer and Albion W. Small.

The second volume, *Contemporary Sociological Theory*, runs from Parsons and Merton to Bruno Latour, Arlie Hochschild and Patricia Hill Collins. Here there is more scope to rectify the gender balance: besides Hochschild and Hill Collins, there are Judith Butler, Simone de Beauvoir, Ann Oakley and Dorothy Smith. Again, besides all the usual suspects, it is useful to have a chapter on Niklas Luhmann, partly because, although so celebrated among German sociologists, he often seems either dull or incomprehensible (or both) in the anglophone world. There is a chapter on Ernest Gellner and Michael Mann, and another on Randall Collins, who are very much not incomprehensible – and Mann and Collins are happily still very much with us and indeed known personally to many readers of *Figurations*. Finally, of course, I must mention that there is an excellent chapter on Norbert Elias (second volume, pp. 248–67).

Stephen Mennell

Michael Dunning, *Terrorism and the End of Empire* (London: Palgrave, 2021). xi + 332 pp. ISBN: 978-3-030-72299-9 (hbk); 978-3-030-72300-2 (ebook).

Challenging the standard paradigm of terrorism research through the use of Norbert Elias's figurational sociology, Michael Dunning explores



the development of terrorism in Britain over the past two centuries, focusing on long-term processes and shifting power dynamics. In so doing, he demonstrates that terrorism as a concept and designation is entwined with its antithesis, civilization. A range of process sociological concepts are deployed to tease out the sociogenesis of terrorism as part of Britain's relationships with France, Ireland, Germany, the Soviet Union, the industrial working classes, its colonies, and, most recently, jihadism. In keeping with the figurational tradition, Dunning examines the relationships between broad, macro-level processes and processes at the level of individual psyches, showing that terrorism is not merely a 'thing' done to a group, but part of a complex web of interdependent relations.

Contents:

1. Introduction
2. Terrorism as a Social Scientific Concern
3. Terrorism, Violence and Civilisation
4. The Sociogenesis of Terrorism as Part of British-Irish Relations During the Nineteenth Century
5. Functional Democratisation, Revolutions and Rebellion in the Nineteenth Century
6. Rebellion in Britain: Trades Unions, Reformers and Terrorism
7. Global Wars and Terrorism
8. Terrorism, Socialism and the Soviet Union

9. Terrorism and the End of Empire
10. Terrorism and the Fault-lines in the British Monopoly of Violence
11. Britain and Salafi-Jihadist Terrorism
12. Conclusion: Towards a Sociogenetic Theory of Terrorism

Wai Lau, *The Japanese Civilising Process*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester, 2020.

Abstract: This thesis examines the patterns of development found in Japanese society to establish how structural and psychological changes led to the Japanese seeing themselves as ‘more civilised’ than their forebears and neighbouring countries in the nineteenth century that contributed to the breakdown of their civilisation in the twentieth century. While existing scholarship from Eiko Ikegami, Shmuel Eisenstadt, and Johann Arnason sought to explain the development of the Japanese, they focus on a structuralist or culturalist approach. Both approaches have been limited and problematic because they have reached an impasse. To bridge this scholarly impasse, I have employed a novel approach by examining the development of Japanese society in a four-dimensional approach from longitudinal and latitudinal and macro and micro ways. Using Norbert Elias’s theory of civilising processes as the foundation of this thesis, I have traced the long-term developments in Japanese society from the seventh century to the nineteenth century. By drawing from primary and secondary sources in particular, I have illustrated various complex underlying psychological and structural processes similar to those found in Europe by Elias. Although the theory of civilising processes outlined in *On the Process of Civilisation* by Elias is the most crucial reference point, I have drawn from other parts of his writing to trace how the Japanese cultural arts (for example, the tea ceremony), the Japanese court society (for instance, imperial and warrior courts), and the Japanese state-formation process (including imperial and warrior state formations) form the civilising process in Japan. Moreover, to compensate for some shortfalls that Elias’s theory presents when examining the civilising process in Japan, I have

engaged with writings from other scholars that have built on a partial scholarly consensus on the historical experience of the Japanese to address the different complex questions that have emerged. As such, by examining the Japanese civilising process, this thesis has presented an alternative way to understand the complex development of Japanese society and interceded into an ongoing debate about the applicability of Elias’s theory in a non-Western context by establishing, with minor modifications, a way to address developments beyond Europe.

