

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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■ UPDATED IMAGE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Images in the newsletter add colour, context and show the unique faces of the people who have contributed and continue to contribute to the intellectual endeavour that binds us. We would like to publish more images in the newsletter, which display the events, places, and perceptive skills of the process-orientated scholarship community.

We are interested in images that:

- Document an event, conference, workshop or gathering involving the process-orientated scholarship community.
- Showcase spaces and places of significance to the process-orientated scholarship community.
- Assist the reconstruction of a particular process or sets of processes in ways that expands the discussions of process-orientated scholarship and should be accompanied by a short explanation (around 3-5 sentences).

The first two points reaffirm the longstanding practice for images to appear in Figurations newsletter. Also, if you have recently completed

your Viva and have pictures of yourself, alongside your examiners and supervisors, send us your photos. The third point is a new addition that opens a space to utilise the attuned grasp of the means of orientation shown by the process-orientated scholarship community, to make visible, the sets of relations and processes that routinely seem invisible. The newsletter can offer a platform to showcase those perceptive skills in a visual format as well as through written words.

If you have a photograph or set of photographs that fit with any of the above criteria. Submit your pictures in JPEG format to figurations@norbert-elias.com and we hope to include them in future issues.

■ PEOPLE

Aurélié Lacassagne has been appointed, from 1 July 2022, Dean of the Faculties of Human Sciences and Philosophy at Saint Paul University, a small university located in Ottawa and federated to the University of Ottawa. She also becomes a full Professor. This is an especially happy outcome, because in 2021 Aurélié was one of the many victims of the disgraceful behaviour of Laurentian University when it closed down dozens of its programmes and sacked 200 staff.

Two octogenarians: Abram de Swaan celebrated his 80th birthday on 8

January 2021, and Richard Kilminster his on 7 April. Congratulations to both. People some of us once thought of as Norbert Elias's 'young men and women' are no longer young – except in spirit, of course.

On 31 May, the biennial Dublin Gastronomy Symposium at the Technological University Dublin conferred the title of Fellow on Stephen Mennell, also presenting him with a hallmarked solid silver ladle, which looks far too valuable to be used to serve out soup.

■ OBITUARY



Clare Spencer (1974–2022)

We are sorry to report the death of Clare Spencer on 5 May 2022, at the age of 47. Clare designed the logo of the Norbert Elias Foundation, the red square that we still use, as well as the Foundation's website that was in use until about 2017, at www.norberteliasfoundation.nl.

Clare, who came from Hampshire, was between 2001 and 2007 on the administrative staff of the Department of Sociology at University College Dublin, in charge of our Undergraduate Office. That involved keeping track of almost a thousand students, and she managed them with great efficiency and good humour. Her tasks also included assisting me as Head of Department, and she managed me with great efficiency and good humour too. She was a lively presence in the Department, and became a dear friend to many of us, notably Katie Liston, Steve Quilley, Steve Loyal, Eric Dunning (who was a Visiting Professor at that period) and of course me.

Very unusually for a member of the administrative staff, she also published an academic essay in the *Irish Journal of Sociology* in 2005. Clare was not a total novice in sociology: she had read English and Sociology

in her degree at the University of Lancaster. But her real passion was art, design and architecture, and she took an evening course in 'interior architecture' at Griffith College, Dublin. For that, she wrote a paper comparing the social assumptions underlying the architecture and designs of Le Corbusier and Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Eric and I both read it and were impressed. We suggested some ideas for its further development, and the revised version was accepted for publication (see the abstract under Bibliographical Retrospect). In April 2006, she also presented her argument at the conference on 'Elias in the Twenty-First Century' in Leicester (see *Figurations* 25).

In 2007, Clare moved to Glasgow, because she had worked out that it was the only major city in the British Isles where she could afford to buy a flat. The fact that so many of Mackintosh's finest buildings are in Glasgow no doubt played a part too. But she always remained in contact with the Elias circle. She took on various tasks for the Elias Foundation: not just the website, but she also attended a couple of meetings of the Board, once acting as its Secretary; she became involved in the journal *Human Figurations*, helped with the Collected Works, notably

preparing the typescript of the new edition of *Quest for Excitement*, and came to the conference in Leicester marking the completion of the 18 volumes in 2014. She also became a very fine jewellery designer, under the tradename 'Rose Madder', expressing her personal artistic impulse (see <https://rosemadderjewellery.com/>).

She is a great loss.

Stephen Mennell

Oleksandr Kyslyuk (1962-2022)

We regret the passing of Oleksandr Kyslyuk (1962-2022), Senior Lecturer at the Department of Theory and History of State and Law of the Institute of Political Science, and Law of the National Pedagogical University MP Dragomanova. He was a historian, classicist and Ukrainian translator of Aristotle, Xenophon, and Thomas Aquinas. In 2009, he published a translation of Norbert Elias's *Studies on the Germans* into Ukrainian.

■ FORTHCOMING EVENTS

SYMPOSIUM: TOWARDS AN ELIASIAN UNDERSTANDING OF FOOD IN THE 21ST CENTURY, 7TH SEPTEMBER 2022, HERITAGE QUAY, UNIVERSITY OF HUDDERSFIELD, UK

Like many sociologists, Norbert Elias (1897-1990) did not write directly about food, more to demonstrate propositions that are wider in scope than the actualities of eating. Since Elias completed his major works, a vast body of Eliasian inspired food research has emerged across academic disciplines. The most notable continuation in the 20th century emerged through the work of Huddersfield born Stephen Mennell, whose discussions with Elias led to the influential *All Manners of Food* (1985). In the intervening decades, Mennell's work has influenced many in food studies, including Alan Warde (2016) and others involved in the development of theories of practice. In the early 21st century, specific Eliasian accounts have emerged through John Lever's work on the meat industry and religious food

markets (2017; 2021) and Jennifer Smith Maguire's work on contemporary wine markets (2017; 2021); Connolly and Dolan's (2017) work on marketing, organisations and markets also comes to mind. More broadly, as the Eliasian inspired environmental sociologist Debbie Kasper (2016; 2021) notes, food provides a fascinating way of exploring many emerging issues to which the modern eye is blind. This came to the fore at the recent conference to celebrate the life and work of Joop Goudsblom in Amsterdam, where Nina Baur (2022) discussed long term processes as obstacles to food system sustainability in the context of a fourth ecological transformation.

This symposium invites papers on the following themes:

- Eliasian influences on food studies
- Food & drink markets
- Food & the fourth ecological transformation
- Advertising, marketing & branding
- Informalisation & digital food transformations
- All manners of food in the 21st century

Update: The symposium will now take place online. If you are interested in attending, please register using this link: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/surge-towards-an-eliasian-understanding-of-food-in-the-21st-century-tickets-373211675167>. For more information, please contact j.b.lever@hud.ac.uk and/or Adrianna.Kapek-Goodridge@hud.ac.uk.

■ XIX INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON CIVILIZING PROCESSES SALVADOR/BAHIA/BRASIL, 27TH TO 30TH OF NOVEMBER 2022

Eliasian greetings,

At the end of the XVIII International Symposium on Civilizing Processes-SIPC, in November 2020, during the event's evaluation meeting, representatives from the Escuela Superior de Administración Pública (ESAP/Colombia), the Federal University of Grande Dourados

(UFGD/Brazil), the State University of Londrina (UEL/Brazil), University of Buenos Aires (UBA/Argentina), Federal University of Paraíba (UFPA/Brazil), University of Amsterdam (UvA/Netherlands) decided on Bahia as the venue for the nineteenth edition of the symposium. At the same meeting, it was decided by the group that the theme of the event for the year 2022 symposium would be racism. UNEB and IFBA, represented respectively by teachers Dina Maria Rosário dos Santos and Márcia Maria Gonçalves de Oliveira, accepted the group's proposal.

The nineteenth edition of the symposium is organized around the theme "Racisms and the expansion of the civilizing process: yesterday, today and becomings". The theme of the event was built between the key that Elias gives us to think about the expansion of the civilizing process and the racialization of relations between social subjects. In 2022 the International Symposium on Civilizing Processes updates Sérgio Campos Gonçalves' invitation/alert to "the study of the different social realities of ex-colonies with the help of the theory of the civilizing process, whether in the Portuguese/Spanish Americas or in other continents, is still a task to be done" (GONÇALVES1, 2013, p. 220). Let's do it!

