

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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■ MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

In our brief time as editors, Issue 58 is the most sombre we have put together. The process community is intergenerational and is enriched through the exchanges across generations. To fulfil our editorial responsibilities, reports on the passing of members of this community are required. The passing of Ali, Arend-Jan, Bart and Fernando offer a moment to reflect on the people we have lost, but also a chance to build on their legacies and to grow our community.

Issue 58 is very large and conveys expanding strands of inquiry. We are developing some exciting changes for the newsletter to expand our readership and communicate the diverse, sophisticated research that defines each contribution.

We wish all readers a happy new year and look forward to sharing your studies.

Best wishes,
Alex & Leon

■ ANNOUNCEMENT FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

The Board of the Norbert Elias Foundation invites scholars to propose

a book for the Norbert Elias Book Prize 2023. Nominations can include self-nominations. The prize of €1,000 will be awarded this year for an original and well-written book significantly inspired by Elias's oeuvre; a strict Eliasian paradigm is not required. Eligible are English language books (including translations) that have been published in 2020, 2021 or 2022. Books in the most widely used international languages other than English (Spanish, Portuguese, French and German) are accepted as well, but their nomination should be accompanied by a 4-5 page summary of the book in English and a Word file of their manuscript which can be translated using a Machine Learning Translation programme, so that jury members can make an assessment based on such translations.

Nominations for the prize should be sent to Arjan Post, Secretary to the Norbert Elias Foundation, by 1 April 2023, by email to secretary@norbert-elias.com

■ STATEMENTS AND MESSAGES

A Thank You Message from the Warsaw Conference Planning Committee

Dear Participant,

We hope the conference was as fruitful and enjoyable for you, as it was for us,

the organizers. We would like to thank you all for your contributions to the conference, and we would like to take this opportunity to once again thank the student volunteers, the IT team, and all our colleagues at the Faculty of Sociology, the University of Warsaw for their exceptional performance. We hope that the closing session was a reminder to all of the need to engage in exchanges based on mutual respect and with due regard for the aims of each conference. We will endeavour to ensure that all future sessions are organised with this in mind.

We would also like to thank the organizers of the PhD workshop “Violence and its sublimation within the fantasy-reality continuum”, Emilia Sieczka and Paweł Bagiński. Their hard work and dedication created a truly memorable event.

We will be posting the pictures from the conference on the conference website as well as on the websites of the Faculty of Sociology, University of Warsaw and of the Center for Figurational Research. Should you wish to keep up to date with the Center’s activities (seminars, conferences, publications, and more), you may wish to sign up for the newsletter here: <https://forms.gle/bHA8RUo2ryV7N2pH6>

We are looking forward to meeting you again soon!

All the best,

On the behalf of the Organizing Committee

Marta Gospodarczyk
Center for Figurational
Research Faculty of Sociology,
University of Warsaw

A Thank You Message from the Norbert Elias Foundation

The Norbert Elias Foundation would like to thank everyone involved, particularly the local organisers, for a truly excellent conference that stimulated high quality presentations and exchanges between scholars drawing from a range of different approaches and backgrounds. The

central theme of the fantasy–reality continuum prompted discussion of a wide array of topics spanning the interface between the disciplines of sociology, history and psychology. The conference served to highlight vitality in the work of emerging and established scholars investigating cognate areas and addressing related issues, debates and controversies. It attested to the importance of fruitful, constructive and productive debate between social scientists grappling with common or similar problems and concerns, albeit through their utilising different approaches. The event also demonstrated the need further to encourage, develop and support such dialogue in the future. Ultimately, figurational scholarship will be lost without precisely this kind of engagement with competing perspectives and approaches within sociology and from across the social sciences as a whole.

The Centre for Figurational Studies at the University of Warsaw, launched at the conference, has been established with this purpose — of developing, extending, and cross-fertilising figurational research through exchange and dialogue with different approaches and perspectives, and through applying processual and relational scholarship both to established and emerging fields and areas of enquiry.

■ PEOPLE

Sir Keith Thomas, doyen of British historians, celebrated his 90th birthday on 2 January 2023. From 2006 to 2014 Keith served as Patron of the Collected Works of Norbert Elias in English, giving historical advice to the editors, and reading the proofs of the 18 volumes.

Daniel Bloyce has been made a Professor at the University of Chester. His inaugural lecture is titled: “From research to policy in the sociology of sport: the reality of knowledge transfer”. Utilising his most recent areas of research interest – Olympic legacy policy; active travel; the lives of male professional golfers and footballers – he presented his and his

PhD students’ experiences of trying to use research in the sociology of sport to influence policy, both within and beyond sport.

Barbara Górnicka has been made a Lecturer of Sociology at the University College Dublin.

■ FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Zur Transformation sozialer Kanons. Prozesssoziologische Perspektiven auf das 21. Jahrhundert (Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster, 23. und 24. Juni 2023)

Die Betrachtung von Veränderungen im menschlichen Zusammenleben sowie die Feinheiten von sich wandelnden Verhaltensstandards ziehen sich wie ein roter Faden durch das Werk des Figurations- und Prozesssoziologen Norbert Elias. Genutzt wird aber auch der Begriff sozialer Kanons, so dass sich neue Begrifflichkeiten andeuten. Wann ist also von grundlegenden Veränderungen im „Verhaltens- und Gefühlskanons“, wann lediglich von vorübergehenden Erscheinungen auszugehen? Das 21. Jahrhundert ist dabei von einer Reihe von dynamischen Veränderungen und rasch aufeinander folgenden Krisen der Gesellschaft geprägt, die inzwischen gar als „Zeitenwende“ deklariert werden. Richtungen und Formen der sich transformierenden und transformierten Aushandlungsprozesse um gesellschaftliche Teilhabe und Machtkämpfe sind dabei offen. Daher sind das Ausmaß und die Intensität sozialen Wandels in der relationalen Perspektive empirisch-theoretisch sowie methodisch neu zu bestimmen. Schauplätze dieser Prozesse sind unter anderem Wandlungen der...

- ... Interdependenzen in der gegenwärtigen Arbeitswelt, vor allem vor dem Hintergrund der Digitalisierung;
- ... Machtbalancen und Spannungen zwischen den Geschlechtern;
- ... Stellung, aber auch Wahrnehmung des menschlichen Körpers in der Gesellschaft;
- ... gesellschaftlichen Rolle von Natur und Technik sowie der Debatten

um ökologische und ökonomische Nachhaltigkeit;

•... inner- und außereuropäischen Demokratisierungsprozesse sowie der Konflikte um Flucht und Migration angesichts von Krieg und Gewalt.

Zudem sollen methodische Wege empirischer Figurations- und Prozessanalysen erschlossen werden.

Erbeten sind Beiträge, die sich auf der Basis von Norbert Elias's Werk prozessanalytisch mit den Veränderungen der sozialen Kanons in den genannten Bereichen und darüber hinaus auseinandersetzen. Bitte senden Sie Abstracts für Vorträge (max. eine Seite) bis zum 31. Januar 2023 sowie eventuelle Rückfragen an Dr. Valerie Dahl, Institut für Soziologie (v.dahl@uni-muenster.de) Leider können wir keine Kosten übernehmen. Rückmeldungen werden zeitnah gegeben.

Perspectives in Historical Sociology Symposium (University of York, 26 and 27 June, 2023)

The objective of this symposium is to gather European researchers who are actively involved in historical, processual, and/or figurational sociology and history. It aims at encouraging reflections and intellectual exchanges within the field of Historical Sociology, as well as ways to raise the importance of Historical Sociology within wider academic research and envision the future of Historical Sociology.

To open our symposium, Stephen Mennell will present the topic: 'A Manifesto: All Sociology should be Historical Sociology'.

Other areas covered will be: time and temporality in sociological research, religion and spirituality, architecture and urban history, globalisation, medicalisation and the civilising process.

Speakers will include Baptiste Brossard (University of York), Lucy Brown (Charles University), Jason Hughes (University of Leicester), Eric Lybeck (University of Manchester), Daryl

Martin (University of York), Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin), Gareth Millington (University of York), Amanda Rees (University of York), Dennis Smith (Loughborough University), Jiří Šubrt (Charles University).

Please contact Lucy Brown (Lucy.Brown@fhs.cuni.cz) and Baptiste Brossard (baptiste.brossard@york.ac.uk) by the 28th of February 2023 if you are interested either in attending the symposium or presenting your research.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

'Norbert Elias, un penseur à redécouvrir' (L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, Paris, France, 14 January 2022)

This conference discussed the dossier 'Norbert Elias, un penseur à redécouvrir' [Norbert Elias, a thinker to rediscover] compiled by Nathalie Heinich (La revue *Cités*, no. 88, December 2021) in a German-French perspective. This conference brought together contributions from researchers with different backgrounds, all of whom have recognised the importance of this work for their field and have set themselves the goal of honouring it.

Before the start of the conference, I observed about 20 people in the room, with 40 people connected online via Zoom. Yves Charles Zarka and Nathalie Heinich, who were responsible for the volume *Cité 88*, conversed with speakers and non-speakers in the room. After Thomas Maissen, the director of DHI, gave a welcome address to those present in-person and online to formally open the conference.

During the conference, there were four sections. The first session, which commenced around 10.00, provided an overview of the current reception in both countries. Both Stefanie Ernst and Nathalie Heinich gave presentations, which were followed by discussions. The second session, which took place at about 11.00, dealt with the form in which Elias was edited and his writings made accessible. Here,

Reinhard Blomert and Aude Cirier gave presentations followed by discussions. After, there was a two-hour lunch break from 12.00, which resumed at around 14.00. The fourth session, which took place around 14.00, dealt with the process of spreading his international reception. Both Marc Joly and Adrian Jitschin gave presentations, which were followed by discussions. The fourth and final session, which commenced at about 15.00, concerns how interdisciplinary reactions through various research were perceived. Marc Abélès and Claudia Opitz were scheduled to give presentations, but only Claudia gave one.

At the end of the conference, a small and lively discussion occurred in the room, which was very interesting. However, as time drew near, the conference drew to a close around 16.00.

Within all areas of discussion found in the four sessions, they had already been implicitly addressed in the anthology designed by French-speaking researchers. Against the background of this publication, scholars engaged in lively discussions about the volume and research implications. Nevertheless, the sessions compared the research communities on Elias in France and Germany. What all speakers emphasised was Elias's close connection with both countries. More importantly, it must be said that his work was incorporated into research communities differently and in diverse places.

Wai Lau

'Towards an Eliasian Understanding of Food in the 21st Century' (University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, United Kingdom, 7 September 2022)

This webposium was held on Wednesday 7 September on Microsoft Teams. The webposium aimed to examine the development of food in the 21st century from an Eliasian perspective and features keynote speakers Stephen Mennell, who gave a retrospective view on All Manners of Food; Nina Baur, who talked about

Changing Power Balances in Food Commodity Chains; and Jennifer Smith Maguire, who spoke about Wine and an Eliasian Sociology of Food.

Before the start of the webposium, I observed around 25 participants in the online room. As well all settled in online, John Lever, one of the organisers of the webposium, gave a warm welcome to those present and officially started the webposium around 13.00.

The webposium began with two keynote speakers, Stephen Mennell and Jennifer Smith Maguire, giving a very interesting speeches and presentation about their works. The former gave a speech on *All Manners of Food* in Retrospect, and the latter gave a presentation on wine and an Eliasian sociology of food. Both speakers spoke with great enthusiasm about food and wine, respectively. What was particularly hilarious was Stephen making the odd joke or two, in particular, on a diagram from *What is Sociology?* by Elias. According to Stephen, the diagram was dubbed by the late Eric Dunning as the ‘false teeth model’, which managed to elevate the online room. A question-and-answer segment followed, in which both presenters gave great responses.

During the webposium, there was a total of 9 presentations held online that were separated into two sessions. The first session covered presentations from Irem Ozgoren Kinli on Turkish Food writers’ engagement with larger food audiences through social media platforms, Debbie Kasper on food systems in transition, Roberta Shapiro on the ratifying process and its limitations, Leigh Morland on conceptualising coffee consumption in towns, and John Lever on the ecological crisis and food utopias. The second session covered presentations from Adrianna Kapek-Goodridge on farm animal welfare and the civilising process, Ximing Fan on becoming established through food, and Zuzana Valenská on changing human sensitivity towards animals and effects on meat consumption. Both sessions had a question-and-answer session, and the discussions were lively. Unfortunately, during the

first session, Roberta initially tried to show us a video clip from YouTube, but technical difficulties hindered her. Furthermore, because of a lack of time, John postponed his presentation and made a video instead, which he sent us via email. Despite some mishaps, every presenter has made valuable contributions to the study of food from an Eliasian perspective.

The webposium closed with a final keynote presentation from Nina Bauer on an Eliasian perspective on climate change, the pandemic, the war and food. Within her presentation, Nina has made some fascinating revelations on current events.

Overall, the webposium has presented an intriguing insight into the development of food, food practices, and food consumption from an Eliasian perspective in the 21st century. Although Elias has not directly touched upon food in his works, a vast body of Eliasian-inspired insights into food has advanced our understanding of it. Most notably, the presentations from the webposium have presented a fascinating way of exploring and understanding emerging issues. Here, the insights certainly gave me some food for thought.

Wai Lau

‘XIX International Symposium on Civilizing Processes’ (Universidade do Estado da Bahia, Salvador, Brazil, 27-30 November 2022)

Between November 27th and 30th, 2022, the XIX International Symposium on Civilizing Processes, the main event in figurational and processual sociology in Latin America, took place. Organized by Bahia State University and held in the city of Salvador – BR, this edition theme was “Racism and the expansion of the civilizing processes: yesterday, today and becomings”. The symposium had 230 subscribers and most of the discussion boards and paper research presentations dialogued with this central theme, seeking to bring some contributions from Eliasian theories to ethnic-racial discussions in Brazil and other Latin America Countries.

