

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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■ FIGURATIONS: ELECTRONIC VERSION

All the evidence seems to show that people read printed copies of newsletters such as this more thoroughly than when they read onscreen, and *Figurations* will continue to be printed and posted.

Some subscribers have said, however, they would like to receive the latest issues by email. If you would prefer to receive *Figurations* in that form, please send an email – stating your postal address as well as your email address to: figurations@norberteliasfoundation.nl. This will save the Foundation a bit of the cost of printing and postage.

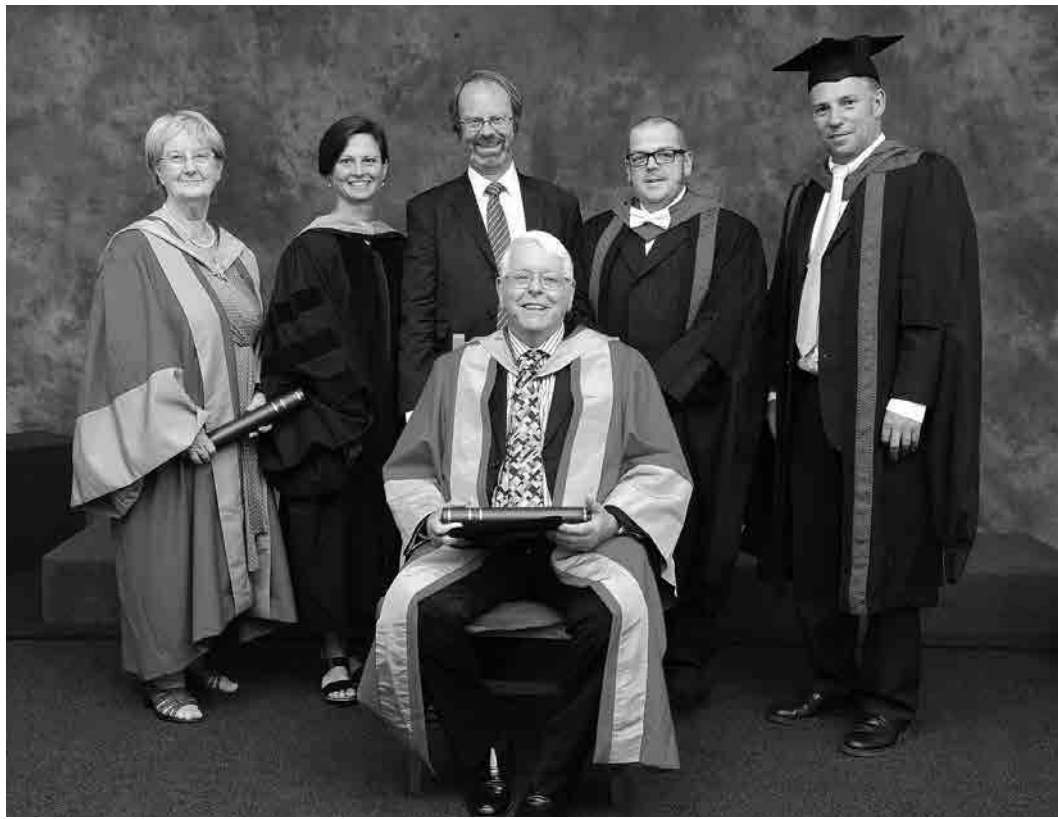
All back numbers of *Figurations* since 1994 have been available online for many years: go to www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/figurations.php.

■ PEOPLE

- Dieter Reicher gained his *Habilitation* and his professorial *veni legendi* at the Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. See details of the resulting book below.
- Emmanuel Taïeb (Sciences Po Grenoble), has been admitted to the Institut Universitaire de France (the French University Institute), for a five-year appointment. He will be conducting research on the retention of the death penalty in

both the French Third Republic and the contemporary United States, using a socio-historical perspective. The Institut Universitaire de France allows its members to reduce their teaching hours by two-thirds and to benefit from extra funding for their research project. Earlier in the year, Emmanuel Taïeb also successfully attained the *agrégation* in his field and was officially named Professor of Political Science.

- The top 50 most cited articles of *Theory, Culture and Society* (as of 1 January 2013) included five pieces of figurational work, all of which were originally published in the 1980s. These are: Cas Wouters (1989), Norbert Elias (three papers published in the special issue marking his ninetieth birthday in 1987) and Eric Dunning (1987). Rankings are based on citations to online articles from HighWire-hosted articles.
- On 10 July 2013, the University of Leicester conferred the degree of Doctor of Letters *honoris causa* on Eric Dunning at a degree congregation. Eric arrived in Leicester as a first-year undergraduate in 1955, and with brief visits to other universities, has spent his entire academic career there, where he continues to work and write as Professor Emeritus. In presenting Eric for the degree, the orator stressed his loyalty not just to the university but to two central continuing interests: to sport, especially football and the sociology thereof, and to the sociology of his teacher - and subsequent collaborator - Norbert Elias.
- Also receiving the same honorary degree was Olwen Hufton, the historian famous especially for her work on women and poverty in Revolutionary France. She has taught at, among other universities, Harvard and the EUI in Fiesole. But she began her career as a junior lecturer in Leicester, at the same time as Eric Dunning. She too reminisced about Norbert Elias and Ilya Neustadt who, she reported, tried to poach her from History into Sociology.



Left to right: Professor Dame Olwen Hufton, Dr Jennifer Smith Maguire, Professor Stephen Mennell, Dr John Goodwin, Professor Jason Hughes with Eric Dunning.



The Chancellor of the University, Lord Grocott, conferring the degree.

Inaugural Lecture of Professor Stefanie Ernst

Professor Stefanie Ernst delivered her Inaugural Lecture to approximately 70 people at the Institute of Sociology at Westfälische Wilhelms-Universität Münster on Friday, 12 July 2013. The topic of her lecture was: 'The Master Class: On becoming a figuration'. The master class whose becoming was in question was no less than our own figural research network. All the usual suspects were rounded up.

At the beginning of the ceremony the dean of her faculty, Professor Volker Gehrau, welcomed her back to Münster, the place where she started studying sociology in the late 1980s.

Professor Ernst started her lecture with the following sentence: 'I would like to take you along on a journey in time back to one of the greatest sociological thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.' In a very vivid way she presented the various academic life stages of Norbert Elias beginning in Frankfurt in the 1920s, via Bielefeld in the 1980s and ending in Amsterdam in 1990:

At each of these stages Professor Ernst pointed out how in the course of time the academic relationships of Elias as a teacher or as a colleague among his students and peers turned into personal relationships and intellectual friendships. These were relationships based on trust and friendship as well as rivalry and competition. She developed her lecture with the concepts of generations and sociology from exile. Through systematic interviews with the members of different generations of figural sociologists at various locations throughout Europe, Professor Ernst demonstrated the dynamic emergence of process theory from an out-of-the-mainstream theory shaped by biographical experiences of helplessness and powerlessness of its carriers to an established and recognised one. These interviews provided the audience with unique insider information about this long-term process. The particular emphasis was put on the contribution of the



aspects of personal relationships – which was, for instance, symbolically represented by the expression 'the figural family' – to the process of the acquisition and development of sociological knowledge. By doing so, Professor Ernst made the 'biography' of figural sociology into a subject matter of sociological research.

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Norbert Elias on Facebook!

There is now an official Facebook page for Norbert Elias and the Norbert Elias Foundation. It has been set up by Jonathan Fletcher from his (latest) base in New York, and Jon will run it on behalf of the wider figural research network.

See the work in progress at <https://www.facebook.com/norberteliaspage>.

If you are into Facebook, please sign up – and contribute material for the further development of the new account.

Human Figurations Journal

Please note new email addresses for the Editor (Katie Liston): humanfigurations@me.com and the Administrator: adhjournal@hotmail.co.uk.

Website: www.norberteliasfoundation.nl

Please help us to keep the website up to date. In particular, check your profile on the 'Figural Research Network' page (www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/network/index.php). If you are not there already, send us a new entry.

