

# Figurations

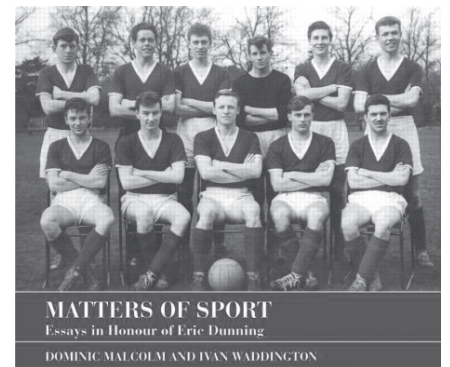
## Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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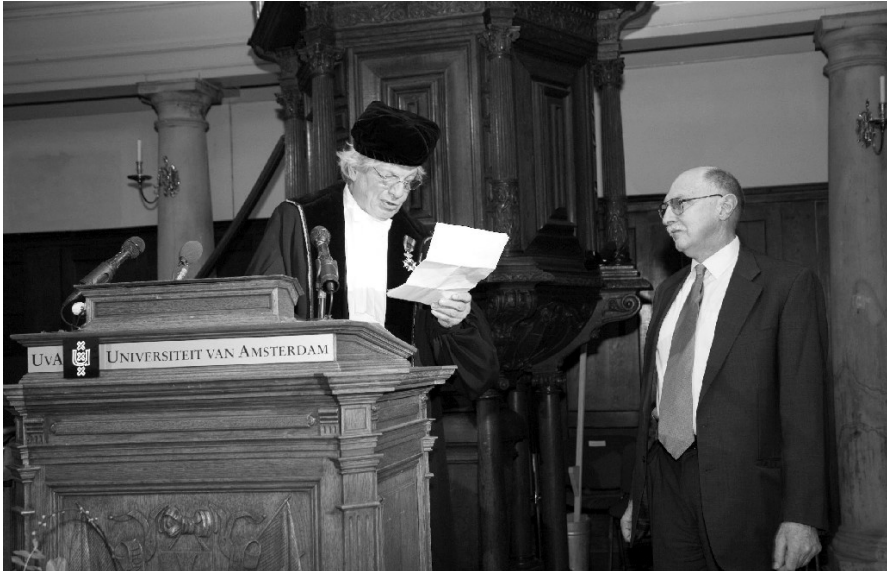
### ■ PEOPLE

• The festschrift for Eric Dunning edited by Dominic Malcolm and Ivan Waddington, which was first published in 2006 as a special issue of the journal *Sport in Society* (see *Figurations* 26), has now appeared in book form. It is entitled *Matters of Sport: Essays in honour of Eric Dunning* (London: Routledge, 2008. 193 pp. ISBN 978-0-7146-8282-2).



Close scrutiny of the cover photograph of the University of Leicester first eleven in 1958 reveals that Eric – discreetly semi-concealed in the back row – was the only member of the team to forget that the photo was being taken, didn't bring his kit, and so is seen wearing a borrowed shirt with his long trousers instead of his shorts. *Plus ça change* ...

• The University of Amsterdam conferred an **honorary doctorate on Randall Collins**, Dorothy Swaine Thomas Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Randall, whom



Abram de Swaan and Randall Collins © Bert Nienhuis, 2008

we consider an honorary cousin in the figurational family, has recently added to his extraordinarily distinguished series of books *Violence: A Micro-Sociological Theory* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), and a volume on macro-sociological theory is to follow. The photograph shows Abram de Swaan delivering his *laudatio* at the ceremony on 8 January 2008.

• **José Esteban Castro has been promoted to a personal chair at the Newcastle University (UK)**, with effect from 1 August 2008. Esteban has written extensively on the sociology of Latin America and, in English, on environmental questions, especially on water resources, drawing on Elias's insights to trace their connection with power. See for instance his book *Water, Power and Citizenship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).



• John Goodwin has been appointed Reader in Sociology at the University of Leicester (a hallowed title!), in the Centre for Labour Market Studies. See reports about John's work with Henrietta O'Connor on Elias's Young Worker's Project in *Figurations* 17, 21, and 23, and John's notes on how to use the Elias archives at the DLA Marbach in *Figurations* 25.



## ■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

### Marianne Bernard appointed Secretary to the Foundation

The Board is delighted to welcome Marianne Bernard as the new Secretary of the Norbert Elias Foundation in succession to Saskia Visser. Marianne previously worked for 15 years in the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the University of Amsterdam, the last five years as Personal Assistant to Abram de Swaan.

When Bram became Emeritus Professor at the end of 2006, the University gave Marianne early retirement too, and she says: 'I was very pleased to be asked by Johan Goudsblom to work for the Elias Foundation in December 2007. Although I was familiar with the Elias Foundation, many of its activities are completely new to me.'

Marianne was born in 1946 in Amsterdam, where she lives with her second husband. They have three grown-up sons and one grandson. In the 1970s, she studied psychology at Leyden University, where she also worked as a student assistant. Then, before going to work in the University of Amsterdam, she was employed for ten years in the Dutch music-publishing house Done-mus, as Personal Assistant to the artistic manager.

### Collected Works: new UCD Press Website

UCD Press, which on behalf of the Foundation is publishing the Collected Works of Norbert Elias in English, has launched an entirely redesigned and upgraded website. The address remains the same – [www.ucdpress.ie](http://www.ucdpress.ie) – but it will now be much easier to order books online. A hyperlink on the home page takes you directly to the Collected Works, which are now offered at substantial discount if you order them direct from the publisher.

The publication of two more volumes of the Collected Works – *The Established and the Outsiders* (vol. 4) and *Quest for Excitement* (vol. 7) is now imminent. And in the autumn–winter the three volumes of collected essay will be published: *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge and the Sciences* (vol. 14); *Essays on Civilising Proces-*



Marianne Bernard

ses, *State Formation and National Identity* (vol. 15); and *Essays on Sociology and the Humanities* (vol. 16).

These follow upon the volumes already published: *Early Writings* (vol. 1) and *The Court Society* (vol. 2) in 2006, and *Involvement and Detachment* (vol. 8) and *An Essay on Time* (vol. 9) in 2007.

Other UCD Press titles include Elias's *The Genesis of the Naval Profession*, edited by René Moelker and Stephen Mennell (2007), and Stephen Mennell's *Norbert Elias: An Introduction* (1998).

## Hurry to join ISA RC20!

The Ad Hoc Group on Figurational Sociology that met at the International Sociological Association World Congresses in 1994, 1998 and 2002, though not in 2006, has now been incorporated as a Working Group within ISA Research Committee 20, on Comparative Sociology. We urge all readers who are not already members of the ISA to join it, and RC20, as soon as possible. Subscriptions are modest, and last for four years – so if you join now, it will ensure that you are on board for the next World Congress, in Göteborg, Sweden, in 2010. If you are a member of the ISA but not of RC20, you use the same online form to pay €25 to add membership of that research committee to your existing membership. The form can be found at [www.isa-sociology.org](http://www.isa-sociology.org) *Note:* The more members we recruit to RC20 and our own affiliated Working Group, the more sessions we can claim at Göteborg.

## ■ LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

### Elias the Poet

Maybe you remember that I gave a paper on the poems of Elias in the workshop 'Norbert Elias – Menschenwissenschaftler' in Marbach in September 2007 (see *Figurations* 28 –ed.). When I talked to all the people from the Foundation I recognised, in a way that I had not before, that Elias had been talking a lot about his poetry to his friends and other people. He seems to even have sent some poems around in letters or talked about writing poems in them.

For my analysis of his poetry it would help me a lot to get to know more of these private notes (in addition to those documents in the archive in Marbach) and I was wondering, if it would be possible to post a request for letters or other documents concerning the poetry anyone may have in her or his possession in *Figurations*? If they do, I should be most grateful if they would contact me at the email address given below

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### Elias the Misattributed

I was amused and pleased to read in *Figurations* 28 Patrick Murphy's anecdote about his copy of *Sociology in the Balance*.

Here is another item that you may find worthwhile for *Figurations*. In the book review section of *NRC-Handelsblad* of Friday, 21 December 2007, a reviewer referred to 'what the sociologist Elias called "a sunken element of culture"'. This demonstrates that in the Netherlands Norbert has reached the hall of fame where other people's ideas are attributed to you – in accordance with the Matthew principle as formulated by Max Weber.

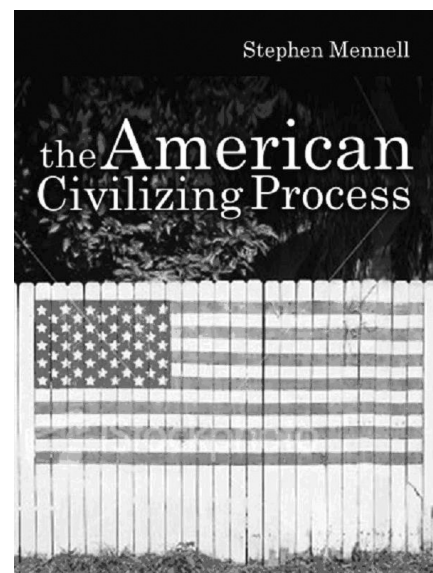
Unfortunately I don't know the standard English translation for the German concept of 'gesunkenes Kulturgut'. The term was used extensively by Hans Naumann in *Grundzüge der deutschen Volkskunde* (1922), and by many others, including Nazi folklorists. I am not sure whether Naumann coined the term or took it over from some other writer (maybe Alfred Vierkandt?).

Joop Goudsblom  
Amsterdam

## ■ REVIEW ESSAYS

### Andrew Linklater reviews Stephen Mennell

**Stephen Mennell**, *The American Civilizing Process* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), pp. xii + 388. ISBN: 978-07456-3208-7 (hb); 978-07456-3209-4 (pb).



Hegemonic powers seem destined to decline as others acquire the means to challenge their dominance and erode their influence and authority. The United States will probably succumb to the same fate as all earlier great powers, but the character of its civilising process will have special significance as long as it retains the ability to affect the fate of large numbers of the human race in at least these three ways – by directly shaping global political and economic structures, by attempting to influence internal politics elsewhere, and by providing a model of social and political development which many wish to emulate in their regions of the world. America's capacity to shape 'long-term processes affecting humanity as a whole' may prove to be just as important during its almost inevitable period of economic, political and military decline. Rejections of authority, the reduction of influence along with demands to share power and decision-making present the strong with the challenge of adapting to what they are almost certain to regard as unsettling, even disturbing, power reconfigurations. How the United States will cope with this likely transition, and how it will exercise its power during the remaining period of its hegemony, make it all the more essential to understand the nature of its civilising process.

The purpose of this book is to ascertain what the American civilising process shares with its European precursor and to explain what sets it apart. As Men-



nell states, his book is organised along roughly the same lines as Elias's study of the process of civilisation. Popular meanings of 'civilisation' are considered in the opening two chapters. Four chapters follow on the development of manners, 'American aristocracies', attitudes to violence, and market society. State-formation, territorial expansion and internal integration are the subject of chapters seven to nine. The last three chapters deal respectively with social inequalities, religiosity and with America's place in the world. Considerable light is cast throughout the discussion on central themes in Elias's own writings as well as on the distinctive patterns of the civilising process in the United States. The volume as a whole is guaranteed to be 'model setting' in its own right. All future studies of civilising processes, which will hopefully include analyses of such dynamics in rising powers such as China, India, Brazil and so forth in the emerging post-Western international system, can derive their bearings from this volume.

It is impossible to summarise a work of such impressive scope, insight and erudition in this short overview. Specialists are certain to take issue with specific features of the argument – which is inevitable in a book that ranges so widely. Feminists, in particular, may ask if more might have been said about gender and about constructions of masculinity specifically.

Turning to the central argument, a crucial theme is the absence of an American equivalent to Europe's court society that could foster 'we feeling' in the face of enormous regional contrasts and economic inequalities. Strong support is offered for Spierenburg's thesis that 'democracy came to America too early'. State monopoly powers were first established in much of Europe, and only later democratised. In the United States, centralised powers were not firmly embedded prior to the logic of democratisation. High levels of violent harm particularly in the South and West are traced to this specific trajectory of political development.

Mennell argues that the differences between the European and American civilising processes should not be exaggerated.

Increasing levels of interconnectedness in American history have created similar tensions and conflicts to those in Europe. Individuals and groups have displayed familiar patterns of resentment as they have been forced to live together but, as elsewhere, the formation of centralised structures and institutions has proved fundamental in the long run. The compulsions of interdependence have fuelled logics of social conformity. In the case of manners, the United States has sometimes run ahead, and sometimes lagged behind, developments in Europe. The long-term trend has witnessed the overall decline of crime rates although levels of 'expressive or impulsive homicide' are greater in several parts of the United States than in most areas of Europe.

Following Elias's reflections on interconnectedness, functional democratisation and the widening of the scope of emotional identification, Mennell focuses on the high level of social inequality in the United States and on relatively low levels of sympathy for the underprivileged. Great emphasis is placed on the opposite of the trend towards functional democratisation which Elias observed in Europe. The US demonstrates a clear tendency towards 'functional de-democratisation and its effects' which include widespread perceptions of an undeserving poor, largely responsible for its own plight but conveniently hidden from view.