A revised version of this PhD thesis will be published in 2022 in the series Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias, edited by Tatiana Savoia Landini.

Dominic Malcolm, ‘Post-Truth Society? An Eliasian sociological analysis of knowledge in the twenty-first century’, *Sociology*, online publication March 2021. doi: 10.1177/0038038521994039

Abstract: This article draws on Elias’s sociology of knowledge to delineate the social processes that have culminated in the development of the post-truth phenomenon. It argues that technological and social changes have led to a complex commingling of increased emotion and increasingly ‘rational’ debating techniques. These have been accompanied by an increasing human capacity to consider issues on multiple ‘levels’ and anticipate the varied ways in which different audiences could perceive particular propositions. While these changes explain the polarisation of views characteristic of post-truth, the theory of informalisation is invoked to explain the relative absence of shame at the public exposure of ‘untruths’. The article expands debates in communication and science and technology studies to locate post-truth as an emergent form of knowledge contingent upon new forms of communication, a re-structuring of social interdependencies and changes in modes of thinking. In so doing, it advances the sociological analysis of knowledge.

Dominic Malcolm, *The Concussion Crisis in Sport* (London: Routledge, 2020) doi: 10.4324/9780429292408 and ‘The Impact of the Concussion Crisis on Safeguarding in Sport’, *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, vol. 3, Article 58934 1 February 2020. doi: 10.3389/fspor.2021.589341.

This book and the short ‘discussion piece’ also listed above represent the culmination of Dominic Malcolm’s sociological research on concussion in sport over the last decade. The first paragraph of the article sets the scene:

For around 30 years, sociologists have explored the distinct ways in which athletes experience injury. This work has explained the apparent high incidence of injury in relation to subcultural factors such as the dominance of masculinity and the specific organizational dynamics of sport. In 1997 Walk perceptively noted that the implication of these analyses was that ‘medicine is practised differently, more competently, and/or more ethically in non-sports contexts’, a hypothesis that has largely been borne out by subsequent empirical analyses. Indicatively, a study of English professional football concluded that ‘many clubs fail to meet the requirements of health and safety legislation’ (Murphy and Waddington, 2011). A high incidence of injury allied to limited or substandard healthcare runs contrary to the guiding principles of safeguarding in sport. In the last decade, rising public health concerns about brain injuries in sport – both concussion and chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) – have reinvigorated this field. Specifically, as coroners decreed that the neurodegenerative illnesses of former athletes were a form of ‘industrial disease’, questions were asked about the sport’s subcultural practices and a range of harm reduction measures were initiated. The previous routine dismissal of concussions as short-lived and relatively trivial events has been replaced by claims that there is now a concussion epidemic or crisis (Malcolm, 2020). Public support for sports injury safeguarding measures is perhaps stronger now than at any time in recent history. This opinion piece explores

the impact of this concussion crisis on injury prevention and safeguarding in sport. It outlines the significant changes that have been made in recent years and the problematic or potentially limiting aspects of these changes. The discussion identifies three far-reaching changes required to promote further safeguarding and de-institutionalize physical harm to sport participants.

Dominic Malcolm and Souvik Nah, 'Cricket at the beginning of the long twenty-first century', *Sport in Society*, June 2021. DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2021.1932307

Abstract: This article provides an introduction to the special issue, *Cricket in the Twenty-First Century*. It argues that cricket's struggle for global recognition and the shifting concerns about cricket's perceived 'character' provide two of the most significant meta-narratives to shape the game's historical and future development. However, in contrast to the degree of continuity these narratives appear to provide, the article argues that the game is currently undergoing a particularly rapid and radical phase of change. The contents of this special issue illustrate the processes that will dominate in the twenty-first century. These can be broadly categorised as the changing political economy of the game, the culturally-specific manifestations of cricket's political-economic landscape, and the intro- and retrospection within the English game. The article concludes with a state-of-the-art review of cricket scholarship, and some recommendations for future research agendas.