See also the 'Classic Essays' page, www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/network/essays.php, the aim of which is to make available important essays that are not easily found elsewhere. Suggestions for new inclusions welcome.

And finally, if you would like to keep abreast of news between issues of *Figurations*, do enrol on the NEF Blog (see homepage, top right-hand corner).

All correspondence about the website can be directed in the first instance to figurations@norberteliasfoundation.nl.

■ ELIAS COLLECTED WORKS IN ENGLISH

Studies on the Germans published

Norbert Elias, *Studies on the Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2013 [Collected Works, vol. 11]). xxvi + 529 pp. ISBN: 978-1-906259-08-9. €60.00 / £50.00. Translated by Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell, edited by Stephen

Mennell and Eric Dunning.

Studies on the Germans, the antepenultimate volume of the Collected Works, has now been published by UCD Press. As usual, the volume can be bought at a 20 per cent discount (€48.00) if ordered direct from the Press via the website (www.ucdpress.ie).

In this new edition, Elias's original English text of the extremely important essay 'The breakdown of civilisation' – his major treatment of the rise of Nazism – is published for the first time. When Eric Dunning and Stephen Mennell translated the book for the first edition (*The Germans*) in the early 1990s, they did not have access to all of Elias's original English drafts of the essay, so they translated Michael Schröter's German translation back into English. Now, however, as editors of the Collected Works edition, they have been able to locate all the English texts on which Schröter drew, and so it has been possible to reconstruct the full version in Elias's original English.

Other essays include those on duelling and its wider social significance, as well as on nationalism, civilisation and violence, and post-war terrorism in the Federal Republic of Germany. In this edition, they are presented in a more logical and easily followed order, dealing with nineteenth and twentieth-century German history in more nearly chronological sequence.

Most important, however, all the essays have been extensively annotated by the editors, especially to make clear many historical references that Elias – quite unrealistically – took for granted that his readers would understand without further explanation. Readers with only a sketchy knowledge of German history and culture will find the new edition much more rewarding. In their Note on the text, moreover, the editors set *Studies on the Germans* in the context of the famous *Historikerstreit* – the bitter dispute among historians in the 1980s about the interpretation of the uniqueness or otherwise of Germany's path of development – and of sociological contributions such as those of Dahrendorf and Bauman.

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Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections (vol. 17) is in press, for publication in autumn 2013, and the series will conclude in spring 2014 with Supplements and Index (the consolidated index to all 18 volumes). For further details, see www.ucdpress.ie.

■ IN THE MEDIA

Jason Hughes took part in an edition of the BBC World Service's 'The Why Factor' series, broadcast on 29 December 2012, on the topic of 'Manners'. The programme was recorded in a Japanese restaurant in London, which served as a stimulus for discussing different codes of politeness, and how they change over time. Jason managed to get across the basic outlines of the theory of civilising processes!

■ AND IN BLOGLAND

In his blog, Graham Scambler (Professor of Sociology, University College London), posted a list of 'Twelve career-nudging books for a sociologist', the first of which made an interesting link:

'The first book is Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, which I read during a summer break as a schoolboy working in a nursery north of Rustington in Sussex (I was sacked by the supervisor, a former German fighter pilot who spotted me deep in conversation and leaning on a shovel, but I managed to talk him round and was subsequently reinstated). If I missed a lot in the 1500 pages, I also picked up an abiding sense of overarching historical and socio-cultural context and something also of the slow unfolding of social processes. It was not until I read Elias on: (a) the 'civilising process' (extending to sport, courtesy of Dunning), and (b) *The Germans* that I came across a sociologist who adequately conveyed this. The historian Braudel does so too, although I read him much later. What Tolstoy bequeathed was a sense of what

I would now call structural continuity even at times of all-consuming war and transition (as with Napoleon's fated trek east into Russia). I could not have articulated this in my mid-teens, but memories lingered.'

For the full posting, see: <http://grahamscambler.wordpress.com/2013/01/06/twelve-career-nudging-books-for-a-sociologist/> (6 January 2013)

■ FAMILY BACKGROUND OF NORBERT ELIAS

Adrian Jitschin

University of Marburg

Little is known about the family background of Norbert Elias. He himself never spoke publicly in any detail about most of his family, and appeared to be a rather isolated person.

Despite being almost unknown, the family has relevance to his writings, at least in his autobiographical essay, where he speaks of himself as a member of a typical Jewish middle-class family, or in his late work *Studien über die Deutschen*, where he describes gender relations in the German middle class at the beginning of the twentieth century. But it is also relevant to knowing more about the background of his most famous book, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*. This book is not only dedicated to his parents, it is also about different concepts of culture and civilisation in Europe. We know that Elias learned much about the civilisation of France and England. But he never spoke about *his* personal experience with the concept of culture in Germany before 1933. He demands that sociology should incorporate medical thinking, but remains silent about the medical people in his family. He speaks about the self-esteem of the German middle-class in general, but not about that of *his* German middle-class family.

I went to archives to find out more. I visited those of his hometown, Wrocław, and of several German towns and universities, the German Federal Archives, and I viewed the records of the Jewish Historical Institute in

Warsaw. A further source was his personal papers in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar.

The main findings can be summarised in twelve points:

1 The second given name of Norbert Elias was Leo. Despite there being no documents in which Elias uses this name himself, the naming is clear from his birth certificate at the National Archive in Wrocław.

2 His mother's name was spelled Sofie or Sophie. The dedication to her in *On the Process of Civilisation* reads 'Sophie Elias, d. Auschwitz 1941 (?)'. According to the *Gedenkbuch – Opfer der Verfolgung der Juden* (Memorial book – victims of the persecution of the Jews), published by the German Federal Archives, she was deported from Breslau to the Theresienstadt ghetto on 30 August 1942. Theresienstadt was the only ghetto in central Europe and it was the only one in an area without significant Jewish population. The former fortress with high walls and only a few gates was transformed within months in 1942 into a ghetto. Over the whole summer of 1942 transports arrived. By September 5, 9000 people were living there in an area of only 750 square metres. They had to sleep in cellars, in attics, aisles and in some cases even on the street. During the summer heat, the infrastructure collapsed: The water supply was absolutely inadequate for that number of people and there was a huge sewage problem. 57 percent of the inhabitants were older than 65. They began to die from exhaustion, diarrhoea and illness. During September 1942 about 4000 people died. In this situation the commandant's office decided to transport people into, they were told, 'other ghettos in the east'. Between 19 September and 29 September six transports with 11,000 Jews were sent to extermination camps. Sophie Elias was aboard the last one. Her transport went to the *Treblinka* extermination camp – not Auschwitz, as Norbert Elias always assumed.

The Treblinka camp consisted of scarcely more than three gas chambers and barracks for some working

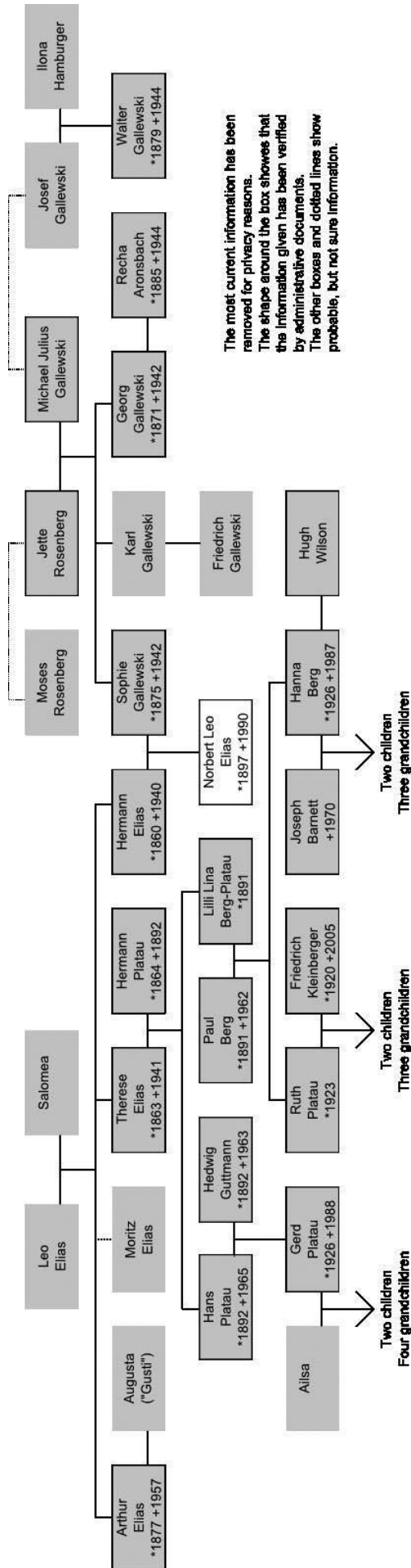
detainees. The procedure for the new arrivals was always the same: They arrived at a railway station with the fantasy name 'Obermajdan'. The doors of the box cars were opened and they were chased down the ramp. People unable to move were transported to a 'sickbay', where they were later shot to death. Those people able to move had to take off all their clothes. After that the women's hair was sheared. They had to walk around an earthen wall to what the Nazis told them was a 'group shower'. After being gassed their bodies were burned in pits.