That part of the discussion links developments in the United States with certain global trends. The main 'emancipation struggles' of the twentieth century must be viewed against a background of power balances that are reaching their end in some cases, not least with respect to class inequalities. In a society in which the accumulation of capital has high value, domestic inequalities have mattered less than in many European societies. The result is not merely social distance between the established and outsiders in the United States. Similar disparities of power and wealth between the US and other societies have not made it easy for large sections of the American public to understand different cultures or indeed to see themselves as distant strangers often see them.

One of the strengths of this work is its focus on the interplay between 'internal' and 'external' factors in the making of the American civilising process, and its significance for large sections of humanity. ('External' factors include the aspiration to establish regional hegemony as expressed in the Monroe Doctrine, protestations of 'manifest destiny', Cold War rivalries and the current phase of unipolarity). In this context, two interconnected themes are central to the remainder of this essay: first, the relationship between civilising processes and international politics and, second, the importance of normative international theory for reflections on the global responsibilities of hegemonic powers.

Readers will recollect Elias's remarks – advanced in the course of commenting on the peculiar course of German history – that Sociology had yet to recognise that social and political developments within states could not be understood without taking account of the whole course of their international relations. The clear implication is that one cannot comprehend a civilising process as a wholly endogenous phenomenon, or think in terms of how it has affected foreign policy as a domain apart. 'National' civilising processes always bear the imprint of the history of critical relations with the rest of the world. Such remarks stress the importance of integrating 'domestic' and 'international' phenomena in order to understand: a) the distinctive nature of civilising processes within specific nation-states; b) the influence of the dominant 'national' civilising processes for domestic developments within other societies; and c) the impact of 'national' civilising processes on what there is in the way of a global civilising process. One has to focus on all three developments for the purpose of analysing any nation-state, but it is all the more necessary to proceed in this way when analysing great powers that are 'model setting' either because of deliberate efforts to export their beliefs and practices or simply as a result of patterns of emulation that form part of the weaker powers' strategies of advancement.

For such reasons, hegemonic powers are critically placed with respect to

advances in human interconnectedness. The hegemon integrates large numbers of people not only within its own national territory but through the array of alliances and relationships that bring other societies within its sphere of influence. (One might add that the development of human interconnectedness provides a central key to explaining how 'domestic' and international' phenomena are linked). To stress a theme that has been discussed at length in the writings of the International Relations scholar, David Campbell, the conduct of foreign policy can have a crucial impact on national identity and collective purposes. Beyond that, the hegemon's foreign policy has the greatest ability to shape the principles that govern lengthening webs of interconnectedness and to influence the conditions that affect 'humanity as a whole'. Of special importance is the way in which it constructs significant 'insider-outsider dualisms'. As Elias maintained in the course of comparing Germany and Britain, such dualisms can take many different forms. Some may be highly particularistic and antagonistic towards outsiders, while others are more universalistic in orientation and more open to cooperation and compromise. Mennell's discussion of unique features of America's rise to power addresses those concerns. Unlike the European states, the US did not run up against similarly powerful states in the initial phases of its expansion, but enjoyed unusual opportunities for 'frontier decivilising processes'. Once national territory had been consolidated, a broadly similar trajectory shaped the US experience of the wider world. Citing Stiglitz on 'market fundamentalism', Mennell stresses that asymmetries of power have been linked with rampant lack of interest in the 'wider ethical considerations regarding the consequences of ... actions', whether their authors are individuals, governments or business corporations. This is perhaps most evident in successive policy stances on global environmental degradation that have displayed little concern for 'externalities'. A relatively weak sense of the 'public interest' can explain the unusual influence of sectional economic interests on foreign policy, and yet this is combined with the symbols of patriotism that secure 'we feeling' and 'collective self-satisfaction' in the

face of sharp regional diversities and growing economic inequalities. Such trajectories have shaped the internal contradictions which Elias regarded as integral to every civilising process.

The American civilising process raises large issues about how the US has used its global power and should use it in future – and not least because, as Mennell maintains, similar developmental tendencies to those that Elias identified in Europe are probable at the level of humanity as a whole, assuming that some unforeseen global catastrophe does not propel the human race on a radically different course. Those tendencies include the predictable impact that increased social interconnectedness has had on perceptions of the need for international institutions that may yet exercise greater control over hitherto unregulated processes. Although he emphasises that his commitments have less to do with 'moralising than with explaining', Mennell does not conceal robust social-democratic views about US society and American military and political power; nor does he concur with the more optimistic beliefs that can be found in Elias's comments in *The Symbol Theory* about the 'late barbarians'.

The greater pessimism of Mennell's argument follows from the discussion of 'functional de-democratisation' in American society, from the extent to which US power is unbalanced globally and from a lack of 'detachment' from immediate concerns that pervades American (but clearly not only American) society. There are sound 'figurational' reasons for leaving matters there. Elias advocated non-partisan sociological inquiry rather than the forms of engaged scholarship associated with for example members of the Frankfurt School. But Mennell's social-democratic tendencies, just like Elias's humanism, raise large ethical questions about how hegemonic powers should exercise their influence, given their unusual – but limited – ability to influence the political structures that respond to the challenges of increasing global interconnectedness.

Pursuing those normative issues may be a task for a 'critical' branch of process sociology that incorporates ideas that

are drawn from studies of ethics and foreign policy along with analyses of alternative principles of world political organisation that have been central concerns of students of international relations. In particular, it is important to stress that great powers have an unmatched ability to use their resources not just to secure their own interests but to ensure that the international system is more responsive to the claims of the 'have nots' and also sensitive to the interests of emerging great powers that may well develop commitments to challenging and changing the current global political and economic order.

One must not lose sight of the ambiguities of the great powers: they alone have the ability to persuade, cajole, bribe or force others to think beyond their immediate interests, and they, in association with progressive forces in global civil society, can provide leadership in widening 'the scope of emotional identification'. But they may also have little incentive to pursue what the international relations scholar Hedley Bull called 'purposes beyond themselves' that include the high levels of self-restraint and foresight that will be required for managing the next phase of 'human integration'. The central moral issue is what it would mean for the US to be a 'good international citizen' or a 'great responsible' in the face of the global dangers (military-political, economic and environmental) that are by-products of unprecedented levels of global interconnectedness. One must also ask whether Mennell's discontent – or exasperation – with US power is symptomatic of a new phase in the civilising process in which there are higher expectations than ever before of hegemonic powers, specifically in the area of foreign policy. Those expectations may yet exert influence on the future course of international relations, but they can just as easily lead to widespread dissatisfaction with the gulf between normative possibilities and political realities. How will the hegemon use its power and influence in future to influence the next phase of human integration? That is not the least of the reasons for understanding the American civilising process.

Andrew Linklater  
Aberystwyth University

## Nico Wilterdink reviews Richard Kilminster

**Richard Kilminster**, *Norbert Elias: Post-philosophical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2007). 209 pp. ISBN: 978-0-415-43706-6. (Also published as an e-book: 978-0-203-93930-7).

Richard Kilminster's *Norbert Elias* is the third book in English, after the introductions by Stephen Mennell (1989; new edn 1998) and Robert van Krieken (1998) that not only deals with the whole range of Elias's work but also has the same, sober and simple main title. What makes this new book distinct from the other two?

The shortest answer can be found in its subtitle, *post-philosophical sociology*, which summarises the book's central proposition. Elias's sociology is post-philosophical, argues Kilminster, in that it deals with problems commonly defined as philosophical and is at the same time a radically new way of approaching these problems by breaking with philosophy itself. '*For Elias, philosophy was part of the problem, not part of the solution*' (p. 13, italics in the original). The solution was sought in 'the *abandonment* of philosophy altogether' (ibid.) and its replacement by empirical sociology.

By accentuating Elias's anti-philosophical stance as the basis and core of his work, Kilminster gives a new twist to the thesis he advanced in his earlier book *The Sociological Revolution* (1998): there he argued that sociology in general, beginning with Comte, Marx and Spencer and continuing with Weber and Durkheim, signified a break with philosophy. This thesis implies that Elias did not initiate this 'revolution', but continued and perhaps radicalised a tradition that had been formed in the nineteenth century.

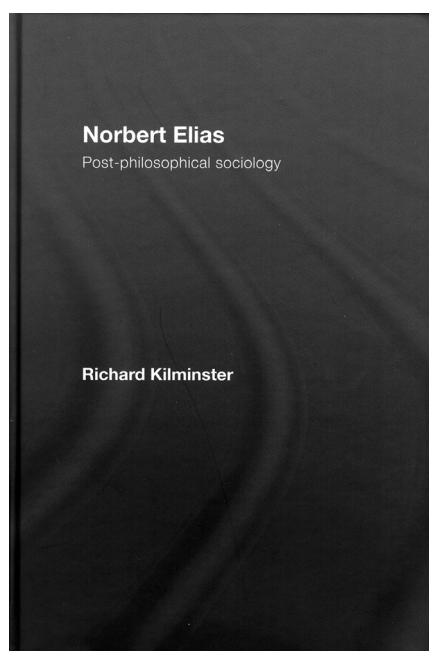
However, as Kilminster shows in this new book, the transition from philosophy to sociology was for Elias also a personal conquest, a deeply felt, hard-won conviction, which in turn can be understood in the context of intellectual and social transformations in Germany after the First World War. In illuminating what may be called the sociogenesis

of Elias's thinking, Kilminster makes a fruitful use of recent studies of parts of Elias's biography – including his participation in the Zionist youth movement – and of the cultural and political life in the Weimar Republic in general. As a student in philosophy, Elias absorbed what was then the dominant mode of theorising in the German university establishment: neo-Kantianism, with its focus on epistemological questions of truth and validity and basic categories of knowledge and thought. This was the philosophy Elias came to oppose, and which he continued to attack during the rest of his life. In his opposition he was not alone. Neo-Kantianism itself moved in the direction of a more historical and 'relational' approach, particularly in the work of Ernst Cassirer. Besides, there was a sharp revolt against neo-Kantianism among younger philosophers such as Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, who substituted ontology for epistemology and pointed out that the world of lived experience was very different from the Kantian categories of the mind. Kilminster speculates that these philosophers must have made a strong impression on the young Elias, helping him to develop a more informal and less abstract style of writing and reasoning. From a very different perspective, Marxists also gave priority the 'real world', and they too brought Elias nearer to sociology. This broad intellectual movement in the Weimar years, Kilminster argues, was related to

wider social transformations, notably the political turmoil of the time and the wave of informalisation that Elias later observed for this period.

The more direct influence came from Karl Mannheim, the sociologist with whom Elias had a long relationship of personal friendship and whose assistant he was in Frankfurt in 1930–1933. In a separate, extensive chapter on their relationship, Kilminster shows the many similarities between Mannheim's writings from the 1920s to 1940s and Elias's later work. While Elias made the transition from philosophy to sociology independently from Mannheim, the latter helped him to articulate ideas that supported this move. Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, with its insistence on the *Seinsgebundenheit* or social embeddedness of all knowledge, fell with Elias on fertile ground. It represented a definite break with traditional epistemology, which Elias carried further in his later work. Kilminster notes that, apart from an enthusiastic commentary in 1929, Elias never acknowledged his indebtedness to Mannheim. On the contrary, in his autobiographical *Reflections on a Life* (1994) he 'distances himself erroneously from what he sees as Mannheim's total relativism' (p. 49). One may add that Elias had already implicitly done so in his essay 'Sociology of Knowledge: New Perspectives' (1971) where he attacked 'philosophical absolutism' and 'sociological relativism' as the two polar and equally biased approaches that dominated the study of knowledge. Kilminster is undoubtedly right in pointing out that Mannheim should not be simply put in the camp of 'sociological relativism'. Yet I also think that there are many formulations in Mannheim's work that come close to this 'caricature' (p. 46), and that Elias in his sociology of knowledge came to a very different position by focusing on the question how to explain *progress* of human knowledge as part of a long-term social trend.

Another important influence on Elias in the 1930s is of course that of Freud, as becomes apparent in *The Civilising Process*, where Elias 'profoundly sociologises Freud' (p. 90). In discussing the wider human, moral, perhaps





even philosophical significance of *The Civilising Process*, Kilminster sees in this work a 'retrieval' of our forgotten past that corresponds to the hidden part of our individual selves; the historical past is within each of us. The book's implicit message is therefore a rejection of hodiecentric feelings of superiority: 'In Elias's deeply historical conception of human society there is a profound sense that people in the past (for example, medieval warrior knights) can be salvaged from present ideological devaluations and condemnations of their existence and behaviour, informed by present standards of conduct' (p. 98). I agree. Yet it is noteworthy that the criticism that *The Civilising Process* has evoked since the 1980s among social scientists and particularly anthropologists (from Anton Blok to Jack Goody and Hans-Peter Duerr) goes in a very different, even opposite direction: namely that the theory reveals a naïve, unwarranted belief in progress and an ethnocentric bias in favour of our own, present-day Western society. Kilminster does not even hint to this kind of criticism, which could have given his own interpretation more sharpness.