The main discussion boards, made up of guest professors, debated the following subjects: “Colonial power games and the production of racisms”, “Coloniality and racist figurations”, “Elias: readings and re-readings” and “Where do other civilizing processes point?”. The research paper presentations brought together researchers from different areas, who discusses “Childhood”, “Culture and Tourism”, “Eliasian historicities”, “Eliasian lucubrations”, “Inclusion and accessibility”, “Languages and narratives”, “Methodological approaches in Eliasian research”, “Public policies”, “Racisms”, “Schooling and power” and “Teacher training”. In addition to these spaces for exchanges and debates, 15 thematic boards were also held, each proposed by 4 researchers from different Latin American universities and institutes. Among the different themes addressed, I highlight three as an example: “Affectivity, affectation and race relations”, “Conscience and power” and “Ethnic-racial dynamics in Ibero-American figurations”. All the discussions held at the XIX ISCP will soon be available to the entire academic community, as the texts from the discussion board and thematic boards will be published in a book and the research papers presented will be published in the *Annals of the event*.

At the XIX ISCP, some works by Elias or based on his theoretical-methodological framework were released. These are some of them: “Processos de excitação: trabalhos inéditos de Norbert Elias sobre esporte, lazer, corpo, cultura” [“Excitement processes: Norbert Elias’s unpublished works on sports, leisure, body, culture”, edited by Jan Haut, Paddy Dolan, Dieter Reicher e Raúl Sánchez García and translated into Portuguese by the State University of Ponta Grossa Publisher], “Tiempos de cambio: diálogos desde Norbert Elias” [“Times of change: dialogues from Norbert Elias”, edited by Carina Kaplan and Diego M. Barragán] and “Norbert Elias: Educação, política e processos sociais” [“Norbert Elias: Education, politics and social processes”, edited by Edson Pantaleão, Magda Sarat, Reginaldo C. Sobrinho e Tony Honorato], besides to the works of “Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias”.

Given the inequalities that characterize Latin America figurations, which include restrictions on learning other languages, the publication of works in Portuguese and Spanish represents a great advance for our research field.

In addition to the specific topics addressed at the symposium, the ISCP represents an important cohesion element for the maintenance of our research field, as it enables exchange between different groups of researchers. In this edition, it was evident the existence of three generations dialoguing in the event. Pioneering professors of Eliasian sociology in Brazil, recognized for their contributions already made, were present and formed the discussions boards; in an intermediate position are those researchers who seek to bring new readings and perspectives to the field and who had defended their master's and doctoral research in recent years; and, finally, there are young researchers, especially undergraduate students who are taking their first steps in the Norbert Elias company.

Beyond the spontaneous contacts between generations, the symposium structure itself can contribute to this exchange. It is necessary to involve more and more undergraduate students, from different areas, to stimulate new researchers to use the figurational and processual perspectives of research; and include masters/master's students and doctors/doctoral students – if not as guests at the discussions boards – as mediator of the debates between those established in the field. Only with the active collaboration of these three generations, in a process of mutual training and learning, will we keep alive what we learned from Elias and what we have already developed and will develop from him.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professors Dina Maria Rosário dos Santos, Márcia Gonçalves de Oliveira and others involved for their effort and dedication in organizing this beautiful event. We are already looking forward to the next ISCP edition in Cochabamba – Bolivia!

Ana Flávia Braun Vieira



Photographs from Adrian Jitschin, Wai Lau, and Stephen Mennell.

‘International Workshop: ‘Violence and its sublimation within the fantasy-reality continuum. Between psychoanalysis and the theory of civilizing process’ (Staszic Palace, Warsaw, Poland, 6-8 December 2022)

The conference ‘The Fantasy-Reality Continuum: Science, Religion, Politics, Culture’ was accompanied by the international workshop for PhD students and postdoctoral researchers: ‘Violence and its sublimation within the fantasy-reality continuum’. Between psychoanalysis and the theory of civilizing process”. The

event took place on 6-8 December 2022 at the Graduate School for Social Research in Warsaw. It was organized by the young researchers affiliated with the newly founded Centre for Figurational Research at the University of Warsaw, Emilia Sieczka and Paweł Bagiński, within a cooperation with following institutions: the Norbert Elias Foundation, Faculty of Sociology (University of Warsaw), Graduate School for Social Research (Polish Academy of Sciences) and Center for Psychoanalytic Thought (Polish Academy of Sciences). A central theme of the



Photographs from Andreza Vieira, Ana Flávia Braun Vieira, and Vanessa Kusminski.

workshop consisted in a discussion about interconnections between psychoanalysis and Norbert Elias's theory of civilizing and decivilizing processes, with the focus on historical transformations of violence and its sublimation exemplified by the case studies proposed by the participants themselves.

The instructors included established Eliasian sociologists, Robert van Krieken (University of Sydney) and Marta Bucholc (University of Warsaw), as well as a group of leading Polish scholars specializing in psychoanalytic

approach: Adam Lipszyc (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology PAN), a specialist in contemporary Jewish philosophy and the head of the Center for Psychoanalytic Thought at the Polish Academy of Sciences, Andrzej Leder (Institute of Philosophy and Sociology PAN), philosopher of culture and psychoanalyst, expert in Lacanian psychoanalysis; and Krzysztof Świrek (University of Warsaw), sociologist of culture and a specialist in freudo-marxism.

The workshop was divided into a preparatory, theoretical part delivered

by the instructors in their respective lectures and the panels discussing the papers of all participants. A single panel consisted in two participants – put both in a role of a presenter of own paper and a peer-reviewer of the colleague. The groups were accompanied by the instructors addressing their final comments and concluded by the general discussion. The themes of the panels (in a chronological order) included:

1. The Catholic Church and Christianity in relation to sexual minorities (Laddach) and colonialism (Angulo Martinez). Commented by Robert van Krieken.
2. Symbolic violence within civilising offensives exemplified by the cases of school system (Baquet Quiroga) and state-led local campaigns in China (Zhao). Commented by Krzysztof Świrek.
3. Violence against women in the context of sexual harassment (Bagiński) and limiting reproductive rights (Zakrzewska). Commented by Adam Lipszyc and Marta Bucholc.
4. Early modern projects of governing through libidinal economy in theory (Szymański) and practice (Klimont). Commented by Robert van Krieken.
5. National habitus in the context of the state being a modern survival unit (Helled) and within its actualizations in socio-political revolutions (Sieczka). Commented by Andrzej Leder.

List of participants:

- Agnieszka Laddach (Center for Figurational Research, Faculty of Sociology, Warsaw University),
- Alexis Angulo Martinez (School of Humanities, Warsaw University),
- Gaston Baquet Quiroga (School of Education, University of Glasgow),
- Yikun Zhao (Department of Sociology, York University, Toronto),
- Natalia Zakrzewska (Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences),
- Paweł Bagiński (School of Humanities; Center for Figurational

Research, Faculty of Sociology, Warsaw University),

- Radosław Szymański (Department of History, University of Lausanne),
- Gabriel Klimont (Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences),
- Alon Helled (Department of Political and Social Sciences, University of Florence),
- Emilia Sieczka (Graduate School for Social Research, Polish Academy of Sciences; Center for Figurational Research, Faculty of Sociology, Warsaw University).

Marta Bucholc

‘The Fantasy-Reality Continuum: Science, Religion, Politics, Culture’ (University of Warsaw, Warsaw, Poland, 8-10 December 2022)

Organising Committee: 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).

Making up for lost time over the pandemic, this was the second conference under the auspices of the Norbert Elias Foundation in Europe in 2022 (after that held in Amsterdam in March in honour of Johan Goudsblom). This was jointly hosted by the University of Warsaw, in the impressive University Library. Over 60 very diverse papers and lectures were presented, most on-site, but some in online sessions, which necessitated three parallel sessions – which is always irritating, of course, inevitably causing clashes between papers one would like to hear – but it is an unavoidable convention.

The Dean of the Faculty of Sociology of the University of Warsaw, Anna Giza-Poleszczuk, who kindly opened the ceremony, also commented on the fantastic discoveries of contemporary science that are often communicated in a nearly esoteric, highly metaphoric language – another argument for putting the concept of fantasy–reality continuum in the centre of sociology

of all human knowledge, wherever and by whomever it is produced. There followed opening contributions by Marta Bucholc, Stephen Mennell and Jason Hughes. Stephen Mennell related how before the pandemic he had proposed the overall topic of ‘the fantasy–reality of continuum’ because there have been so many alarming symptoms of the unleashing of fantasy in recent political events – Brexit, Trump, Q-Anon, ‘anti-vaxers’, climate change denial, Putin’s vision of a restored Russian empire, and the Reichsbürger plot in Germany – to mention only a few. He had always himself always considered that Elias’s work was replete with political relevance (even if Elias was reluctant to dwell on that); but, he stressed, the role of fantasy in social life cannot be understood purely in political terms, which was why the conference title included the words ‘science, religion, politics, culture’. The conference organisers had hoped that the topic would attract contributions from beyond the ‘usual suspects’ of Elias enthusiasts, and in a modest way that goal appeared to be met.

Plenary lectures were given by three excellent scholars coming from very different parts of the sociological continuum. Manuela Boatca (University of Freiburg, Germany), long-standing President of the ISA RC56 Historical Sociology, to which many Eliasians belong, spoke about ‘Occidental fantasies, imperial maps: Placing Europe on a continuum’. In her powerful and eloquent historical analysis, using the categories and sensitivities of postcolonial studies, she stressed the symbolic structures and power relations reflected in the image of Europe as a fantastic symbolic unit. Manuela Boatca supported her argument with examples from European political geography and cartography, pointing out with her characteristic brilliance of address the unexpected continuities between old European imperialist fantasies and contemporary European political project.

Stefanie Ernst (University of Münster) entitled her talk ‘The “particular problems” of the sexes? Thoughts on analysing gender dynamics with

figurational theory’. She offered a broad, systematic and critical historical overview of the gender problematic in figurational sociology. Starting with the relatively sparse but inspiring Eliasian sources and moving onwards, Stefanie Ernst outlined a map of today’s network of gender studies using Eliasian theory. It was an incomparable exercise in group self-reflection for the Eliasian community which the speaker, as the supervisee and long-standing collaborator of Hermann Korte, knows better than most. Stefanie Ernst’s talk, it could be mentioned in passing, put the fact that all the three keynotes in the Warsaw conference were given by women into a perspective not devoid of a touch of irony.

The final keynote lecture of the event came from Debbie Kasper (Hiram College). ‘Resistance is Fatal: On the ecological, societal, and personal dangers of refusing reality’, was the title of this complex yet immensely rewarding and beautifully visualized presentation offering a theoretical synthesis drawing on Elias to solve the problem of interplay and interdependence between social systems and their environment. Using Elias along with a number of other inspirations, Debbie Kasper has shown – here and in her recent book *Beyond the Knowledge Crisis* – how to combine a new, interdisciplinary reading of Elias’s sociology of knowledge with high relevance for today’s social problems.

In the paper sessions, all the four main themes featuring in the conference title were amply represented. While politics seemed to gain the most attention, religion, science and culture were all extensively covered in a series of brilliant talks, the abstracts and titles of which can be consulted in the beautifully designed book of abstracts and programme, available at the conference website (<https://fantasy-reality.ws.uw.edu.pl/>)

Two sessions, slightly apart from the main theme, were organised by Adrian Jitschin and Joseph Garncarz discussing Elias in his biographical context. Particularly striking was the new light shed by Professor Garncarz’s

investigation of Elias's Breslau doctoral dissertation and his celebrated dispute with his supervisor, the philosopher Richard Höningwald.

The production of publishable knowledge by the Eliasian community was also discussed during a special conference event, in which Tatiana Savoya-Landini presented the Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias, of which she is a very successful and energetic editor, and Marta Bucholc discussed Adrian Jitschin's recent book on the young Norbert Elias with the author. He was much praised by the enthusiastic and extraordinarily numerous audience for both the scholarly and literary merit of his work – if the two can really be told apart.

Other special events included a visit to the famous Warsaw POLIN Museum of Polish Jews as well as a brilliant and enthusiastically received presentation on the vicissitudes of refugees in Poland by a young Warsaw sociologist and social activist Marta Pietrusińska, and a walking tour around downtown Warsaw's trail of places of memory, memorable for their role in the ongoing cultural wars in the country, guided by Emilia Sieczka, who was also one of the organisers of a PhD workshop preceding the conference, the report of which is also included in this newsletter.

It was unanimously agreed that the organisation of the conference as a whole had been superb, with much of the credit being due Marta Bucholc and – especially – her on-site, hands on assistant, the ubiquitous Marta Gospodarczyk, but also to the Warsaw IT team led by Artur Grygencz, the general administration and coordination done by Agnieszka Nowakowska, and the incomparable student volunteers. Among the sponsors of the conference were the Excellence Initiative of the University of Warsaw and the University of Warsaw Foundation, to whom we were all much obliged. The conference was also a debut event of the newly founded Centre of Figurational Research at the University of Warsaw, directed by Marta Bucholc (see figurational_research.uw.edu.pl).

List of presentations (in alphabetical

order of author):

- Paweł Bagiński, Doctoral Candidate, *The Businesswoman Fantasy in Postsocialist Poland*
- Prof. Adele Bianco, *The Fantasy–Reality Continuum: Free Exercise or Turning Point to Decivilization?*
- Dr. Ryszard Bobrowicz, *Legible Religion: How State Fantasy Turns into Reality*
- Marília Bueno, Doctoral Candidate, *Conspiracy Theories in the Brazilian Decivilizing Process*
- Prof. John Connolly, Dr. Paddy Dolan, *Economic Processes on the Fantasy–Reality Continuum: Differences in the Development of Boxing and Cycling in France and the United Kingdom*
- Dr. Brian Conway, Prof. Bram Spruyt, Dr. José Pereira Coutinho, *Religious Intergenerational Transmission among Catholics in European Countries: Testing the Religious Socialization Perspective*
- Jan Czempiński, *The Concept of Multiple Realities by Alfred Schütz: Theory and Applicability*
- Dr. Valerie Dahl, *“Should I Stay or Should I Go?” Institutional Determinants of Academic Careers from a Process-Sociological Perspective*
- Prof. Joyce Dalsheim, Prof. Gregory Starrett, *Truth in the Service of Fantasy: Narratives and Ontologies of the Capitol Insurrection*
- Dr. Michael Dunning, Prof. Jason Hughes, *The Sociogenesis of Psychedelics: The Balance Between Scientific Fantasy and Scientific Reality*
- Dr. Florence Delmotte, *The Fantasy–Reality Continuum of Nationalism and National Identities: The European National Habitus, Singular and Plural*
- Ximing Fan, Doctoral Candidate, *Physical Activity in the Established–Outsider Relations: Theorizing the Figuration of Chinese Communities in the United Kingdom*
- Gordon J. Fyfe, Honorary Fellow at the School of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, *Museums, Gifts, and the Reality–Fantasy Continuum*
- Dr. Norman Gabriel, *Is This the Real Life? Is This Just Fantasy? Mechanisms of Defense*
- Prof. John Goodwin, Prof.