John Goodwin, Henrietta O'Connor and Laurie Parsons, 'Certainties and control in the lives of young men: Stories from three research projects', in M. Nico and A. Caetano (eds), *Structure and Agency in Young People's Lives* (London: Routledge, 2020).

Abstract: The intersection of gender and youth is a core sociological concern, and there has been an increase in the critical accounts of men's experiences with authors questioning hegemonic, hard and other 'forms' of masculinity. In this chapter, we are interested in the extent to which young men have ever had agency,

and consider in what ways their lives were always 'determined' by broader social structures. Using three stories of masculinity from three different research projects from the last twenty years or so, we utilise sensitising concepts as a 'way of seeing' and analysing data. They are 'starting points', to help us consider the extent to which the young men in our studies accounted for the agentic certainties and control ascribed to them or the degree to which structures such as family and home, school, work, and education curtailed agency and reinforced dominant, hegemonic forms of masculinity. We conclude by reflecting on the utility of structure and agency as an analytical concern as against the need to understand the complexities of lived realities.

John Goodwin notes: 'We were invited to submit a chapter late in the book's development as one of the authors had pulled out, so we were stuck having to deal with an unhelpful concept like structure and agency. We did our best!'

John Goodwin, Laurie Parsons and Henrietta O'Connor, (2020) 'COVID-19: A Global "Civilising Offensive"', *Timelines*, Issue 29 (2020), pp.13–15. https://www.asanet.org/sites/default/files/history_-_issue_29_may_revision.pdf

An almost universal response to the COVID-19 pandemic by governments and health organisations has been prioritisation of and advocacy for increased personal hygiene, particularly handwashing. The process-orientated sociology of Norbert Elias, and related conception of 'civilising offensives', can be an instructive lens through which to view these responses. The aim of a process-orientated analysis is to explore the inter-related transformation of social and psychological processes over the long term. This approach asks how social habitus adapts in order to meet the specific physical and social needs within changing social, cultural and historical conditions. Civilising offensives, relatedly, refers to the short-term, purposeful interventions of powerful groups (including the state) designed to change behaviours and social habitus as quickly as possible in

order to 'solve' a particular problem. The assumption behind these is that the powerful groups who instigate them have access to a specialist knowledge. They 'know' how to behave, 'know' what is best for 'us', especially as compared to 'them'. The impact of civilising offensives plays out in relationships on a global and local scale. Using this as a lens to view the COVID-19 responses, two discussion areas emerge – 'othering' and individualisation.

Kobe De Keere, Estrelle Claire Thunnissen and Giseline Kuipers, 'Defusing moral panic: Legitimizing binge-watching as manageable, high-quality, middle-class hedonism', *Media Culture & Society* 43: 4 (2020), pp. 629–47. DOI: 10.1177/0163443720972315

Abstract: The rise of video-on-demand streaming services has facilitated more intensive television watching. When novel consumption behaviours emerge, cultural intermediaries may be mobilized to make sense of it and potentially legitimize it. This often takes place by raising moral panic, as it draws attention to new cultural practices and asks tastemakers to take a stance. The current study takes 'binge-watching' as a discursive anchor point to investigate this process. We argue that moral panic is not only a strategy that can be employed to condemn cultural practices, but by deflecting moral concerns through mechanisms of social distinction, it can also allow intermediaries to normalize new cultural phenomena. Through inductive and deductive coding of US news articles on binge-watching (n: 681), we discern three pathways through which intensive video-on-demand watching is reframed: first, the shows that are binge-watched are high quality; second, binge-watching can be controlled, at least by the right type of audiences; and third, binge-watching is fun, in that if undertaken in moderation, it can be good for viewers. All three pathways resonate strongly with new middle-class dispositions. This study shows how the legitimization of new cultural boundaries demands an interplay between social distinction and moralization.