In the next chapter Kilminster returns to fundamental problems of knowledge formation in his discussion of Elias's conceptual pair 'involvement and detachment'. With these twin concepts Elias purported to overcome the philosophical, Kantian dichotomies of subject versus object and facts versus values, and to revise Weber's prescription of scientific value-freedom based on these dichotomies. Elias replaces them by a dynamic sociological view in which groups of people vary in the degree to which their perception of the world is 'involved' (emotion-laden, subject-centred) or 'detached' (emotionally controlled, object-centred). The long-term trend from involvement to detachment, as can be seen in particular in people's perception of 'nature', is part of and conditioned by wider civilising processes. Elias views the emergence of relatively autonomous scientific fields as a late stage in this development. Within these fields 'autonomous' evaluations (rather than non-evaluative or value-neutral observations) increasingly take the place of 'heteronomous' ones.

Here Kilminster stresses again how Elias develops a radically post-philosophical sociology, taking distance not only from the philosophy of philosophers but also from philosophical elements in the work of sociologists like Weber. Yet we may wonder if Elias solved all the problems posed by Weber and other methodologists. As Kilminster points out, the involvement-detachment continuum is not one clear dimension in which more detachment and better science always go hand in hand. Science requires 'involvement' of a specific kind, which Elias came to call 'secondary involvement' and Kilminster terms 'involved detachment'. What exactly makes this kind of involved detachment different from the 'involved involvement' of, for example, magicians or religious believers? And what is the place of moral evaluations within the sciences if these are not 'value-free'? Are such evaluations by definition 'heteronomous'? More generally, are the boundaries between 'autonomous' and 'heteronomous' evaluations not always contestable, contested, and changing over time?

Kilminster suggests such a change in arguing that Elias's strong emphasis on detachment as a precondition for scientific progress reflects a stage in the civilising process in which a strong super-ego suppresses forbidden emotions. In a later stage, the control of emotions becomes more ego-dominated; emotions are recognised rather than forbidden or denied, and allowed to be expressed in controlled and socially acceptable ways. This informalisation, Kilminster suggests, is reflected in today's social sciences, which tend to be methodologically less rigid, more flexible, more tolerant toward 'lay' knowledge such as 'literary knowledge, folk knowledge, ... gay, lesbian and ethnic knowledges, concern with morality and so on ...' (p. 128).

This interesting thesis raises a number of questions. The first question is, of course, whether such an overall trend in the social sciences really can be observed – which Kilminster himself seems to doubt. A second question is whether this development – if and to the extent that it takes place – is desirable. Did, for example, postmodern-

ism's advocacy of 'anything goes' and its relativistic interpretation of scientific knowledge as just a narrative among others deserve our warm support? Anyone inspired by Elias's sociology will deny this.

Elias's emphasis on a high degree of detachment as essential to any mature science, and his observation that the social sciences are lagging far behind the natural sciences because they are still in a stage of high involvement, may indeed be seen as somewhat time-bound. But rather than connecting his view to an earlier stage in the civilising process (Elias's intellectual style is, after all, informal rather than formalistic, and bears the stamp of informalisation processes that took shape from the 1920s onwards, as Kilminster suggested in an earlier chapter), a simpler and more plausible interpretation is, I think, to connect it to the dramatic events and changes in Germany in the period of and between the two world wars, when most social scientists were driven into partisanship. The subsequent Cold War and the opposition movements of the 1960s probably confirmed Elias's idea that the social sciences still had to emancipate from political and ideological group alignments. This lesson is still relevant today, but younger generations have indeed different experiences. As political and ideological contrasts diminished, the pull of party alliance and emotional engagement became weaker. For many social scientists today the more pressing problem is perhaps to find emotionally satisfying meaning and engagement in their professional work. The recurring dilemmas for social scientists to which the concepts of involvement and detachment refer take different forms in different times.

Kilminster devotes the last chapter before the conclusion to Elias's last theoretical essay, *The Symbol Theory*, which the author completed in its first draft when he was ninety-one years old. Richard Kilminster was the editor of the book, which was published a year after Elias's death in 1990. *The Symbol Theory* is presented here as a grand finale in which different motives come together, now placed in the broad framework of evolutionary theory.

In this essay, Elias again attacks the conception of reality in static dichotomies, such as body/mind, matter/spirit, nature/culture. 'Mind', 'spirit', 'culture' refer to emergent properties that gradually evolved in the process of hominisation, the evolution from apes to humans, which included the emergence of the uniquely human capacity for creating, learning, using and understanding symbols. The symbols, while at the core of a new level of reality (the human sociocultural world), are not simply 'immaterial': they are 'also tangible sound patterns of human communication' (p. 140). In this way, Elias moves 'beyond the traditional alternatives of idealism or materialism (even though his work possesses an affinity with materialism generally)'. He 'overcomes the traditional nature/culture and structure/culture dualisms ... by dipping them into the stream of continuity from the evolution of the human species through to the development of human societies as a level of integration *sui generis*' (p. 141). Kilminster points out that Elias's argument is similar to and draws upon the 'modern synthesis' in evolutionary theory represented by Julian Huxley, among others. He could have added a reference to George Herbert Mead, who in *Mind, Self and Society* also stressed the importance of symbol use ('vocal gestures') for humans and placed its emergence in an evolutionary framework.

In the concluding chapter Kilminster remarks that 'Norbert Elias may be seen to have delivered the *fourth blow* to human narcissism, beyond Copernicus, Darwin and Freud – the *sociological blow*' (p. 154; italics in the original), which consists in the basic insight that human individuals are part of and dependent on social figurations that none of them can control. Kilminster's formulation expresses some hesitation ('may be seen to have delivered ...'), which is understandable. The 'fourth blow' can be and has been attributed to sociology in general, just like the break with philosophy. Elias shares his basic insight with many others before or after him, though we could perhaps say that he is more explicit, radical and consistent in his critique of the illusions of individual autonomy than anyone else. This leads to a final question: How

unique and exclusive is Elias's sociology? And how should it be used – in an exclusivist or a more eclectic way? Kilminster goes far in the direction of exclusivism. Following Elias, he remarks at the end of the book, means that we have to 'unlearn much of our sociological education. ... We have to move beyond conventional sociological dualisms; abandon philosophy, Marxism, the leading concept of "modernity", critical theory and the fashionable "social theory".' (p. 152). 'Whole disciplines are to be abandoned, or at least placed at arm's length. Political and moral values are to be suspended in favour of a significant transfer (through secondary involvement) of a person's affective motivation and life meaning into the mission of developing, against enormous odds, highly detached sociological knowledge of the social dynamics that thwart people's plans like forces of nature' (p. 153).

This sounds quite heroic, and accords well with Elias's own life and work. But in making use of Elias's insights, we cannot, need not, and should not become like Elias. My position differs somewhat from Kilminster's exclusivism. I regard the Eliasian, figurational, or processual perspective as sociology at its potential best: a perspective which contains basic sociological insights that have been formulated in different ways by different authors, and are open to correction and refinement. The figurational perspective has, above all, a critical function in my view; it may indeed 'act as the conscience of the discipline', as Kilminster puts it in the last sentence. This does not mean that one should reject or abandon 'whole disciplines', not even philosophy. Rather than isolating itself from other disciplines or other sociological perspectives, figurational sociology should stay in an open relation to them, criticising and correcting misconceived ideas, selectively incorporating useful insights.

Despite my reservations, I think Richard Kilminster has written an excellent book. It is well written and well argued, and based on impressive scholarship. While being relatively silent on, in particular, the empirical side of Elias's work and several specific topics, it uncovers layers in his work that were hidden and unexplored until now.

Anyone who is seriously interested in Elias's sociology should read this book.

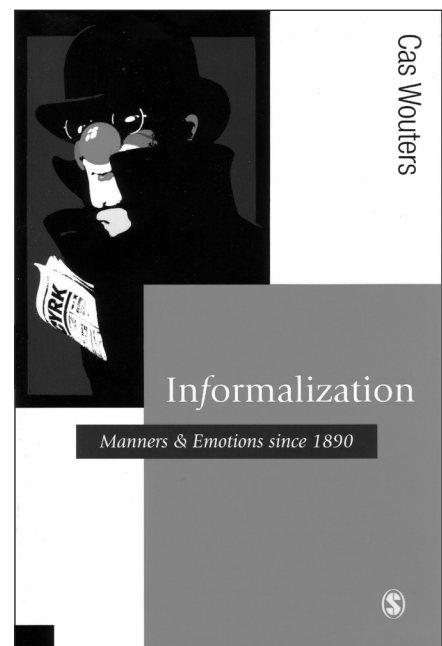
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## Helmut Kuzmics reviews Cas Wouters

**Cas Wouters**, *Informalization, Manners and Emotions since 1890* (London: Sage, 2007). xii + 274 pp. ISBN 978 1 4129 3575 3 (hb); 978 1 4129 4718 (pb).

For a long time – indeed since the late 1970s – the concept of 'informalisation' has been inseparably linked to the name and person of Cas Wouters. From an appendix to this volume (a twin to *Sex and Manners: Female Emancipation in the West 1890–2000* published in 2004), we learn in more detail how this label came to be formed. It emerged from the interaction between Norbert Elias and Cas Wouters, with the former conceding only reluctantly that the loosening of affective controls, all too visible in the post-war Euro-American world, could be more than a short backlash in the civilising process. But while it seems that Elias was convinced that this development also meant a real – though possibly short-lived – decrease in self-control or self-restraint, Wouters recounts here (p. 10) that as early as 1976 he thought the opposite was correct: 'Less formally regulated manners placing greater demands on self-regulation.'





With this book, therefore, we face the controversial core of the theory of the civilising process, namely its application to the ‘modernity’ of the twentieth century, developed by one of its most authentic authors. It is the result of decades of empirical research and theoretical reflexion. The evidence collected here consists of numerous books on manners and advice-literature in four Western state-societies (all speaking variants of a Western Germanic language – Dutch, German, English and US-American), written and read between 1890 and 2000. The focus is on the most significant changes in standards of behaviour and self-regulation as they are caused by the shifts of power-balance and authority-structures between the classes and as they are refracted in different variants of national habitus. It is less on the relationship between the sexes, since this was already the topic of this volume’s predecessor.

The central message of the book is:

- (1) The surprising homogeneity of ‘functional democratisation’, a developmental path that reigns over the whole century and tends to harmonise the conditions in the four – at the start very diverse – societies under scrutiny to an astonishing degree;
- (2) The overall direction of this process consisting in ‘informalisation’ and a habitus of ‘third nature’ (following similar thoughts formulated by Hans-Peter Waldhoff in 1997) that means a shift from a more authoritarian, ‘second-nature’ type of automatised, super-ego directed forms of affective controls to a more ego-directed, reflexive way of self-monitoring;
- (3) This process, furthermore, appears in the form of two major informalising thrusts, the 1920s and the 1960s, but it is also interrupted – or given a special shape – by processes of reformalisation, in the 1930s (here with a greater variance of national swings of the pendulum) and in the 1980s and 1990s. And this process – which seems to become global and extends also to the uneven relationship between the hegemonial and more backward parts of the globe – means that (4) There is simultaneously a break with the direction of the Eliasian notion of the occidental civilising process if it is

seen as a mere extension of ‘repressive’ affective controls (my choice of the term, not Cas Wouters’s), but also its plausible continuation if seen as the indispensable ‘de-controlling of emotional controls’ that demands greater flexibility and power to take decisions in more evenly balanced and open situations. The focus is largely on situations of face-to-face interaction, as this is the world manners-books are written for. And although many forms of affective expression become less regulated and thus more permissive, there is one marked exception: everywhere, feelings of superiority have to be suppressed and are tabooed.