Henrietta O'Connor, Laurie Parsons, Doctoral Candidate, *Uncertainty: The Liminal Space Between Fantasy and Reality*

- Prof. Miklós Hadas, *Scientific Fantasy and Imaginative Detachment: The Case of Bourdieu's Posthumous Sketch for a Self-Analysis*
- Prof. Johan Heilbron, *Why Is Science Under Attack?*
- Dr. Alon Helled, *The Resilience of Nation-States: Between Sociogenetic Fantasy and Juridico-Political Institutionalization*
- Philip Højme, Doctoral Candidate, *From Science Fiction to Transhumanistic Necromancy: How Fantasies about the Future Revert to Archaic Thinking*
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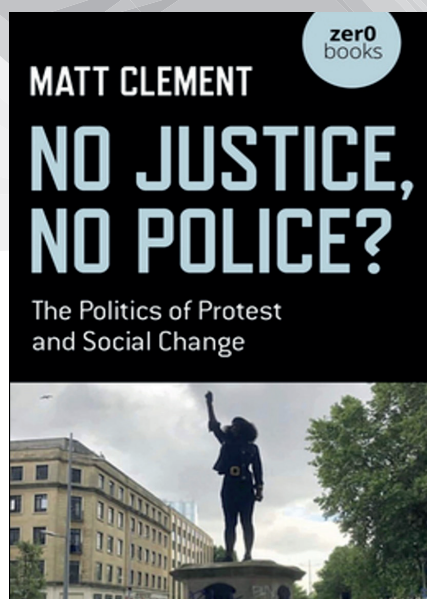
Historical Populism and the Plague of Fantasies: Transformations of Collective Images of the Past

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Stephen Mennell & Marta Bucholtz

RECENT BOOKS

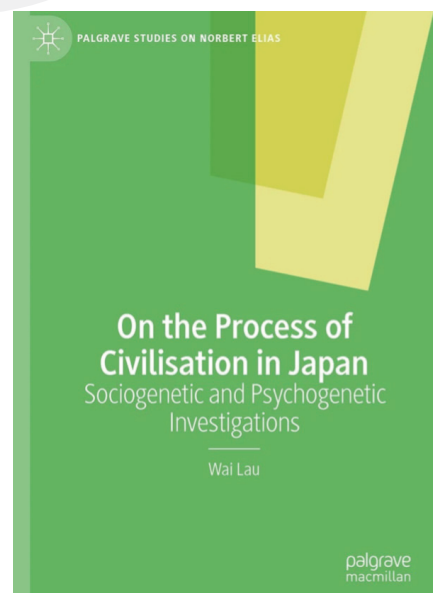


Matt Clement (2023). *No Justice, No Police? The Politics of Protest and Social Change.*

Winchester: Zero Books.

Abstract: Sparked by the brutal police murder of George Floyd, the second wave of the #blacklivesmatter protest movement has surged across more than 100 US cities, spilling into Brazil, South Africa, Paris and London - to name a few of the primary sites of active resistance. This is a new movement, international in scope, with a disproportionately large section of young people - Black and white - using their own language and tactics to fundamentally challenge the whole range of racist institutions governing today's globalised world. *Matt Clement's No Justice, No Police? The Politics of Protest and Social Change* chronicles this movement as it continues to deepen and broaden.

To purchase this book, please visit: <https://www.johnhuntpublishing.com/zer0-books/our-books/no-justice-no-police>.

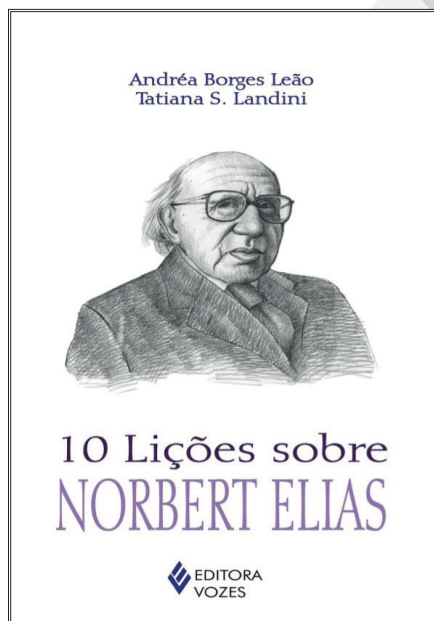


Wai Lau (2022). *On the Process of Civilisation in Japan: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations.* **Cham: Palgrave Macmillan.**

Abstract: This book charts the process of civilisation in Japan. Using the theory of civilising processes developed by Norbert Elias, the author examines the complex underlying structural and psychological processes from the seventh century to the twentieth century. Furthermore, by drawing on rich historical data, the author illustrates how these complex processes led the Japanese to see themselves as 'more civilised' than their forebears and neighbouring countries. Although the theory serves as an important reference point, the author draws on other works to address different complex questions surrounding Japanese development.

Therefore, this book presents three key themes: first, it gives an alternative understanding of the complex developments of Japanese society; second, it intercedes into an ongoing debate about the applicability of Elias's theory in a non-Western context; and third, it expands Elias's theory.

To purchase this book, please visit: <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-031-11424-3>.



Tatiana Savoia Landini & Andréa Borges (2022). 10 Lições sobre Norbert Elias. Petrópolis: Vozes.

Original Portuguese Abstract: Este livro tem o propósito de apresentar, em 10 lições, os princípios da sociologia figuracional de Norbert Elias. Nosso intuito é o de apresentar as bases da sociologia figuracional, seus principais conceitos e alguns dos temas tratados pelo autor. Nesse caminho, o modelo de conhecimento e o raciocínio sociológico de Elias são reconstruídos, passo a passo, na discussão das principais obras publicadas em sua longa carreira. Seguimos o fio de uma cronologia das publicações. Após nota biográfica, apresentamos a sociologia figuracional e seus conceitos fundantes, figuração e processo, passando em seguida à discussão dos livros *A sociedade de corte*, *Sobre o processo da civilização*, *Os estabelecidos e os outsiders*, *A sociedade dos indivíduos* e *Envolvimento e distanciamento*. As lições sobre arte, violência e

conhecimento buscam mostrar a aplicação da sociologia figuracional no estudo de temas bastante desenvolvidos e discutidos por Elias e que, acreditamos, são também de grande interesse para o público brasileiro.

English Abstract: Aiming at undergrad and grad students interested in Elias and figurational sociology, the purpose of this book is to present, in 10 lessons, the principles of Norbert Elias's figurational sociology to Portuguese speakers. We intend to offer the foundations of figurational sociology, its essential concepts, and some of the themes dealt with by the author. In this way, Elias's model of knowledge and sociological reasoning are reconstructed, step by step, along with the presentation of his major works published in his long career. We follow the thread of a chronology of publications. After a biographical note, we present figurational sociology and its founding concepts, figuration and process. We then move on to discuss the books *The Court Society*, *On the Process of Civilization*, *The Established and the Outsiders*, *The Society of Individuals* and *Involvement and Detachment*. The three last lessons – on art, violence, and knowledge – seek to show the application of figurational sociology in the study of themes developed and discussed by Elias and which, we believe, are also of great interest to the Brazilian public.

To purchase this book, please visit: <https://www.livrariavozes.com.br/10licoesobrenorbertelias6557135520/p>.



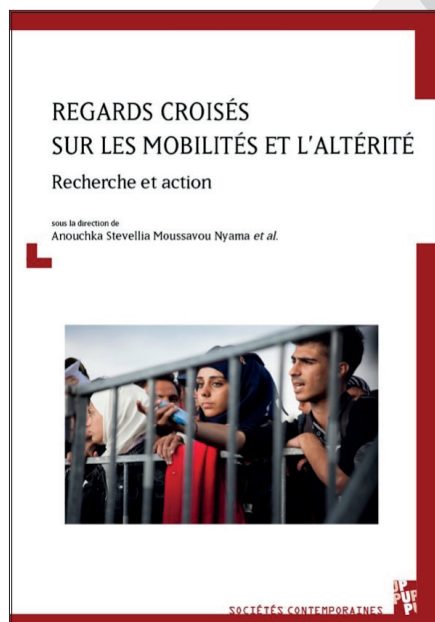
David Sierra (2022). Le passage de la nature à la culture: Essai exploratoire de la théorie historico-génétique de la culture [The transition from nature to culture: Exploratory essay of the historico-genetic theory of culture]. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Original French Abstract: Que pouvons-nous dire de la manière dont s'est déroulé le passage de l'histoire naturelle à l'histoire culturelle humaine ? Que savons-nous de la manière dont les mondes culturels humains apparaissent dans un organisme vivant, le nôtre, dont les structures constitutives ne contiennent aucun type de culture ? Selon quelles dynamiques historiques les mondes culturels humains se transforment-ils ? Que nous apprennent les réponses à ces questions sur la façon dont les philosophes et les spécialistes des sciences sociales comprennent la spiritualité humaine ? Ce livre aborde ces questions à travers l'exploration de certaines prémisses centrales de la théorie génético-historique de la culture systématisée par le sociologue Günter Dux, cherchant à mettre en évidence ce que la clarification des processus tant historiques qu'individuels du passage de l'existence naturelle à l'existence socioculturelle apporte au projet d'une redéfinition unifiée de l'espèce humaine, corps et esprit, nature et culture, et à la manière de comprendre et de reconstruire son histoire.

English Abstract: What can we say about how the transition from natural history to human cultural history took place? What do we know about how human cultural worlds appear in a living organism, our own, whose constituent structures do not contain any type of culture? According to what historical dynamics are human cultural worlds transformed? What do the answers to these questions tell us about how philosophers and social scientists understand human spirituality? This book addresses these questions through the exploration of some central premises of the genetic-historical theory of culture systematized by the sociologist Günter Dux, seeking to highlight what the clarification of both historical and individual processes of the transition from natural existence to socio-cultural existence brings to the

project of a unified redefinition of the human species, body and mind, nature and culture, and how to understand and reconstruct its history.

To purchase this book, please visit: https://www.editions-harmattan.fr/livre-le_passage_de_la_nature_a_la_culture_essai_exploratoire_de_la_theorie_historico_genetique_de_la_culture_david_sierra_g-9782140290978-74507.html.



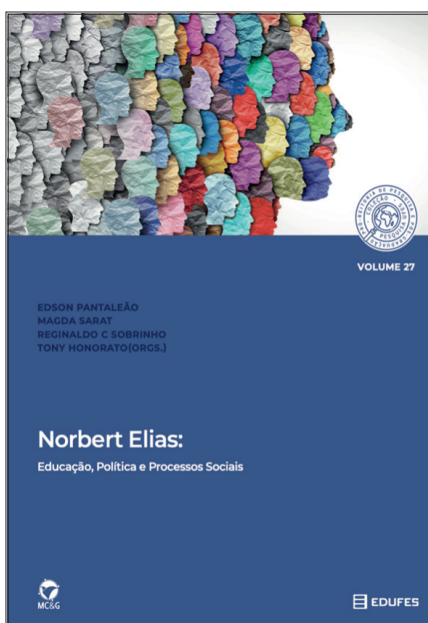
Stevellia Anouchka, Eva Raynal, David Sierra, & Anyisia Troin-Guis (2022). *Regards croisés sur les mobilités et l'altérité: Recherche et action* [Crossed views on mobility and otherness: Research and action]. Provence: PUP.

Original French Abstract: “Regards croisés sur les mobilités et l’altérité : Recherche et action” s’adresse à un large public désireux d’approfondir ses connaissances concernant les problématiques liées aux mobilités, aux migrations, à l’exil et à l’altérité. L’ouvrage se caractérise par sa transdisciplinarité et couvre de multiples spécialités, de la littérature au cinéma et aux arts plastiques jusqu’à la sociologie et à la psychologie. Il croise des études académiques et des témoignages afin de proposer une réflexion singulière dans le domaine novateur et hybride de la recherche-action. Entre récits de vie, témoignages, œuvres littéraires et artistiques, ce sont des problématiques de mémoire, de

domination, de violence et de résistance qui sont au cœur de cet ouvrage.

English Abstract: “Crossed views on mobility and otherness: Research and Action” is aimed at a wide audience wishing to deepen their knowledge of issues related to mobility, migration, exile and otherness. The work is characterized by its transdisciplinarity and covers multiple specialties, from literature to cinema and the visual arts to sociology and psychology. It crosses academic studies and testimonies in order to propose a singular reflection in the innovative and hybrid field of research-action. Between life stories, testimonies, literary and artistic works, these are issues of memory, domination, violence and resistance that are at the heart of this book.

To purchase this book, please visit: <https://presses-universitaires.univ-amu.fr/regards-croises-mobilites-lalterite>.

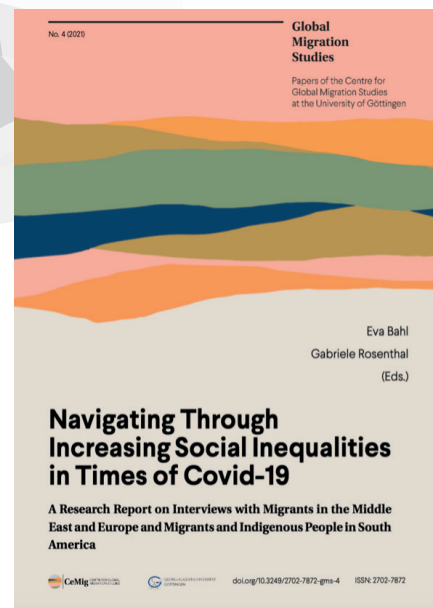


Edson Pantaleão, Magda Sarat, Reginaldo Sobrinho, & Tony Honorato (Eds.) (2022). *Norbert Elias: Education, Politics and Social Processes*. Vitória: EDUFES.