John Lever, (2020). ‘Understanding halal food production and consumption in “the West”: Beyond dominant narratives’, *Cambio: Rivista Sulle Trasformazioni Sociali*, 10(19), 89–102. <https://doi.org/10.13128/cambio-9001>

Abstract: In recent decades, the increasing visibility of halal food has become highly emotive and controversial, with halal meat in particular being seen as an indicator of the growing presence of Islam and what are seen to be ‘barbaric’ Muslim food practices. In this paper, I move beyond these dominant narratives to demonstrate how, as the UK halal market has expanded, and the range of halal food options has increased, Muslim consumers have been compelled to justify their halal food choices in ever more complex ways. Within the sociology of food literature, the proliferation of food choice often draws on the notion of informalisation to illustrate the dissolution of structures governing food production and consumption. Here, drawing on insights from Eliasian sociology, I present a more compelling account of informalisation, not only to move beyond the notion of halal as a ‘barbaric’ practice, but to illustrate that Muslim and non-Muslim consumers have very similar concerns and anxieties about food production and consumption.

Debbie V. Kasper, *Beyond the Knowledge Crisis: A Synthesis Framework for Socio-Environmental Studies and Guide to Social Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), xxx + 273 pp. ISBN 978-3-030-48370-8 (ebook); 978-3-030-48369-2 (hb).

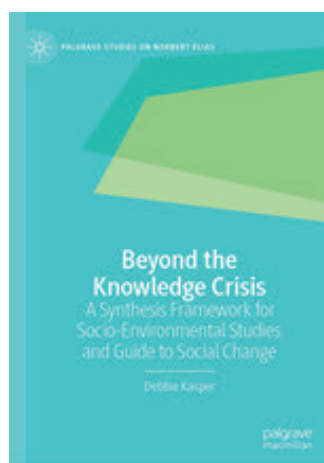
Series Title: Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias

In the face of complex, interwoven, planet-scale problems, many cite the need for more integrated knowledge – especially across the natural and social sciences. Excessive specialization, they argue, gets in the way of knowing what we know, much less being able to use it to address urgent socio-environmental crises. These concerns, it turns out, go back centuries. This

book picks up where most leave off, exploring the history of how we got here and proposing a way forward. Along the way, readers find that the



Debbie Kasper



synthesis long called for depends on theoretical advancements in social science. Fortunately, the author argues, we have everything we need to achieve those advancements, thanks largely to the contributions of Norbert Elias. Integrating his insights with history, science, sociological theory, and more, this book neatly packages the upgraded paradigm we need to be able to meaningfully address complex socio-environmental problems and more intentionally shape humanity’s collective future.

Katie Liston, ‘Honour and Shame in Women’s Sports’, *Studies in Arts and Humanities*, 7: 1 (2021), pp. 1–17. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18193/sah.v7i1.199>.

Abstract: This article examines the role of honour and shame in understanding the many stories of women’s involvement in sport in Ireland from

the eighteenth century onwards, and especially in the modern era. While women’s sporting involvement was regarded as shameful, especially in those sports imbued with traditional associated masculine norms, the prospect for women’s sports is different today than in the past. Yet the struggle for honour is ongoing, seen in topical debates concerning gender quotas and the recommendations made by the [Irish] Citizens Assembly on gender equality. Bringing the analysis up to date, the piece outlines ad hoc policy initiatives around gender equality in sport from the mid-2000s (in which the author was centrally involved) to the publication of the first formal statutory policy on women in sport, in 2019. Here it is argued that the guilt and shame of previous generations has influenced the public debate on gender quotas and it is as if, in the desire for perceived equality, the current generation of sportswomen do not wish to be associated with quotas. In this way, honour is conflated with merit. The piece concludes by suggesting that merit is honourable, personally, but equally, that quotas are by no means shameful in public struggles.

David Sierra Gutierrez, *Sobre el paso de la naturaleza a la cultura* [On the passage from nature to culture] (Bogota: Ediciones Aurora, 2021). ISBN: 978-958-5402-55-3

Abstract: This book by Colombian sociologist David Sierra Gutierrez addresses three fundamental questions: What can we say, with the current fund of knowledge, about the way in which the transition from natural history to human cultural history took place? What do we know about how human worlds emerge in a living organism, our own, whose constitutive structures do not contain any kind of meaning? Under which general socio-historical processes do the natural, social and inner worlds of human beings change?