Cas Wouters develops his argument in several steps. He starts with some general considerations about the explanatory role of manners for societies that are guided by ‘etiquette’ rather than by ‘courtesy’, and where the bourgeoisie has come to replace a courtly aristocracy. ‘Social mixing’ creates deep-seated social anxieties. Everywhere, social distance between the classes diminishes and inhibits the expression of superiority. Simultaneously, there is a rise in ‘constraints to be unconstrained, at ease and natural’. A whole chapter, though, is dedicated to the differences of national structures of stratification and forms of ‘habitus’, particularly as they show in introductions, definitions of ‘friendship’, and ways of addressing superiors and inferiors. Then, Wouters turns to the ‘Spiral Process of Informalisation’, the ‘Expressive Revolution’ of the 1960s and the reformalisation of the 1980s and 1990s. The book closes with the linkage between social and psychic processes and with the question: ‘Towards a controlled decontrolling of superiority and inferiority feelings?’, answering it with a cautious ‘yes’, in spite of the massive strengthening of tendencies to social closure, an aggressive market ideology and accompanying fears, insecurity and the rebirth of more one-sided dependencies, making many people in these four societies more powerless: the equalising tendencies shift to the global society as a whole, since on this level, the process of growing integration and reciprocal dependency is kept alive. As I give this sketch of Cas Wouters’s overall argument, I become aware of its

simplifying appearance. But the book’s language is much more subtle, and with its solid base in huge masses of empirical evidence, the often very different shape of national developments is given its due weight. English privacy and reserve, German militarism, love for *ständische* titles and prerogatives, but also the German praise of ‘friendship’, constitute quite different forms of habitus, particularly at the beginning of the period under scrutiny, when the Netherlands were also quite far away from the liberal and relaxed standards we have learnt to see as their true essence. Indeed, the Dutch boundaries of class were marked surprisingly clearly and language about them used to be rather unrestrained, much in contrast to England and the USA, where the tabooisation of differences between classes was developed quite early: in England as part of a more generalised gentlemen’s code, which stressed ritual modesty, and in the USA as a result of a remarkable degree of status insecurity, caused by massive social competition, lack of a centralised ‘good society’ and superficial imitation of English models. At the beginning of the twentieth century, no-one would have guessed that a century later, the world would become ‘Americanised’ on the massive scale with which we all are familiar. Although the path towards informalisation has been followed in all four countries, with standardising effect, many examples – some of them funny – also show its peculiarities: English privacy has been subjected to efforts to overcome it by the strange method of gate-crashing (seeking the hole in the fence that guarded closed festivities); Germans developed a frenzy for camping and nudism; the Americans were the first to call their superiors by their Christian names; and the Dutch showed creativity in their transition from a highly moralising, patrician and mercantile bourgeois society to a particularly relaxed and negotiated informal approach towards authority.

Wouters is also aware of the limited character of the integration of ‘strangers’ and oppressed racial/ethnic ‘outsiders’, since it is particularly through the medium of manners books that we can see in the neglect of rules for addressing and introducing members of

these groups their low degree of 'real' integration.

This book has many merits. It is written in a clear, unequivocal language, abounds with detail and replaces many highly normative statements about the alienating state of contemporary, capitalist, mass-consumption-oriented bureaucracy – in the tradition of the Frankfurt school, examples being the approaches of Lasch and Hochschild – through balanced accounts that avoid bipolar predicates of 'authentic' and 'alienated'. He has succeeded in giving a nuanced, subtle and theoretically informed analysis of the sometimes quite chaotic civilising processes of the last century. I have but few suggestions for further discussion. The first refers to the explanatory character of manners: How central are they not as indicators of the shift between the power-balances between classes and other groups, but as causal agents for the modelling of affective households themselves? The case is clear for court societies, but what is the answer for a social world regulated by money, occupation and commodities? Cas Wouters is aware of the discontinuist position (he refers to Elias's formulation of it). I think that the case is not yet closed.

Another point is the range of affective and emotional experience that goes hand in hand with informalisation, which his material-based interpretation is forced to omit. I think that the huge interest that met Elias's *The Civilising Process* in the 1970s also had much to do with the dangerous, persuasive wish to learn about the price we pay for being civilised. Of course, there is no simple 'we', and here I would like to follow Cas Wouters's scepticism. But the interest remains, and is it not also possible to see forms of depression, diseases like bulimia or anorexia and so forth as problems of self-regulation, of affect-regulation in a changing world? Maybe this is material for another book – or many other books. A real strength of the analysis developed by Cas Wouters is its wealth of detail. Therefore, I would not argue that he should complement it by giving more weight to the macro-processes and historical contingencies of state-development and economic growth. This would make

the whole ambitious project even more aspirational and possibly doomed to fail. We should rather be glad that we now have an empirically based analysis by the one and original author who contributed, through three decades, more than any other to the description and explanation of 'informalisation'. Its strange and enigmatic character has been partly unveiled here. What else can we justifiably expect?

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### Pieter Spierenburg reviews three books on violence

**Stuart Carroll** (ed.), *Cultures of Violence: Interpersonal Violence in Historical Perspective* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

**Helmut Thome and Christoph Birkel**, *Sozialer Wandel und Gewaltkriminalität : Deutschland, England und Schweden in Vergleich, 1950 bis 2000*. (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2007).

**Katherine D. Watson** (ed.), *Assaulting the Past: Violence and Civilization in Historical Context*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007.

Among historians as well as sociologists, violence is a booming subject. In 2005 there were two historical conferences in England alone, resulting in the two collective volumes under review. Although their titles lack a geographic indication, both deal in large part with England; the Carroll volume has France as a secondary focus of attention. With respect to Elias's theory, the respective editors take opposite sides. Stuart Carroll is largely hostile and Katherine Watson mostly sympathetic to Elias. Watson, moreover, has consistently turned her volume into an engagement with the theory of civilising processes, as the word 'civilisation' in the title indicates. Each contributor discusses Elias's work at some point, although the extent of the discussion varies considerably. The Carroll volume, on the other hand, is not consistently anti-Elias. In fact, if we may rely on the index, only two authors besides the editor refer to Elias

or the civilising process at all, and one of them – John Carter Wood – is largely sympathetic. Thus, the burden of the attack rests on the shoulders of Carroll himself and Michel Nassiet. One of their major points concerns the persistence of feuding in France until the eve of Louis XIV's reign. That is, a number of aristocratic conflicts can be observed, sometimes involving revenge and at other times leading to a duel. Carroll and Nassiet have not attempted to quantify these conflicts, but they seem to have been numerous, especially in the unsettled times of the wars of religion and in some unruly regions up to the years of the Fronde. Needless to say, nothing of this would have surprised Elias. France around 1600, moreover, was no longer like the feud-ridden Middle Ages and Claude Gauthier, hardly an admirer of Elias, posits a relative decline of feuding in France from as early as the late fourteenth century onwards.

Carroll's other criticisms of the theory of civilisation remain vague and unconvincing, based on the usual misunderstandings and dubious claims. He states, for example, that the work of Elias and the scholars inspired by him is characterised by 'simplistic approaches to the relationship between agency and structure' (p. 16). Most readers of *Figurations* will probably share my conviction that there is no use at all for this pair of concepts in the first place. For the rest, readers of Carroll's introduction can judge for themselves. To be sure, the Watson volume also contains a few contributions by authors whose comments on the theory of civilisation make little sense to at least this reviewer. Thus, David Nash identifies an 'anti-civilising process' and Steve Hall a 'pseudo-pacification process.' On the whole, in both volumes, there is no correlation between the intensity of an author's engagement with Elias's theory and the quality of his or her contribution.

One of the most interesting contributions to the Watson volume, the closing one by the editor herself, does provide a creative elaboration of the theory of civilisation. She discusses serial murder, asking whether its apparently growing prevalence since the 1960s is

due to its being a feature of an increasingly interdependent society or, conversely, it is an example of a decivilising spurt. She broadens the discussion by including serial poisoners, who were especially active in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although some have been identified as early as the seventeenth. This is a promising perspective, even though I would tend to draw a sharper line between the poisoners, as multiple murderers, and the 'lust-killing' emerging after the mid-nineteenth century, for which I would reserve the term serial murder. One of the most interesting contributions to the Carroll volume, by Steven Hughes, does not refer to Elias at all. Nevertheless he presents a fascinating story about the representation of daggers and swords in liberal and fascist Italy. Around 1900 swords constituted a positive image for the Italian elites, who were prone to duelling. They viewed the knife as a negative symbol, marking Italy's bad reputation in the eyes of Northern Europeans. The fascists inverted these values, but they integrated the new image of the knife into their ideology of national unity.

The two, largely complementary, essays by Caroline Dodds on human sacrifice in the Aztec Empire deserve special mention as well. One of her themes concerns the apparent contradiction, for us as well as for the Spanish conquerors, between the bloody sacrifices and the orderly society around the metropolis that was Tenochtitlan. The Aztec Empire was at least as pacified, centralised and controlled as contemporary Spain or France. So did the ritual killing of women and men constitute an anomaly? It is always hazardous to juxtapose and compare elements from widely diverging societies, but my suggestion nevertheless would be to compare Aztec religious sacrifice with public executions in sixteenth-century Europe, which by then had assumed a decidedly religious character. This politico-religious ceremony served to underpin the still unstable monopolies of violence in monarchies and republics. Human sacrifice had similar functions for the Aztecs.

The book by Helmut Thome and Christoph Birkel deals with a more recent

period of history. Thome, professor of sociology at the University of Halle, has been studying criminality, contemporary and historical, for a long time. Theoretically, he is interested in the work of Elias as well as some of the classical sociologists, in particular Durkheim. Thome strongly prefers quantitative methods, as in this book written together with a colleague from Halle. It is essentially an analysis of statistics, not only of crime but of numerous other subjects.

A quantitative dataset indeed lies at the basis of our knowledge about the long-term development of violence, in particular murder. Historians and social scientists measure the incidence of murder with the help of the homicide rate – i.e. the annual average of killings in a certain area, usually a town, region or country – per hundred thousand inhabitants of that area. This measure enables us to make geographical and diachronic comparisons. The 'annual-average' component is important for earlier periods of history, because if we only have a one-year count, we cannot tell whether or not it is exceptional for its century. Now that record keeping has become much more complete, for recent times one-year counts are meaningful as well. When the FBI publishes a new issue of its Uniform Crime Reports, for example, criminologists immediately get to work at their computers. For over two decades it has been known that the level of murder underwent a massive decline in Europe from about 1300 until the mid-twentieth century. This conclusion is based on reliable figures, which, over such a long period, are not available for non-lethal forms of violence. The match between the long-term decline of murder and Elias's theory has been widely recognised. Since about 1970, however, homicide has been on the rise, reversing the age-long trend. For every scholar, regardless of his theoretical inclinations, this constitutes an intriguing problem.

The problem might be dismissed as trivial. After all, homicide rates of several dozens were common in the Middle Ages, whereas the recent rise was roughly from a level of one in the 1950s and 1960s to one and a half by

the mid-1990s. But there are at least three reasons why it would be unwise to trivialise the problem. First of all, the rise meant a 50 per cent and hence significant increase. Second, while this 50 per cent is an average of many countries, an increase occurred almost everywhere west of the (former) Iron Curtain. Thus, it is a structural phenomenon. Finally, the level of non-lethal violence, as measured by rates of registered crime, also underwent a sharp upward trend from the 1960s. It looks as though contemporary society is characterised by a heightened level of violence. This is essentially what Thome has been arguing in earlier publications. According to him, increased levels of violence constitute a structural property of modern society and they will likely be here to stay for at least a while.

In their recent book, Thome and Birkel compare figures for homicide, physical injury, robbery and rape in England, Sweden and Germany from 1953 to 1998 (beginning and end determined by peculiarities of the sources). As scholars well versed in quantitative research, they amply discuss all possible problems with their statistics. They rely primarily on aggregated rates of crimes reported to the police. For homicide this is an acceptable measure, because over the last few decades, the police have kept fairly reliable records of cases of apparent murder. For earlier periods medical data are usually better: causes-of-death statistics, which the authors use supplementarily, or, for the distant past, body inspection reports. The choice of relying on police reports for the other three crimes investigated, although defended at length, still seems a bit questionable to me. The authors dismiss the obvious alternative, a comparison of victimisation surveys. One reason for this choice appears undeniable: the available series of victimisation surveys cover only a part, and especially for Germany a tiny part, of the period under scrutiny. In addition, however, the authors express doubts about the validity of victimisation surveys. Yet they base their analysis of the *Anzeigequoten* (the proportion of real/total crime that is reported to the police) on these very victimisation surveys. Subsequently, they assume that there was no systematic increase in this



proportion for the three crimes of non-lethal violence and that, consequently, the trends in police figures are indicative of trends in real behaviour.

These trends consist of a rise, in most instances considered, in each of the three countries between 1953 and 1998. As mentioned earlier, we already knew this in outline. Thome and Birkel concede that in case of sexual assault, where they assume the *Anzeigequote* to be lowest, the data have to be interpreted with caution. In the case of physical injury and robbery, on the other hand, they assume a real increase. Yet, several other scholars are more sceptical about such claims. They note that the definition of robbery has become inflated in several European countries. In the Netherlands, for example, grabbing someone's handbag in the street, formerly classified as simple theft, became classified in the 1980s as theft with violence. Thus, what was formerly only a property offence was now considered as a violation of both property and the body. The definition of the seriousness of assault was equally subject to inflation. A study by Margarethe Egelkamp (2002), dealing with the Netherlands and Germany but not referred to by Thome and Birkel, compares court cases in 1986 and 1996. She found that in the latter year similar cases had moved up one level on the legal scale of seriousness: severe injury automatically led to a charge of attempted manslaughter; what had been simple assault became aggravated assault; and incidents not considered worth prosecuting before streamed in at the bottom. Thus, there is reason to assume that at least a part of the rise in registered non-lethal violence reflects increasing sensitivities rather than actual behaviour. This does not mean that I totally disagree with Thome and Birkel. Some part of the rise probably reflects a real increase in violence.