Abstract: This book organised by Edson Pantaleão, Magda Sarat, Reginaldo Sobrinho and Tony Honorato, published by EDUFES of Brazil - 2022. Work is a collection resulting from lectures presented at the 16th International Symposium on Civilizing Processes (SIPC), held in

2016. It features the following authors: Ademir Gebara; Andre Saramago; Behrouz Alikhani; Carina Kaplan; Célio Costa; Cynthia Veiga; Edilson Souza; Gina Zabludovsky Kuper; Glaucio Matos; Luiz Francisco Miranda; Maria Beatriz Ferreira; Renato Suttana; Ricardo Lucena; Vera Weiler.

This book is available online free of charge at: <https://repositorio.ufes.br/handle/10/12142>.



Eva Bahl & Gabriele Rosenthal (eds.) (2021). *Navigating through increasing social inequalities in times of Covid-19: Research report on interviews with migrants in the Middle East and Europe and migrants and indigenous people in South America*. Göttingen: Centre for Global Migration Studies.

Abstract: This account of research in times of Covid-19, carried out by a team at the Center of Methods in Social Sciences, University of Goettingen, under the supervision of Gabriele Rosenthal, is an updated version of a report published in July 2020. Since then, within the framework of ongoing empirical research in the geographical regions of West Africa, Western Europe, the Middle East and South America, members of the team and their field assistants have conducted many more online interviews (n= 102). We have now updated our description of the individuals presented, with whom we have maintained contact, and look at

the ways in which their situation has changed since summer 2020. This report also includes reflections by Victoria Taboada Gómez on the research she carried out for her dissertation on the situation of indigenous people in Paraguay. The contributors to this report have all used a biographical and figurational approach. This means, in the tradition of Norbert Elias, making an attempt to reconstruct the collective and historical backgrounds of the interviewees, their membership of various we-groups, and the changing collective belongings and power chances in the figurations of different we groups and groupings. A contrastive comparison of the case studies shows that two components have played an important role in determining how the interviewees have experienced the pandemic, how they have dealt with changes in their situation, and especially to what extent their power of agency has been affected by the pandemic. Even before the pandemic, these components were significant in the lives of migrants and the indigenous population in Paraguay: on the one hand, their degree of integration in social networks or we-groups, and, on the other hand, their legal status in the country in which they are living. The analyses reveal not only that legal status is an extremely significant component but also that its effects depend on the extent to which the individual is integrated in a we-group or network.

This book is available online free of charge at: <https://publications.goettingen-research-online.de/bitstream/2/96783/1/cemig-04-bahl-rosenthal.pdf>

■ RECENT BOOK CHAPTERS

Dietmar Schloss (2022). Civilization and Its Discontents: Reading Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* with Norbert Elias. In: Franke, A., Mueller, S., & Sarkowsky, K. (eds.) *Reading the Social in American Studies*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-93551-1_9

Abstract: Drawing on the theories of Michel Foucault and Jean Baudrillard, critics often interpret the extreme

violence in novels such as Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho* and Chuck Palahniuk's *Fight Club* as forms of resistance against the systemic control of modern capitalism. I have chosen to read *Fight Club* through the lens of Norbert Elias's sociology because it is more deeply responsive to the way the novel 'enacts' the emotional dynamics of 'putting the body at risk'. Elias's sociology of leisure time activities, expounded in *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilizing Process* (1986), offers a new interpretive key for the development of the narrator-protagonist of *Fight Club*. The leisure time activities he seeks out to ease his emotional strain closely resemble the "mimetic" or "play activities" that according to Elias help modern individuals sustain the routines of modern life. By closely investigating the transitional process from fight club to Project Mayhem, however, the novel dramatizes the emotional failure of the "mimetic" activities, indicating that the narrator-protagonist's discontent can no longer be contained within culturally sanctioned forms of late modern capitalism. Here, Palahniuk clearly detects 'decivilizing tendencies' in late twentieth-century American society and urges us to take them seriously.

To purchase this book chapter, please visit: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-030-93551-1_9

Andrea Borghini, Vincenzo Scalia & Daniela Tafani (2022). Surveilling the Surveillants: From Relational Surveillance to WikiLeaks. In: Comunello, F., Martire, F., & Sabetta, L. (eds.) *What People Leave Behind. Frontiers in Sociology and Social Research*, vol 7. Cham: Springer. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11756-5_11

Abstract: This chapter deals with the analysis of Julian Assange as a public figure through the use of three perspective angles. In the first part, Assange's history is briefly outlined, tracing it back to the systems of thought of authors such as Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, with the aim of highlighting how the Australian journalist's biography helps to illuminate his (and our) historical time

and, vice versa, how historical time helps to depict his biography and his courageous journalistic campaigns more precisely. The second part shows how the apparently subversive aspects of Assange's activity in fact need to be analysed within the web of social control and the subsequent fight between rulers and outsiders. The criminalisation of Julian Assange is, by this token, a consequence of the reaction enacted by power against militant practice aimed at claiming an alternative use of the web. The third paragraph examines three basic principles of Enlightenment which are apparent in the WikiLeaks approach and explicitly recalled by Assange: the connection between the duty to improve knowledge and the right to communicate, publicity as a test to reveal injustice and the understanding of freedom of the press as an antitotalitarian device.

This book chapter is available open access at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-11756-5_11

Vincenzo Romania (2022). Shameful Traces and Image-Based Sexual Abuse: The Case of Tiziana Cantone. In: Comunello, F., Martire, F., & Sabetta, L. (eds.) *What People Leave Behind. Frontiers in Sociology and Social Research*, vol 7. Cham: Springer. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-11756-5_22

Abstract: In this chapter, I reflect on the relationship between shame and digital traces in cases of image-based sexual abuse (IBSA) (I am thankful to Giovanni Zampieri, Dario Lucchesi and Massimo Cerulo for their invaluable help in writing and revising this chapter.). I will introduce the concept of shameful trace to describe records of diverse nature that can be used by a group of people participating in an effort to stigmatise an appearance, a conduct, an attitude or any other cause of social disapproval. Such a record is an object of shame only in a latent form. For it to become a shameful trace, it is necessary that it be shared and focussed on particular situations of moral condemnation.

This is neither a purely theoretical nor a purely empirical article. Rather, I first

consider a case study of moral violence against a young Italian woman, Tiziana Cantone, who committed suicide in 2016 after the widespread non-consensual dissemination of intimate images. Further, I propose a theoretical understanding of the diffusion of shameful traces as a process of concerted social action including five elements: first, the ontology of the trace; second, the actors involved in its production and diffusion; third, the temporal and spatial coordinates of the shame diffusion and the technical or social means employed in it; and finally (fourth and fifth), the cultural and normative frameworks. Finally, I investigate how social bonds and sociotechnical and normative regulations favour the diffusion of shame in cases of IBSA.

This book chapter is available open access at: https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-031-11756-5_22

Robert van Krieken (2021). Democratic capitalism eats its parents: reflections on the refeudalization process. In Sarah Lenz & Martina Hasenfratz (eds.) *Capitalism Unbound: Ökonomie, Ökologie, Kultur*. Frankfurt: Campus, pp. 83-98.

Abstract: In this paper, I outline the important contribution that Sighard Neckel's writings on the process of refeudalization makes towards grasping the inner logic and dynamics of current crises of democratic capitalism. After a brief reconstruction of Neckel's approach, inspired originally by Habermas's comments on refeudalization in relation to the structural transformation of the public sphere, the paper goes on to discuss the connections with related bodies of work, including Alain Supiot's account of refeudalization in law and politics, Frank Ankersmit's analysis of political representation and sovereignty, Hedley Bull's examination of 'new medievalism' in international relations, and Olaf Kaltmeier's research into refeudalization in Latin America. In all of this expanding body of research into refeudalization, Neckel's particular perspective is especially distinctive in emphasising the central role of the new

structural transformation of the public sphere, providing a vital contribution to the adequate understanding of the world we live in today.

To purchase the book that includes this chapter, please visit: https://www.campus.de/e-books/wissenschaft/soziologie/capitalism_unbound-17057.html

■ RECENT ARTICLES

Andrew Linklater (2022). Religion and civilization in the sociology of Norbert Elias: Fantasy–reality balances in long-term perspective. *History of the Human Sciences*, 13(1), 56-79. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/09526951221094677>

Abstract: Many sociologists have drawn attention to the puzzling absence of a detailed discussion of religion in Elias's investigation of the European civilizing process. Elias did not develop a sociology of religion, but he did not overlook the importance of beliefs in the 'spirit world' in the history of human societies. In his writings such convictions were described as fantasy images that could be contrasted with 'reality-congruent' knowledge claims. Elias placed fantasy–reality balances, whether religious or secular, at the centre of the analysis of how societies have dealt with collective fears that arise in response to largely uncontrolled conditions. He located religious orientations within a broader framework of analysis regarding fantasy–reality balances in the first human groups and in current state-organized societies. Elias stressed how balances changed in 'civilized' societies with the rise of the natural sciences. But his writings emphasized the continuing influence of fantasy images in technologically sophisticated societies, particularly in the context of national and international power struggles. His analysis of how fantasy images acquired considerable influence under conditions of fear is important for studies of social responses to global challenges including climate change. Connections with Weber's sociology of religion point the way to theoretically informed empirical

research on balances between fantasy and reality-congruence in a tumultuous and unpredictable era.

Artur Bogner and Gabriele Rosenthal (2022). Social-constructivist and figurational biographical research. *Current Sociology*, 0(0), Online. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/00113921221132511>

Abstract: In this article, we consider how biographical research can avoid common pitfalls such as viewing social phenomena as ahistorical, focusing on single individuals (as if they exist in isolation), neglecting power inequalities and power balances, or ignoring collective discourses and their impact on the groupings or individuals concerned. When conducting biographical research, we are constantly at risk of falling into these traps, despite all our good intentions. To meet this challenge, we suggest an approach that combines social-constructivist biographical research with the principles of figurational sociology. This makes it possible to investigate the mutual constitution of *individuals and societies*, interdependencies between different groupings or we-groups (and different kinds of we-groups), and the changing power inequalities or power balances between and inside them, within different figurations in varying historical, 'social', and geographical contexts. To illustrate this methodological approach, we present examples from our joint field research on local post-war and peace processes, carried out in two adjacent regions of northern Uganda. This research focuses on the situation following the return to civilian life of former rebel fighters from different sociopolitical, ethnopoltical, or regional settings or groupings, and from different rebel groups.

İrem Özgören Kınlı (2022) Günümüz popüler kültürüne kısa bir bakış [A brief overview of today's popular culture]. *Birikim*, 403, 55-61. DOI: <https://birikimdergisi.com/dergiler/birikim/1/sayi-403-kasim-2022/10081>

Abstract: This article draws attention to the role of mass media and social media in the decontextualisation of

popular culture elements and their incorporation into our daily lives. To assess how cultural texts are decontextualised and disseminated through the media and transformed into popular culture objects, a questionnaire consisting of 12 short questions was designed. This online questionnaire was responded to by 447 participants between 16-24 September 2022 using the snowball sampling method. The main conclusions of this article are as follows. Popularised by being reduced to lines, images, icons, slogans, memes, and mottoes, these elements break away from the contexts in which they were produced in each transformation process, are redefined in a new context and can be adopted by the masses in this new form. Thus, elements of popular culture become an ironic means of harmonising with order and opposition against it. As they are reconstructed in each new context, they create their own universe of reference. In the “cultural hegemony” of the opposition, all protesting elements become products of popular culture and continue to carry an inherent conformism.

İrem Özgören Kınılı & Onur Kınılı (2022). The Turkish Ordeal - A Historical-Processual Analysis of the Perception and Engagement of Elderly People in the Digital Transformation. *Historical Social Research*, 47(3), 315-338. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.47.2022.35>

Abstract: This paper employs a process-oriented methodology for evaluating how digital access to private and public services alters social and everyday practices among older people in Turkey. We also focus on the reaction of elders to the technological infrastructure developed by the Turkish state. We analyse the dynamic interplay between turning points in macro-level historical events and adaptative responses in micro-level contexts. Through historical analysis of the visual turn of culture, the aim is to reveal different ways of digital inclusion of the elderly in processes of digital transformations in Turkey, as citizens of the digital state. We provide an analysis of the process pattern of Turkish digitalisation with

qualitative data gathered through semi-structured, in-depth interviews with middle-class elders in Turkey. To identify temporal patterns in the Turkish digital transformation process, interviews are analysed in terms of their transformative aspects in society. The research data are classified into three groups with respect to their level of analysis from the micro, through the meso, to the macro level: Creation of novelty; variation, continuation, and /or transformation; adaptation. The focus of the article is on the exploration of the impact of the usage of digital communication tools by elders in terms of novelties, continuations, transformations, breaks, and adaptations observed at the micro (individual), meso (social interactions), and macro (governance) levels of social analysis.

Laura Gilliam (2022). ‘This Society Has Taken Me.’ Intensive Parenting and Fragile Belonging among Second-Generation Minority Danish Parents’. *Genealogy* 2022, 6(3), 63. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3390/genealogy6030063>

Abstract: Based on life-history interviews and fieldwork among second-generation minority Danish parents from different ethnic backgrounds, this article explores changes in parenting norms and practices between first-generation and second-generation minority Danish parents. The second-generation parents generally experience that, compared to their own parents and contemporary first-generation parents, they have a more ‘open’ and ‘engaged’ relationship with their children and their schools, making them feel intimately shaped by Danish society. Contesting integration and governmentality approaches, the article takes an Eliasian figurational approach, illuminating the historical changes in and current characteristics of the relationship between state, school, children, and parents that shapes the Danish ‘state-school figuration’. It explores how these second-generation minorities’ entanglement in the interdependencies of this figuration - first as children and later as parents - makes it valuable and sensible for them to engage in the ‘intensive parenting’

applauded in Danish schools. Yet, due to these interdependencies, their intensive parenting involves both distancing themselves from and acting as cultural brokers for first-generation parents, as well as using their own insider knowledge to protect their children from negative influence, stigmatisation, and discrimination.