Treblinka was in its death toll second as an extermination camp only to Auschwitz. In total 870,000 Jewish persons were killed in Treblinka. Sophie Elias was one of them.

3 The Elias family always had close contact with Norbert's paternal aunt. After her husband had died early, Therese Platau moved from Berlin to Breslau in 1893 with two small children. She must have relied on the family network during that period. For some years she received an income from work as an independent seamstress, according to the Breslau address book. Her financial situation improved after her daughter Lilli graduated in medicine in 1916.

4 Lilli set up in practice as a gynaecologist in south Breslau. She became one of the closest reference persons for Norbert. With her husband Paul Berg, Lilli Berg-Platau had two daughters, Ruth (born in 1923) and Hannah (born in 1926).

5 Through Lilli, Norbert Elias came into contact with a member of her close circle, Edith Stein. Jewish by birth but later a convert to Roman Catholicism and canonised, Stein was born in the same year as Lilli and grew up in Breslau. Stein's sister, whose married name was Bieberstein, was also a doctor, and the Biebersteins were close friends with the Berg-Platau. When in 1920 the young Elias went off to spend a semester in Freiburg this network proved useful. Stein, who had gained her doctorate with Edmund Husserl, recommended Norbert Elias to him. So it became possible for Norbert Elias,



who was then still a medical student, to participate in the philosophic circle of Freiburg [see *Figurations* 19, and Hermann Korte, *Über Norbert Elias*].

6 Norbert Elias remained in contact with his aunt's family for four generations. After his aunt Therese, his cousin Lilli and her family moved to Palestine in 1933, they kept in close contact by letter. Elias saw Lilli several times again, the last time in the 1980s, when he visited her in her care home in Tel Aviv.

7 Norbert Elias established a close connection with Lilli's daughter Hannah after she married and settled down in London. During the 1950s and 1960s 'uncle Norbert' visited her, her husband Joseph (Joe) Barnett and the two daughters regularly. The contact ended only when Hannah died suddenly after a fall on the stairs in 1987.

8 His father Hermann Elias retired in 1910 at the age of 50 from his company Hermann Elias Herren- und Knaben-Confection en gros (Hermann Elias Men's and Boys' Wholesale Ready-to-Wear Clothing). Afterwards he dedicated himself to philanthropic work. Hermann's younger brother Arthur Elias, who was 33 at that time, took over the business. In the long run, this uncle of Norbert Elias proved to be less successful. When the inflation crisis of 1923 hit the economy, the company was taken over by the company Cohn & Labrot Herrenkleiderfabrik.

It seems that Norbert Elias never worked in the family business. But possibly it was intended at some stage that he should enter it: his CV states that after his final examination at Breslau University in 1922 he started as an employee in the company of a friend [a producer of iron goods]. He continued his academic work in Heidelberg only in 1925. It should be noted that Arthur remained childless, so that Norbert would have been the obvious successor. During that transition period there might have been plans of Norbert Elias to enter the family business.

9 Elias kept in contact with Arthur until his uncle died in 1957. Arthur escaped from Germany in the 1930s to Chicago via the network of his wife's family. From the 1940s it would have been possible for Elias to go to his uncle in the United States or to his cousin's family in Tel Aviv. For unknown reasons he stayed in England, where he had at that time no relatives, but some friends. He preferred to continue his work, instead of getting into closer contact with his family, which could have helped him materially. [This point is not entirely clear: in a letter to Raymond Aron dated 22 July 1939, Elias wrote 'However, I hope soon to go to the United States' – see *Figurations* 35.]

10 While the paternal ancestors of Norbert Elias had come from Posen to Breslau during the 1880s, his mother's ancestors were by then already well established in Breslau. His grandfather, Julius Gallewski, owned a small liqueur factory and for some time ran a grain trade company with his brother-in-law Moses Rosenberg.

11 In 1905 the Elias family moved closer to the maternal grandparents, into the well-known Nikolaistadtgraben 14 [see *Figurations* 12, concerning the affixing of a plaque at this address]. There were close contacts with the grandparents – for example, they regularly ate lunch together on Sundays. Norbert Elias himself remembered this part of the family as orthodox Jews and did not continue the close contact with them after leaving Breslau.

12 Norbert's mother met her oldest brother Georg again in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. According to the memorial book both were imprisoned there at the same time for two weeks in 1942, before she was deported to her death.

Despite there still being gaps in the family tree of Norbert Elias, and in our knowledge about his family, my research has led to useful new information. It now becomes clear that during his time in Breslau Norbert Elias was involved in the family networks of his father and his mother. There were regular contacts with and visits to uncles, aunts and grandparents. Norbert Elias kept up close contact to the family of his aunt Therese from his early childhood until 1987.

Norbert Elias focused on the 'modern' part of his family, on those members who like himself had pursued academic studies. There was a dominance of medical graduates (Lilli Berg-Platau, Paul Berg, Hannah Barnett). Less information is available about his maternal family. According to Norbert Elias himself (in the TV interview 'Man lässt sich fallen ...'), this part of his family was more traditional. His uncles Georg and Walter Gallewski went to Berlin early, and an uncle Karl seems to have gone to South America. The grandfather Julius died before 1922. Whether the Elias family also kept in contact with the Rosenberg family, the family of his grandmother Jette, is unclear.

As a whole picture it becomes clear that Norbert Elias was never isolated from family. He always kept contact with parts of his family and knew about the existence and the fate of a broader family circle. A closer contact with relatives and involvement in family affairs was possible for him. But it was Norbert Elias himself who remained apart, or at the very least maintained distance from the family.

[Comments in square brackets above are by Stephen Mennell; thanks to Barbara Górnicka for additional research and Hermann Korte for additional comments.]

■ VARIETIES OF 'MUTUAL IDENTIFICATION': REFLECTIONS ON 'RESPECT' AND 'CONSIDERATION'

This meditation on a small difference between British English and American English was inspired by participant observation in the car park of the gym to which I belong in Dublin.

The difference in question is that between 'to show respect' (commonly American) and 'to show consideration' to others (commonly British usage). In American, the opposite is found in the expression 'dissing' (as in 'Don't diss me'), meaning to show 'disrespect'.

Now, to my ears, 'respect' is a hierarchical concept, much in evidence in Elias's account of changing manners in Europe. It involves a power relationship, even a threat in the case of the warning not to 'diss me'. It also essentially refers to face-to-face interactions: it is a matter of manners towards a person who is actually present.

To show 'consideration' to other people, in contrast, is more associated with lengthening chains of interdependence: one can show consideration to other people more abstractly conceived, people one does not meet face to face but towards whom one feels the 'social constraint towards self-constraint'. And 'consideration' is an egalitarian concept, not hierarchical.

How does this relate to the car park? Well, it is always very crowded mid-morning. It is often difficult to find a space. But there are always half a dozen cars parked smack across two spaces, whose drivers haven't been bothered to straighten up their car – and who thus prevent the use of a space by another person. Yet I have no doubt that, had there been another driver visibly waiting to park alongside them, the inconsiderate drivers would have stirred themselves to straighten up. They would have shown 'respect', but their level of mutual identification with fellow members of the club is insufficiently great for them to show 'consideration' in the abstract, for people who are not physically present.