The book addresses these questions through an essayistic exploration of some of the central premises of the historico-genetic theory of culture systematised by German sociologist Günter Dux. Although the book does not explicitly use the prism of Eliasian

theory, it runs throughout the book at its core, insofar as the author's approach to Elias (especially to his symbol theory), is fundamental in his understanding of these questions. The book, as presented by the author, seeks to highlight what the clarification of both the sociohistorical and individual processes of the passage from natural to socio-cultural existence – seen in the light of research from multiple disciplinary fields and a processual epistemological framework – contributes to the project of a unified redefinition of the human species, body and mind, nature and culture, and of the way of understanding and reconstructing its history.

Raúl Sánchez-García and A.

García-de-Alcaraz, 'Crowd Effects, Territoriality and Home Advantage: A Sociological Explanation', chapter 6 in Miguel Gómez, Richard Pollard, and Carlos Lago (eds), *Home Advantage in Sport: Causes and the Effect on Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

Abstract: This chapter proposes a comprehensive sociological approach to further clarify the complexity of home advantage (HA) phenomenon. More specifically, using a process sociological approach, it analyses socio-cultural aspects such as crowd effects and territoriality. Home crowd increases HA by affecting the emotional tone and altering the tension balance of the game. The effects of home crowds boost home team performance, hinder away team performance, and affect referee's bias in favour of the local team. Territoriality is connected to the perception of visiting fans and players as a threat, which leads to the creation of an atmosphere of hostility in defence of home territory. For instance, specific regions within countries of the Balkans or Nigeria, where there is an excessive threatening and aggressive behaviour towards away teams, present a very high HA. Moreover, the type of sport (invasion, net/court or others) and the degree of professionalization affect territoriality: the more intense the interaction between players and the lower the degree of professionalization, the higher the territoriality effect upon HA. Finally, teams based in capital cities present less territoriality and lower HA, as do games

that take place between teams playing in the same city, the so-called local derby.

Felix M. Bathon, 'Holding doors for others: A history of the emergence of a polite behavior' *InterDisciplines* 2 (2018), pp. 57–87. DOI: 10.4119/indi-1074 ISSN 2191-6721.

No abstract, but this passage gives a flavour: Two sequences are basically reconstructed: the factual material fashion sequence and the social politeness sequence. The material fashion sequence describes the formation, development, and eventual disappearance of the hoop skirt as a dynamic, recursive process between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries; the different shapes of the skirts serve as events. Evidence can be found in Georg Simmel's fashion theory and the historical debate is illustrated using newspaper articles, drawings, and other images. The hypothesis is that the increase in the size of hoop skirts created a functional need for doors to be opened and held for women wearing such clothing. The social politeness sequence is characterized by Norbert Elias's theory of civilization as a dynamic process, which began in about the eleventh century and has more or less continued until the present day; it is strongly connected to differentiation within society. A number of books on etiquette, which document this history, serve as events for this process.

Madlen Preuß, *Elias' Etablierte und Außenseiter: Eine quantitativ-empirische Modellierung am Beispiel der deutschen Migrationsgesellschaft* ['Elias's Established and Outsiders: A quantitative–empirical modelling using the example of the German migration society.'] (Bielefeld, transcript Verlag, 2020). 278 pp. ISBN 978-3-8376-5092-1 paperback; ISBN 978-3-8394-5092-5 ePDF.

In her recently published doctoral thesis, Madlen Preuß uses Elias's model of established–outsider figurations to develop a quantitative approach to larger social units. Preuß published her work and German, and therefore this short review will give readers interested in migration a brief overview. The study focuses on autochthonous Germans who seek to maintain