Laura Gilliam & Eva Gullov (2022). Children as potential – a window to cultural ideals, anxieties and conflicts, *Children’s Geographies*, 20(3), 311-323. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14733285.2019.1648760>

Abstract: Drawing on sociologist Norbert Elias’ theory of civilising processes, this article argues for a perspective on children as ‘potential’. With this notion, we focus on the efforts, hopes and fears that adult society invest in children and through them in future society. Seeing this investment as a result of historical processes and social dynamics, we hold that the perspective of children as potential provides a window to deep-felt ideals and anxieties in society, the norms of civilised society that are established as well as the ongoing struggles about these norms. In this way, studying investments in children are particularly significant for social science. Yet, as cultural norms have to pass through the transformative world of childhood to be reproduced, we also have to explore how children actively affect the outcome of the civilising projects and the processes of continuity and change.

Stephen Swailes and John Lever (2022). Becoming and Staying Talented: A Figural Analysis of Organization, Power and Control. *Ephemera*, 22(3), Online. DOI: <http://www.ephemerajournal.org/contribution/becoming-and-staying-talented-figural-analysis-organization-power-and-control>

Abstract: Despite long traditions of management and leadership development it is only recently that organizations have become attracted to the notion of ‘talent’, to talent’s apparent impact on organizational performance, and to the best ways

of finding and deploying talent. In the context of organizational talent management, this article illustrates how the processes and politics of becoming and staying talented can be understood using insights from figurational sociology. We first discuss the features of talent status that figurational sociology helps to illuminate. Second, we apply figurational analysis to two aspects of exclusive talent management: maintaining organizational order and control, and being seen as talented. This is followed by a discussion of how figurational analysis can be used to explain individual performance in exclusive talent programs, and how talent programs can be treated as a means by which the holders of elite power can thwart dissent in order to maintain 'civilized' organizational order and control.

Blake Hallinan (2021) Civilizing Infrastructure. *Cultural Studies*, 35(4-5), 707-727. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09502386.2021.1895245>

Abstract: Over the past decade, commercial social media platforms have scaled up, in terms of the number of users, and scaled out, in terms of integration into public life, taking on infrastructural significance. This paper adapts sociologist Norbert Elias's conceptualization of the civilizing process to examine the role of social media in society, arguing that social media platforms establish socially sanctioned categories of people and modes of conduct. Taking Facebook as an exemplar, the paper analyzes the pedagogical, punitive, and incentivizing practices through which platforms produce social norms and societal ideals. From the company's ambition to become the social infrastructure of the globe and its expansionist history, to policy documents and moderation practices, to formatted interactions and incentive structures, Facebook universalizes appropriate conduct and emotional expression in accordance with the interests of brands and advertisers. With its integration of information technology and automated decision making, Facebook takes over tasks traditionally associated with institutions like the home, the school, and the workplace and acts as

a civilizing infrastructure in a double sense: first, infrastructure itself is civilized by the ability to sense and judge people and actions, and second, infrastructure becomes a civilizing force in the world on the basis of these abilities. Finally, the article concludes with a discussion of the implications of civilizing infrastructure for our understanding of civility, Facebook, and infrastructural politics.

Zanele Gladness Buthelezi & Thandiwe Nonkululeko Ngema (2021). A figurational analysis of the role of the church in handling issues of widowhood amid Covid-19 in northern KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Pharos Journal of Theology*, 102(2), Online. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.102.26>

Abstract: This study sought to investigate the role of the church in handling issues of widowhood amid the rampant Covid-19 pandemic using Christian teachings and Ubuntu in selected parishes in KwaZulu-Natal (KZN), South Africa. Widowhood is a social phenomenon caused by a transition from married status to being a widow or widower due to the death of a spouse. Although a huge chunk of literature enumerates different ways in which widows have been ill-treated and treated as second citizens by communities over the years, this article argues that men grieve too and have also been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. There is undoubtedly little state of balance between men and women in societies, but the reality is that men can also feel physical and emotional pain due to the loss of a spouse and they too need support in order to be able to move forward after experiencing a loss. They therefore cannot be divorced from being part of an intertwined church figuration where the concern is in 'process', not 'state' (Elias, 1978). This study is gender inclusive in that it focusses not only on women but also a range of experiences of widowers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Using figurational sociology by Elias (1978), this qualitative study adopted an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to interrogate the role of the church in the lives of

the widowed during the pandemic. Selecting ten widowed congregants from different African churches in northern KZN as part of figurations, the study sought to explore what role the church has played to support the widowed when death occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic. By using figurational sociology, widowhood research problems are perceived in processual terms with shifting asymmetrical power balances. Data was collected through praxis essays and semi-structured interviews of 5 widows and 5 widowers, with all participants purposively selected. Findings reveal that the church has struggled to provide care and support because of regulations such as social distancing and government prescribed alert levels which restricted movement in society. Even though the widowed understood Covid-19 regulations, they have felt alienated and marginalised during their period of bereavement. The perceived lack of support ruptured loyalty and fractured interpersonal relationships during and after the time of mourning. The study recommends new ways of pastoral care and advocates for a figurational care model as an arsenal to support people, mending relationships and restoring dignity.

■ REVIEW SYMPOSIUM: BOOK REVIEWS

Wai Lau (2022). *On the Process of Civilisation in Japan: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*. Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, XVIII+438 pp. ISBN: 978-3-031-11423-6 (Hardback) and ISBN: 978-3-031-11424-3 (eBook). £109.99 (H/B) and £87.50 (eBook).

This is a long-awaited sociological book on the Japanese and Japanese society written based on the theory of civilising processes developed by the sociologist Norbert Elias. The book is, therefore, quite different from other stereotypical ones written from cultural-essentialist perspectives that emphasise the uniqueness of Japanese culture and the miracle of Japan's industrial, economic, and technological development since the end of the Second World War. The author, Wai

Lau, seeks various historical facts in Japanese history ranging from the early periods (the 7th century) to the modern time (up to 1945), precisely analysing them through his own prominent ability as a sociologist, and successfully uniting his findings to Elias's methodology called figurational sociology. Wai Lau points out that the civilising process, as Elias calls it, can also be found in non-western countries, such as Japan and China and that it has similarly proceeded not in a unilinear direction but in multilinear ways with many fluctuations and setbacks. This essential tendency inherent in the civilising process as well as in the decivilising process is an indispensable factor in understanding Elias's figurational approach applicable to the sociological study of other non-western societies. Wai Lau is fully aware of this standpoint.

The book consists of 5 parts, 18 chapters including several sections or subsections, and numerous interesting figures from Japanese woodblock paintings. These figures play an important role in visually convincing the reader of what the author theorises by means of several scenes suggesting the psychogenetic and sociogenetic transformations of the Japanese, especially in relation to their manners and etiquette.

In Part One, the author mainly explains basic ideas of the theory of civilising processes and how Elias has used them to analyse the structure of Western society and its long-term, psychogenetic and sociogenetic transformations brought about through lengthening and ever-widening chains of interdependence of human groups. This introductory explanation of Elias's methodology is presented here to understand the patterns of development found in Japanese society, which is the aim of this book. In Part Two, the author refers to the concepts of civilisation and culture, the antithetical relations of which, according to Elias, can be found typically in Germany. Here, the main point is the analysis of the Japanese antithesis between the two concepts.

In Part Three, the author treats the change in behaviours, emotions, and

habitus in Japan. The main subject of Part 3 is the changing form of the Japanese tea ceremony from the medieval period up to the early modern period. Even though there is a lack of books on manners and etiquette as a reliable source for tracing civilising processes in Japan, the Japanese tea ceremony can be regarded as a symbol of refinement and sophistication. Thus, drinking tea is sublimated as a highly important cultural activity (as *sado*) [the way of tea] in everyday life, not a mere accompaniment to regular meals any longer. This shift from being a simple beverage to a ritual produces profound changes, leading to a high level of spiritual discipline, such as harmony, respect, purity, and tranquillity. In addition, this upper-class custom gradually spreads and descends to ordinary people through a process of democratization. In this historical analysis of the development of the Japanese tea ceremony, the author shows his most brilliant sociological insight because all participants in the tea ceremony are required to observe strict rules with good (civilized) manners.

In Part Four, the author refers to the Japanese court society by depicting in detail the scenes of life in the imperial court society in Kyoto, in the warrior court society, and in the chrysanthemum court society in Tokyo, respectively, and regards it – for example, the courtisation of the warriors in the Eliasian terms – as a significant factor leading the Japanese to civility and changing their habitus. In Part Five, more emphasis is placed on a long-term process of state formation in Japan from the early 7th century to the middle of the 20th century, and Part 5 is categorised into three chapters: the imperial state formation, the warrior state formation, and the modern state formation of Japan. In each chapter, the author fully explains these important civilising processes, including decivilising processes, by combining the author's own insightful historical analysis and Elias's key terms, namely, the state monopolies of physical violence and taxation.

Overall, it is certain that Wai Lau's book will significantly contribute to

the sociological study of Japan in the future. The well-balanced historical and sociological perspectives he develops in this book will have a great influence not only on professional sociologists but also on students of Japanese history, literature, and culture. As a book written on non-European countries from the perspective of figurational sociology, *On the Process of Civilisation* in Japan is invaluable, as well as Stephen Mennell's *The American Civilizing Process* in its comprehensiveness, insightfulness, and clarity.

Akira Ohira

First, I must declare an interest: I was the external examiner when Wai Lau first submitted this work as a PhD thesis at the University of Manchester; furthermore, I wrote a blurb for the publishers when the slightly revised and elaborated version was published as a book. It was exceptionally ambitious in scope for a PhD thesis – most universities would probably have regarded the research topic as far too ambitious for a mere PhD – but the result is a great success. I think this book is a major contribution to figurational process sociology.

From the title, and still more from the contents page, it is obvious that Wai Lau has modelled the book very closely on Elias's *On the Process of Civilisation*; I tried to do broadly the same with my book *The American Civilising Process*, but I think Wai Lau has stuck more closely to the (quite daunting) model.

He sets out to use Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes in order to interpret the broad sweep of Japanese history over the best part of two millennia, and in so doing also to test the theory itself especially in the light of the charge of Eurocentrism so often levelled at it. In Part I of the book, he demonstrates a quite exceptional command both of Elias's *magnum opus* and of his other writings (notably *The Court Society*) and of the controversies that have swirled around them. Fundamentally, he follows Elias in stressing the necessity of avoiding the false polarity between 'culturalist'

and 'structuralist' historiographies, forging instead a 'workable synthesis' of the two.

Part II contains a good discussion of the theory of 'axial civilisations', of which I have always been sceptical, although here I think it serves as an illuminating counterpart to Part I of *On the Process of Civilisation*, where Elias discusses the meaning of civilisation and *Kultur* in France and Germany. I particularly enjoyed the discussion of how so many celebrated Western writers like Ruth Benedict (in her famous 1946 book *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*) fell into the 'nihonjinron ambush'. By *nihonjinron* (theories of Japaneseness) he means 'a particular brand of scholarship ... [a] literature that conveys the Japanese as 'superior' to their Asiatic counterparts' (p. 60).

Part III contains the most debatable, but also the most ingenious, part of the book. In the absence of a Japanese counterpart to the European manners books that were Elias's principal source of evidence about the trend of changes in European manners, Wai Lau provides a very detailed account of the long-term development of the celebrated Japanese 'tea ceremony'.

Part IV discusses Japanese court society – or rather court societies, since there were two of them, those of the Emperor in Kyoto and of the Shogun in Edo (Tokyo). Two chapters containing 'scenes of life' from each are followed by one on the 'chrysanthemum court society' after the Meiji restoration of 1868. In Part IV the similarities to the European case are striking.

Part V deals with processes of state formation in Japan – again three chapters, on the imperial period, the warrior or Shogun state, and modern state formation processes, which seem to me to go beyond earlier somewhat one-sided views.

This book appears in the 'Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias' series edited by Tatiana Savoia Landini, which is developing into a roaring success. I cannot pretend to be a Japanese specialist myself, but this is clearly a significant piece of scholarship

in the spirit of Elias and is highly recommended.

Stephen Mennell

The book by Wai Lau on the Japanese civilising process undertakes the ambitious project of trying to apply the Eliasian approach to a non-Western case. More precisely, the author tries to provide a figurational angle for "approaching the puzzle of Japanese modernisation" (p.1) that has been so far attached to structural (mainly from sociology and history) or cultural analyses (mainly from anthropology and archaeology). Lau's aim is to provide "a meticulous processual and relational model that considers the connections between macro- and micro-patterns of progress (...) to understand the development of the Japanese." (p.8) The book achieves such objective in some respect but falls short in some aspects of it (see below). Methodologically speaking, the book provides a solid combination of visual accounts through artwork (e.g., woodblocks) and historical written accounts to present detailed descriptions of the live conditions in different ages.

As for the content, the book contains five main parts. Part one provides a general outline of the theory of civilising processes as well as it offers various criticisms and counter-criticisms to Elias's theory. From then on, the structure of the book parallels Elias's magnum opus scheme for the understanding of the European civilising processes. Thus, part two examines the complex development of Japanese 'civilisation' and 'culture'. Lau claims the Japanese navigated between the different 'civilisational lenses' of China and Europe to develop their own civilisation through three processes: selective borrowing, Japanisation, and de-axialisation. Part three traces the long-term development of Japanese manners and etiquette. Without concrete manners books written by the Japanese, the author decides to closely analyse the development of particular cultural form (especially the tea ceremony) as an alternative way to study the change of behaviours and emotions; in a nutshell, the changes in the formation

of the Japanese habitus. The work of Eiko Ikegami (2004) on the analysis of art forms as part of the Japanese network of sociability is a quite relevant source that is missing in this part. Part four presents scenes from life in the Japanese Court Society. It depicts the everyday lives of the civil aristocracy, military aristocracy, and hereditary aristocracy in the court society to study changes in the formation of pre-modern and modern Japanese habitus. Part five widens the scope towards the sociogenetic study of state formation processes affected by the co-existence of the imperial state and the warrior state simultaneously until they merged into one during the late nineteenth century.