By way of provocative extension, may I suggest that this Anglo-American difference is also reflected in the mainstream of American sociology, which broadly speaking remains at the micro-level of 'interaction'?

Stephen Mennell

■ REVIEW ESSAYS

Vera Weiler (ed.), *Norbert Elias y el Problema del Desarrollo Humano* [Norbert Elias and the Problem of Human Development] (Bogotá: Ediciones Aurora, 2011).

Bruna A. Scaramboni
Federal University of São Paulo

Historian and associate professor in the Department of History of the National University of Colombia, Vera Weiler has organised a collection of texts dedicated to contemporary questions in the social sciences, based on the theoretical framework developed by Norbert Elias.

Weiler's text emphasises the influence that developmental psychology, particularly the formulations of Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1896–1980), had on Elias's work, focusing on the psychogenetic axis of the theory of the civilising process, as developed in his *magnum opus* of 1939, *On the Process of Civilisation*.

The influence of Freudian psychoanalysis in the work of Norbert Elias is undeniable and widely recognised among scholars and by Elias himself, despite the fact he did not explicitly declare being influenced by Freud until a late stage in his life. He talked about this in interviews during the 1980s and in *Le concept freudien de société et au-delà* (Paris: La Découverte, 2010, pp. 130–85), where he undertakes a critical analysis of Freudian concepts and formulations. However, according to Vera Weiler, many of the elements of the psychogenetic theory of changes in conduct were already present in Jean Piaget's psychology of development. While Elias does not make reference to Piaget, some of the latter's main works,

such as *The Language and Thought of the Child* (1923) and *The Child's Conception of the World* (1926) are listed in the bibliography of extension courses offered by Elias (p. 129). An essay by Georg W. Oesterdiekhoff (p. 71), for example, explores the relation between developmental psychology and the psychogenetic axis of the theory of the civilising process, contributing to the understanding of the concept of psychogenesis, whose basis can be found in developmental psychology.

Vera Weiler's book is an effort to explore new routes towards scientific knowledge of human beings and social life, aiming to integrate different sciences. Its starting point is, on the one hand, the relation between the theory of the civilising process and Piaget's psychology of development and, on the other hand, Elias's discussion on the problem of knowledge. Weiler (p. 9) considers the social sciences as a scientific domain marked by a large diversity of paradigms, which, according to her, reveals a certain 'insecurity of criteria' and 'absence of cognitive benchmarks'. Therefore, the author considers it urgent that there be a discussion of knowledge in social sciences, attempting to come up with an alternative to relativist tendencies and 'epistemological uncertainty' (p. 14), which are perceived behind a 'cheerfully celebrated diversity'. In this regard, the author starts with psychogenetic research, a strategy developed by Elias, whose purpose is the 'reconstruction of the real subjects' process' (p. 14), who are seen as knowledge producers.

The essay by Gina Zabludovsky focuses on the discussion of the individual and individualisation in sociological theory. Elias's contribution in this respect is confronted by the conceptions of individual and society in classical theory, and the proximity of Elias's ideas to the debates of contemporary theory on subjects such as *individualisation*, *globalisation* and *risk society*.

Other essays in this book, such as those by Ademir Gebara and Federico Benninghoff, aim to explore further developments of Elias's work and move

forward towards a historical-genetic theory of culture – as discussed in Laura Ibarra's essay – as a possible continuation of Norbert Elias's ideas and an attempt to overcome the limits established so far in the investigation of human life.

Guillaume Devin and Marie-Claude Smouts, *Les Organisations internationales* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2011).

Nina Wilen
Royal Military Academy, Belgium

Guillaume Devin and Marie-Claude Smouts have done something unusual, in writing a comprehensive book about international organisations without presenting one organigramme throughout the volume. In contrast to the first impression that this lack of models and structures may suggest a vague and somewhat redundant presentation of international organisation, this step away from traditional textbooks is surprisingly refreshing for the reader and also proof of the transversal analysis of not just one or two IOs, but of international organisations as a phenomenon in itself.

Without diverting from the main subject, the 250-page volume takes the readers on a socio-historic voyage through the birth, the role and the evolution of international organisations, in three parts. The book starts with a thorough analysis of how international organisations have been created, constructed and evolved through history, with empirical examples of the first international organisations to illustrate this. True to their socio-historical perspective, the various examples are put into their historical situation, underlining the importance of context for the organisations' *raison d'être*. Although the many historical examples in chapter 2 may at times seem redundant, the authors make use of them by integrating them into the evolution of today's organisations. The short chapter on the typologies of the organisations emphasises the difficulties in categorising the different entities on today's international scene where heterogeneity and multiplicity

appear to be keywords. On the one hand, one may ask if this chapter actually is necessary, considering that the authors fail to come up with any new and clear manner to categorise the organisations; on the other hand, their honest approach of recognising this insurmountable dilemma and their effort in making a pedagogic distinction useful to the reader makes up for this.

In the second part of the book, the roles of international organisations are examined through questions of both their functions and their use – what functions do they fill and how do actors use them? In a first chapter, which browses through the different classical theoretical approaches used to analyse IOs, the authors affirm their link to Norbert Elias's socio-historical heritage, underlining the constant evolution of both the identities and the contexts of the international organisations.¹ It is also here that their strongest argument on the never-ending evolution and re-construction of the roles of IO's comes out. Touching upon the fine line separating the socio-historical perspective from the constructivist approach, the authors single out the 'densification' and the 'complexification' of the links of interdependence as crucial for understanding international organisations. Although the argument is convincing, the differentiation from constructivism could be clearer. The second chapter investigates the triangle of representativeness, legitimacy and efficiency with a particular and welcome look at the international civil servants inside the organisations (p. 80), which are often overlooked. It also provides an evaluative analysis of the IO's performances, again from a socio-historical perspective, arguing that the informal effects of IO's existence most likely contribute to a more just, consolidated and peaceful world. In the third chapter the authors recognise instrumentalisation, socialisation and legitimisation as common ways for international actors to use international organisations where the part on socialisation appears to be the most innovative through its division into two different categories: learning and appropriation where the idea of rethinking major questions through the

conceptual framework proposed by IO comes out as the main point.

In the third part of the book devoted to the evolution of international organisations, Devin and Smouts attempt to unmask the power relations in what is often called global governance. The first chapter, concerning the transformation of multilateralism, details the proliferation, and the transformation of the different sorts of international organisation to a point where it becomes almost too specific for a book that aims to treat international organisations in general. At the same time, the unmasking of the intricate and complex links and evolutions between, within and outside the international organisations is impressive. In addition it gives the reader more than just a confirmation of what he/she already knew – that the powerful states attempt to direct and influence the international organisations in different ways – and it adds an important perspective through its detailed analysis that balances this simplistic picture. In the chapter consecrated to international security, the authors show how international organisations gradually have transformed our vision on security through the paradoxical development *à la Elias*, of globalising threats and individualising the strategies. In a socio-historical analysis of the commonly known different generations of peacekeeping, the progressive enlargement of the international organisation's competences is confirmed. It is also in this chapter that one finds the perhaps most important and clarifying quotation of the book: 'the natural vocation of international organisations is to make common, that which appears to be particular to each member' (p.183). In just one phrase, the authors manage to sum up both the role and the function of international organisations as such.

The last chapter, entitled 'The regularisation of globalisation', provides a glimpse of political economy through its profound analysis of the major economical institutions such as International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. At times, the authors' language testifies of a normative

and critical stance, for example when analysing the two institutions mentioned above: 'resort to the IMF is a humiliation that all countries try to avoid' (p. 202), but it is also this very candid way of analysing profound issues that gives the book its appeal. In brief, far from being yet another textbook on the structures and functions of international organisations, this volume examines and critically analyses international organisations as a phenomenon in itself, through detailed socio-historical accounts of their constant evolution in a changing environment. Yet, although treating IOs as a whole, the authors still manage to give the reader an in-depth knowledge of many of the most important international organisations of today, with the notable exception of the European Union. This omission is also, perhaps, its only fault.