Before discussing their *explanandum* of crime rates, Thome and Birkel outline their theoretical framework. They draw part of their inspiration from Elias, but Durkheim's influence is more prominent. They briefly mention what the possible explanation in Eliasian terms would be, centring on decivilising tendencies related in their turn to a

partial decline in the level of pacification offered by state institutions. The authors discuss the theme of self-control too, but they find it too narrow a definition of self-control if it is equated with 'Elias's concept of affect control'. Instead, they wish to define self-control (or *Selbststeuerung*) in terms of three 'dimensions of competence' (p. 46). (For my own views about the relationship between contemporary violence and Elias's theory, see my article in *Crime, History & Societies*, 2001–2 and my book *A History of Murder*, forthcoming from Polity Press).

Durkheim is a more important source for the theoretical framework that the authors construe, although they make free use of his work, rejecting some elements and highlighting others. These exercises result in a complex network of theoretical arguments and propositions, supported, at the outline stage already, by bits of empirical evidence. At the risk of simplifying their exposition, this seems the essence to me: according to Durkheim, the increasing division of tasks and the accompanying trends of individualism and the weakening of communal bonds all led to a decline of personal aggression. But there were counter-tendencies, for example when change occurred too fast. Thome and Birkel connect Durkheim's well-known notion of anomie with the lesser-known concept of egoistic or disintegrative individualism. These counter-tendencies, they assert, have become even stronger since the time when Durkheim lived. Partly, this has to do with a new preponderance of the market over the state. The state is instrumental in drawing individualism into the direction of its positive side, which consists of individualism's principled celebration as a value coupled with a readiness for cooperation. By contrast, the market induces individualism to assume the form of selfishness. This argument takes the authors back to Elias by a detour. For Thome and Birkel, the degree of effectiveness and legitimacy of the state's monopoly of violence remains an important factor. Incidentally, their theory makes the two-sidedness of robbery less of a problem, as a selfish individualist will respect neither another's property nor his or her body.

The authors view their theoretical framework as a heuristic scheme, suggesting to them which empirical questions they should pose in order to arrive at an *explanans*. The answers to these questions make up the third and largest part of their study. This part deals with aspects of the economy, the state, large organisations and cultural and social life in the countries studied, in so far as statistics are available. In fact, there seems to be almost no quantifiable element within English, Swedish and German societies that is missing from the discussion. The reader is bedazzled by a tsunami of graphs and tables, deriving from governmental sources, surveys of private organisations or complex indexes constructed by fellow researchers. Especially in the latter case, Thome and Birkel's investigation assumes the character of a meta-analysis. The figures discussed include church attendance, membership of trade unions, tax returns, income inequality, trust in government, the judicial system, the police and in fellow humans, fear of crime, clearance rates, persons active in different sectors of the economy, internal migration, unemployment and much more.

The conclusions to be drawn from all this are multi-faceted and complex – throughout the chapters concerned and again when summed up in the authors' résumé. Important keywords include globalisation, increasing economic competition, reduction in the scope of the welfare state, a decreasing belief in equality coupled with a rise in actual inequalities resulting in a 'winner-takes-all society.' Calling for further research on certain themes, Thome and Birkel freely admit their remaining problems. In particular, some of their crucial indicators, such as the erosion of the state's monopoly of violence in the wake of globalisation, do not show a significant rise until about 1980, hence much after the beginning of the increase in registered violent crime. In order to circumvent this problem, the authors argue that an initial condition of anomie in the 1950s and 1960s was subsequently reinforced and intensified to become a structural trend of disintegrative individualism. Again, this is the essence of their argument as I see it,

although they might view it as an oversimplification.

The argument's principal weakness, in my view, lies in the limits of the quantitative method itself. The whole exercise remains a rather formal analysis. The question why violence has increased over the last 50 years or so cannot be answered without taking a look at what kind of violence this involves. That applies first of all to homicide – the crime for which it is most certain that the increase in its registered incidence represents a real increase. Our knowledge of its long-term decline since the Middle Ages would be barren if we had no information about feuds, duels, knife fights or *crimes passionnels*. Likewise, we would love to know how much the modest rise in homicide in recent times owes to the expansion of organised crime or the drug business. Or have young men perhaps again become more prone to serious fighting? Such questions can be answered with good qualitative sample research.

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### Eric Dunning reviews an edited book on 'Un-Civilising Processes'

**Mary Fulbrook** (ed), *Un-Civilising Processes? Excess and Transgression in German Society and Culture: Perspectives Debating with Norbert Elias*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. 296 pp, ISBN: 978-90-420-2151-8

In the acceptance speech that he gave in Aachen in 1977 when he was presented with the Festschrift marking his eightieth birthday (*Human Figurations: Essays for Norbert Elias* [Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift, 1977]), Norbert Elias started by recalling a recurrent nightmare which he claimed had interfered with his sleep during the 1950s and 1960s but which, he said, had started to become less frequent in the 1970s. This dream involved him in repeatedly shouting into a telephone, 'Are you there? Can you hear me?' Until the 1970s, he said, he had typically received no answer to these dream questions, but, during that decade,

things had slowly started to change. This is not a particularly difficult nightmare to analyse. Elias had had the conviction since a young age that he had important things to say. However, a combination of external events such as the Second World War, his migration to England and his internment in camps at Huyton and on the Isle of Man, together with his difficulty in allowing his manuscripts to be taken from him for publication – Ilse Seglow used to say they were his children and that he was a very possessive father – meant that he had been unable to convey these important things to a wider public. During the late 1960s and the 1970s, however, his work had begun to attract wide readerships, particularly in the Netherlands, Germany and France. Subsequently, of course, especially after his death in 1990, he became a sociologist of world renown, one of the discipline's most important twentieth-century figures. However, he only had thirteen further years in which to enjoy his fame. During that period, to my knowledge, he never referred to this nightmare again. But I think he should have. Let me explain why.

Readers of this review may, by now, be asking what this opening discussion has to do with a review of Mary Fulbrook's edited book? That is simple. The contributors to this book are principally students and teachers of arts subjects and cultural studies, and, although one or two of them have interesting, insightful and relevant things to say, most of them have hardly begun to understand precisely what Elias said and wrote. They construe him as a crude teleological progress theorist – which he most decidedly was not. Before I develop a fuller and more systematic critique, let me describe the contents of *Un-Civilising Processes*?

The book consists of ten chapters and an Introduction by the editor entitled, 'Introduction: the character and limits of the civilising process'. The chapter titles and their authors are: (1) Sebastian Coxon, 'Laughter and the process of civilisation in Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*'; (2) Geraldine Horan, '(Un-)Civilised language: the regulation of cursing and swearing in German through the Middle Ages'; (3) Martin

Swales, 'Civilisation, un-civilisation, transgression: on Goethe's *Faust*'; (4) Susanne Kord, 'The pre-colonial imagination: race and revolution in literature of the Napoleonic period'; (5) Mark Hewitson, 'Violence and civilisation: transgression and modern wars'; (6) Ernest Schonfield, 'Civilisation in the dining room: table manners in Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*'; (7) Maiken Umbach, 'The civilising process and the construction of the bourgeois self: music chambers in Wilhelmine Germany'; (8) Stephanie Bird, 'Norbert Elias, the confusions of Toerless and the ethics of shamelessness'; (9) Mererid Puw Davies, 'Bodily issues: the West German anti-authoritarian movement and the semiotics of dirt'; and (10) Mary Fulbrook, 'Changing states, changing selves: generations in the Third Reich and the GDR'.

The table of contents is practically all we are given by way of information on the contributors. The book does not have an author or subject index, which makes it more difficult to read than it should be. Nor are we given the university affiliations or the subject specialisms of the contributors. All that one can say is that six of them seem to be British, three of them German and one of them possibly Irish. What they write suggests that they work in Arts faculties, that most of them have probably been influenced by cultural studies, and perhaps especially by the metaphysics of Foucault. If these inferences are correct, then it goes some way towards explaining why, in most cases, the authors crudely manufacture and argue against a picture of Norbert Elias and his work as some kind of twentieth-century resurrection of the crudest types of Eurocentric nineteenth-century theories of Western superiority and inevitable progress. With one or two exceptions, they would surely lead – were Elias still alive – to the return of a modified version of his 1950s–1960s nightmare: he would still be shouting into a telephone, only this time, he would be saying: 'You can obviously hear me now but do you understand me? Have you actually carefully read what I have written? Or at least read the accounts of my work by people close to me such as Johan Goudsblom, Richard Kilminster, Stephen Mennell and Cas Wouters? Or

have you criticised my work mainly on the basis of reading inaccurate secondary sources?" If they were honest, Mary Fulbrook and her contributors would have to answer this last question in the affirmative. Let me briefly suggest why.

Mary Fulbrook repeatedly uses the terms 'civilisation' and 'modernity/modernisation' in tandem. She is – perhaps understandably since she didn't know Elias personally and was not taught by him – unaware of the fact that Elias was strongly critical of the concepts of 'modernity' and 'modernisation' when they crept into use and started to become popular in the 1960s, starting if my memory serves me correctly with a book on the subject by Wilbert Moore (*Social Change* [Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963]). Elias's objections largely took the form of his being critical of them as terms with a time reference only, and lacking any connotation of structure in the way that concepts such as industrialisation, urbanisation, democratisation and civilisation manifestly do. Modernity/modernisation were also, Elias pointed out, terms that implicitly resurrected the notions of social development as unilinear, inevitable and irreversible progress which are found in the work of Comte and Marx (but, *nota bene*, NOT, *pace* Giddens, in the work of Herbert Spencer). By contrast, although in *The Civilising Process* Elias concentrated mainly on the case of France, he included a chapter on the differential developmental trajectories of England, France and Germany – which should have alerted any careful reader to the fact that he saw development as complex, multilinear and reversible. Briefly, what he attempted to show was that what in the course of time became England and France were unified earlier than Germany, largely because of their smaller territories and populations and the greater uniformity of their languages and cultures. This gave them an advantage in the colonising of the rest of the world, and helped them to become successful imperialists, whilst the disunited Germans lagged behind. However, despite these shared properties, France and England differed in numerous ways, such as France's higher degrees of bureaucratisation and state centralisation, and the fact that,

as an island, Britain depended more on a navy than a land army. It is perhaps because he regarded every society's (and every person's) development as in some ways a unique variation on a shared pattern that Elias did not refer to Germany's *Sonderweg* [special path], although (perhaps misleadingly) Stephen Menell and I did so in our Preface to our translation of *The Germans*. One of Elias's central points was that in an historical context where anti-Semitism was generally widespread and where France in the late nineteenth century displayed the highest incidence of anti-Jewish feeling – as manifested, for example, in the Dreyfus case – Germany's late unification contributed in a myriad of complex ways to its becoming the country where, retrospective analysis suggests, a Nazi takeover was most likely. The strengthening there of military models was particularly important in this regard. This was, however, a 'blind' or unplanned and unintended process, making it nonsense to suggest, as Mary Fulbrook does, that Elias's study of the 'breakdown of civilisation' in Weimar Germany is an example of what she calls 'long-term structural teleology'.

To be fair to Mary Fulbrook, she does refer to Elias's *The Civilising Process* as a 'path-breaking' and 'searching' study. However, it is perhaps not surprising that someone who can make simple errors of biographical fact, such as referring to Elias having worked 'in the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research under Max Horkheimer', should develop a false understanding of Elias's *oeuvre*. He worked in the University of Frankfurt's Sociology Department under Karl Mannheim, in rooms in the so-called *Marxgebäude*, which the University rented from the privately financed 'Frankfurt School'.

In my view, however, Mary Fulbrook's worst error consists in her taking seriously the work on Elias by Dennis Smith. Whilst Smith's discussion of Elias in *The Rise of Historical Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991) is tolerably accurate on the whole, parts of his *Norbert Elias and Modern Social Theory* (London: Sage, 2001) border on and sometimes actually reach the absurd. Unfortunately, it is precisely on

some parts of Smith's ludicrous miscomprehensions that Mary Fulbrook seizes. She writes (p.7):

'Smith suggests that lower classes had long had a history of "disciplined practices" (p. 63) but that there is a lack [of] appropriate records on the basis of which to write this history. And in contrast to Elias, Smith sees the aristocracy as "almost the last major group within medieval and early modern society to be confronted with the challenge of being tied down to a particular place and being forced to do what they were told by an overlord. They were latecomers to the modern game" (p. 164). Once the aristocracy were forced into self-restraint, in Smith's view, it acquired a degree of prestige.'