My main critique of the book comes from the absence of almost any reference to the long-term transformation of martial arts during the Japanese civilising process. This is not a small detail to overlook. Due to my expertise on the topic (Sánchez García, 2018), I claim that the study of the development of martial arts to understand the Japanese civilising process is crucial in the same vein as the need to study the development of sports is crucial to understand the British civilising process. Precisely, some of the most revealing findings about the British civilising process is provided in Elias and Dunning's analysis in *Quest for Excitement* (Elias & Dunning, 2008). The question about why and how modern sports as we understand them today emerged in Great Britain and expanded globally holds the same relevance as to ask why and how modern martial arts emerged in Japan and expanded internationally. Martial arts constituted a key aspect in the we-image of the samurai, a social group which had a predominant social role across many centuries.

Thus, even if the author uses the long-term development of art forms such as the tea ceremony to trace the historical changes in the Japanese habitus, he misses the opportunity to research such a topic from the changes occurring in the martial practices. Moreover, a closer study of the martial traditions of Japan would have helped him to avoid some anachronism as when talking

about *bushidō* during the Tokugawa period when it only became an official coherent and differentiated ethical code for the samurai during the Meiji period (see Benesch, 2019). Also, the study of the transformation of the martial traditions would have helped the author to better qualify decivilising trends, something that seems ‘beyond the confines of this book’ (p.366) and needs a ‘further analysis.’ (p.378). Finally, the study of Japanese martial arts could have helped the author to address the third theme that he considers to merit further examination: ‘the study of the sociogenesis of Japanese feudalism (...) and how various groups expanded the chains of interdependence in the age of the samurai.’ (p.379)

For all the above, it’s not clear how and why my own work (Sánchez García, 2018) was omitted in Wai Lau’s book, especially given how well it has been received within the Eliasian community. Perhaps it stems from an anti-sport bias which is common within sociology, but is less common in figurational sociology. Elias saw that sport was central to civilising processes and that was part of his brilliance. It is to the detriment of Wai Lau’s work that the study of physical activities such as martial arts is omitted, and it is fundamentally unEliasian to do so.

Raul Sánchez García

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Joseph Garncarz (2022). *Korrektur eines Selbstbildes. Norbert Elias und sein akademischer Lebenslauf*. Köln: Harlem Verlag, 152 pp. ISBN: 978-3-86962-617-8 (Paperback) & ISBN: 978-3-86962-618-5. €24.00 (P/B) & €20.00 (eBook).

With his very accurate and critical book “Correction of a Self-Image”, the German film and media culture scholar Joseph Garncarz has presented a vital piece of the jigsaw puzzle for a better understanding of Norbert Elias and his work. Already in the 1970s, he read Elias’s essential work *On the Civilising Process*. He leaves no doubt that he has “always held Norbert Elias in great esteem” and sees his work as an “independent achievement” to better understand human societies. He also rates Elias’s functional-figural and process-oriented sociology as a “fundamental innovation”.

The more was he astonished by what he accidentally encountered in Elias’ Breslau doctoral file. Facts and the self-image that Elias drew of himself and that until recently was accepted as the image of others could not be more opposite. Garncarz proves this beyond doubt by tracing Elias’s story, the content of his doctoral thesis, the criticism of the doctoral supervisor Hönigswald, the revision of the work and many other aspects in detail. Hönigswald’s report, his grades and behaviour were benevolent and had nothing to do with what Elias later reported about it. The doctoral thesis in philosophy stands intellectually and stylistically in the traditions of his doctoral supervisor. Still, it has glaring deficiencies in terms of content and form compared to other works of the time: no examination of the state of knowledge on his research object, a break with the conventions of his subject that is not discussed, ambiguous, dazzling use of terms, no references to specialist texts that Elias had used, and no bibliography. Hönigswald rightly rated the work as the second worst of four grades and demanded changes. Although Elias did not comply, Hönigswald accepted the doctoral thesis. Due to the evaluation, Elias’s professional goal of a professorship in philosophy was blocked, and he switched to sociology.

Garncarz categorises Elias’s failure to correct his doctoral thesis as “stubborn and unteachable” and the creation of his self-image as an “original genius” as a human reaction to these and other “narcissistic affronts” of his life. He also substantiates his reasoning with two previously unpublished documents.

1) In the interview with Reinhard Blomert from 1984, it becomes clear how emphatically Elias rejected questions about the influences and sources of his thinking as misguided. Regarding his doctoral thesis, he said he was “actually quite happy” that it had been lost and was “terrified” that Blomert had found it again. On the other hand, he was appalled at how academic and abstract his doctoral thesis was.

2) In a radio lecture from 1983, Elias speaks “about the strangeness of a German-Jewish life story”: the persistent feeling of being an outsider, perceived contempt, pressure of tension and exclusion from bourgeois advancement opportunities such as a professorship, resulting in identity and self-esteem problems, subordination, submissiveness, insecurity and vulnerability.

Many well-known breaks and discontinuities marked Elias’s CV. Garncarz works out a scientifically decisive but previously misinterpreted break with his study. He points to the possibility of continuing the investigation of Elias’s self-image and confronting it with facts. This seems not only promising, but essential to understand better whether these are not two sides of the same coin.

Whether Elias became a creative and visionary synthesis and networking thinker because he used metacognitive methods intuitively still has to be researched. However, it is astonishing how he increased this skill in his research – long before metacognition was discovered, and Elias’s working methods were described by working partners such as Michael Schröter or Petra Kunze. For example, Schröter labelled Elias’ method in 1997 as “scientific daydreaming”, “creative spinning of theses, concepts, pieces of

material”, “sublimatory achievements”, and “feeling of the preconscious interweaving of his ideas”. Conversely, did his higher-order cognition entail certain unsuitability for everyday use and structural weaknesses – similar to that of many creative minds? So, despite all the threatening consequences, was he perhaps unable to acquire the strenuous scientific micromanagement of term definitions, source references, fine structuring and bibliographies? Like Mozart and Freud, who greatly fascinated him, he had a subliminal awareness of his abilities and resistance to recognising resulting inadequacies.

In addition to the recently published book by Adrian Jitschin, which reconstructs the biographical genesis of the thinker Elias, Garncarz completes the picture with a more legalistic perspective that focuses on the course of the important biographical and academic event, the doctorate procedure. Anyone who conducts research using Norbert Elias’s approach today benefits from his visionary synthetic achievements. The hitherto largely unknown methodological side and its far-reaching personal and scientific consequences are now an unavoidable key aspect that future studies could and should follow up on just as productively. Moreover, those interested in Elias and his approach may understand better why the method often triggers scientific unease, why it doesn’t belong anywhere and is sometimes devalued as under-complex or even ignored.

Désirée Waterstradt

Jan Stöckmann (2022). *The Architects of International Relations: Building a Discipline, Designing the World, 1914-1940*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 338 pp. ISBN: 9781316511619. £85.00 (H/B).

Although it might be odd to include a review about a book that appears to fit squarely in the narrow academic field of International Relations (IR), the book author’s research highlights the overlap between the inter-war development of IR as an academic field, and the wider inter-societal struggles of international relations in the 1920s

and 30s. This historiographical inquiry concludes with a more sociological point about how international relations disputes ‘eventually boiled down to profounder questions about how society should be organised’ (p. 309). In rather frustrating correspondence, the book author told me that in his conclusion, he wanted to discuss philosophy of science, and is not intentionally raising any sociological questions. Alert readers will know that in the very same interwar period studied by the book author. There were fervent discussions about the ways that society is organised in places such as Breslau, Freiburg, Heidelberg, and Frankfurt that pushed beyond philosophy of science and developed a sociology of knowledge. At the RC 33 sociology conference in September 2016 held in Leicester, Stephen Mennell urged his audience to consider the historical development of societies in their research. From correspondence with the book author, it is arguable that many historians also need to think about the changing make up of societies when they undertake historiographical studies. A full review can be found here: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/09592296.2022.2143131>

Alexander Mack

Lars Kaspersen (2020). *War, Survival Units, and Citizenship: A Neo-Eliasian Processual-Relational Perspectives*. London: Routledge, 290 pp. ISBN: 9780754649526 (Hardback), ISBN: 9780367560959 (Paperback), & ISBN: 9781315547695 (eBook). £104.00 (H/B), £29.95 (P/B), & £29.59 (eBook).

The following review article first appeared in the *E-International Relations* website as ‘Review – War, Survival, and Citizenship’ written by Siniša Malešević, which can be found here: <https://www.e-ir.info/2022/11/04/review-war-survival-units-and-citizenship/>

The phenomenon of state formation has been one of the central topics for historical sociology. Sociologists have been puzzled by the key questions such as: Where do states come from? Why human beings live in

states? How different forms of state organisation emerge, develop, and become hegemonic? Or: what is the relationship between the state formation and historical change? Scholars have provided different answers to these questions and have elaborated a variety of theories on the state formation, including neo-Marxist, culturalist, economicist, and neo-evolutionary approaches.

However, since mid-1980s until recently the neo-bellicist paradigm has dominated much of the scholarship on the origins and transformations of the state. Charles Tilly and Michael Mann were central to the development of this perspective, but many other scholars such as Mohammed Ayoob, Robert Carneiro, Miguel Centeno, Chris Downing, Thomas Ertman, John A. Hall, Geoffrey Herbst, Veronica Tin-Bor Hui and Dingxin Zhao have contributed to the ascent of this paradigm. The neo-bellicist perspective identifies war as the central social mechanism for the development of the state. In Tilly’s (1992) view the proliferation of inter-state wars in the early modern Europe was the key catalyst for the growth of governance structures, civil service, transport and communication infrastructure, and technology, all of which allowed for the more extensive extraction of resources for wars. Hence the famous formulation “war made the state, and the state made wars” (Tilly 1975, p.42). This was not a novel idea as the classical bellicist perspective, which included Otto Hintze, Franz Oppenheimer, and Alexander Rustow among others, articulated a similar argument at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century (Malešević 2010). However, the neo-bellicists were interested in the relationship between warfare and the emergence of modern nation-states and the question of how diverse premodern empires and patrimonial kingdoms have transformed into relatively standardised and stable territorial, constitutional, and national polities. By contrast, the classics were studying the diverse forms and origins of state formation (Malešević 2019, 2017).

In some respects, Kaspersen’s book is an attempt to answer questions raised

by the classical bellicist tradition while in the process critiquing the contemporary neo-bellicist perspective. Although Kaspersen focuses mostly on the European historical experience, he pays less attention to the modern world. Instead, he examines a variety of organisational forms that have dominated the political space of medieval and early modern Europe. Furthermore, drawing primarily on the work of Norbert Elias, Kaspersen argues that the state is an inadequate concept to capture the sheer historical diversity of polity formation. Hence, he opts for the Eliasian idea of ‘survival units’ instead. This concept is defined as ‘an entity with an ability to defend itself,’ and as such ‘is a universal (transhistorical) concept, of which it is possible to identify a number of subvariants ... which defend their domain of sovereignty in very different ways. These different forms of survival units can differ from each other in defence structure, form of government, relation between survival unit and “society”, economic structure, and structures of rights and obligations’ (p.8).

Thus, for Kaspersen, the focus should shift from the narrow debate on the historical dynamics of state formation in modernity towards understanding how ‘survival units’ emerge, develop, and are replaced by alternative ‘survival units’ over the course of human history. In the first part of the book, Kaspersen offers a critique of existing scholarship on state formation, and develops the contours of the neo-Eliasian approach to the study of the relationship between war, citizenship and ‘survival units’. This approach is then applied to the European historical experience. The second part of the book zooms in on the period from 800 to 1500, and traces the social changes from the Carolingian Empire to the rise of feudal *Ständestaat* model of polity organisation. The third and longest part of the book explores the transformation of European social and political order from 1500 to 1660 with extensive historical analysis of France, England, and Germany. Kaspersen argues that the neo-Eliasian perspective sheds more light on the complexities of historical change as its processual-relational framework can explain many intricacies of the

relationship between the transformation of political orders, citizenship and war.

This is an interesting and wide-ranging work that makes two valuable contributions. Firstly, Kaspersen demonstrates persuasively that the conventional debates on state formation and warfare are conceptually and historically too narrow. To understand the long-term social and political change, it is crucial to develop concepts that can accommodate historically diverse forms of social organisation. Instead of focusing almost exclusively on the territorial states, it is paramount to analyse the historical impact of other influential social organisations such as the city-states, city-leagues, merchant guilds, patrimonial kingdoms, free towns, or the religious organisations all of which have shaped our historical experience. Secondly, it is necessary to go beyond the neo-bellicist theories of state formation as they offer an overly structuralist, teleological and state-centric view of historical change that overemphasises historical ‘winners’. Echoing Spruyt (2017), Kaspersen rightly argues that the mainstream approaches tend to see the contemporary nation-states as an inevitable historical outcome, while ignoring the significance of other social organisations that have now disappeared but have played a crucial role in the development of the contemporary world.

Nevertheless, the neo-Eliasian theoretical framework he offers to replace the neo-bellicist paradigm does not seem very convincing to me. For one thing, the concept of a ‘survival unit’ is analytically too vague and historically imprecise to serve as an adequate replacement for the concept of the state. In many respects, this concept reproduces the same problems that affect the idea of the state: it is a catch-all, transhistorical, concept with strong essentialist features, which aims to reduce enormous historical diversity to a singular phenomenon. In the book a ‘survival unit’ often appears as a simple synonym for the state. One could replace the two terms and not much would change in the existing narrative of the book.

Another problem is the rampant essentialism that underpins this concept. It is highly indicative that Elias (2012) interchangeably used the terms ‘survival units’ and ‘attack and defence units’. These are obviously highly loaded terms that imply an inherent presence of violence and the inevitable struggle for survival, which are perceived to be the natural state for human beings. At times it seems that Kaspersen is not completely comfortable with this original formulation, as he states that ‘a survival unit is in principle a defence unit – not an attack and defence unit as Elias suggests’ (p. 60). However, Kaspersen still insists in a rather deterministic manner that a survival unit is ‘a primary unit of social life’ (p.1) or ‘is the fundamental structuring principle of human life’ and also ‘an inescapable figuration’ (p.58).