The XIX SIPC, which will take place between the 27th and 30th of November 2022, is an event of technical-scientific study aimed at researchers, teachers, professionals, undergraduate students and graduate students from different fields of knowledge, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations, public or private, and political and civil society. The 2022 edition is organized around the theme "Racisms and the expansion of civilizing process: yesterday, today and becomings" and has the following axes of discussion: Figurations and Interdependencies; Balance of power; Insurgencies and reticular phenomena. The modalities of the works of the event will be: i) Scientific article ii) Essay; iii) Pedagogical letter; iii) Artistic presentations.

The works will be presented at: a) Coordinated tables (by invitation); b) Thematic tables (proposed by participating researchers); c) Communication sessions (submitted and approved); and d) Research workshops (submitted and approved works whose contents address topics for Eliasian-based academic research to be appreciated and optimized by area experts). The works presented at the XIX SIPC will be XIX SIPC Salvador/Bahia/ Brasil registered in two publications: the Annals of the event (the texts of all submitted and approved works) and a collection (texts from the coordinated tables and thematic tables). The event's activities will take place at the headquarters of CEPAlA – Center for the Study of Afro-Indian-American Peoples at the State University of Bahia – UNEB.

The Organizing Committee, attentive to the challenges imposed by the Covid19 pandemic, remains looking forward to holding this XIX SIPC 2022 in a face-to-face format, considering the possibility of including hybrid activities as a strategy to guarantee participation (listeners, presenters and guests) of as many people as possible, including professors, researchers and students from the most diverse Brazilian academic institutions and foreigners, activists of social movements and others interested in the subject.

The first circular of the XIX SIPC invites researchers, teachers, professionals, students from undergraduate and graduate courses in different fields of knowledge, especially the areas of human, social, political and health sciences, as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations, public or private, and political and civil society, interested in the Theories of Figurational Sociology and Civilizing Processes formulated by Norbert Elias, as a theoretical and methodological contribution to understand social formations, to participate in the construction of the symposium through the composition of a scientific committee, proposal of tables, submission of works, coordination of research workshops and book releases.

In due course, we will publish the specific calls for the composition of actions and initiatives, as well as details on the general schedules, timelines and deadlines.

Regards,
Organizing Committee of the XIX SIPC/2022

■ THE FANTASY–REALITY CONTINUUM: SCIENCE, RELIGION, POLITICS, CULTURE, University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland, 8–10 December 2022

Papers are invited for an international conference at the University of Warsaw on 8–10 December 2022 on the theme 'The Fantasy–Reality Continuum: Science, Religion, Politics, Culture'. Under the auspices of the Norbert Elias Foundation, the steering group for the conference consists of Marta Bucholc (University of Warsaw), Valerie Dahl (Universität Münster), Marta Gospodarczyk (University of Warsaw), Jason Hughes (University of Leicester), Katie Liston (Ulster University), Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin).

The conference will be face-to-face (on-site) in Warsaw with some sessions online.

The Topic

The idea of the fantasy–reality continuum plays a key part in Norbert Elias's sociological theory of knowledge and the sciences. The struggle to achieve relatively more 'reality- congruent' knowledge has been closely bound up with long-term civilising processes, and notably the gradual reduction of levels of everyday danger and corresponding fears. The gathering pace of the natural sciences involved breaking religions' historic monopoly over the means of orientation. At the same time, the social organisation of the sciences brought with it relatively strong controls over the scope of fantasy, with the curbs on emotion and fantasy were relatively weaker in the realm of politics, and

weaker still in the field of cultural creativity.

All this has suddenly become of great contemporary practical and political relevance. The curbs on the free exercise of fantasy have seemed suddenly to be much weaker, and fears are on the rise. As indeed so have, in politics especially, the curbs on untruthfulness: is it now more possible to 'get away' with consciously telling lies, possibly with the intention of promoting fantastic beliefs for other people? Examples abound that it is less possible than before to take for granted the effectiveness of social controls over standards of evidence and truth in debates, be it over military aggression parading as self-defense or the unfulfillable campaign promises ending in disasters. Even hard scientific expertise has been affected, as witness for example the denial of climate change and the strength of 'anti-vax' fantasies. Softer scholarly contributions to our knowledge about human societies past and present also face severe challenges by revisionists, reformers and revolutionaries. Among those are the pursuers of historical politics and politics of memory marked by *ressentiment*, striving to reverse the arrow of time, and fundamentalists, seeking to establish new utopias in lieu of the old ones such as the human rights.

In all this, the new social media have apparently played a decisive part. At first seen as a possible step towards greater democratisation of knowledge production and dissemination, they also appear to have fostered in some quarters an extreme individualistic belief that 'anything goes'. The Janus nature of an apparently limitless human communication has seldom become so evident.

We hope this topic will stimulate the whole wide range of contributions from scholars of any theoretical and methodological orientation coming from social sciences and humanities, including sociology, economy, history, cultural studies, literary studies, gender studies migration studies, political science, international relations, theology, and law. It is our goal to

bring social-scientific understanding of long-term history processes to bear on the shifts in the fantasy–reality continuum in today’s world. It is anticipated that the conference will comprise five streams, including, apart from a general one, streams on science, religion, politics, and culture, for which the following list of indicative subjects is suggested as a starting point for the contributors’ consideration.

Science

- Are science and the democratisation of knowledge incompatible?
- What does ‘anything goes’ mean in the production and reception of scientific knowledge?
- What are the limitations to the laissez-faire in the field of knowledge production?
- How are we to understand and explain current challenges to scientific expertise coming from politics, religion, and culture in general?
- What has Covid-19 taught us about the fantasy–reality continuum?
- What are the ethical constraints and restraints of the production of reality-congruent knowledge?
- Is there such a thing as a ‘scientific fantasy’? What are the scientific fantasies of our times?

Religion

- Can religion survive without fantasy? How much reality-congruence can religion bear?
- Can society survive without religious fantasy? What are the likely replacements – if any – for religion as a social glue?
- Was the secularisation thesis in sociology a scientific fantasy that is now coming to be debunked?
- Is the nineteenth-century conflict between religion and science still relevant in the twenty-first century?
- How are editions and interpretations of sacred religious texts affected by the political tensions, behavioural codes and sensibilities of a generation?
- How are we to understand the appeal of different kinds of religious extremism?
- Which religious organisations

are still to some degree capable of maintaining a monopoly of the means of orientation? Under what conditions?

- To what extent can centralized religious organisations be analysed as court societies?
- Does Elias’s *Die höfische Gesellschaft* / *The Court Society* help in understanding their functioning?

Politics

- How far can we move towards reducing the fantasy content in political discourse? What are the main challenges of moving towards more reality-congruent approaches to politics?
- What role, if any, has fantasy played in the resurgence of wars, notably Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022? Which fantasies are particularly prone to fuel warlike imaginaries and attitudes?
- How far can we move towards reducing the fantasy content in established–outsiders relations in general, in intra- and interstate relations? Can there be exclusion and integration without collective fantasies?
- Does the upsurge in magical-mythical thinking in politics constitute what Freud terms ‘a return of the repressed’?
- What role do the media/politicians or bureaucrats have in retaining public standards and distinctions between fantasy and reality?
- Why are conspiracy theories so alluring?
- What changing role do fantasy, wish-fulfilment and paranoia play in the political ideologies on the left and on the right in times of social tension and disorder?
- Are democracy and the rule of law political fantasies? What fantasies about democracy and the rule of law prevail in the political ideologies of our times?
- Can process sociology help illuminate the notion of ‘post-truth’?

Culture

- How can we analyse national culture and national identity in terms of reality-fantasy continuum?
- To what extent do the forms of cultural expression (including cultural practices, lifestyles, group and class identification and we-images) reflect the reality–fantasy tensions of our own time?
- Are fantasy and imagination the same thing?
- Elias’s interests included the utopian and dystopian aspects of science fiction for their insights into the collective fantasies of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. How does twenty-first-century science fiction appear in the light of figurational sociology?
- What is the contribution of biographical studies to understanding the role of fantasy in artistic creativity?
- What is the role of social media as a domain of individual and collective fantasising?
- Where are museums located on the fantasy–reality continuum? What is the function of contemporary museums of anxiety, guilt, and terror?
- What effect do climate change, public health crisis and economic crisis have on the fantasies of consumption and advertising: car ownership, air travel, tourism, etc.? How does it change everyday culture?