What this fails to take into account is legion. Firstly, although he did make some generalisations beyond his basic framework and his data, Elias clearly delimited his major concern by calling Part 1 of his book 'Changes in the Behaviour of the Secular Upper Classes in the West'. In a word, what he wrote was not intended as a total or totally complete study but, rather, as a contribution to the understanding of a delimited fragment. What he principally sought to show in this connection was what he called *die Verhöflichung der Krieger* (the courtisation of the warriors) – that is, the taming of leading members of the warrior ruling class, the dukes and counts etc., by bringing them into the royal court together with members of the emergent bourgeoisie where they were constrained over time to give up their former love of violence and abandoned living. Added to this, Elias suggested that the factual sequence of ruling classes in Western Europe since the Middle Ages has been: knights, courtiers and bourgeois. Smith's critique, swallowed hook, line and sinker by Fulbrook, seems to be in part an attempt to curry the favour of left-wing students and other readers, but what he says has little or no relevance to what Elias wrote. Smith weakens his case even further by seemingly using the Christian Bible's Book of Genesis and the story of Adam and Eve as a source of factual evidence! Let me bring this



review to a close by commenting on some of the other contributions to this anthology.

Sebastian Coxon describes laughter as a 'blind spot' in Elias's theory and maintains this to be the case even though he goes on to show himself familiar with and to discuss Michael Schroeter's 'Wer lacht kann nicht beißen', an essay reconstructed from fragments in the Elias archives in Marbach, and which Elias told me had formed the basis of a talk that he gave to the Haldane Society at University College Leicester in 1956. It was based on ideas that had long been central to the basic underpinnings of Elias's synthesis and I have vivid memories of his discussing them in the psychology lectures that he gave when I was an undergraduate. Sociologists and psychologists, he insisted, should have a basic grounding in biology and human evolution. One of his central points in this connection concerned the great mobility of the human facial musculature compared with that of chimpanzees and other apes, a point which he used to illustrate, among other ways, using a book of photographs of the French comic actor, Fernandel. What Elias was trying to illustrate, of course, is the fact that *Homo sapiens* evolved biologically as a social species. Geraldine Horan's essay on uncivilised language is another which makes some interesting and valuable points but mars these with a by-now conventional misinterpretation of Elias. She writes (p. 39):

'Language use cannot merely be regarded as a teleological process, which moves from an 'uncivilised' to a 'civilised' state. The 'civilising process' in its linguistic manifestation can be better understood as a continual, ever-shifting process of mutual (re-) negotiation of the limits of acceptable forms of expression.'

Geraldine Horan is seemingly unaware of the fact that Elias completely rejected teleology and that what she wrote in the second of these two sentences is far closer to his meaning than the first.

I hope that I shall be forgiven if I end this review with just one more comment. It relates to Mererid Puw Davies's essay on the West German

anti-authoritarian movement. What she bases it on is an act undertaken in 1968 by 24-year-old Karl-Heinz Pawla in a West Berlin courtroom as a gesture of contempt directed at the then-existing status quo. He was on trial for distributing literature which had displeased the authorities and what he did was to turn his back on the judge, pull his trousers down and defecate on the courtroom floor, finally using the court files as toilet paper. I think this is indicative of a difference between the German and the English psyches and civilising processes. As an Englishman, I felt constrained to use indirect language in order to describe this act and, on reading Davies's account, I was reminded of an experience I had in Bavaria in the 1960s. This in its turn reminded me of Elias's essay on Mozart – which surprisingly is not mentioned by any of the arts and cultural studies contributors to this book.

With two friends, I was the guest of a well-off Bavarian businessman, his wife and their three daughters. We were given good food and excellent wine, and after the meal the middle daughter, who was 27 or 28 at the time, entertained us by dancing and singing. The song had a repeated chorus and when she sang it, she placed her clothed bottom provocatively in our faces. The chorus was 'leckt mich am Arsch' (Lick my arse). We, two of us English and one Scots, were shocked. I also remembered this experience when I first read Norbert Elias's book on Mozart and learned for the first time of what one might call Mozart's and his father's 'anal fixation' in their letters to one another. This suggests one further (and last) point. As I hinted above, Mary Fulbrook and her contributors make little or no reference to Elias's work on art and artists. That is a pity. As it is, whilst it is not by any means totally void of interesting and valid points, *Un-Civilising Processes?* suggests that, if they wish to make meaningful contributions to sociology, to understand the work of scholars such as Elias, and to build constructively on their foundations – as many cultural studies specialists nowadays seemingly wish to do – they will have to take far greater care over the reading of their texts than most of them have done here. Above all,

relying on secondary texts has nowadays become foolhardy and dangerous in the extreme.

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## ■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

**Helmut Kuzmics**, 'Zivilisationsprozess und Emotionen der Feindseligkeit auf dem Schlachtfeld am Beispiel der Habsburgischen Armee vom 18. bis zum frühen 20. Jahrhundert' [Civilising process and emotions of hostility on the battlefield: the example of the Habsburg army from the eighteenth to the early twentieth century]. In: Paul Ertl and Jodok Troy (eds), *Der Feind – Darstellung und Transformation eines Kulturbegriffs*, vol. 2, *Ausgewählte Bereiche der Feindkonzeption* (Vienna: Jänner, 2008), pp. 59–118.

In Norbert Elias's *The Civilising Process*, the reality and experience of war are situated and structured historically. In one of the most surprising and original recent interpretations of war, Martin van Creveld (*On Future War*, 1991) has stressed its basically unchanging character, including the motives and causes for war. For him, the male fascination for war is deeply rooted in needs that can be summarised vaguely as the appeal of danger, the wish to prove manliness, by all means not guided by rational interest or profit-seeking. Who is right?

This paper draws on examples of the Habsburg army, using diaries, fiction, regimental histories and autobiographical material as its main sources. It covers the time-span from dynastic, 'Trinitarian War' (Van Creveld) of the eighteenth century to the industrialised war between nation-states and empires 1914–18.

In terms of the manly 'pleasure of attacking', the experience of fear and its overcoming by courage or boldness,

the perceived brutality of war and the coarseness or refinement of the circumstances surrounding organised fighting, dynastic war provided two very different sets of opportunities: one for the aristocratic warrior caste, the other for the common soldier. Much of what Van Creveld sees as the unchanging, fundamental character warfare has for men is actually based on the complex, time-bound canon of chivalry, courage and honour, of death as the ultimate proof for them, necessitating a life-long preparation in order to be able to accept death in consent and dignity

For the Habsburg army, like other armies, the 'Great War' brought an end to aristocratic ideals of chivalry and to the proud tradition of its cavalry. Modern, industrialised war replaced the feudal attacking spirit with more modest emotions – apart from the many who did not have to 'fight' in the narrower sense of the term, as an element of a huge apparatus based on division of labour, responsible for supply, technical support, logistics, information. But even those who stood in the front-line ready for attack or defence very seldom if ever experienced a 'pleasure of attacking'; spontaneous emotions were rather the result of vindictiveness and revenge (when no prisoners were taken). More often, the main property of a good soldier was his ability to endure – under exhausting external conditions and heavy artillery or machine-gun fire, when fear turned into sheer horror. The experience of the front was rather heterogeneous, though, and over long periods of time, the cen-

tral emotion could be boredom. Neither a simple linear path of development nor the assumption of an essentially unchanging nature of war seem to be adequate models for the multiplicity of structural conditions and structured emotions occurring in war.

**George Cavalletto**, *Crossing the Psycho-Social Divide: Freud, Weber, Adorno and Elias*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007. 284 pp.  
ISBN 978-0-7546-4772-0 (hb)

By way of response to a commentary by Thomas Scheff on the ideal balance between the concrete and abstract in research and teaching, on 26 May 2007 George Cavalletto wrote to the Elias mailing list as follows: 'Shame serves as one bridge (or "channel" as Elias's text calls it) between broader macro figurations of these (power) contests and the psychological functions of individual agents who exist within these contests'. Indeed, in the acknowledgements to his latest book, *Crossing the Psycho-Social Divide: Freud, Weber, Adorno and Elias*, Cavalletto admits to being long 'fascinated with those spheres of experience in which human relations interconnect in a significant way with inner psychic life' (p. xv). His analysis of these two interrelated generations of German speaking intellectuals seeks to reinvigorate what he sees as a decaying field of study, that of psychic and social realities and the related methods of analysing their inter-relationship. As part of this, Cavalletto subjects to close and contextualised

reading a series of texts written by Freud, Weber, Adorno, and – of particular interest to us – Elias. Using these methodological techniques, Cavalletto claims, amongst other things, to have uncovered evidence of a ‘psychological Weber’, ‘whose analytic practices ... display nonetheless a recognition of the dynamic mechanisms of the psyche’ (p. 6), not least in the *The Protestant Ethic* which, for the author, demonstrates the ways in which irrational responses to religious dogma shape people’s actions, often in an opposing direction.

In the context of Elias’s work, which synthesises historical, social and psychological processes, Cavalletto claims that Elias grants sociogenesis primacy over psychogenesis – that is, the latter is shaped by the former. Thus, Elias’s conception of human reality is characterised by an historical or developmental orientation and socio-historical processes form the social conditions in which psychic developments originate. As is the case with other psychoanalysts’ use of Elias’s work, Cavalletto too suggests that Elias offers an advancement of Freudian notions of drives and emotions because of their socio-historical location. Because of this, readers will be particularly interested in the author’s aspiration to re-establish the presence and effects of psychic qualities in social reality and, allied to this, to elucidate methods for rendering these psychological qualities more open to enquiry and understanding. His conclusions are also provocative for not only does he demonstrate some interrelated themes in the work of these four writers, but he also sets out a paradigm for future work by offering the following ideas for further consideration by contemporary practitioners using contemporary conceptual and theoretical tools: some sociological questions require psychological answers; the psyche dynamically alters that which society imposes upon it; the psyche mediates the human interactions that constitute the social world; and a reciprocal alignment of sociological and psychological analyses requires that they occur at similar levels of abstraction (pp. 260–6).

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**Timothy Phillips and Philip Smith,** ‘Rethinking Urban Incivility Research: Strangers, Bodies and Circulations’. *Urban Studies*, 43: 5–6 (2006), pp. 879–901.

Summary: Research on urban incivility has made progress but has limited scope thanks to stereotyped and policy-relevant focus on problem neighbourhoods and urban renewal. It also lacks benchmark comparative data, has almost nothing to say about interpersonal incivility and is experiencing diminishing returns to effort. A new agenda is proposed that explores everyday life incivility as this is experienced over the broader population in the course of daily routine. The Everyday Life Incivility in Australia Survey is introduced. This was a random national sample survey collecting systematic narrative information on interpersonal encounters involving a rude stranger. Findings from the study are reported here, documenting the range of low-level incivilities experienced in daily life and outlining some of their properties. The results challenge received wisdom about the corrosive effects of urban incivility on society.

**Jean-Paul Callède,** *La sociologie française et la pratique sportive, 1875–2005* (Pessac: Maison des Sciences de l’Homme d’Aquitaine, 2007). 607 pp. ISBN: 978-2-85892-345-8.

This book is a sequel to Jean-Paul Callède’s *Les politiques sportives en France: éléments de sociologie historique* (Paris: Economica, 2000), which was devoted to French sports policies. In this second opus, he classifies historical and sociological texts according to the *modèle culturel* of sports practice, offering a general overview of what has been published since games and sports emerged as an object of study for French sociology up to the present day. Particularly conscious of the importance of Elias’s work, Callède carefully lists the texts that Elias dedicated to sport from the 1960s onwards. One can note that these texts are integrated into the whole framework of Callède’s book. In the second part, dealing with the *perspectives complémentaires*, a full chapter is devoted to

Elias’s studies (Chapter 5: ‘L’analyse socio-historique du sport selon Norbert Elias’, pp. 343–83). Callède first notes that social scientists’ opinions are strongly divided about the validity of an Eliasian analysis of sport in the contemporary social context. Callède fully enters into this debate. He nevertheless adopts a highly nuanced approach. He proposes a critical study of Elias’s contribution to the development of the scientific knowledge about sport. In that perspective, from the very beginning, Callède invites the reader to distinguish between two categories of texts. On the one hand, he considers what is properly due to Elias’s work. On the other hand, he identifies what in Elias’s work proceeds from evident but not explicitly mentioned different sources of inspiration and criticism (Huizinga, Spencer, Groos, etc.). On this basis, Callède examines the originality of the sociological and historical approach adopted by Elias in his important studies on games and sports. He particularly investigates the way Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning study the historical development and the evolution of sports in the frame of the development of the state structures of political power in Western societies from the eighteenth century, more precisely in England.

Callède then stresses the impact of the underlying development of civilising process in the fields of power and sport. He stresses that Elias firmly contends that the history of modern sport’s development and its specific characteristics give some reliable indicators about the way the civilising process has shaped and is still shaping our societies. Therefore Callède takes up Elias’s major idea that sport and balance of power should be explored following the same methodological global approach. He then shows how two very distinct fields at first glance should be able to *s’éclairer réciproquement*. In this way, Callède carefully elucidates the famous notions of ‘figurations’, ‘self-constraints’, etc. It allows him to explain again the ‘organising process’ of sport that Elias and Dunning evoke. The aim here is the progressive shift from disinterested playful games towards sport as organised into a hierarchy and assuming the function of regulating power relationships between opposed groups. But



Callède does not only examine carefully Elias and Dunning's propositions on these topics. He also introduces the reader to the Eliasian historical approach, demonstrating its major principles. Then he returns to the way Elias seeks to overcome the famous dichotomy of 'individual' versus 'society' by focusing upon the various types of chains of interdependence. Callède then comes back to the game models (*modèles de jeux*) that Elias developed in *Was ist Soziologie?* to explain and illustrate the different kinds of interpenetrating social phenomena. The French author ends his critical analysis of Elias's work by pointing to some of its 'blind spots'. He finally enters into a very interesting discussion centred on the present uses and current pertinence of the notion of figuration. Last but not least, Callède makes some interesting reflections about how to develop further what appears to him to be the most convincing and stimulating work in the field of sociology of sport.