their position as established group vis-à-vis migrant outsider groups. Preuß conducted her research project at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) at Bielefeld University. Apart from adapting established-outsider-figurations to the larger-scale context of contemporary German society, Preuß's objective is to investigate shifting power balances between autochthonous Germans and (former) migrants. For most readers interested in applying Elias's concepts in empirical research, the first three chapters are probably the most relevant ones. The first chapter contains an overview of Elias's *The Established and Outsiders*. This chapter concludes with Preuß's assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the model. The second chapter is a literature review that focuses on the reception of Elias's model in migration-related research. In chapter three, Preuß develops her theoretical approach to immigration in Germany based on the established-outsiders model, and she explains its application to the quantitative research design of her work. In the fourth chapter, Preuß restates her main assumptions as hypotheses. The first hypothesis is presumably the most interesting for readers of this newsletter because it seeks to test under which conditions the established group can be measured empirically. Chapters five, six and seven contain a detailed description of data, samples, analysis methods, and the research design. Preuß obtained her data through the nationwide ZuGleich study of the IKG. In chapter eight, the author presents the results of hypothesis testing based on confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM). She also discusses the most important implications of her findings. For readers with just a little knowledge of statistical methods, the last chapter might still be a thought-provoking reading. Preuß stresses that claims of being established among the autochthonous German population correlate significantly with rejecting four specific migrant groups in Germany (Muslims, Sinti and Roma, Africans, Asians). The study also determined a significant correlation between the perception of belonging to the established group and

the perception of threats from outsider groups. As Preuß emphasises, it should be noted that the recent developments in Germany since 2015 have not been sufficiently taken into consideration in this study. Nevertheless, this work can shed light on the effects of right-wing populism and ongoing controversies about migration in Germany. While Preuß has shown convincingly how to apply the established-outsider model in a quantitative study, future research should focus on outsider perspectives to further her investigation by evaluating to what extent established and outsider groups might be trapped in double-bind processes.

Robert Rode

Gautam Ghosh, 'Multi-dimensional change and the question of comparison', *Journal of Comparative Research in Anthropology and Sociology*, 9: 1 (2018).

Abstract: This article elaborates and endorses the idea of civilization as advanced by R. G. Collingwood. Particular attention is given to two of his most neglected works, *The New Leviathan* and 'What "Civilization" Means'. *The New Leviathan* was written in the context of the rise of fascist populism and World War II. Collingwood re-conceptualized the notion of civilization and situated it in the relationship between autonomy and rationality, with both conceived as processual and each intertwined with the other. He puts 'civility' at the heart of civilization. Central to his argument are the distinctions he draws between civilization and barbarism, on the one hand, and between social, economic and legal dimensions of civilization, and their protean interrelationships, on the other. Collingwood ultimately advocates a notion of civilization-as-progress that is unencumbered by utopianistic determinism or ethnocentric populism. His unique argument has important implications for comparative research. [This also contains multiple references to Elias.]

Walter Simons, 'Was there peace in the Middle Ages?', Introduction to Simons (ed.), *A Cultural History of Peace in the Medieval Age*, vol. 2

(London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), pp. 1–12.

A well-informed discussion of a vexed question, referring to Pieter Spierenburg, Robert Muchembled and other scholars influenced by Elias, as well as to Elias himself.

V. M. Oliveira, M. R. Brasil, V.V. Mattes, V.A.E. Álvarez and J. Souza, 'The Reception of Norbert Elias's Work in Brazilian Physical Education', *Revista Internacional de Medicina y Ciencias de la Actividad Física y el Deporte* 21: 82 (2021). pp. 337–53
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15366/rimcafd2021.82.009>

Abstract: This study aims to investigate the process of reception and appropriation of Norbert Elias's work in the Brazilian Physical Education field. To achieve this objective, an analysis was made of the eight main scientific journals of the socio-cultural area in the country. After data collection, 452 studies were found that had some relationship with the author's reference. Among the main results, it is noted that the process of receiving the work of the sociologist began around the 1990s, being intensified only in the present decade. Although there has been a growth of studies in connection with Elias' contributions in the literature, when analysing the sample texts, it was found that only 17.61 per cent had a rigorous appropriation of the Eliasian way of working. In addition, most studies were linked to sports and leisure, indicating the possibility of the author being explored in other contexts.