General

- How can psychoanalytical approaches be used to explain collective fantasies?
- How can we build on, revise, or improve on the idea of the fantasy–reality continuum? What theoretical perspectives can offer a starting point for it?
- What are the determinants of our thinking about reality-fantasy continuum and its changes, including in particular the colonial and gender ones?
- How is our knowledge situated in terms of moving between fantasy and reality?
- What long-term shifts in

socio-political conditions, including changes of class structures, political systems and geopolitical alliances have allowed the flourishing of increasing degrees of fantasy-based knowledge?

- Is 'future' yet another fantasy?

Submission of papers

Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be submitted to Fantasy-Reality-Warsaw2022@is.uw.edu.pl not later than 15 July 2022.

Abstracts should:

- specify the title of the presentation and the preferred stream;
- give not more than five keywords;
- include details of all institutional affiliations of all the authors (with an indication of their student/PhD student/independent scholar status);
- indicate the preferred mode of participation (on-site or online); it will be possible to change the participation mode until the end of September 2022.

The language of the conference will be English.

The authors of the abstracts will be notified of their acceptance and of the registration fees by the end of July 2022.

Registration for the conference will open on 1 August 2022.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

LONG-TERM PROCESSES IN HUMAN HISTORY: A TRIBUTE TO JOHAN GOUDSBLOM, AMSTERDAM, 17-19 MARCH 2022

Editors Note:

For the recent Goudsblom conference, we have decided to include two conference reports, one from David Sierra and another from Rineke van Daalen. We feel that two different accounts of the conference would make for a more interesting read by highlighting both overlaps and distinctions. It would also encourage further reflections by both presenters and participants. Moving ahead, we would like to continue this practice because it further emphasises the experiential dimension of the means of orientation: how people can experience the same event in different ways.

Tribute to Johan Goudsblom – David Sierra

Following the death of the renowned Dutch sociologist and beloved member of the international Eliasian community, Johan Goudsblom, three of his former students and colleagues, Johan Heilbron, Nico Wilterdink and Stephen Mennell, took the initiative to organise a conference focused on his lifelong efforts to elucidate long-term social processes. It was supported by the Norbert Elias Foundation, whose secretary, Arjan Post, joined the organising committee. Due to restrictions related to the covid-19 pandemic, the desire to commemorate Goudsblom and his work had to be put on hold. It finally took place exactly two years after his passing. The conference was

held in the beautiful Trippenhuis, home of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, in Amsterdam, from 17 to 19 March 2022, with the possibility of attending and participating virtually via Zoom.

The first day of the conference focused on Goudsblom's life and work. Stephen Mennell and Hermann Korte opened the conference, to be followed by contributions by Frans Saris, Nico Wilterdink and Abram de Swaan. Members of the Goudsblom family also took part in the tribute, especially





in the moments of conviviality. The anecdotes shared allowed to recall the exceptional personality of ‘Joop’, as he was called by those close to him, and revealed the high esteem he was held in by his friends, colleagues and former students. On the following days, Friday 18 and Saturday 19 March, various topics related to the conference theme were discussed, both in plenary lectures and in parallel paper sessions. Keynote speakers were David Christian, Nina Baur, John McNeill, Giseline Kuipers, Richard Sennett, and Randall Collins. Despite a few manifestations of the pandemic, which forced some participants and even one of the organisers, Johan Heilbron, to attend the event only virtually, the conference was a great success. This is confirmed by some general figures: More than a hundred participants registered to attend



the conference, 11 plenary presentations were given by leading scholars from 6 different countries, and 47 papers were presented in 18 parallel sessions by researchers from universities across 15 different countries.

Much of the discussion dealt with general and specific aspects of Goudsblom’s work, showing the mark he left on research into long-term socio-historical processes. This conference manifested and reinforced his enduring legacy. A selection of papers will be published in a special issue of the journal *Historical Social Research* early 2023. Besides, a website devoted to Goudsblom’s work is in the making.

Tribute to Johan Goudsblom – Rineke van Daalen

Johan Goudsblom died at the beginning of the first lock-down period, on 17 March 2020. We had to wait exactly two years to honour him with a conference. Its theme was ‘Long-Term Processes in Human History: A Tribute to Johan Goudsblom’, and in that title lies the breadth of Joop’s interests. *Fire and Civilisation* (1991) is an illustration of this. That book is about processes of civilisation, but it covers an unusually long period for sociologists, much longer than the work of Norbert Elias himself and most historical sociologists who work in his tradition.

As the conference went on, I became increasingly aware that Joop Goudsblom’s legacy is actually twofold. He trained a circle of sociologists in the tradition of Norbert Elias, and he gave social civilisation processes a place in the history of mankind in the broadest sense of the word. Figurational sociologists and Big History scholars were present at the conference.

Joop was one of the links in this interdisciplinary approach to human history, but a connection between these scientific communities did not materialise. In retrospect, that is a pity, because in 2022 it turns out that it is precisely this lengthening and widening of the field of vision that directly links up with current events. People like David Christian and John R. McNeill talked about urgent issues such as climate change, sustainability regimes and the exploitation of the planet.

Richard Sennett changed his original story ‘Performing Civility’ and started talking about barbarism. In doing so, he did us all a favour. During the conference, the war in Ukraine was on everyone’s mind, but rarely the subject of conversation. That is how compartmentalisation works. Sennett compared the ‘ontological uncertain’ situation we are in to a chronic illness. You have to learn to live with it. Frans Saris saw that attitude as too resigned. You have to keep asking yourself what can be done about it. In his earlier lecture, Saris had already called on

social scientists to design a fourth regime, a socio-ecological regime, along the lines of Joop Goudsblom.

‘Norbert Elias and...’ – On the 125th Birthday of a Classical Social Scientist

*Classroom event at the University of
Passau, 24–25 June 2022*

Organised by Thorsten Benkel and
Matthias Meitzler

Norbert Elias’s rank as a sociological classic is undisputed. The 125th anniversary of his birth falls on 22 June 2022. This anniversary will serve as the occasion for a workshop dedicated to the sub-disciplinary connectivity of Elias’ thought. The event ‘Norbert Elias and...’ will serve to exchange views on various aspects of Elias’s oeuvre, which ranges from the first philosopher’s works to the late sociological studies of knowledge. No doubt, *On the Process of Civilisation* is Elias’s most influential book, but this is contrasted by numerous thematically heterogeneous publications, without whose consideration the sociologist Elias cannot be fully grasped. This applies not least to the experiences and upheavals in his biography. The event has taken place on the 24–25th of June 2022 at the University of Passau. Conference report to be published in the next issue of *Figurations*.

■ A NOTE ON NORBERT ELIAS’S ENGLISH

In the final volume of the *Collected Works of Norbert Elias in English*, as General Editor I wrote a short note on the editorial policy we had adopted in the 18 volumes. A short part of that note was headed ‘Problems of translating Elias’s German’, and a somewhat longer part ‘Problems of editing Elias’s English’.¹ I remarked that

‘When Elias wrote in German, his meaning was always absolutely clear. The task of the translator and editor is therefore to render the meaning into English, and they have some discretion

in striving for a clear and stylish English. ... When he wrote in English, however, more complex problems arise. ... [P]assages are sometimes less clear ...’

Over the years of editing the *Collected Works*, we had given a lot of thought to how far it was legitimate to amend what Elias himself had actually written, and I went on to describe at some length the characteristics of Elias’s written English.

Unfortunately, it has recently come to my attention that I may have inadvertently given the impression, wrongly, that Elias’s English was poor. It wasn’t, though it did have its idiosyncrasies. Let me now try to correct that false impression.

When I first met Elias in 1972, he had been living in Britain for 37 years. When he arrived in 1935, he seems to have spoken little English – his ‘first second language’ was French – though he probably could read it a little. Since then, he had had time to acquire a most extensive English vocabulary and a really impressive command of English idioms (some of which may now have become a little old-fashioned) – not to mention an extraordinary knowledge of English literature, culture and history. He freely admitted, as in the 1975 television programme made by Bram de Swaan, that he still spoke with a strong German accent, so that he would never be taken for a native English speaker. But I do not remember him ever making grammatical errors or misusing words. He also had strong views on how sociology should be written in English. I had to learn from him how to avoid *Zustandsreduktion*, for example. And indeed we had mildly heated disputes about how to translate certain words, including *Zustandsreduktion* itself. When I argued that ‘state reduction’ would not do because it was not a state that was reduced, but rather a process that was reduced to a state, he adopted a radical solution: ‘process reduction’. (‘How do you make an egg stand on its end?’, he asked me. ‘Break the shell to create a flat bottom’, he answered his own question.) I also jibbed at some of his processual neologisms, such as ‘courtisation’, but he rejected my suggestion of

‘curialisation’, and of course I overcame my aesthetic scruples and can now live with courtisation, sportisation and the rest.