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**Cas Wouters**, On friendship and equality in England and Germany: *introducing* versus *duzen*. *Sociologie* 3: 3 (2007), pp. 350–72 [in Dutch].

**Abstract:** This article starts from the observation that English manners books from the nineteenth century until the 1980s are preoccupied with introductions, a topic that hardly receives attention in German manners books. The German books, on the other hand, are preoccupied with 'friendship' and *Duzen* (using the personal pronoun). The attempt at explaining these striking national differences, part of research findings from a larger comparative study of changes in American, Dutch, English and German etiquette or manners books from 1890 to 2000, aims at presenting their sociogenesis, by placing them in the context of a wider framework of changes in national habitus, national class structure, and national integration. This attempt departs from the observation that introductions and the proposal to *duz*, whether or not followed by *Bruderschaft trinken*, both

functioned as a *rite de passage* toward greater equality and intimacy.

**John Lever**, 'Governance, Partnerships and the Mainstreaming of Community Safety', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the West of England, 2008.

Using the figurational sociology of Norbert Elias, the thesis compares partnership working in urban governance with royal courts in the Middle Ages, regimes where new identities are worked out and new relationships between established and outsider groups are negotiated. Lever examines the emergence, use and future potential of community-based partnership working in urban regeneration. Based on a case study of partnership working in the Bristol in southwest England, it examines the ongoing process of institutional change through which partnership working and community safety have become central features UK public policy. Placing partnership working in a long-term socio-historical perspective the paper draws attention to an approach to community safety that prioritises short-term reductions in crime and disorder at the expense of long-term community concerns. This approach is seen to be problematical for a number of reasons and it is argued that partnerships will only be successful if they encourage pro-social behaviour from within rather than through the imposition of formal rules and regulations. Building on the work of Elias and prominent figurational scholars, the paper concludes that although partnerships like Safer Bristol are playing a similar coordinating role to that played by royal courts during earlier periods of European history, they are not currently having the same civilising impact, despite their obvious potential.

#### 'Debat over historische sociologie'

*Sociologie* 3: 4 (2007), pp. 479–510, consisting of:

Marjolein 't Hart, Een revolutie in de historische sociologie? Een debat over *Remaking Modernity* (pp. 479–84).

Johan Goudsblom, Wat is historische sociologie? (pp. 495–91).

Nico Wilterdink, Waar moet het met

de historische sociologie naar toe? (pp. 492–501).

Julia Adams, Elisabeth S. Clemens and Ann Shola Orloff, 'Not drowning but waving ...': *Remaking Modernity* and its Dutch Critics (pp. 502–10).

The last issue of the Dutch journal *Sociologie* of 2007 features a debate on *Remaking Modernity: Politics, History, and Sociology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), edited by Julia Adams (Yale University), Elisabeth Clemens (University of Chicago) and Ann Shola Orloff (Northwestern University). The discussion is opened by Marjolein 't Hart, economic and social historian at the University of Amsterdam, explaining why this book deserves attention of Dutch historical sociologists. Under the heading 'A revolution in historical sociology?' she points out to the far-reaching claims of the so-called 'third wave' in US historical sociology. The editors of *Remaking Modernity* state that since the 1990s or so, US historical sociology has undergone a significant shift as to the sort of questions and methods used. In the 1970s, the field had experienced a major boost by the success of studies by (among others) Barrington Moore, Charles Tilly and Theda Skocpol. For at least two decades, large-scale comparisons became the norm, and students in historical sociology focused on subjects like classes, state formation, and revolutions. Many of these 'second wave' scholars were inspired by Marx (the 'first wave' being the historical sociology prior to this upsurge in the field). Yet by the 1990s, other methods came into fashion, like the new institutionalism and rational choice theory. The cultural turn brought Weber back in, and criticism from feminist scholars and post-colonial studies revealed the layered identities within the ontological categories of the second wave research agenda, like nation and class. The strong eurocentrism of both the first and second wave was criticised too. By the first decade of the twenty-first century, the third wave historical sociologists have found sufficient grounds to feel their approach being established. Their research agenda focuses often upon agents, processes, gender and ethnic differences, as can be seen from the separate contributions to the volume.

Joop Goudsblom (Professor Emeritus of Sociology, University of Amsterdam) is the first to start. He criticises the editors for not being clear about what historical sociology actually means. This presupposes that there is also a sociology that is not historical. This is a misconception (alas held by numerous sociologists as well), as sociology always deals with a reality that has obvious historical roots. The gaze of the third wave seems blinded by the second wave, which they criticise, but their historical understanding is at least as limited, and might even be labelled 'parochial', as it remains focused on US sociology only. Although the criticism of modernisation theory can be understood to a certain degree, nowhere in the book is there any reference to long-term developmental processes. While embracing the criticism of eurocentrism, Goudsblom pleads for a return to the gaze of the sociologists at the beginning of the twentieth century with their obvious interest in large-scale, world historical processes.

Nico Wilterdink (Professor of Cultural Sociology, University of Amsterdam) is at least as critical as Goudsblom. First, the conception of the three 'waves' in the book is too much focused on US sociology, and the treatment of theories is even further narrowed by what the 'second wave' historical sociologists thought important. Furthermore, in the 1970s European sociology experienced a different development, strongly influenced by Norbert Elias and the *Annales* School. For around two decades, history and sociology seemed not so far apart. Yet from the 1990s onwards, historical sociology was became marginalised, with the result that no European 'third wave' can be discerned. However, Wilterdink states that the American third wave is quite inconsistent too and combines trends that stand opposite to each other. Furthermore, part of the criticism of the third wave has been voiced before, among others by world historians in the 1970s like William S. McNeill or Immanuel Wallerstein. Wilterdink ends with the plea that US historical sociologists might significantly enrich their research agenda by looking at developments in the very long term.

In their rejoinder (in English) 'Not drowning but waving...', the editors Adams, Clemens and Orloff welcome the contributions to the debate on their book. They do recognise that the volume is strongly US-centric, from their being raised and trained within the family of the dominant tradition of the second wave themselves. Also, the new research agenda is by no means as coherent and consistent as was that of the 1970s and 1980s. Yet this is partly due to the fact that unlike the situation in several European countries, US sociology is less structured along intellectual hierarchical lines. The mapping of existing scholarship shows the possibilities and fruitfulness of new approaches and most contributions to the volume yield a fine awareness of the current state of the new trends in historical sociology. The editors notice several diverging aspects in scientific culture across the ocean: whereas some Dutch colleagues might find themselves beleaguered by 'rational choice theory', US historical sociologists tend to see rationalities as historically formed, and thus important in the analysis of particular epochs. Another interesting difference is the virtual absence of conversations between Dutch sociologists and historians: in the US, more co-operation exists, among other ways through several cross-disciplinary periodicals and conferences. They acknowledge that the study of developments in the very long term deserves more attention: this is still a lacuna within the established US historical sociology. Finally, they sympathise strongly with Goudsblom's tenet that all sociology should be historical sociology. Although it is unlikely to be accepted by mainstream US sociology, they should do well to keep that maximum programme as a vision and inspiration.

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## ■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

These articles were overlooked when published:

**Susanne Brandtstädter** 'With Elias in China: civilising process, local restorations and power in contemporary rural China', *Anthropological Theory* 3: 1 (2003), pp. 87–105.

*Abstract:* This article argues for the relevance of Norbert Elias's theory of civilising process and social figurations of power for a political anthropology of institutional emergence. The empirical case discussed here is the emergence of seemingly traditional institutions in the more 'developed' regions of rural Southern China – temples and lineages – after the economic reforms. I show how Elias' theory of social figurations of these institutions out of local interdependencies and competition, their relatedness with both the state and 'civil' society, the past and the present, and their ability to combine competition and inequality with the production of a 'moral community'. Using Elias allows integration of these apparent contrasts because in his theory social institutions and the direction of social change are not the result of human intentions or values, but of social figurations of power that, in turn, shape self-interested strategies and collective moralities.

**Sue Dopson**, The diffusion of medical innovations: Can figurational sociology contribute? *Organization Studies* 26: 8 (2005), pp. 1125–44.

*Abstract:* This article seeks to present and explore the relevance of a figurational, or process sociological approach, as developed by Norbert Elias, to the investigation of innovation and change. It is argued that Elias's work offers a theoretically robust framework for exploring such issues. Applications of the principles of his work, in particular the emphasis on an understanding of longer-term unplanned processes, are a potential help to those charged with planning and managing complex change, such as the introduction of innovation. The example of health policy-makers' attempts to use the principles of evidence-based medicine (EBM) to change clinical practice is used to explore these claims.

## ■ RECENT CONFERENCES

### Civilising and Decivilising Processes: A Figurational Approach to American Studies

Frankfurt,  
22–24 November, 2007

Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, Zentrum für Nordamerika-forschung, 22–24 November 2007, organised by Prof. Dr. Christa Buschendorf, Prof. Dr. Astrid Franke (Tübingen), and Dr. Katja Sarkowsky.

The aim of the Frankfurt conference on civilising (and decivilising) processes in the US was to initiate in the field of American Studies an international and interdisciplinary discussion on the figurational or process method developed by Norbert Elias. It was also meant to broaden Elias's method to include the sociological concepts of Pierre Bourdieu – thereby necessarily emphasising the affinities rather than the differences between the two sociologists. Like Elias, Bourdieu challenged the sociological community by disrespecting disciplinary borders; and like Elias, Bourdieu sought to combine agency and structure, which in his case is expressed in his interrelated concepts of habitus and field.

In his keynote address 'Decivilising the Penal State', the French sociologist Loïc Wacquant (Berkeley and Paris) presented the major results of his extensive field research on the black ghetto (as published for example in his latest book *Urban Outcasts: A Comparative Sociology of Advanced Marginality*, Cambridge: Polity, 2008). Wacquant insisted on an integrative method: by analogy to Bourdieu's concepts of the relative autonomy of the various fields of society and the unequal distribution of forms of capital and power-chances, he considered all relevant factors of the labour market, ethnic division, and state policy and, in addition, historicised them by making use of Elias's theory of civilising processes. The most provocative hypothesis of his most recent research is the claim that it is above all the structural violence exerted by the state that is responsible for the decivilisation of the American 'hyperghetto'.

The first section, 'The Formation of the State and of Individuals', was devoted to the correlation between the processes of state-formation and national habitus formation. In his talk 'The American Civilising Process and its Decivilising Underbelly', the renowned Elias scholar Stephen Mennell (Dublin) presented central theses of his recent book *The American Civilizing Process* (Polity, 2007; see the review essay by Andrew Linklater in this issue of *Figurations*). In offering a brief overview of his pioneering study – the first comprehensive attempt to apply Elias's model to American social development – Mennell on the one hand emphasised the continuity of the transatlantic civilising processes in Europe and the US, for example with regard to attitudes towards violence, and on the other hand stressed 'American exceptionalism' by pointing out such differences as the effect of the key institution of the market on shaping the American habitus. Mennell's book covers the broad spectrum of the characteristics of the American civilising process and thus has opened up a promising field of further specialised research.

In her response to Mennell's theses, the historian Mary Furner (Santa Barbara, California) posed a number of pertinent questions. For example, she criticised Elias's trust in a basically benevolent character of the state monopoly of violence. Moreover, as a representative of intellectual history, she missed the deliberation of the role of human reason in the American process of civilisation, especially with regard to the writing of the American Constitution, which allowed the Founding Fathers to draw from various ancient and modern European theories, on the basis of which they created an 'ideal' constitution emphasising 'checks and balances'.

The contribution by the Americanist Dietmar Schloss (Heidelberg), 'Norbert Elias and the United States: the Public Discussion about the Shape of the Republic in the Early National Period', also focused on the Founding Fathers whose recourse on Scottish moral philosophy provided them with an understanding of the civilising process that according to Schloss bears great

resemblance to Elias's concept of the gradual shift from external constraints to self-restraints.

Cas Wouters's (Amsterdam) sociological research on etiquette books has focused on the central question whether the civilising process as conceptualised by Elias has taken a different direction in the twentieth century. Wouters's latest book, *Informalisation: Manners & Emotions since 1890* (Sage, 2007; see the review essay by Helmut Kuzmics in this issue of *Figurations*), is a comparative study on the increasing processes of informalisation in Germany, England, the Netherlands, and the USA. Wouters demonstrates that the discernible tendencies of informalisation are compatible with Elias's notion (albeit a modified version) of civilising processes, and he tries to explain the different developments in the four countries by the various degrees of social (im-)permeability. In his talk, 'Status Competition and the Development of an American Habitus', Wouters concentrated on the specifically American pattern of development towards several competing centres of power and the resulting characteristics of American regimes of emotions and manners.