Note

1 In 1995 Guillaume Devin published an article devoted to 'Norbert Elias et l'analyse des relations internationales' in *Revue française de science politique* (45: 2, pp. 305–27). In his previous books, such as *Sociologie des relations internationales* (Paris: La Découverte, 2007) and *La construction européenne* (with Guillaume Courty, Paris: La Découverte, 2010), he also used Norbert Elias's long-term processes sociology, continuing contributing to diffuse it among academic and student audiences in the field of International Relations in France.

■ FIGURATIONAL JOURNALS

Human Figurations: Long-term Perspectives on the Human Condition, vol. 2, no. 2, July 2013: http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0002.2*

Katie Liston, Editor's introduction: 'The most important thinker that you have never heard of?'

Michael Banton, 'Social capital as a source of majority sentiment.'

Abstract: Sociology textbooks present majorities as the counterparts of minorities. This reflects the influence of US sociology, fashioned in a country of immigration that lacks any *Staatsvolk*. Majority sentiment in situations of immigrant settlement elsewhere draws from many sources, including mass media reporting, the policies of central and local governments and personal experience of a decline in the sense of community with co-ethnics. The reported sense of loss can be explained as a decline in bonding capital. If majority members share goals with minority members, this can build bridging capital. Research into the preferences for association with co-ethnics could investigate the circumstances in which civic norms are given priority over ethnic norms.

Ryan Powell, 'The theoretical concept of the "civilising offensive" (*Beschavingsoffensief*): Notes on its origins and uses'

Abstract: It is over 30 years since the theoretical concept of the civilising offensive (*het beschavingsoffensief*) emerged from Amsterdam and the work of Norbert Elias. Since then a small but important number of studies, primarily focused on the Netherlands, have applied the concept to various historical civilising projects aimed at bringing about cultural shifts and inculcating lasting habits in working-class populations deemed to be 'immoral' or 'uncivilised'. More recently, a number of UK academics have sought to apply the concept to contemporary concerns related to welfare policies aimed at specific

‘problematic’ populations perceived to be in need of ‘civilising’. These disparate but overlapping UK accounts have neglected the Dutch origins of the concept. This paper seeks to reconcile that neglect in charting the genealogy of the concept of the civilising offensive. In doing so the paper argues that a greater appreciation of these theoretical origins and developments can not only aid a more coherent understanding of the concept and facilitate comparative analyses, but also enable its refinement and development both as a complement to Elias’s theory of civilisation and as a tool for exposing the targeted and stigmatising projects of powerful groups. Drawing on existing studies, the paper also suggests that more nuanced insights on the impact of civilising offensives can be gleaned, and greater understanding accrued, by moving beyond the narrow conceptualisation of them as projects of elites (the established) aimed at less powerful groups (outsiders). The importance of internal pressures and group and peer socialisation relative to civilising offensives are therefore discussed. The paper concludes that the theoretical concept of the civilising offensive offers much potential in understanding group conflict and the role of the state in contemporary neoliberal society, as well as historically.

Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley, ‘Wittgenstein, Gellner, and Elias: From the philosophy of language games to a figurational sociology of knowledge’

Abstract: This paper addresses the problem of relativism in the social sciences and the related notion that the political life of modernising societies necessarily presents a choice between regressive/*Gemeinschaftlich* and progressive/*Gesellschaftlich* visions of community and society – between Mannheim’s ‘liberal/natural law’ and ‘conservative thought styles.’ Starting from Gellner’s account of Wittgenstein and Malinowski as instantiations of this ‘Hapsburg Dilemma’, it is argued that the Gellner/(early) Malinowski solution of epistemological co-habitation is unsatisfactory. Linking the development of human knowledge to long-term dynamics of social development, Elias’s

processual concept of involvement and detachment, conceived as a (highly) variable balance, allows social scientists to move beyond the dualities of ‘thought styles’. *Involvement and Detachment* provides the foundation for a historical sociology of language games and a reinvigorated social science, understood as contributing to the cumulative expansion of the social stock of knowledge.

Richard Kilminster, ‘Critique and overcritique in sociology’

Abstract: The concept of ‘overcritique’ is defined as a type of melodramatic, negative, one-sided and total critique of society, which developed in the latter part of the twentieth century out of the Critical Theory strand of Western Marxism. As an aid to understanding, the notion the multiple meanings of the much used terms critique and critical in sociology and the humanities generally are clarified, and their origins are traced in Kant, Hegel and Marx and the work of the Frankfurt School. The equivocal term ‘critical’ is shown to function in overcritique in particular as a political code word for a generalised commitment to eliminating all forms of unequal power balances between interdependent groups, which relations are prejudged as subjugation, oppression or domination. Overcritique is shown to be one-sided, over-abstract, destructive and socially iatrogenic, based on dubious transcendental arguments and overstated to the point of absurdity. These drawbacks are illustrated by reference to some of the recent writings of Zygmunt Bauman.

Steven Pinker, ‘Decivilisation in the 1960s.’

From The Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined. © 2011 by Steven Pinker. Reprinted by permission of Viking Penguin

Jason Hughes and John Goodwin, ‘Drawing Elias – Sketches from four interviews’, and ‘Four interviews with Norbert Elias’ – by Gregor Hahn, Aafke Steenhuis, Martin-Jochen Schulz and Helmut Hetzl.

Cambio: Rivista sulle trasformazioni sociali Anno III, Numero 5/Giugno 2013 <http://www.cambio.unifi.it/CMpro-v-p-78.html>

‘Presentazione: Fare i conti con la disuguaglianza sociale’

Gavino Maciocco, ‘Crisi economica, malattie croniche e disuguaglianze nella salute.’

Giampaolo Nuvolati, ‘La geo-referenziazione dell’approccio oggettivo e soggettivo per la misurazione della qualità della vita.’

Cristian Campagnaro and Valentina Porcellana, ‘Il bello che cura: Benessere e spazi di accoglienza notturna per persone senza dimora.’

Micol Bronzini, ‘Famiglie in affanno: una ricerca sui processi di impoverimento nel Comune di Senigallia.’

Mara Tognetti Bordogna, ‘Nuove disuguaglianze di salute: il caso degli immigrati.’

Federico Farini, ‘Interpretazione e mediazione in un sistema di cura interculturale: Pratiche di esclusione e pratiche di inclusione dei pazienti migranti’

Nicoletta Bosco and Valeria Cappellato, ‘Malati di SLA in Italia e meccanismi di disuguaglianza.’

Annamaria Perino and Nicole Braida, ‘La transitional care di adolescenti con malattie rare.’

Giovanna Vicarelli, ‘Salute e sanità come beni comuni.’
Temi eliasiani

Hermann Korte, ‘Norbert Elias at the University of Leicester.’

Marc Joly, ‘Norbert Elias’s networks in the British intellectual field before his appointment in Leicester (1945–54).’

Søren Nagbøl, ‘Elias and Freud on childhood socialisation.’

Elias Dossier In Sociedade E Estado

The autumn 2012 issue of the journal *Sociedade e Estado*, 27: 3 (September/December 2012) contains a special section dedicated to Norbert Elias and his sociological tradition. See http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_issuetoc&pid=0102699220120003&lng=en&nrm=iso

The section *Reinventar Norbert Elias / Reinventing Norbert Elias* includes:

Andréa Borges Leão and Edson Farias ‘Apresentação’.

Norbert Elias ‘A civilização dos pais’.

Andréa Borges Leão ‘Vamos ao Brasil com Jules Verne?: processos editoriais e civilização nas Voyages Extraordinaires’.

Vera Weiler ‘Bases de la transformación de el sujeto en proceso intentada por Norbert Elias’.

Cas Wouters ‘Como continuaram os processos civilizadores: rumo a uma informalização dos comportamentos e a uma personalidade de terceira natureza’.

Enio Passiani ‘Não existe pecado abaixo do Equador?: algumas considerações sobre o processo de formação da sociedade de corte no Brasil (1808-1889)’.