So what did I mean when I said that ‘passages are sometimes less clear’? Primarily I meant that when he wrote academic work in English, it sometimes seems that he was still to some extent thinking in German. Minor errors of word order crept in, and sometimes he wrote sentences too long for English readers easily to cope with (partly because of the lack of cases). I have joked that it reminds me of the line in *My Fair Lady*, ‘Why can’t a woman be more like a man?’; Elias seems at times to ask ‘Why can’t English be more like German?’.

More serious problems arise from his characteristic method of working. He typically made numerous drafts of every chapter and essay he was writing. (When he was supervising Eric Dunning’s MA thesis in the early 1960s, Elias told him he should expect to make about eight drafts.) Elias would type out a first draft and a carbon copy, and then make revisions in his very difficult handwriting – sometimes making amendments, not necessarily consistent, on both the top copy and the carbon – and/or type new sheets to be inserted, then perhaps retype the whole text, before starting the whole sequence again. The process is not to be dismissed: he was endlessly seeking to find better ways of expressing more exactly his important ideas. But sometimes it made it difficult for later editors to establish what were his final thoughts, or indeed even to decipher his manuscript additions. I have not had to deal with his German typescripts to the same extent, but my instinct is that the problem is probably worse in English.

And then, finally, there is the problem of the texts that Elias dictated to relays of assistants in the last years of his life, when he was nearly blind. Nearly all of the assistants were Dutch, and Joop Goudsblom told me that the dictation was always in English (though most of them would have known German as well). Conscientious as they all were, they were not native English speakers, and sometimes there is evidence of

them mishearing or misunderstanding words used by Elias. In his editorial note on the text, in *The Symbol Theory*, Richard Kilminster reports his conversation with some of the last group of Elias’s assistants, and they plainly had a far from easy task.²

In short: I am sorry if I gave the impression that Elias’s English was poor. It was not. Nevertheless, editing his English writings does pose some problems.

Stephen Mennell

References

1. *Supplements and Index to the Collected Works* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2014 [Collected Works, vol. 18]), pp. xi–xiv.
2. Norbert Elias, *The Symbol Theory*, ed. Richard Kilminster (Dublin: UCD Press, 2011 [Collected Works, vol. 13]), pp. xi–xvii.

■ IN THE MEDIA

Network Magazine of the British Sociological Association, Spring 2022

‘Live sociology’ takes students to the streets, mosques and police HQ

Michael Dunning writes about a new teaching programme at the University of Leicester which takes students out of the lecture room.

Adrian Jitschin took part in a radio programme, on the south-west German radio station SWR2, marking the 125th anniversary of Elias’s birth on 22 June 2022.

<https://www.swr.de/swr2/wissen/der-soziologe-norbert-elias-und-der-prozess-der-zivilisation-swr2-wissen-2022-06-20-100.html>

■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Matthias Meitzler, *Norbert Elias und der Tod Eine empirische Überprüfung* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2021). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-658-34654-6>

From the Publisher: Der Einfluss von Norbert Elias als soziologischer Klassiker ist unbestritten. Dieser Status verdankt sich in erster Linie seiner Theorie vom Zivilisationsprozess. In dessen Geist steht auch Elias’ 1982 erschienenes und in mehrere Sprachen übersetztes Buch *Über die Einsamkeit der Sterbenden in unseren Tagen*. Dort widmet er sich der Frage, wie Menschen der Endlichkeit des Lebens gegenüberstehen, unter welchen Bedingungen sie sterben, sich voneinander verabschieden, umeinander trauern und sich aneinander erinnern. Im Zentrum steht die Einsicht, dass es immerzu die Lebenden sind, die das Sterblichkeitsproblem zu bewältigen haben. Menschen in zivilisierten Gesellschaften tun dies Elias zufolge, indem sie Sterben und Tod verdrängen. Als schambesetztes Thema werde das Lebensende in alltäglichen Gesprächssituationen zumeist ausgeblendet; ferner haben sich Sterbeprozesse im Zuge sozialer Ausdifferenzierung vom heimischen Familienumfeld in Institutionen wie das Krankenhaus verlagert. Diese Entwicklung führe dazu, dass heute anders gestorben werde als früher: steril, geräuschlos, unauffällig – und vor allem *einsam*.

Für die thanatosoziologische Erforschung des Umgangs mit Sterben, Tod und Trauer erwies sich Elias’ Studie als Meilenstein. Kein anderes deutschsprachiges Buch dürfte in diesem Zusammenhang häufiger zitiert worden sein. Was jedoch fehlt, ist eine systematische Überprüfung der empirischen Aktualität seiner Thesen. Dieses Desiderat bildet den Ansatzpunkt für die vorliegende Untersuchung. Ausgehend von originären qualitativen Forschungen werden zentrale Aspekte der Elias’schen Perspektive aufgegriffen und auf ihre Anschlussfähigkeit hin analysiert. Ein Schwerpunkt liegt auf

der Frage, was der soziale Wandel der vergangenen Jahrzehnte für die heutige Situation der Sterbenden bedeutet.

Norbert Elias and Death An Empirical Investigation

The influence of Norbert Elias as a classical sociologist is undisputed. This status owed to his first train of thought in his theory on the civilising process (see *On the Process of Civilisation*: UCD Press, 2012). Its spirit also exists in his 1982 book *The Loneliness of Dying* translated into several languages (currently published with essay *Humana Conditio*: UCD Press, 2010). There he dedicates himself to the question, how people confront the finality of their lives, and under which circumstances they die, say goodbye to each other, mourn each other and remember each other. In the centre stands the insight, that it is continually the living, that have to manage the mortality problem. According to Elias people in civilised societies do this by repressing dying and death. As a shameful topic, the end of one's life becomes mostly hidden in everyday conversations; furthermore, in the course of social differentiation the dying process shifts from the domestic family field to institutions such as the hospital. This development means that dying is different today than before: sterile, quiet, inconspicuous – and above all *lonely*.

The death sociological examination of relations with dying, death and grief shows Elias's study as a milestone. No other German speaking book is likely to have been so frequently quoted in this context. What is missing however is a systematic investigation of the empirical relevance of his thesis. This suggestion forms the starting point for the present study. Based on original qualitative research, the central aspect of Eliasian perspective is taken up and analysed for its relevance/connection ability. One emphasis is on the question of what the social changes of the past decades mean for the current situation of dying.

(Very rough translation by Alexander Mack)

Editors Note:

Meitzler's book offers an important discussion about the experience of death, especially in light recent global experiences surrounding the pandemic and war in Ukraine. All of us, wherever we find ourselves have been touched across these years by the experience of death in unanticipated ways. Even for non-German language readers, the book prompts an engagement with Elias's essay on *The Loneliness of Dying*, which may in turn assist our struggles with the patterns of global interdependence that situate our own lives. AM.

Cas Wouters, Civilising Pressures in Globally Expanding Networks of Functional Interdependence: Power Inequalities and Equalities. *Cambio. Rivista Sulle Trasformazioni Sociali*, (2022) DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36253/cambio-13265>.

Abstract: Over the past three hundred years, with the emancipation of people as individuals and groups, social definitions of differences in inequality and equality -particularly those in social and political power, wealth and rank - have increasingly shifted from being designated as 'bad luck' in the direction of 'social injustice'. These are now debated as signs of changing social power relations, both in economic and political terms. On a global level, increasing inequality is reported to coincide with the reduction in these relations, while integration coincides with integration conflicts and with part-processes of disintegration, defunctionalisation and decivilisation. These contradictory directions can be understood by analysing them as tension balances. Two key questions are addressed here: Which side is (or becomes) dominant? At what level of integration does this occur? I show how the contradicting trends of integration and disintegration have been *co-dominant*: growing social interdependencies such as those based upon the controls of fire, agriculture and industry, have coincided with growing 'equality' and 'inequality' in power, wealth and rank. They coincided further with rising pressures on everyone involved to take more of

each other into account more often, to develop longer-term perspectives, and to identify with other people regardless of their social origins. These pressures in *civilising* directions include the informalisation of regimes of manners and emotions and their internalisation, processes in which people exercise increasing control over their emotions, feelings and displays of superiority and inferiority in particular, resulting in rising levels of ambivalence and higher levels of trust *and* distrust.