The second section of the conference, 'Challenges to the Civilising Process', was supposed to focus on special developments of the American society, such as the power differential between established and outsiders (e.g. Native Americans and African Americans) and its consequences. In his methodical reflection, the historian of law, Anthony V. Baker (Buies Creek, North Carolina), '... violation of law ... contempt of justice': Figuration and the Nat Turner Rebellion', maintained that the figurational approach to this uprising could be instrumental in leading the research on Nat Turner out of the impasse of mere moral judgements. It would allow scholars to pose innovative questions. Thus the enquiry into Turner's habitus, undoubtedly shaped by the master-slave figuration, might lead to new insights into the motivations of the rebel.

The third section, 'Civilising Projects? Education and the Arts', was dedicated to special conditions influencing the American intellectual fields. In his talk



with the title 'Emerson and the Field of Transcendentalist Intellectuals', the Americanist Günter Leypoldt (Mainz) explored Bourdieu's concepts of field and forms of capital in his attempt to situate the eminent public intellectual Ralph Waldo Emerson in the overlapping fields of nineteenth-century theology and literature. Biljana Oklopčić, a literary scholar from Osijek, Croatia, gave a talk on 'Women's Education in the US South as Civilising Project: Its Literary (De)Construction in William Faulkner's *Snapes Trilogy*'. As Oklopčić demonstrated, Faulkner's history of a Southern family presents the ideology of the patriarchal South, according to which women – equated with nature – have to undergo a civilising process that, in the trilogy, shows the immense power differential between the sexes. The great American educational project of the late nineteenth century, the boarding schools devoted to the 'civilising' of Native Americans, was the topic of the talk '“Making Us Be Like Wasichus:” Civilising and Decivilising Processes in Nineteenth-Century Indian Boarding Schools' by the Romanian Americanist Ruxandra Radulescu (Bucharest), which she discussed by presenting photographic documents of the period.

In conclusion, the Americanist and cultural theorist Winfried Fluck (FU, Berlin) juxtaposed the postmodern theories of subject formation that attempt to eliminate the notion of a coherent 'identity' with figurational concepts of identity formation which, as he maintained, allow for more adequate explanations of the new habitus that has evolved under the conditions of globalisation. Fluck described it as an enhanced flexibility that develops in reaction to the challenges both of the multiple tasks of today's working place and the increasing variety of consumer goods. In his response to Fluck's methodological considerations, Pieter Spierenburg (historian and criminologist, Rotterdam) referred for example to Fluck's remarks on Foucault's concept of power, emphasising the desideratum of further research on Foucault's and Elias's theories of power.

The following results have emerged from the talks and discussions in Frank-

furt. As the organisers had hoped, the dialogue between experts of the method of figurational sociology and scholars who explored the possibilities of the approach in the field of American Studies proved to be very productive. Moreover, the participants agreed upon the great potential the approach offers for the discipline of American Studies. It appears that the conceptual tools of Elias and Bourdieu provide innovative perspectives on American exceptionalism, when it is seen as the result of a distinctively American direction of civilising and decivilising processes. The publication of the conference proceedings will hopefully encourage further American Studies research projects on the basis of figurational or process sociology.

Christa Buschendorf  
Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität  
Frankfurt

### Symposium on Informalisation in Honour of Cas Wouters Amsterdam, 18 April 2008

On April 18, Cas Wouters' book *Informaliserin: Manieren en emoties sinds 1890* (Amsterdam, Bert Bakker 2008) was launched in Amsterdam. The Dutch translation of *Informalization: Manners and Emotions since 1890* (London: Sage, 2007 – see review

essay by Helmut Kuzmics in this issue of *Figurations*).

A symposium was organised for the occasion. As the process of informalisation involves increasing behavioural and emotional alternatives, the leading idea of the symposium was to invite scholars from several disciplines within social science and have them discuss the relevance and significance of informalisation theory and informalisation processes for their discipline. The sociologist who did so was Paul Schnabel, director of the Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP). His eloquent paper provided many witty examples of changes in the direction of informalisation and subsequent reformalisation. Several examples of an unbalanced 'emancipation of emotions' showed rough edges of informalisation processes – people who would have felt shame before, feel angry today while presenting their anger as a sign of being right – and functioned to open a window on how and why these processes will continue.

From his study in Ahmedabad (Gujarat, India), political scientist and cultural anthropologist Ward Berenschot presented a paper relating a century of changes in manners in the direction of informalisation to changes in the structures and functions of the state, castes and classes. As social dividing lines of castes eroded, status competi-



From left to right: Ward Berenschot, Cas Wouters, Paul Schnabel, Joop Goudsblom, and Arend-Jan Heerma van Voss

tion continued along lines of class, and Berenschot drew special attention to the Sanskritisation process in India: how new upper and middle classes tried to adopt many of the manners and distinctions of the previous ruling castes. The latter was described as an attempt at (re)formalisation.

Wouter Gomperts, psychoanalyst and psychologist, presented a paper on the emancipation of emotions in psychotherapy with immigrants, focusing on ethnic feelings of superiority and inferiority. Thus he addressed the emancipation of emotions that are the most difficult to subject to 'controlled decontrolling of emotional controls', if only because displays of superiority and inferiority became increasingly tabooed, and correspondingly, the feelings of superiority and inferiority became (and remained) more strongly repressed and denied than other emotions. Gomperts provided many moving examples of the difficulties in attempting to address these feelings of inferiority and superiority, showing at the same time the importance of 'working through' these feelings in the microcosm of therapeutic sessions. And certainly not only there.

In the last paper, Bernard Kruithof, historian and pedagogue, addressed the question whether the concept of informalisation could be a useful tool for historians. Considering the rather strong allergic reaction of Dutch historians to sociological theory and certainly to such a theory dealing with the most recent past, he did not expect many historians to use the concept. Yet he predicted that the concept would catch on and become a household word among people who never heard of Cas Wouters.

## ■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

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

There will be three 'figurational' sessions, organised by Stephen Menzell and Robert van Krieken, on the overall theme of 'Civilising and Decivilising Processes: Key Trends of the Twenty-First Century'.

### Session A: Paths to the Present

*Chair and Discussant: Nico Wilterdink (University of Amsterdam)*

Andrew Stebbins (Murdoch University, Perth, Australia) *Elias and China*

Fernando Ampudia de Haro (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal) *Spanish 'decivilisation' and 'dyscivilisation': The case of Second Republic, Civil War and Franco's dictatorship*

Irem Ozgoren Kinli (Izmir Economics University, Turkey) *Gendering the civilising process of the Ottoman Empire*

Helmut Kuzmics (Universität Graz, Austria) *Emotions of Commanders and Officers and their Control in War and Peace: The Example of the Habsburg Army from 1800 to 1918.*

Rafael Marques (Universidade Técnica de Lisboa, Portugal) *Von Braunmühl's Conjecture: The Civilisational Dimension of Duelling*

Sam Nelson (Yale University, USA) *Religious Revival and Discourses of Civilisation in the Early Eighteenth Century*

Dieter Reicher (Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria) *Widening the Civilising Theory to Aspects of Interstate Conflicts*

### Session B: Civilising and Decivilising Process, Power and Conflict

*Chair and Discussant: Steve Loyal (University College Dublin)*

Stephen Menzell (University College Dublin, Ireland) *The American Empire: Functional De-democratisation and Diminishing Foresight*

Cas Wouters (University of Utrecht) *Status Competition and the Development of an American Habitus*

Matt Clement (Open University, UK) *Civilising and Ghettoising: Social Figurations and Urban Development*

José Esteban Castro (University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK) 'Social struggles, common goods, and the long-term development of citizenship: local water conflicts in global perspective'

Michael Drake (University of Hull) *Out of the barracks and running amok? An Eliasian perspective on trends in the organisation of violence in the twenty-first century*

Stephen Vertigans (Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, UK) *De-Civilising in the Name of Civilisation: Understanding the Consensus*

Andrew Hammel (University of Düsseldorf, Germany, and Harvard University, USA) *The Civilising Process, the Politics of 'Civilisation', and the Death Penalty in Europe and the United States of America*

### Session C: Civilising and Decivilising Processes Today

*Chair and Discussant: Richard Kilminster (University of Leeds)*

Tatiana Savoia Landini (Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brazil) *Sexual violence against children: a decivilising process?*

Stefan Bargheer (University of Chicago, USA) *Toward a Leisure Theory of Value: The Game of Bird watching and the Concern for Conservation in Great Britain*

Norman Gabriel (University of Plymouth, UK) *Affective bonding or attachments? An exploration of the relation between Bowlby and Elias's approach to human interdependence*

Sam Binkley (Emerson College, Boston, USA) *The Civilising Brand: Shifting Shame Thresholds and the Dissemination of Consumer Lifestyles*

Yi-Tung Chang (National Pingtung University of Education, Taiwan) *Civilising or De-Civilising the Children in the Global Age*

Sarah Egan (Yale University, USA) *A Good Sport? Hunting and civilisation in the Twenty-first Century*

**Self-Regulation or Self-Care – The Sociology of the Subject in the Twenty-first Century**  
University of Hamburg,  
3–5 July, 2008  
Hörsaal H, ESA (Edmund Siemers-Allee), Hauptgeb.

#### ***Provisional Programme***

Only the main speakers are given for reasons of space; including the parallel sessions, 34 speakers are listed in the full programme – see [www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/srsc](http://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/srsc)

3 July 2008  
11.00–13.30 Registration  
13.30 – 14.00 Welcome and Introduction  
Topic 1: The Nature of the Individual/  
Subject  
Eva Illouz, Jerusalem  
Armin Nassehi, Munich  
Annette Treibel, Karlsruhe

4 July 2008  
*Topic 2: Self Regulating and Self Caring Techniques*  
Thomas Schäfer  
Stephen Mennell, Dublin  
Helga Pelizaeus-Hoffmeister, Munich  
Afternoon: *Topic 3 – Current Research: Parallel Sessions on Work, Body, Desire, Time and Space*

5 July 2008  
*Topic 4: Perspectives of transdisciplinary research about the individual*  
Andrea D. Bührmann, Muenster and Berlin, Stefanie Ernst, Hamburg.  
*Discussion Forum:* M. Pieper, J. Goudsblom, H. Korte, J. Stagl, C. Wouters  
13.30 Close of Conference

*Enquiries* can be addressed to the conference organisers:

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**International Sociological Association First Forum on Sociology**  
Barcelona,  
5–8 September 2008

Research Committee 20, Comparative Sociology: Working Group on Civilising and Decivilising Processes  
*Chair:* Stephen Mennell, University College Dublin

*Speakers:*  
Johan Goudsblom, University of Amsterdam: 'Toward a developmental theory of violence: Combining Elias and Collins'

Fernando Ampudia de Haro, Universidade Nova de Lisboa: 'Discussing decivilisation: some theoretical remarks'

Diego Mauricio Barragán Díaz, Universidad Militar Nueva Granada, Colombia: 'The notables family and the social order, in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Colombia'

John Lever, University of the West of England, UK: 'Regeneration, partnerships and the civilising process'

Vera Weiler, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Colombia: Understanding processual thinking – on Elias's theory of knowledge

Andrew Stebbins (Murdoch University, Perth, Australia): Elias and China

**Zur Genealogie des Zivilisationsprozesses: Friedrich Nietzsche und Norbert Elias**  
Berlin, Humboldt University,  
26–27 September, 2008.

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



## ■ OBITUARY

Stanislav Andreski,  
1919–2007



The great Polish–British sociologist Stanislav Andreski, Professor Emeritus at the University of Reading, died on 26 September 2007. His books included *Military Organization and Society* (1954, rev. edn 1968, which first advanced the key concept of ‘military participation ratio’), *Elements of Comparative Sociology* (1964), *Social Sciences as Sorcery* (1974) and *War, Revolutions and Dictatorships* (1982).

Andreski was a long-term friend of Norbert Elias’s. My best memory of him was when he turned up at the conference on Elias’s work that Eric Dunning and I organised at Balliol College, Oxford, at the New Year, 1980. The title of Andreski’s paper was ‘Protestantism, Capitalism and Syphilis’. I’ve always wished that I had thought of that.

There’s a wonderful legend about Stas Andreski and Norbert Elias swimming together in Lake Geneva, on the occasion of the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Evian in 1966, talking animatedly about sociology (what else?). A large wave came along and sank Elias completely. For some moments Elias remained submerged, and then popped up again, still talking sociology.

Stas also had a colourful military history in the Second World War. Entertaining details can be found in excellent obituaries by Christie Davies in the *Independent*, 10 October, and by Kazimierz Sowa in the *Guardian*, 20 November 2007.

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## ■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

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<http://elias-i.nsfhost.com/elias/figs.htm>

There you can read them all the way back to the first issue in 1994.

## ■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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

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