Edson Farias ‘Personalidade artística nos negócios mundanos: a celebração do “gosto do povo” em Joãozinho Trinta’.

Special Issue Of *Política Y Sociedad*

Política y Sociedad, Número Especial/ Special Issue *Tras la estela de Norbert Elias/ In the Wake of Norbert Elias*, 50 (2), 2013. Organizado por/Edited by Fernando Ampudia de Haro and Raúl Sánchez García

Fernando Ampudia de Haro and Raúl Sánchez García, ‘Tras la estela de Norbert Elias: Una introducción

(In the wake of Norbert Elias: An introduction)’

İrem Özgören Kinli, ‘Reconfiguring Ottoman Gender Boundaries and Sexual Categories by the mid-nineteenth century (La reconfiguración de las fronteras de género y las categorías sexuales otomanas a mediados del siglo XIX) [See abstract below.]

Dominic Malcolm and Louise Mansfield, ‘The quest for exciting knowledge: developments in figurational sociological research on sport and leisure (La búsqueda del conocimiento emocionante: Desarrollos en la investigación sociológica figuracional sobre el deporte y el ocio).

Cas Wouters, ‘“No sex under my roof”: Teenage sexuality in the USA and in the Netherlands since the 1880s (‘¿Sexo? No bajo mi techo’: Sexualidad adolescente en Estados Unidos y Holanda desde 1880)

Marina Vinha, Maria Beatriz Rocha Ferreira and Adir Casaro Nascimento, ‘Espacios de ocio en la territorialidad guaraní kaiowá de Dourados, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brasil’ (Leisure spaces in Dourados Kaiowá/ Guaraní Territoriality, State of Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil).

Amanda Rohloff, ‘Moral panics as civilising and decivilising processes? A comparative discussion’ (¿Pánicos morales como procesos civilizatorios y descivilizatorios? Un debate comparativo).

Ilan Lew, ‘“Barbarity” and “Civilisation” according to perpetrators of state violence during the last dictatorship in Argentina’ (‘Barbarie’ y ‘civilización’ según los responsables de la violencia de estado durante la última dictadura argentina).

Horacio González López, Irene Marquina Sánchez and Celia Cristina Contreras Asturias, ‘La Civilidad en las castas veladas del México actual’ (Civility in the veiled castes of present Mexico).

María J. F. Gebara and Marcos A. Florczak, ‘Sobre el tiempo: primeras aproximaciones entre el pensamiento físico y el pensamiento sociológico de Norbert Elias’ (On time: initial approaches between physics and the sociological thought of Norbert Elias).’

Cas Wouters and Stephen Menzell, ‘Discussing civilisation and informalisation: criteriology (Civilización e informalización a debate: Criteriología).’ [See abstract below.]

Steven Loyal, ‘Assessing Elias on Marx in a neoliberal age’ (Elias acerca de Marx: una evaluación en la era neoliberal)

■ OTHER RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Nicole Eustace, Eugenia Lean, Julie Livingston, Jan Plamper, William M. Reddy and Barbara H. Rosenwein, ‘AHR Conversation: The historical study of emotions’, *American Historical Review* 117: 5 (2012), pp. 1487–1531.

This is a transcription of a long and important conversation between six leading American historians who specialise in the historical study of emotions. Elias is mentioned by Barbara Rosenwein, although there is little evidence that any of the participants has read any of Elias’s works after *On the Process of Civilisation*, nor any of the voluminous literature of the figurational research tradition. Nevertheless, all Eliasians should read this discussion.

Dieter Reicher, *Nationensport und Mediennation: Zur Transformation von Nation und Nationalismus im Zeitalter elektronischer Massenmedien* (Göttingen: V&Runipress, 2013). 378 pp. ISBN: 978-3-8471-0078-2 (hb); 978-3-8470-0078-5 (e-book).

This book is the published version of the author’s 2012 *Habilitationschrift* at Graz.

Reicher makes original contributions to several normally distinct areas

of sociology: the study of sport, nationalism, globalisation, the mass media and public opinion, habitus and identity formation, emotions, war and International Relations.

One very valuable aspect of the book is his comprehensive theoretical discussion of a whole range of theorists who have been influential in the social sciences since the 1960s. He draws selectively on them for concepts that he finds useful, and criticises them cogently when he considers them to have taken wrong turnings. Among the theorists used or referred to, one can list among others Benedict Anderson, Hobsbawm and Ranger, Geertz, Habermas, Baudrillard, Bourdieu. (Some of these might object to my subsuming them into the category 'theorist'.) Above all, however, Reicher draws on the figurational or process sociology of Norbert Elias and the research tradition that has emerged from his work. This 'figurational' influence can be seen particularly clearly in the illuminating models of stages of development, dealing with sport in relation to identity and habitus, and with sport and states in the changing structure of the public sphere. These models – and others that are used in a more implicit way – are examples of what Johan Goudsblom has called 'phaseology': they represent sequential orders, in which earlier stages are necessary but not sufficient conditions for development towards later stages. Another important consequence of this kind of phaseology in human social development is that the earlier stages generally do not disappear, but can exist in niches alongside subsequently dominant models. In the present case, this is demonstrated in the revealing discussion of 're-ethnicisation' of 'nations-sport' in the age of the Internet. I found Reicher's discussion of the mediatisation (in the communications rather than political sense of the word) of sport consistently illuminating.

SJM

Tom Gibbons. 'The relationship between English national habitus and football fandom'. Unpublished PhD thesis, Teesside University, 2013.

Abstract: Since the 1996 European Football Championships (Euro 96) academics, journalists and politicians have regarded the increasing use of the St George's Cross by football fans as evidence of a rise in a specifically 'English' identity. Yet, there is little empirical evidence to substantiate this assertion, meaning it has been constructed as a myth. Drawing most significantly upon the 'figurational' or 'process-sociological' approach advocated by Norbert Elias, who argued for the sociologist to be a 'hunter of myths' (Elias, *What is Sociology?*, 2012, p. 46), the aim of this thesis was to explore the precise nature of the relationship between English national habitus and football fandom and to challenge the emergence of this alleged 'English identity'.

Considering the present-centred nature of much previous research on the ways in which the English national press have represented Englishness via football, and the lack of empirical research assessing the actions and opinions of English fans themselves, the thesis involved the following three interrelated research studies: an examination of historical representations of Englishness within English national press coverage of the English national team between 1950 and 2006; analysis of observations of fans' displays of national identity in public houses during World Cup 2006; and, a fourteen-month participant observation study of an online fan community.

Findings are explained using Elias's notions of 'Changes in the we-I balance' and 'Diminishing Contrasts, increasing varieties' and the research demonstrates the effectiveness of Eliasian sociology more broadly. It is concluded that the relationship between English national habitus and football fandom is more multi-faceted than previous research has contended. The assertion that the rise in the appearance of the St George's Cross amongst English football fans

somehow signals the emergence of a specifically 'English' national identity is not supported by the research findings. 'English'; 'British'; 'local'; and 'club-based' identifications were all observable from the studies conducted. Future research is required in order to provide comparative empirical evidence on the relationship between English national habitus and fandom in alternative figurations of football fans and those formed by fans in relation to other sports.

Cas Wouters and Stephen Mennell, 'Discussing Civilisation and Informalisation: Criteriology', *Política y Sociedad* 50: 2 (2013), pp. 553–79.

Abstract: Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes has been received only marginally in the USA, one of the obstacles being the absence of figurational or process studies of American society. In the first decade of this century this situation was changed by the publication of Stephen Mennell's *The American Civilizing Process* (2007) and Cas Wouters' *Sex and Manners* (2004) and *Informalization* (2007). By 2012, Randall Collins had reviewed the first and the third books in two essays (2009, 2011).

His claims and criticism of civilising and informalisation theory are discussed in this paper by placing them in the context of the reception history of Elias's work since the 1960s, when a first round of discussion centred on criteria to be used for determining the direction of civilising processes. A second round was in the 1990s, and in this paper we contribute to a new round by presenting a summary of earlier critical discussions in an attempt to establish a more solid and subtler body of criteria for studying civilising processes. We use this in critically discussing Collins's contributions, linking them to symbolic interactionism, American National Ideology, and blind spots in American sociology.