Florence Delmotte, Norbert Elias and Women: Life, Texts and New Perspectives on Gender Issues, *Sociologia & Antropologia*, 12(1), (2022), pp. 81-112. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752022v12i1>

Abstract: Sex, gender and gender relations are generally considered minor issues in Norbert Elias's historical sociology. However, the sociologist placed greater emphasis on gender relations and inequalities than many of his contemporaries did. For Elias's readers, gender relations and their transformations in terms of the power balance between sexes are falling under the theory of established-outsiders relations and represent a rather crucial aspect of the civilising process(es). Gender relations and their transformations also refer, in Elias's work, to the emancipatory role of law and rights, to transformations of sensibilities, to increasing individualisation and integration of humanity. Starting not from gender studies but from a situated reading of Elias's texts, this article also suggests that re-exploring certain aspects of Elias's life, like his relationship to women and men, makes sense so we can better understand his sociology and its topicality in the post-#MeToo context.

Jennifer Smith Maguire, 'Towards a Sociology from Wine and *Vina Aperta*', *Journal of Cultural Analysis and Social Change* 6(2) (2021) pp. 1-12 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20897/jcasc/11448>

Abstract: In considering the wisdom of pursuing the development of a sociology of wine, I outline several dangers associated with sub-disciplinary specialization, including overlapping

risks of silo-ization, sequestration, and scope and process reduction. In particular, I discuss the attendant risk of thinking of wine as *vinum clausum*, that is, as a closed and static object. In contrast, I outline an open, processual approach to wine as *vina aperta*, and consider three, interrelated features of conceptualizing wine as processual, interconnected, and constituted through interdependence between humans and the physical world, others, and themselves. Drawing on a number of process-oriented sociologists, and a range of existing sociological research on wine and related topics, I advocate for a sociology *from* wine, that is, for wine as an invaluable point of departure for a historically- and processually-oriented sociology.

Katie Liston and Joseph Maguire, ‘A Shared Ireland? Identity, Meaning, Representation and Sport’, *Irish Studies in International Affairs* 33(2) (2022) pp. 101-132. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/isia.2022.0005>

Abstract: This paper examines historical and contemporary interdependencies in Ireland, north and south. We explore how individual and group identities and traditions on the island were and are understood, felt, expressed and promoted through the medium of modern sport, a powerful transfer mechanism for culture. We examine the interweaving of sportcraft and statecraft, and how group notions of identity contour and shape possibilities for engagement that might, in some conditions, allow for potential mutual understanding and reconciliation. We analyse ‘Ireland’ and Irish–British relations through the historical and contemporary development of Olympic sports and track and field athletics, in the spirit of a public and policy sociology about a shared Ireland; this can potentially inform decisions about sport-related issues. Without reference to the centrality of sport for identities, considerations of a shared Ireland are more likely both to reaffirm silences, shadows and collective amnesia and to limit future opportunities.

Jacob Griffiths and Daniel Bloyce, “If you haven’t got the contacts ...

you have no choice’: A figurational examination of unpaid work in football scouting in men’s professional football in England’, *International Review for the Sociology of Sport* 00(0) (2022) pp. 1-21. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902221086119>

Abstract: Association football has been viewed as an industry with considerable lucrative career prospects; however, this has not prevented the use of unpaid staff throughout football in the UK. There has been increasing academic research regarding the professionalisation and commercialisation of football, yet there has been little acknowledgement of the role of those working in football in an unpaid capacity. Therefore, this paper examines the culture of unpaid work in football scouting, by exploring the motivations of 12 unpaid scouts at professional clubs, from a figurational perspective. Our findings suggest that scouts want to work in the industry because of their ‘love of the game’, in a ‘quest for excitement’ in their career. Unpaid work was in the pursuit of experience and contacts, the latter of which was highly valued in the industry. Football clubs are enclosed figurations and the scouts placed importance on developing interdependent social relations to gain entry to the industry, demonstrating how football may be perceived nepotistic. The likelihood of gaining a paid role directly from an unpaid position was low and therefore the decisions to continually accept unpaid work represented the notion of fantasy-laden thinking.

Jeroen Staring, ‘A Book That Could Not: An Impossible Copy of Norbert Elias’ Exiled 1939 Two-Volume Book?’, *Case Studies Journal* 11(3) (2022) pp. 45-55. DOI: <https://www.casestudiesjournal.com/Volume%2011%20Issue%203%20Paper%205.pdf>

Abstract: This descriptive miniature case study presents results of an initial investigation into the history of a copy of a book written by philosopher Norbert Elias, published in 1939, with official Nazi German censorship stamp impressions from the WWII POW camp Stammlager XI B.

Jason Hughes, André Saramago, Michael Dunning, and Kahryn Hughes, *Fields, Worlds and Figurationa: Using Elias to Revisit Depth Conceptual Imagery and Emancipatory Critique*, *Sociologia & Antropologia*, 12(1), (2022), pp 53-80. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752022v12i12>

Abstract: We centrally explore the significance of conceptual imagery, particularly ideas of ‘depth’ and its relationship to ideals of critique, emancipatory action, and conceptions of social structure and action. We consider how depth imagery is invoked in critiques of sociological thinkers understood to employ ‘flat’ social ontologies. We develop a three-way comparison between Pierre Bourdieu’s ‘field,’ Howard Becker’s ‘world,’ and Norbert Elias’s ‘figuration’ to argue that not only is the ‘flatness’ charge unwarranted in the case of Becker’s and Elias’s ontologies, but the axioms upon which it is made are static, substantialist, and reductively mechanistic. Drawing on the work of Elias, we consider the merits of alternative more dynamically oriented conceptual imagery, reflecting upon its implications for how we might revisit the ‘politics’ of figurational sociology and understandings of emancipatory critique more generally.

John Pratt and Daisy Lutyens, *Populism vs Covid -19. Civilising and Decivilising Processes in a Time of Global Catastrophe*, *Sociologia & Antropologia*, 12(1), (2022), pp. 113-138. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752022v12i14>

Abstract: What constitutes a “civilized society”? The Oxford Dictionary defines it as one that has reached “an advanced stage of human development in which people [...] behave well towards each other and share a common culture.” Yes, but there is more to “being civilized” than this. Based on Norbert Elias’ *The Civilizing Process*, this paper examines how the rise of populism in leading Anglo-American societies has undermined many of the essential attributes of civilized societies. Although the emergence of COVID-19 further added to this decivilizing

process, COVID-19 and populism oppose each other. The former shows the empty promises and fraud of the latter, which can only be defeated by belief in science and a strong (but accountable) central state authority. Despite damaging individuals and societies, COVID-19 ironically helps strengthen the civilising process and weaken populism.

Jorge Silva Paulo, ‘A Armada tem posto em crise a supremacia civil em relação à Autoridade Marítima? Uma análise à luz da teoria do processo civilizacional de Norbert Elias’. CIES e-Working Paper (ISSN 1647-0893) N.º 232/2021

Abstract: This paper presents the research developed to find out if the public statements of admirals of the Portuguese Navy about the public policy of maritime authority generate civilian supremacy crises in Portugal. Civilian supremacy is one of the pillars of democracy, and its crisis, even if only in one policy, has impact in democracy. The analysis was done by applying the theory of the civilizing process by Norbert Elias, considered some criticisms pointed at it, and was supplemented by the theory of the elites of Gaetano Mosca. The empirical validation focused on the statements of admirals, with a representative sample presented in this paper, with highlights for the period since 2005, in which those chiefs no longer made use of the frugality and pudency that were their mark before 2005. This new behaviour can be interpreted in the light of Elias theory as a loss of shame and, together with Mosca’s theory, as decivilizing processes.