Leaving on one side the highly problematic understanding of violence in Elias (see Malešević 2017), this concept is also inadequate to capture different organisational capacities across time and space. For example, Kaspersen regularly emphasises that ‘survival units have always shaped human life’ and that ‘human beings have always been born into survival units’ (p.2). Nevertheless, if ‘a survival unit’ is defined in relation to its ‘sovereignty’, ‘forms of government’, ‘structures of rights and obligations’, ‘the ability to monopolise the means of violence’, as well as its relationship with ‘society’ (p.8, p.59), then much of human prehistory would not fit this pattern. Since human beings have lived for 99 per cent of their existence on this planet as foragers who roamed African savannahs in tiny and highly malleable egalitarian nomadic bands and who for the most part did not engage in organised violence (Fry 2007), then applying this concept indiscriminately to all humans seems highly counterproductive. Even if the concept is applied only to the sedentary populations, it cannot distinguish clearly between very different forms of organised social life. What is gained analytically if the Roman Empire or the People’s Republic of China are treated as the same type of social organisation as the Augustine Band of Cahuilla Native Americans that consists of sixteen members?

These conceptual problems reflect wider issues that affect the general Eliasian approach. Elias was a pioneer of relational sociology, who rightly emphasised the processual and highly dynamic character of social relations. His figurational perspective has often been hailed as innovative, reflexive, and sensitive towards complexity of social life. However, there is a clear discrepancy between the noble goals of the Eliasian theory and the empirical analyses generated by its proponents. Simply put, while the Eliasian framework emphasises the dynamic, contingent and process-oriented features of social life, this is rarely reflected in the actual empirical analyses, which are often couched in fairly conventional, reifying and essentialist language.

Kaspersen recognises this difficulty when he makes a point about our ‘language that makes it almost impossible for us to think in dynamic relational processes’ (p.257). Nevertheless, the problem is not just static language. Some of Kaspersen’s analysis represents an amalgamation of a subtle conceptual apparatus with old-fashioned, top-down historiography, often based on the very dated sources. Some of the empirical chapters are written in the style of historiography from the 1980s and 1990s. For example, while Kaspersen probes and criticises the idea of the state, the concept of the nation is mostly used in a non-reflexive way that implies historical continuities between pre-modern and modern social and political formations. Hence, there are regular references to ‘the French survival unit’ or ‘the Spanish survival unit’, which are unproblematically described as entities with the transhistorical national features. The Ottoman Empire is also constantly referred as ‘the Turks’, while in the several chapters ‘France’ and ‘England’ are reified, as they are attributed human qualities, such as in ‘France has learned from its defeats and was again catching up’ (p.166), and so on. It is a pity that the book does not engage with the recent and booming scholarship on nation-states, nationalisms, and empire, which analytically probes not only the process of state formation but also nation formation.

Despite my critical remarks, this is a worthy contribution that raises some important conceptual and theoretical issues in historical sociology. As such it should be read by the wider academic readership and not only by Eliasian scholars.

Siniša Malešević

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■ OBITUARIES



Ali de Regt (1941-2022)

‘How cheeky they are...’ Ali de Regt let that slip not so long ago when we had a conversation about the upper classes in the Netherlands and discussed the sometimes-enviable casualness of their *savoir faire*. Preparing a book about the topic, I wanted to know what she thought about the current significance of ‘good names’, family pride, and family connections in the higher circles. She said she didn’t know much about it and the quoted words seemed to arise spontaneously from old feelings and convictions. She came from a large family of a small fruit grower in a village in the Northern part of the province North Holland and knew what it meant to be poor. Her heart was beating for the left-wing cause, and she made this known through political activities - initially as a member of a small socialist party - and also in the way she developed intellectually, in the choice of subjects she studied, and in the refugee work she devoted herself to later in life. After completing her secondary school and training at a teachers college, she worked for two years as a teacher at an elementary school in a working-class neighbourhood in Amsterdam, and at the same time prepared successfully for the state exam that gave her access to the university. She went to study political science at the University of Amsterdam and was subsequently appointed at the department of Sociology of the same university. There

she specialized in the sociology of the family, education and the welfare state, with a continuous focus on the impact of social inequality on people's everyday lives. In 1984 she obtained her PhD doctorate with a study entitled (in English translation) *Working-Class Families and the Civilisation of Workers. Developments in the Netherlands 1870-1940*, a widely read book that vividly describes, among other things, the attempts to civilise so-called 'inadmissible' families who were defined as being unfit to live among 'respectable' working-class people. She was approached to become a *hoogleraar* (full professor), but she thought – wrongly, according to many – that she was not suited for that position. But as a valued researcher and lecturer, who was also the partner of a professor of sociology, she did become an example of successful upward social mobility; as she herself wrote in a contribution to a booklet in 2012: 'I am what sociologists call a "social climber"'. She lived in an elegant neighbourhood in Amsterdam, where she felt at home, but the status insecurity that accompanied this social rise never completely disappeared. As she wrote in the same piece, upward social mobility leads to tensions that may manifest both in shame and pride: shame for where you come from, and pride of who you have become. Those who were in her presence saw neither the one nor the other, however. It was a sociological observation that did not seem to apply to herself.

One of the things that annoyed her about the social milieu she had entered was the way money could be talked about as something that was not important. That became a research topic. How different do people in different social locations actually handle money? She wrote about this subject *Geld en gezin [Money and Family]* (1993). How much are parents willing to invest in their children? How far are they willing to go to help their children to get a diploma? To what extent does wealth within the family help with this? Sensitive subjects, about which people don't always want to show the back of their tongue, but that did not stop her from seeking answers. In *Investeren in je kinderen [Investing in Your Children]* (2003) she and her

former student and younger colleague Don Weenink showed how important the retention of money and status within well-to-do families is, and with how much tension this is surrounded, despite all denials. This interest for issues of money and status she shared with her partner, Nico Wilterdink, author of a monumental study on wealth inequality in the Netherlands.

Ali de Regt had an intriguing kind of media appearance. The illustrious Dutch journalist Ischa Meijer was clearly charmed by her when she appeared in his TV show in 1994 after the publication of her book *Geld en gezin*, and answered his questions in a friendly and decisive manner. She convincingly highlighted the significance of her sociological research, which was quite an achievement with this critical interviewer. Not surprisingly she was one of the best-loved teachers, always clear, precise and engaging. Abram de Swaan called her 'hot-tempered' in his speech after her PhD defense and that was not incorrect, because she could become angry when she heard nonsense or stupidity and then explode into fierce opposition. But she was also cordial and genuinely interested in the work and the personal fortunes of others. Combined with her professional competence, this made her perfectly suited for the role of supervisor of students and young researchers.

After she retired from the university, her enthusiasm for sociology gradually waned. She admired the motivation of others to continue researching and publishing after retirement, but she didn't think it was necessary for herself. Modest, perhaps too modest, she considered her own sociological contributions of little importance, and as she grew older, she began to doubt more and more whether this was not true of sociology in general. What was its social usefulness? Helping refugees, giving language lessons to foreigners and disadvantaged children, standing up for political prisoners: such activities were much more meaningful in her eyes. From then on, she mainly devoted her energy to this kind of voluntary work, besides various leisure activities and reading a lot of literature.

But in the meantime, she remained the observant sociologist she had always been. She followed current events closely and wrote letters to newspapers if they contained claims that could be disproved. She was surprised, for example, about a piece in a weekly magazine which claimed that Amsterdam's well-known shopping street the Kalverstraat was nowadays populated only by masses of ordinary white people. She went counting and observing in the same street for an afternoon and showed that it was all very different.

When her end drew near, she remained herself: well-tempered and facing the facts. Those who asked her how she was doing were told 'very well' for a long time, followed by words of praise for her caregivers. She did not complain, this social climber from the North Holland countryside and dear friend, who was happy to contribute to the fight against injustice and nonsense.

Kees Bruin



Arend-Jan Heerma van Voss (1942–2022)

In the circle of 'figurati' Arend Jan Heerma van Voss, who died at 79 in February this year, will be remembered at least for the extensive biographical interview with Norbert Elias he conducted with his friend Bram van Stolk (1941–1996). It first appeared as a series in the Dutch weekly *Vrij*

Nederland (Free Netherlands) in 1984. Later it was published as a book, also in German and English, and taken up in Volume 17 of the Collected Works. In the interview Elias expands on his youth as an only child in Breslau, his parents, the First World War, ‘that horrible emperor’, Hitler, Jews, outsiders, Ghana, his long awaited recognition. Not one syllable of it is out of date. (First question: ‘Do you remember any time in your life when you were not already working?’ Full answer: ‘No.’)

Heerma van Voss was born in a well-to-do but impoverished family, studied Economy and Law, became a master of law, and started writing about jazz. Later he married Christien Brinkgreve, with whom he would have two sons; from an earlier marriage he had two daughters. His profession of a journalist he fully developed during his years as an editor of the opinion weekly *Haagse Post* (The Hague Post), at that time a left-intellectual bulwark of socially engaged writing. When democratisation among these renowned journalists turned into disillusionment he switched to the reputable *Maandblad voor de geestelijke volksgezondheid* (Monthly for mental public health) as editor-in-chief. Here he introduced his old friend Van Stolk, who would be editor from 1986 to 1994 (from 1983 on he was Board member of the Norbert Elias Foundation). Van Stolk wrote essays on emancipation, homosexuality, women torn two ways. Heerma van Voss’s opening pieces used to be the most read ones, unfolding his progressive vision on mental health care and societal psychiatry, along with his unrelenting dislike of bureaucratisation and protocolisation.

His reputation as a semi-public figure was already established when he became chairman of a respected broadcast organisation and part-time interviewer for the radio. Psychologists, psychiatrists and social-democratic politicians were his interlocutors. In between he was ‘the best b-actor around’. For satirical TV programmes he impersonated psychiatrists, technocratic broadcasting executives or gynaecologists, with a remarkable fervour and a sharp eye for human

oddities — for human beings, that is. For visitors at home, around the kitchen table covered with newspapers and crumbs, he proved to be gladsome and amiable. But the suspicious spectator he was never renounced. The drilling gaze, then, involved the drilling for details and deeper layers. In one word, the truth. Growing up in a family where silence was the rule, he obsessively kept records and lists, and developed an aversion to lies. And then there was his passion for raw blues music, cinema, and football.

Arguably, this is the material dedicated journalists are made of, but it also echoes a childhood trauma. His seven-year-old sister Dokie was killed by a motor vehicle right in front of their parental home, but his parents muffled the cause. In his ‘retro reportage’ *Dokie, een familiebericht* (Dokie, a family report) he would sift through it all, many years later, in a peculiar double-barrelled style. It is as concise as it is evocative, both distant essayistic and in-depth private. When he was once interviewed for the radio himself he explicated how he used to be, in turn, the youngest, the only and, after his other sister was born, the oldest child. All in one and the same family — first of all he was a spectator of himself.

Arjan Post



Bart van Heerikhuizen (1948-2022)

Bart van Heerikhuizen died on 12 December 2022 at his home in

Amsterdam at the age of 74. A student of Johan Goudsblom, he was part of the ‘Amsterdam School of Sociology’ that was so important in elaborating the Elias-inspired figurational approach. While not very active in the international community of figurational sociologists, Van Heerikhuizen was a prominent and well-known sociologist in the Netherlands. He owed his reputation in the first place to the inspiring lectures with which he introduced generations of students to sociological theory. In May 2013, when he gave his valedictory lecture that marked his official retirement as senior lecturer from the University of Amsterdam, a newspaper published an article on him under the heading ‘The Mick Jagger of sociology’. His speech on that day showed that there was some truth in this comparison, as it exemplified the central thesis that he advanced: the ideal university lecture is more than a way of transmitting knowledge - it is, like a rock concert, a collective ritual that evokes feelings of enthusiasm and interconnectedness.

Bart van Heerikhuizen’s significance for sociology encompasses much more, however. He was a practitioner of what Alvin Gouldner called ‘reflexive sociology’, studying and analysing sociological ideas as part of changing social reality. Soon after his appointment at the University of Amsterdam in 1974 he started to focus on the history of Dutch sociology. This resulted in a number of articles, a co-edited book, and his PhD dissertation (1987) on the criminologist and first professor of sociology in the Netherlands, W.A. Bongers (1876-1940), who was also an influential member of the Dutch Social-Democratic Labour Party – and one of the very first scholars who, in 1940, recognized the great significance of Norbert Elias’s study *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*.

Bart and I were lifelong colleagues and friends. For more than 25 years we cooperated as editors of the *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* (AST), the journal founded by him and some other young sociologists in 1974 that became a major vehicle of Eliasian sociology and debates on the theory

of the civilising process. We co-edited the journal's last issue in 2004, which reflected on its significance and impact over the thirty years of its existence in the context of broader social changes. We wrote a few articles together. Later, after the merger of the AST with the *Sociologische Gids* into *Sociologie* in 2005, Bart chaired the editorial board of that new journal for some years (2010-2012).

In the late 1970s, as we were frustrated about the quality of available sociological textbooks, we conceived the plan of making a new and better textbook, based on the central tenets of figurational and processual sociology. After years of preparation, it appeared in 1985 under the title *Samenlevingen* [Societies], and it turned out to be successful; thousands of students of several universities and colleges in the Netherlands and Flanders have been introduced to the discipline by this book. Its ninth revised edition appeared just a few months ago.

Bart van Heerikhuizen was also active as an organiser. For several years (1998-2002), he was chair of the Dutch Sociological Association (NSV). In recognition of his various important contributions to Dutch sociology, the NSV made him honorary member in 2021. These contributions include the columns and short essays that he regularly wrote in the later years of his career for *Sociologie Magazine* (the journal of the NSV) and other periodicals, in which he discussed a wide variety of subjects from a sociological point of view, ranging from a new film or a recent novel to the art of long-distance walking, and from differences between generations to issues of religion and morality. It is particularly in these short, loosely yet precisely written pieces that he demonstrated his originality and excellence as a sociological observer and author.

But, as remarked earlier, Bart van Heerikhuizen owes his reputation above all to the outstanding quality of his lectures. Fortunately, these have not all faded away; thanks to modern technology, an important part of those lectures has been

recorded and can be seen and heard on YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/@bartvanheerikhuizen4260>). They include a series of lectures in English for an international MOOC on classical sociological theory, given after his retirement. Having received enthusiastic responses from students from all over the world, this last course confirmed his reputation as an outstanding academic teacher, now extending to a worldwide audience.