Jesús Romero, 'El problema de la libertad en Norbert Elias en diálogo con las neurociencias' ['The problem of freedom in Norbert Elias in dialogue with Neuroscience'], *Revista Española*

de Investigaciones Sociológicas 142 (2013), pp. 93-116.

Abstract: This paper focuses on the social theory of freedom proposed by Norbert Elias, as opposed to classic philosophical views. Firstly, it analyses the basic features of the metaphysical theories of freedom which Elias rejects. Then the key points on which Norbert Elias's social theory of freedom is based are developed. Finally, two Eliasian classic empirical examples are briefly discussed: the cases of Louis XIV and Mozart. The article is intended to show that Elias has a legitimate voice in the current scientific debate about freedom, especially within neuroscience.

Gary Sinclair, 'Spaces, emotion and heavy metal subcultural control: music consumption and civilising process' Unpublished PhD thesis, Dublin Institute of Technology, 2013.

Abstract: Despite the longevity, cultural relevance and global popularity of heavy metal, it has been noticeably absent from both the Birmingham School's subcultural studies, the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) and in consumer community contexts informed by post-subcultural perspectives ('neo-tribes'). This study examines the Irish for example, heavy metal scene. The literature review considers the problematic aspects of applying both frameworks (subcultural and post-subcultural) to heavy metal and other similar contexts. I argue that Norbert Elias's figurational sociology (relatively underutilised in previous consumer research), can be used to bypass the agency-structure dualism that impedes both approaches. It is also advanced that such a perspective can become incorporated into the wider consumer culture theory (CCT) framework.

Data was collected through a combination of interviews, participant observation of live events, and observation of Irish fan forums. The positioning of the researcher as an 'outsider-participant' represents a departure from previous 'metal' studies and increasingly common 'insider' accounts of youth cultures.

Additionally, the adoption of the Eliasian position concerning the balance between involvement and detachment addresses some of the challenges that come with researching (sub)cultures that are as controversial and divisive (in an aesthetical sense) as heavy metal. The seemingly chaotic and 'uncivilised' associations with heavy metal subculture represent an interesting context in which to explore Eliasian concepts concerning civilising processes and the increasing social constraint towards self-restraint or self-steering. I draw from empirical data collected in the field and previous figurational histories concerning Irish civilising processes (Dolan, 2005), sportisation (Elias and Dunning, 2008a) and technisation trends (Elias, 2008a). In doing so, I explain how heavy metal is a figuration based on control. The different fan spaces are co-constructed through a combination of subcultural and marketplace controls. Such spaces are used to facilitate a sense of comradeship and generate cathartic experiences, as the fans engage in a 'controlled de-controlling' of emotions (Elias, 2008b). The significance of the heavy metal experience is dependent on the visibility and quality of marketplace influence and the successful enforcement of the subcultural fan code. The dynamics of the complex figuration of heavy metal, the unique modes of behaviour, and the communication and interpretation of different symbols within the scene are analysed with regard to how status and subcultural capital is displayed. Fundamentally, I argue that the ability of the fans to adapt their behaviour to the fluid heavy metal scene and its evolving subcultural code is dependent on their ability to self-steer. The analysis contemplates the breakdown of the subcultural code, the lack of restraint demonstrated in the online spaces, and the retreat of what have become unacceptable modes of behaviour to 'behind the scenes' and the virtual social scene.

Désirée Waterstradt, 'Sozialisierung oder Zivilisierung der Eltern?', *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 49-50 (2012), pp.16-21. Online at <http://www.bpb.de/apuz/150618/sozialisierung-oder-zivilisierung-der-eltern>

Abstract: After the 'discovery of childhood' 200 years ago, the discovery of parenthood is badly needed today. In the present-day figuration of child-centered families and child-decentered societies the position of parents has come under enormous pressure. This can only be understood if parenthood, itself becomes an object of sociological interest. To describe parenthood the theory of socialisation offers various concepts, but it cannot explain the long-term psychogenetic and sociogenetic development of parenthood in different societies over time. For the description of parenthood as a basic process of human societies, promising concepts can be found in Elias's process sociology and theory of the civilising process. Following this approach, the essay outlines some of its concepts: the habitus of parenthood and the corresponding ideals of parenthood, balances of shame with regard to parenthood, the changing balances of power and shame regarding the positions of children and parents within family and society.

Désirée Waterstradt, 'Machtbalances der Elternschaft: Die Gesichte eines Drahtseilaktes' [Power balances of parenthood – the history of a high-wire act] in Klaus Hurrelmann and Tanjev Schultz (eds) *Staatshilfe für Eltern: Brauchen wir das Betreuungsgeld?* (Hemsbach: Beltz Juventa, 2013). ISBN: 978-3-7799-2752-5.

Abstract: This essay attempts to give some background on the development of the power balances of parenthood in Germany and what would be needed to strengthen parenthood. It shows the importance of the figuration of the nation not only regarding the figuration of the family, but also for other figurations / institutions taking over functions of parenthood. Especially interesting seems to be the relatedness of the changeful German nation-building process and parenthood in Germany.

The article is published in a book on the current German political issue of the 'Betreuungsgeld' (child care subsidy) of Klaus Hurrelmann and Tanjev Schulz. Starting from next

summer, parents in Germany will have the enforceable right to a place in a nursery school for their children. As there are not enough nursery schools in Germany and there will be elections in September, the government is now trying to calm the upcoming conflict about this gap in demand and supply of child care. The 'Betreuungsgeld' is planned to be paid out to those parents who do not send their children to nursery school before age of three. The book tries to explain the background as well as the pros and cons of the 'Betreuungsgeld'. The intention of the book is to address broader publics, so that there is no quotation and only some general literature is listed.

Franklin Hugh Adler, 'The Hermeneutics of Civility', *Telos: Critical Theory of the Contemporary* 2010: 152, pp. 171–180.

Abstract: My focus will be on challenges to civility in Europe raised by the presence of sizable immigrant communities, which, unlike those of earlier times, are significantly different from host populations in terms of national origin, race, religion, ethnicity, and culture. Coming principally from former colonial territories, their otherness additionally bears the deep historical imprint of inferiority and subordination, merited or not, to the degree that to Europeans they sometimes appear to be, at worst, uncivilised, or, at best, to live in another non-European or semi-European world. Though they inhabit the same geographical space as the host population, and have become an enduring component of the European labour force, their broader integration into European life remains problematic for a significant sector of the European public, such that political parties of the far right, occasionally resurgent, have made immigration a predominant issue for the past 30 years.

[Note: An excerpt from an interview with Elias conducted by Franklin Adler, Peter Ludes and Paul Piccone in Bloomington, IN, in 1982, will be published in *Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections* (Dublin: UCD Press, autumn 2013 {Collected Works, vol. 17})]

Annette Treibel, "Frauen sind nicht von der Venus und Männer nicht vom Mars, sondern beide von der Erde, selbst wenn sie sich manchmal auf den Mond schießen könnten" – Elias und Gender', in Heike Kahlert and Christine Weinbach (eds), *Zeitgenössische Gesellschaftstheorien und Genderforschung: Einladung zum Dialog* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2012), pp. 83–102. ISBN: 978-3-531-17486-0 (Print) 978-3-531-94254-4 (Online)

Abstract: With respect to feminist approaches, sociology in the tradition of Norbert Elias's process and figuration theory could be considered to be innocent. Within a long-term perspective though, the continuing inequalities seem not as crucial as the heterogeneous progresses concerning education, role models and biographical options for both men and women. Popular dichotomies like 'Men are from Mars, women from Venus' are neglecting the mutual interdependencies of men and women – within and between the different hetero-, homo- and transsexual settings. The article argues that figuration theory is suited well to the remarkable changes of private and everyday relationships and less to the continuity of discrimination, sexism and violence. Female and – to an above average extent – male process sociologists are interested in the power struggles and balances in contemporary societies concerning gender. In the long run, changes towards more egalitarian structures are happening slowly, but they are happening – and they deserve more attention in gender research and social theories than they are getting up to this time.