Nina Baur, Peter Graeff, Lilli Braunsch, and Malte Schweia, ‘The Quality of Big Data: Development, Problems, and Possibilities of Use of Process-Generated Data in the Digital Age’, *Historical Social Research* 45(3) (2020) pp. 209–243. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.45.2020.3.209-243>

Abstract: The paper introduces the HSR Forum on digital data by discussing what big data are. The authors show that big data are not a new type of social science data but

actually one of the oldest forms of social science data. In addition, big data are not necessarily digital data. Regardless, current methodological debates often assume that “big data” are “digital data.” The authors thus also show that digital data have a big drawback concerning data quality because they do not cover the whole population – due to so-called digital divides, not everybody is on the internet, and who is on the internet, is socially structured. The result is a selection bias. Based on this analysis, the paper concludes that big data and digital data are data like any other type of data – they have both advantages and specific blind spots. So rather than glorifying or demonising them, it seems much more sensible to discuss which specific advantages and drawbacks they have as well as when and how they are better suited for answering specific research questions and when and how other types of data are better suited – these are the questions that are addressed in this HSR Forum.

Tatiana Savoia Landini and Andréa Borges Leão, *Indivíduo e Individualismo em Norbert Elias*, *Sociologia & Antropologia*, 11(3), (2021), pp. 891-911. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752021v1137>

Abstract: The essay, theoretical in nature, discusses the concepts of individual and individualism in Norbert Elias. To this end, three objectives are pursued: - starting from the works *The court society*, *The civilizing process*, and *The society of individuals*, we discuss the concept of figuration, Eliasian conceptual solution to the antithetical pair individual and society; - *Mozart, sociology of a genius* is used as a case study in which the genius is seen in his figuration, interdependent relations and social constraints; - finally, thinking with and from Elias, we put forward the understanding of individualism as individual and social *habitus*, a formulation that indicates the radicality of the concept of figuration, which affirms society as the formation of interdependent individuals, despite the individual or social perception of possible autonomy, interdependence consisting of an empirical and ontological question.

Tatiana Savoia Landini, Norbert Elias and Figural Sociology: Interview with Stephen Mennell, *Sociologia & Antropologia*, 12(1), (2022), pp. 13-50. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1590/2238-38752022v1211>

Abstract: This is an interview with Stephen Mennell and a set of texts related to Norbert Elias’s figural sociology that make up the current volume of *Sociologia & Antropologia*. Mennell provides readers with a review of figural sociology, as well as its reception and diffusion. More specifically, he reflects upon Elias’s legacies for sociology and his movement away from philosophy; the publication of the collected works of Norbert Elias; authors who influenced Elias; the importance of the sociology of knowledge and the sciences in the body of Elias’s work; the understanding of the concepts of civilising and decivilising processes, and functional democratisation and de-democratisation; resemblances and differentiations between Elias and Bourdieu; concluding with some reflections on the book *The American Civilizing Process*, published by Mennell in 2007, and on the use of figural sociology for the study of current political issues.

Marta Bucholc, The Anti-LGBTIQ Campaign in Poland: The Established, the Outsiders, and the Legal Performance of Exclusion. *Law & Policy*. 44. (4-22). 2022. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/lapo.12183>



Abstract: Since Spring 2019, over 90 local communities in Poland adopted resolutions expressing their rejection of “LGBT ideology.” Based on a content analysis of these resolutions, I show how local lawmaking was used in this case to create and reinforce the social division between the heteronormative majority and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, and Queer people. In the “anti-LGBT resolutions,” majoritarian identities are territorialized by way of a construction of moralized social spaces designed to cast out the minority. Drawing on concepts proposed by Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson, I demonstrate the efficiency of law in the performance of exclusion in three dimensions: institutional, symbolic, and proxemic.

Marta Bucholc, Historical Sociology of Law. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_55-1

Abstract: The chapter offers an overview of historical sociology of law, focusing on the sociological studies of the official law. It unfolds the main themes in historical sociology of law ordered by research traditions and demonstrates the plurality of paths along which historical-sociological studies of law developed. The introduction briefly outlines the philosophical prehistory of sociohistorical approaches to law centers on the connection between the law and the state, on the one hand, and the law and morality, on the other, as a durable motif of ancient philosophy reiterating in contemporary social sciences. It is followed by a presentation of three paradigms in sociology of law, inspired by Michel Foucault, Pierre Bourdieu, and Niklas Luhmann. The role of historical material and the scope of sociohistorical insights in each of these distinct theoretical approaches is exemplified by a brief discussion of the main contributions of each of the three theorists, indicating the further research directions they inspired and the main branches of law which they influenced. The final section includes a synoptic summary of the path of historical

sociology of law and concludes with a tentative glance into the future, arguing for a cultural turn in the historical sociology of law and the necessity of its further interdisciplinary connectivity.

Robert van Krieken, Norbert Elias and Psychoanalysis: The Historical Sociology of Emotions. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_58-1

Abstract: This chapter outlines the ways in which the historical sociology of emotions should be seen as positioned between three allied fields of study: the sociology of emotions, the history of emotions, and historical sociology more broadly. It examines the work of the leading historical sociologist who has been highly influential across all these fields, Norbert Elias, explaining the main elements of his analysis of emotions, highlighting the relationship between his conceptual approach and that of Sigmund Freud and later psychoanalytic theory. Outlining the nuances and complexities of Elias’s relationship to Freud and psychoanalysis functions as a useful window onto the core issues and debates characterizing the historical sociology of emotions, being a leading example of how the disciplines of sociology, history, and psychology can be brought to bear on the analysis of emotions in a variety of ways. Three conceptual issues are examined: (1) how the “drivenness” of emotions should be understood with reference to Freud’s theory of drives and Elias’s revision of that theory; (2) Elias’s critique of the “closed personality” image of human beings and his emphasis on the constitution of emotional experience within social relations; (3) the question of how the psychic agency responsible for the management and control of emotions, Freud’s “superego,” can be seen as having developed over time.

Christian Olsson and Siniša Malešević, Organized Violence and Historical Sociology. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave*

Handbook of the History of Human Sciences. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_51-1

Abstract: This chapter briefly reviews and analyzes the key contributions on organized violence within historical sociology. It explores both the macro- and micro-level studies that have influenced recent debates within the field. The first section looks at war and warfare, the second section analyzes the clandestine political violence, the third section explores the revolutions, and the final section engages with the scholarship on genocides.

Helmut Kuzmics, Power and Politics: State Formation in Historical Sociology. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_57-1

Abstract: This chapter first outlines the history of questions and research problems predating and constitutive of the historical sociology of state formation as it exists today. It deals with three main stages of state formation and the development of both internal and external power relations, starting with the joint process of the formation of early states and civilizations taking place in Neolithic societies, including the rise of empires. It then shifts focus to the diverse developmental paths toward the early modern European states, from more liberal to more absolutist states. Finally, theories are discussed that attempt to explain the rise of the industrial nation-state entangled in a worldwide web of interstate relations with the tendency to transcend nation-states by supranational associations of states. Since historical sociology assembles various approaches – Marxist, Weberian, structural functionalist, Eliasian, and others – this chapter characterizes them according to five criteria: What is the theories’ dominant problem or question related to the power aspect of the state? How far back do they follow the processes that are responsible for today’s institutions, patterns, problems, or solutions? Do they predominantly treat the relevant processes in a

comparative way, or do they rather study them as historical individuals on their own? What is the place they give to firsthand historical sources and their “emic” interpretations by their contemporaries, or do they put more emphasis on secondary, theoretically modeled “etic” interpretations? Is their historical, processual understanding based on the uniqueness of a specific development with universal relevance, as “universal history”?

Dominic Malcolm, Sport and Leisure: A Historical Sociological Study. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_59-1

Abstract: This chapter provides a developmental account of the historical sociological study of sport and leisure. Adopting a framework informed by the broader approach of Norbert Elias, it begins by presenting an overview of the development of the sociology of sport subdiscipline, arguing that the broader characteristics of this field – its location within the multi- and interdisciplinary sports sciences, its manifest status insecurities stemming from the cultural perceptions of sport as “low brow,” and the relative influence of Elias himself on the study of sport – have shaped the tension balances between historically oriented sociologists of sport and sports historians. The chapter charts three distinct developmental phases of relations, starting with a period of relatively harmonious separation in which the pioneers of these respective fields were largely supportive and encouraging of work which fundamentally advanced the study of sport. This was followed by a period of heightened tensions as the research in the respective fields increasingly converged due in part to the maturation of historical sociological studies of sport, and the challenge to history as a discipline posed by postmodernism. In the third and final phase, cross-disciplinary tensions have declined and historical sociological research on sport has been reinvigorated, expanding in both quantity and quality. The chapter concludes with some reflections on the degree to which the historical

sociological study of sport and leisure, and the Eliasian study of this field, has distinct if not unique characteristics.