When in 2015 Bart became seriously ill, he had to diminish and then stop his sociological writing and lecturing. But, heroically fighting against his progressive illness and despite his worsening physical condition in the last years of his life, he remained lively and communicative until the very end, following closely the daily news, strongly engaged with current affairs, and discussing political and social issues. He also remained a warm-hearted friend, who showed his deeply felt sympathy when someone near to him had to cope with illness or impending death. He clung to life, but finally had to concede. Bart van Heerikhuizen is survived by his wife and his son and daughter. He will also be dearly missed by friends, colleagues, and former students.

Nico Wilterdink



Fernando Ampudia de Haro (1975-2022)

Our dear colleague and friend Fernando Ampudia de Haro left us too soon.

Fernando, born in Spain, in 1975, died on December 1st, in Portugal, at 11 pm, due to incurable cancer. 47 is no age! The farewell held at his funeral, on the 3rd day of December, in Lisbon, demonstrated that the memories Fernando leaves behind as a son, brother, husband, father, brother-in-law, uncle, friend, and colleague are of great beauty. The emotion that followed the words of those who loved him left no doubt that he had a positive impact on the lives of several people, including fellow professors. Fernando will be remembered with the immense *saudade* he leaves us with. At the farewell, songs that Fernando played and sang with his friends were sung and played. Castilian and Portuguese were spoken — his languages. Farewells, as Fernando knew being part of the figurational family, are long-term processes: which is why we will not fail to remember him.

Among the Elisian colleagues, we know Fernando above all as an interesting, dedicated, and meticulous researcher. Despite his remarkable importance for the Portuguese research heritage, his training and research in Sociology began in Spain. He was born in Madrid at the Hospital La Paz, on the 15th of August 1975, the same hospital where his son António would be born on the 22nd of August 2006. Fernando grew up and lived in Madrid until he came to Lisbon in March of 2008. He completed his basic education at the Unamuno College and then studied at the Camilo José Cela Secondary School in Pozuelo de Alarcón, in Madrid. He completed a degree in Sociology at the Complutense University of Madrid in 1998, and added several specializations (Group Discussion Technique, African Studies, Philosophy) at the same university, where he also obtained his doctorate in 2004.

Fernando presented a doctoral thesis expressively entitled *La civilización del comportamiento: Urbanidad y buenas maneras en España desde la Baja Edad Media hasta nuestros días* (Civilizing Behavior: Urbanity and good manners in Spain from the Lower Middle Age until our days), for which he would receive the Extraordinary Doctoral Prize 2004/05 awarded by the Faculty

of Political Sciences and Sociology of the Complutense University. In 2007, Fernando published a development of this work: the book *Las bridas de la conducta: una aproximación al proceso civilizatorio español* (The bridles of conduct: an approximation to the Spanish civilizing process), edited by the Center for Sociological Research (CIS).

It was at the Complutense, in Madrid, that he met the Portuguese sociologist Sofia Gaspar, with whom he would later marry and have their two beautiful children, António, today of 16 years old, and Luís, of 11 years old.

In his thesis, Fernando thanks Sofia as part of his family. He thanks her for her emotional support and her interventions in his text. Sofia Gaspar completed her PhD in Sociology at Complutense in 2005, with a thesis on the relationship between Sociology and Literature, exploring the hypothesis that the novel is an intermediate form of social knowledge between common sense and scientific knowledge, based on the analysis of *O Primo Basílio*, by the Portuguese writer José Maria Eça de Queirós. The thesis is dedicated to her sisters and her brother, but also Fernando “*por todo y mucho más*”. Despite not being, unlike Fernando’s thesis, Eliasian in theme, method, content, and form, Sofia’s doctoral thesis reserves an entire section for Norbert Elias.

Fernando and Sofia are part of a younger generation that, in Madrid, has received the legacy of an important wave of reception of Elias’s œuvre in Spanish. This wave has been signalled by the works of Francisco Javier Noya (*Figurations. Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation*, 1994), Helena Béjar, Ramón Ramos Torre (1994, *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, No. 65), and Gina Zabludovsky (*Norbert Elias y los problemas actuales de la sociología*, 2007) on the Spanish reception.

What those authors show is that, following an acknowledged international trend of increased interest in Historical Sociology and, in particular, in Process-figurational

Sociology, attention to Elias’s work in Spanish initially stood out in Spain from the 1980s onwards. Several essays and books by Elias will then be translated into Spanish. Several leading publications, such as *Revista de Occidente*, *Archipiélago*, *El País*, or *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas* (REIS), dedicated reviews and articles to Elias. Authors such as Geoffrey Barraclough, Fermín Bouza, Julia Varela, Helena Béjar, Ramón Ramos Torre, Emilio Lamo de Espinosa, José María González García, Cristóbal Torres Albero, Julia Varela, Fernando Álvarez-Uría, Jorgen Kocka, or Francisco Javier Noya discover, translate, contextualize, and comment Elias’s ideas, applying them to analyse their own realities.

The fundamental receptive moment in Spain was found in the publication of a special issue of REIS in 1994, as it suggested the need to study Elias’s work, discuss interpretations of such work, and present Eliasian-based methodological proposals and theoretical hypotheses to deal with specific problems linked to the Spanish-speaking community. The issue is edited by Béjar and Ramos Torre and contains a study by González García, one by Fermín Bouza, followed by research notes by Kocka and Noya, a section with translations of Elias texts, opened by a presentation once again written by Béjar and Ramos Torre. The issue closes with a proposal for a general bibliography of Elias’s work.

It is in this figuration that we will unveil a training ground for Fernando Ampudia de Haro and Sofia Gaspar, as well as the space in which their research paths are molded. Fernando will initiate his professional career as a research assistant at the Complutense University of Madrid between 1997-99. REIS is a reference journal in the social sciences, being published since 1978 by CIS, an autonomous organization related to Complutense. Béjar, Ramos Torre, and Lamo de Espinosa are professors at this university. Béjar is the author of *El corazón de la república. Avatares de la virtud política* (The heart of the republic. Vicissitudes of political virtue), a book that will be the subject of one of Fernando’s first

works, a review published in *Revista de Occidente* in 2001. Ramos Torre was the supervisor of Fernando’s doctoral thesis. Sofia was supervised by Lamo de Espinosa. It was at REIS that Fernando published several reviews of works by authors of Eliasian forge, such as Stephen Mennell, Cas Wouters, or Dennis Smith.

Fernando became Assistant Professor at the University of Salamanca in 2006 and Assistant Professor at the Pontificia Comillas University from 2006 to 2008. From 2006 onwards, however, Fernando integrated Portuguese university organizations. The first link is with the Institute of Contemporary History (IHC) of the Nova University of Lisbon. That’s where Fernando would carry out a post-doctoral project on the Spanish and Portuguese civilizing processes, with a grant awarded by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology. This link began in 2006 and ended in 2012.

In 2009, Fernando became Assistant Professor at the European University, where he joined the Pedagogical Council and coordinated the areas of Sociology and Methodologies of the Social Sciences. In a short period, between 2011 and 2012, he would also teach at the Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon. Fernando will then joined, between 2012 and 2020, the Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology of the Higher Institute of Labor and Business Sciences (ISCTE) of the University Institute of Lisbon. Sofia Gaspar started her scientific journey at this Institute, where she became a Senior Researcher, thus remaining until our days. At ISCTE, Fernando deepened his interests in Political Economy from an institutionalist orientation through the completion of a master’s degree in Social and Solidarity Economics, completed in 2016, becoming a reader of Marcel Mauss, Karl Polanyi, Michel Foucault and a critic of neoliberal theoretical perspectives and government practices. In 2021, Fernando rejoined the IHC.

Over the years that followed his post-doctoral project, Fernando dedicated himself to the study of

diverse processes and phenomena from an Eliasian point of view: from the outset, Eliasian theoretical concepts or hypotheses, such as the notion of decivilizing processes; self-help literature, which he had already been studying along with the fine figurational analysis of good manners manuals; various aspects of Portuguese and Spanish history, such as behavioral models or revisionist tendencies; the contemporary financial system; the financial crisis of 2007; political rationality, especially the genealogy and critique of neoliberal political rationality, linking up with Foucauldian governmentality studies, as demonstrated in the book he edited in 2021 with the Portuguese sociologist José Nuno Matos under the title *Os sujeitos do neoliberalismo* (The subjects of neoliberalism); the current scientific communication and publication model; with Sofia Gaspar, he published several studies on the tax regime and migration policies.

In his last works, Fernando showed special concern with the theoretical issues of politics and communication in Elias's corpus and its interpretations. The last major work he published is the book, edited by the IHC publishing house in 2020, *O processo civilizacional da tourada. Guerreiros, cortesãos, profissionais ... e bárbaros?* (The civilizing process of bullfighting. Warriors, courtiers, professionals... and barbarians?). Fernando's last published text addresses the "cultural repertoires" of love in a Portuguese reality show and was published in ISCTE's sociological journal. This is his last published text, but I know from Sofia that it is not his last text. He has also written two articles that she will seek to publish.

Observing the sum and volume of these works, Fernando was undoubtedly the person who contributed the most to the development of Process-figurational Sociology in Portugal and one of the most active worldwide Eliasian voices in the Portuguese language. Fernando suggested that, while there is not an absolute absence of work on Elias in Portugal, there still is a passive reception of his contributions. Although this characterization deserves to be explored through systematic research,

it can be said that his book on the civilizing process of bullfighting is the biggest enterprise of application of the Process-figurational framework ever made in Portugal and one of the most rigorous, detailed, and also creative exercises of testing Elias's point of view in the Iberian circuit.

Despite some apparent shift in focus, it is important to note that, as a researcher, Fernando Ampudia de Haro never abandoned his concerns with Spain and the Spanish-speaking community. There is no actual break in his path, but a process of theoretical-methodological integration of interests and objects that may seem, at the naked eye, disconnected. This can be seen from the simple fact that Fernando continued to be present at Spanish scientific meetings and continued to publish and also edit works on Spain and in his mother tongue, namely being the author of texts in Spanish on Portugal, in Portuguese on Spain, also maintaining collaborations with or having worked on Portuguese or Spanish speaking countries other than Portugal and Spain, such as Brazil and Mexico respectively. Besides this, Fernando was co-author, together with Stephen Mennell, of a prologue to one of the most systematic books entirely dedicated to the work of Elias in Spanish: Jesús Romero Moñivas' *Los Fundamentos de la Sociología de Norbert Elias* (The Foundations of Norbert Elias's Sociology), which I already reviewed in *Human Figurations*.

Among the causes that our time makes urgent, one of them is the anthological edition of Fernando's articles and chapters and the other the translation of Fernando's work to English in order to expand the audience of his readers, diversify the Eliasian approach, discuss each of the topics Fernando studied and understand the real complexity of Elias's work reception.

I met Fernando in 2013. I was preparing my thesis on Elias, I was reading and underlining *Engagement und Distanzierung*, when my supervisor, José Luís Garcia, from the Institute of Social Sciences of the University of Lisbon, invited me to attend a seminar

on contemporary critical thinking and violence organized by the critical and militant collective Unipop. Fernando then made an exhibition under the title "Elias and the Civilizing Process".

I pronounced a comment trying to underline the importance of the Eliasian themes of the internalization of constraints and the control of violence and the relationship between Psychology and Sociology.

Since then, I have come across Fernando in various Philosophy, History, Sociology and Political Economy meetings held in Portugal. The last time I could hear him was in the defence of my own master's thesis on Elias's theory of history. Fernando was the arguer of my thesis and, as expected, provided an excellent discussion. He left us at a time when we had discussed, after my studies, deepening the investigation into the reception of Elias's work in Portugal and in Portuguese. For me, Fernando will remain a source of inspired figurational curiosity. It is unanimous among Portuguese colleagues that Fernando was a good and kind person – one of those that the world needs. His Portuguese, tinged with a characteristic Castilian sibilance, will remain in my ear as an eternal recommendation from an eternally young sage.

Diogo Silva da Cunha

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Abstract: Some early thoughts on the impacts of covid-pandemic, written in March 2020, motivated by the death and in honor of Joop Goudsblom.

Laura Gilliam (2019). *Secularities-in-Practice: Accommodating Muslim Pupils and Preserving Danish Identity in Multi-ethnic Danish Schools.* *Journal of Religion in Europe*, 12(1), 1-26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1163/18748929-01201001>.

Abstract: This article explores the ideals and practices of moderate secularism characteristic of Danish schools' approach to Muslim pupils, Islam, and religion in general. It argues that while these reflect the Danish 'culture of secularity' (), differences in 'secularities-in-practice' between schools necessitate a look at the interactional level and institutional context. Drawing on Norbert Elias's figurational sociology, the article shows how an increase in Muslim pupils changes the webs of interdependencies in the social figuration of teachers, children, and parents in Danish schools and how the schools attempt to maintain institutional practices, civilised interaction, and a Danish identity.

John O'Brien (2015). *Commemoration in the Civilizing Process: Reconciliation, Melancholy and Abstraction in Contemporary Memorialising.* *International Political Anthropology*, 8(2), 99-116. DOI: <https://www.politicalanthropology.org/ipa-journal/2-uncategorised/123-ipa-journal-contents-2015-2>.

Abstract: Norbert Elias has become a key inspiration for many of the most important researchers of collective memory and commemorative practices,

broadly because his work points to a way beyond the reification of collective memory that is a feature of traditional Durkheimian approaches, and an overly static perspective in Bourdieuan approaches, which have the additional liability of a dominant-dominated class perspective. This paper seeks to indicate trends that have transformed the character of commemoration, which the social theory of Elias are very productive in explaining. Commemorations are marked by a trend from chauvinism and towards reconciliation, from naivety to strategy, from clear messages to abstraction and blandness, and trends towards increasing control by 'memory elites' and individualization. Elias's thought can provide a powerful account

of the reasons for these trends, by relating them to the transformation in the nature of interdependencies over the course of a civilizing process. However, the paper concludes by noting the limitations of his thinking, and the need to supplement it with other models. Though the manner in which changes in social competition has driven changes in commemorative practices, commemorations as a practice that seeks explanations for suffering and anxiety cannot be explained well, nor can contingency. At the heart of the lacuna is the absence of a language to discuss in-betweenness, as commemorations are out-of-the-ordinary moments that reflect on, and summon to memory, extraordinary events.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in July 2023. News and notes should be sent by 30 June 2023 to the Editors at figurations@norbert-elias.com.

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