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Armando Salvatore's work on the sociology of Islam has not been mentioned previously in *Figurations* and ought to have been. So here we list not only his 2016 book, but also an article from all of a decade ago, the abstract of which gives some impression of his awareness of Elias: *The Sociology of Islam: Knowledge, Power and Civility* (New York: Wiley, 2016). 342 pp. ISBN: 978-1-118-66264-9

'Eccentric modernity? An Islamic perspective on the civilizing process and the public sphere', *European Journal of Social Theory* 14: 1 (2011), pp. 55–69.

DOI: 10.1177/1368431010394508

Abstract: This article engages with Johann Arnason's approach to the entanglements of culture and power in comparative civilizational analysis by simultaneously reframing the themes of the civilizing process and the public sphere. It comments and expands upon some key insights of Arnason concerning the work of Norbert Elias and Jürgen Habermas by adopting an 'Islamic perspective' on the processes of singularization of power from its cultural bases and of reconstruction of a modern collective identity merging the steering capacities and the participative ambitions of an emerging urban intelligentsia. The Islamic perspective provides insights into the interplay between civilizing processes and the modes through which cultural traditions innervate a modern public sphere. By revisiting key remarks of Arnason on Elias and Habermas, the Islamic perspective gains original contours, reflecting the search for a type of modernity that is eccentric to the mono-civilizational axis of the Western-led, global civilizing process. While this eccentric positioning entails a severe imbalance of power, it also relativizes the centrality of the modern state in the civilizing process and evidences some original traits of the public sphere in a non-Western context.

André Oliveira Costa, the Brazilian psychoanalyst deeply influenced by Elias, has been similarly neglected in *Figurations*. Two of his articles are:

'State, subject and the traumatic effects of the civilization, in the Polish journal *Język-Szkola-Religia*, 12: 4 (2017), pp. 73–9.

Abstract: This article aims to provide a discussion between the Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory and Norbert Elias's sociological work on the subject of violence as a paradoxical element of the constitution and the disruption of the relationship between individual and society. According to Freud, civilization discontents

determine that the cultural bases are held in an individual's conflict with the body, the external world and the others. The subject of violence is also found in Norbert Elias's work. Violence emerges from the pact rupture between state and individual and destroys the ability of the citizen to become a person. What are the implications for the psychic economy and social structures in the face of an emergency situation of violence in the public sphere? The paradoxical relationship between violence and civilization, articulated by Norbert Elias to the civilizing process, provides us with elements to answer Freud, when the psychoanalyst questions the implications caused by institutions that should give protection to individuals.

'Notes on the Established-Outsiders Figuration: A Psychoanalytical Approach, *Psychology Research*, 8: 2 (2018), pp. 53–9. doi:10.17265/2159-5542/2018.02.002

Abstract: The influence of psychoanalysis in the work of sociologist, Norbert Elias is notorious and recognized by himself. The established and the outsider figuration shows how individuals are in relationships of interdependence with each other, allowing the dissolution of the antithesis between individual and society. In this paper, we propose to consider how the concept of figuration can contribute as an operator for the field of psychoanalytic practice. So we will seek to articulate psychoanalysis and Norbert Elias's sociology through the concept of figuration, as a methodological operator that helps us understand the subjective processes in psychoanalytic practice.

Other articles on psychoanalysis and Norbert Elias by André Costa are available on his academia.edu page: <https://independent.academia.edu/AndreOliveiraCosta>

Sasha Roseneil and Kaisa Ketokivi, 'Relational persons and relational processes: developing the notion of relationality for the sociology of personal life', *Sociology* 50: 1 (2016), pp. 143–59.

Abstract: The concept of relationality has recently found widespread favour in British sociology, particularly in the emergent sub-field of the sociology of personal life, which is characterized by its attachment to the concept. However, this 'relational turn' is under-theorized and pays little attention to the substantial history of relational thinking across the human sciences. This article argues that the notion of relationality in the sociology of personal life might be strengthened by an exploration of the conceptualization of the relational person and relational processes offered by three bodies of literature: the process-oriented thinking of American pragmatism, specifically of Mead and Emirbayer; the figurational sociology of Elias; and psychoanalysis, particularly the object relations tradition, contemporary relational psychoanalysis, and Ettinger's notion of transsubjectivity. The article attends particularly to the processes involved in the individuality, agentic reflexivity and affective dimensions of the relational person.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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