Marta Bucholc and Stephen Mennell, The Past and the Future of Historical Sociology: An Introduction. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_50-1

Abstract: The chapter provides an overview of the development of historical sociology as a sociological subdiscipline. The authors argue that over the decades of institutionalization of sociology as an academic discipline, historical imagination was gradually forsaken in many if not all sociological traditions, and the revival of historical sociology in the recent decades is but a return to the origins of sociology as a historically informed science of society. The chapter is organized as a chronological narrative of the history of historical sociology following the three-waves model, starting with the early classics, through the breakthrough of the 1960s, up to the contemporary state of the discipline. An overview of the main themes and research problems of historical sociology is followed by a brief review of the contents of the chapters included in the *Historical sociology* section, which are devoted to historical sociological insights in the fields of research of state and power, war and violence, emotions, sport and leisure, gender relations, collective identities, law and legal cultures, and memory studies.

Joanna Wawrzyniak, Collective Memory and Historical Sociology. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_56-1

Abstract: This chapter argues that collective memory studies contribute important insights into the most enduring concerns of historical sociology, notably epochal social transformations, modernization processes, class formation and dissolution, and the origins and decay

of states structures. However, memory studies, along with their conceptual toolkit created amid contemporary transnational turn and grassroots struggles over uses of the past, are also inspiring new waves of research in historical sociology. Not only memory studies aid critical reflection on Western-centric categories of historical inquiry, but the alliances between scholars of memory and memory activists make the field sensitive to the diverse application of uses of the past around the world. Memory studies remain at the forefront of humanities and social science today and deserve the close attention of historical sociologists.

Stefanie Ernst, Hidden Gender Orders: Socio-Historical Dynamics of Power and Inequality Between the Sexes. In: McCallum, D. (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of the History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore. 2022. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_52-1

Abstract: The chapter aims to reconstruct the socio-historical dynamics of power and inequality between the sexes in order to understand the enduring long-term development of gender inequality in private and professional life. These developments include ambivalences that express power struggles that are mostly hidden and very often romanticized as “natural” difference, such as that women are the “better angels of our nature,” that they civilize and pacify society. On the surface the #MeToo campaign against sexism drastically demonstrated these problems of unequal power relations between the sexes. In focusing the deep, ambivalent and dynamic structure behind relevant emancipation gains, such constructions can be explained in detail. On the one hand we find official agreements of solidarity, gender equality, and the acceptance of women’s rights; on the other, in practice a fragile hidden gender order of violence, power, and oppression throughout history up to the present is relevant. Pinker especially analyses the intensity of violence throughout history in a fundamental, evolutionary perspective, stating that in Western societies in the long run we can observe a decline of violence.

Women seem to play a central and specific part within this process, which is worth reconstructing, and also comes into mind in the face of renewed stereotypes on women's place in history and the present romanticization of the nuclear family in the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. These ambivalent behavioral ideals and standards are expressed mostly in contemporary and historical guidance literature. Here, the genesis of the private space illustrated with marriage and family life on the one hand, and the public world of work on the other, shows that the balance of power and degrees of social formalization and informalization also affect the dynamic power relations between the sexes. Moreover, this perspective delivers an overdue synthesis about these gender arenas and helps in understanding the embeddedness of gender, work, and private life and its interdependencies.

Florence Delmotte, Identity, Identification, Habitus: A Process Sociology Approach. In: McCallum, D (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of History of Human Sciences*. Palgrave, Singapore. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-4106-3_53-1

Abstract: Identity is a polysemic, politically saturated and even polemical notion. Sometimes considered a formidable problem when it is associated with fundamentalism and extreme nationalism, identity is seen at other times as a precious asset, a project to be built or a treasure to be regained, for example when it is a question of a European identity. However, the term identity remains difficult to replace. The many phenomena it evokes are nothing less than existential, for individuals and groups, in that they refer to the questions 'Who am I?', 'Who are we?' and 'Who are they?', as Charles Tilly pointed out. By focusing more on processes of identification than on given identities, historical sociology reveals the relational and changing character of these phenomena and avoids the trap of essentialism. But it also avoids the pitfalls of constructivism, of seeing identities everywhere or nowhere. In particular, Norbert Elias's sociology of figurations and processes considers the long-term

transformations of political and psychic structures. Reconciling macro- and micro-sociological perspectives, this approach focuses on interdependent relationships and power differences between social groups as well as on the place of affects, notably when political identities are at stake. Eliasian-inspired historical sociology thus makes it possible to question the feelings of belonging and the process of identification with a post-national Europe. In the end, process sociology allows for a better understanding of the resistance that the tenacity of 'national habitus' continues to put up against it on the part of the citizens of the European Union Member States.

■ RECENTLY COMPLETED THESIS

Jennifer Ginsberg, 'Employing Norbert Elias' Concept of National Habitus Within His Theory of "The Civilizing Process", to Analyse, Understand and Evaluate the Flight and Return of the Danish Jews October 1943 to August 1945'. MA Thesis, Latrobe University. 2021. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.26181/19568566.v1>

Abstract: The genesis of this research lies in an extraordinary moment in history, when lives were saved, and when courage, creativity and social cohesion combined and triumphed. This thesis examines a World War II story of escape and return, using a substantive sociological concept to analyse and illuminate it. The story is the flight of the Danish Jews in 1943 and their return home in 1945. Nearly 8,000 Danish Jews escaped directly to Sweden and 470 were imprisoned in Theresienstadt (Terezin) concentration camp, Northern Czechoslovakia. The extraordinary rescue of the group imprisoned in Theresienstadt concentration camp, Northern Czechoslovakia, is also discussed. The survival of more than 95 percent of the Jewish population of Denmark is unparalleled in other Nazi-occupied European countries. The concept is Norbert Elias' national habitus, and the thesis focuses on the development of relational, long-term state formation processes within his vast theory of

(Elias 2000) *The Civilizing Process*. Perhaps uniquely, the thesis insists that the events of 1943 to 1945, the flight and return, must be considered as paired, dual experiences. This enables a full understanding of their significance as a notable manifestation of Elias' national habitus, and as evidence of a singular, inclusive, and compassionate Danish national habitus at that time. The thesis scrutinises the multiple figurations found in Danish social history, confirming their crucial role in the successful escape and return of the Danish Jews. Recognition is also given to the often overlooked and under-appreciated contribution of Danish women to the wider occupation historiography, which was largely written and curated by men. Probing the significance of a united, compassionate leadership and the sustained, collective response to the urgent needs of captive Danes, combined with a detailed examination of the Danish Jews' experiences in Theresienstadt concentration camp, adds depth to the overall analysis.

■ REVIEW ESSAYS

Adrian Jitschin (2021) *Das Leben des jungen Norbert Elias*. Weinheim, Basel: Beltz Juventa, 634 pages, ISBN 978-3-7799-6504-6

With his monumental work of over 600 pages, Adrian Jitschin presents a biography of the young Norbert Elias that goes far beyond previous research. Jitschin covers the period from 1897 to 1940, from Elias' birth in Breslau, which at that time belonged to Germany, to the completion of his *Civilisation* book in exile in London. He reconstructs how Elias tried to establish himself as a scholar without gaining widespread recognition. Jitschin works with the hypothesis that four basic qualities - literacy, cultural commitment, ambition, dedication - passed down through his family made this possible for him.

Jitschin not only used published sources for his work but also systematically researched manifold archives and spoke with contemporary witnesses.

From the doctoral file of the University of Breslau, the personnel files of the University in Frankfurt am Main, to a multitude of letters and the diaries of his childhood friend Martin Bandmann, he unearths sources that have hardly been used so far and enrich our picture of Elias. Moreover, Jitschin tells of Elias with a fine sense of the role that people who met him played for him.

As a biographer, Jitschin is interested not only in the work but also in the person of Norbert Elias. He explores the question of how Elias managed to establish himself as an academic scholar despite adverse life circumstances, becoming one of the great thinkers of our time in later years. The circumstances Jitschin vividly describes include his well-off but non-academic parental home as well as his school years, where he received many intellectual stimuli. His time as a German soldier in the artillery in the First World War was also formative - a traumatic experience that he did not like to talk about. Jitschin provides diverse evidence of how Elias struggled to maintain his and his parents' economic

existence after the First World War and how he tried to meet his parents' demands for a marriage that he could not live up to because of his sexual orientation. His academic career was marked by groping, trial and error and near-failure as he first studied medicine and eventually earned a doctorate in philosophy. Jitschin traces in detail how Elias switched from philosophy to sociology in search of an academic career.

Elias was accepted for habilitation in Heidelberg by Alfred Weber, Max Weber's brother, which was a prerequisite for a professorship at German universities - a special feature of the German university system that allows us to understand Elias' efforts and problems. In close cooperation and permanent interaction with Karl Mannheim, who plays a prominent role in Jitschin's biography, he began to develop his sociological ideas. In order to obtain a professorship more quickly, he then followed Mannheim to the University of Frankfurt am Main. Elias met Horkheimer and Adorno; he began to study Freud's writings. There he wrote his habilitation thesis on courtly humans, although the process was never completed because the National Socialists seized power and destroyed Elias' career, which had just begun to take off.

Jitschin deals in detail with Elias' problems of securing his economic existence in exile and restarting his stalled career. He recounts with great empathy and knowledge Elias's trip to Switzerland to find an academic position, his activities and encounters in Paris, where he exchanged ideas with Raymond Aron, and his first years in exile, during which he established only loose contacts with academic colleagues. Eventually, Elias managed to obtain charitable financial support from the London School of Economics, among others, which enabled him to write his *Civilisation* book in the reading room of the British Museum. He emancipated himself from the thinkers he learned from with this book. However, his original achievement was virtually unrecognised after its publication in the late 1930s - not only because it was written in his native



language, German, but because it did not fit into any school of thought. Jitschin meticulously traces the depressing times that immediately followed the publication of his *Civilisation* book. Elias did not manage to get an academic position in Britain or Scandinavia, and with the outbreak of the Second World War his situation was hopeless. Attempts to save his parents from the Holocaust failed. Jitschin's biography ends with Elias' last letter to his parents. In it, he takes stock of the course of his life and his turn to sociology in a very sobering way, from which he was not yet able to make a living at the time. "Overall, I can say that it was good that I chose sociology as my profession; although it doesn't make me a rich man, it gives me my daily bread; it's the only thing that gives me constant satisfaction; it is, if I may say so, an aspiring profession with a great future."

The volume is pleasant and exciting to read and contains a wealth of previously unknown details and new insights into Elias' life. However, the strength of the biography does not lie in individual insights but in the fact that Jitschin succeeds in questioning Elias' self-image, which is familiar to us readers. Elias was sceptical about biographical studies of his person, probably also because he did not want anyone to portray his life path, which was broken in many ways, in a way that was not convenient for him. Jitschin succeeds not only in sowing well-founded doubt about many of the stories Elias used to put himself in perspective, but also in making references to authors (such as Ernst Cassirer, Ernst Robert Curtius, Franz Borkenau, Alfred von Martin) and their works that were influential for Elias' work, but which he deliberately and systematically suppressed.

Jitschin writes in Elias' mother tongue. In order to make the work accessible to a wider circle of readers, it is highly desirable that this fundamental biography of Elias be translated into English. The author is planning two further volumes of his Elias biography, which will deal with the period of his groping and searching in the 1940s and 1950s as well as his meteoric rise in

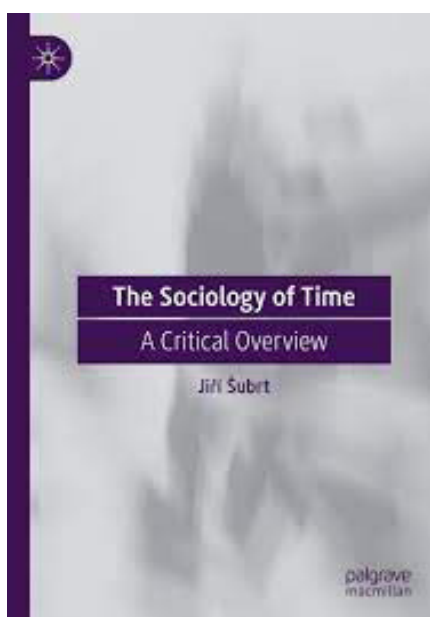
later years to become an internationally esteemed sociologist. We can rightly look forward to the two volumes to follow.

Joseph Garncarz

University of Cologne

Jiří Šubrt (2021) *The Sociology of Time: A Critical Overview*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 282 pages, ISBN: 978-3-030-83288-9

In a critical, comparative study of the sociological literature, this book explores the term "time," and the various interconnections between time and a broad cluster of topics that create a conceptual labyrinth. Various understandings of time manifest themselves in the context of many individual social problems—there is no single vision in sociology of how to grasp time and address within social theory. This book, therefore, attempts to define an approach to the concept of time and its associated terms (duration, temporality, acceleration, compression, temporal structures, change, historical consciousness, and others). The volume is guided by a critical engagement with three main questions: a) the formation of human understanding of time; b) the functioning of temporal structures at different levels of social reality; c) the role and place of time in general sociological theory.



The book follows the history and theoretical perspectives of the concept of time within Historical Sociology. Across nine chapters, we move from the history of time as a human construction, through to the concept of 'temporalized sociology' via a brief stint into the natural sciences. Opening chapters explicitly examine time from the concept of the civilising process and processual sociology more generally. This leads on to an examination of time as a social category and in particular the influence of Durkheim on later theorists. Many of the subchapters focus on individual theorists and their approach (or lack of) to time within their work. A later chapter discusses time from the framework of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. Šubrt argues throughout the book that a sociology which lacks a temporalized grounding is theoretically insufficient and calls for greater emphasis in future on temporalized sociology.

Lucy Brown

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

In memory of Clare Spencer, we include this article belatedly; details were never listed in *Figurations* at the time.

Clare Spencer, 'Designing the person: sociological assumptions embodied within the architecture of Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Le Corbusier', *Irish Journal of Sociology* 14: 1 (2005), pp. 141–62.

Abstract: This essay presents a comparative study of the sociological assumptions implicit, and to some extent explicit, in the work of two famous architects, Charles Rennie Mackintosh and Le Corbusier. The inhabitant implied through the architectural practice of Le Corbusier resembles Elias's *homo clausus* (closed person), the mode of self experience viewed by Elias as the dominant one in Western society and one which sees the individual person as a 'thinking subject' and the starting point of knowledge. Mackintosh's designs,

in contrast, imply individual people closer to Elias's *homines aperti*, social beings who are shaped through social interaction and interdependence. This paper demonstrates how, as well as fulfilling social, cultural and political needs, architecture carries, within its designs, certain assumptions about how people do, and should, live. The adoption of an Eliasian perspective provides an interesting insight into how these assumptions can shape self-experience and social interaction in the buildings of each architect.

The full article can be read at: <https://bit.ly/3sLwZMI>.

Laura Alfrey and Michael Gard, 'Figuring out the prevalence of fitness testing in physical education: A figurational analysis', *European Physical Education Review* 25(1) (2019) pp. 187–202. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1356336X17715361>

Abstract: This paper explores the ways in which figurational sociology can offer a useful lens through which to understand the ongoing use of fitness testing as a means to physically educate young people. We contribute to a theoretical discussion around how physical education teachers have come to think about and enact fitness testing so pervasively. Applying a figurational lens: (a) encourages us to view fitness testing as a historically rooted practice; (b) sensitises us to the importance of social interdependencies and habitus when trying to understand their prevalence; (c) helps us to go beyond the labelling of fitness testing as 'disciplinary' and encourages us to identify the (un)in-tended consequences of fitness testing, and how these are enabling and constraining and for whom. Using a figurational lens we identify scientisation and shaming as two social processes that can help us understand why physical educators use fitness testing as a context for learning despite a lack of evidence to suggest its worth. The theorising articulated in this paper, together with the sociological work it follows, can help us move forward in terms of pedagogical possibilities for physical education.

Norman Gabriel, Beyond 'developmentalism': A relational and embodied approach to young children's development, *Children and Society*, 0(0), 2020, pp. 1-14. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12381>

Abstract: This article begins by discussing 'developmentalism', one of the key debates that has characterised the current theoretical impasse in the development of childhood studies. I use Norbert Elias's concept of the

relation between love and learning as a foundation to develop the way in which young children's development is a non-linear, temporal and embodied process. I argue that we need to develop a relational approach that moves beyond some of the binary divisions between 'nature' and 'biology', drawing on concepts from particular theoretical traditions that have been underutilised, particularly the relational school of psychoanalysis and the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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