Alastair Finlan, *Contemporary Military Culture and Strategic Studies* (Abingdon: Routledge 2013). ISBN: 978-0-4156-3842-5.

This book explores and compares the contemporary military cultures of the United States and the United Kingdom. Western military forces have been engaged in continuous military operations since the century began. It is therefore now apt to focus on the military cultures of these state-based armies, navies and air forces. The book

explores the formation and development of two military cultures with respect to the following themes: social origins, transformative events, leadership, approaches to war, technology, and collective identity. In the conclusion, the book considers the impact of the War on Terror on the military cultures of the US and the UK, as well as likely directions for the future.

Enrique Guerra Manzo, *Breve introducción al pensamiento de Norbert Elias* [in Spanish], (México, UAM, 2012), 207 pp. ISBN: 978-607-477-870-0

Norbert Elias conceived of sociology as a mission, with the capacity to account for how human beings behave in social figurations they make up together, and help them to control the unforeseen consequences of their actions (such as wars, mass deaths). While important contemporary sociologists (Parsons, Habermas, Giddens or Luhmann) forgot history and lent support to the image of the *homo clausus*, Elias never gave up building his figurational sociology on long-term processes and on the image of *homines aperti*. Elias developed a sociology that represents a Copernican Revolution in the basic assumptions of conventional sociology. This book offers a comprehensive exegesis of the work of Elias, not only his intellectual trajectory, but the ways in which he began to extend, test and develop his ideas through his own research.

Derrick Fiedler, 'The Courtisation of Ambassadors: the figuration of diplomacy in the time of Jean Hotman, Marquis de Villiers-St Paul (1552–1636)', *Forward: Student Journal for the Investigation of Social Sciences* 1:1 (June 2010).

[URL: [www.jforward.org/June 2010/Fiedler_Derrick_610_Article.pdf](http://www.jforward.org/June%2010/Fiedler_Derrick_610_Article.pdf).]

Abstract: This article begins from the observation that in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries there was a relatively sudden proliferation of manuals and treatises on the proper conduct of diplomacy and diplomats. This is indicative of the crisis in Europe during this period, in which relations between dynastic states became especially problematic

and permanent diplomacy became firmly established. Just as similar manuals regarding manners were indicative of a certain kind of formative process – conceptualised by Norbert Elias as the ‘civilising process’ – so too, I argue, are these diplomatic treatises reflections of another kind of formative process, in diplomatic rather than courtly conduct. Much as the emergence of the early modern state, with its techniques of regulation, subjectivised its populations, so too was the state itself undergoing a formative process in the conceptualisation and regulation of its international relations. Unlike the citizenry, however, the states were subjectivised without also being subjugated – unlike the courtly nobility, who were subject to the higher authority of their king, the ambassadors were the representatives of sovereign and competing states. In addition to theoretical exposition, a textual analysis of one of the more prominent diplomatic manuals of the period, *The Ambassador* (1603) by Jean Hotman, Marquis de Villers-St. Paul (1552–1636), is undertaken. By focusing on this single text, and situating it historically and theoretically, I aim to indicate the ways in which the forms of thought expressed in it are symptomatic of a broader process of ‘courtisation’.

Didier Georgakakis and Julien Weisbein, ‘From above and from below: A political sociology of European actors’, *Comparative European Politics* (2010) 8, pp. 93–109.

Abstract: The aim of the article is to develop a perspective on EU studies centred on social agents, and to assess its contribution to the understanding of both the making of an EU political field at the top and the emergence of European social fields at the bottom. This perspective, intellectually informed by authors such as Pierre Bourdieu or Norbert Elias, provides a way to deepen existing approaches and to expand the scope of EU studies in two ways. First, it aims to evaluate the social foundations of the European integration process through a very precise analysis of what social actors involved in EU processes think and do considering their position in

wider structures of interaction and domination. Second, it calls for wider collaboration with sociology, history and anthropology and bringing back traditional notions and toolkits from other social sciences in order to better understand an emerging European institution–society nexus.

John Flint and Ryan Powell, ‘The English city riots of 2011, “Broken Britain” and the retreat into the present’, *Sociological Research Online*, 17:3 (2012). [URL: <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/17/3/20.html>]

Abstract: The responses to the English city riots of 2011 bear a remarkable resemblance to those of historical urban disorders in terms of the way in which they are framed by concerns over ‘moral decline’, ‘social malaise’ and a ‘lack of self-restraint’ among certain sections of the population. In this paper we draw on the work of Norbert Elias and take a long-term perspective in exploring historical precedents and parallels relating to urban disorder and anti-social behaviour. We reject the notion of ‘Broken Britain’ and argue that a more ‘detached’ perspective is necessary in order to appreciate that perceived crises of civilisation are ubiquitous to the urban condition. Through this historical analysis, framed by Elias’s theory of involvement and detachment, we present three key arguments. Firstly, that a ‘retreat into the present’ is evident among both policy discourse and social science in responding to contemporary urban disorder, giving rise to ahistorical accounts and the romanticisation of previous eras; secondly, that particular moral panics have always arisen, specifically focused upon young and working-class populations and urban disorder; and, thirdly, that previous techniques of governance to control these populations were often far more similar to contemporary mechanisms than many commentaries suggest. We conclude by advocating a long-term, detached perspective in discerning historical precedents and their direct linkages to the present; and in identifying what is particular about today’s concerns and responses relating to urban disorder.

Ryan Powell, ‘Loïc Wacquant’s “ghetto” and ethnic minority segregation in the UK: the neglected case of Gypsy-Travellers’, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 37:1 (2013), pp.115–34.

Abstract: This paper utilises Loïc Wacquant’s concept of the ghetto as an analytical tool in understanding the marginal and ambivalent position of Gypsy-Traveller populations resident on sites (or camps) in Britain. The paper argues that the fruitful work of quantitative geographers on ethnic segregation in the UK has neglected Gypsy-Travellers. It suggests that the theoretical concept of the ghetto can elucidate the ways in which the spatial marginality of sites serves as a weapon of ‘confinement and control’ to the dominant and an ‘integrative and protective device’ to the stigmatised Gypsy-Traveller population. Key characteristics in Wacquant’s definition of the ghetto are shown to hold true for Gypsy-Traveller sites such as: ethnic homogeneity, spatial confinement, shared cultural identity, mutual distancing and a retreat into the private sphere of the family. This comparison also reveals key differences in terms of economic function, parallel institutionalism and the relationship with the state. The paper points to the potential offered by Wacquant’s theory and suggests that the dismissal of the ghetto concept within the UK ignores its power as a tool of comparison. The paper suggests that qualitative and theoretical approaches should seek to complement the work of quantitative geographers through focusing on everyday social relations and encounters between ethnic minority groups and ‘host’ populations – both within and outwith residential boundaries. It also questions the urban-centred focus of debates on ethnic segregation.

Arpad Szakolczai, *Comedy and the Public Sphere: The Rebirth of Theatre as Comedy and the Genealogy of the Modern Public Arena* (London: Routledge, 2013). xi + 376 pp. ISBN 13: 978-0-415-62391-9 (hbk).

The aim of this book is to study the constitutive links between comedy and the 'public sphere'. This means that the public sphere, considered as 'a domain of our social life in which such a thing as public opinion can be formed' (Habermas), cannot be understood if it is isolated from theatrical spectacles, in particular the staging of comedies, as the formation of this 'public sphere' and the rise of modern forms of public spectacles were strictly interconnected. Its study therefore requires a genealogy. Genealogy is an approach for the study of formative historical events that was pioneered by Friedrich Nietzsche, and further developed by Michel Foucault. However, the work of a number of central figures in comparative historical sociology, first and foremost Max Weber, but also some of his closest followers like Norbert Elias, Eric Voegelin or Franz Borkeu, each strongly influenced by Nietzsche, has strong affinities with genealogy. The genealogy of a particular political institution or social practice is concerned with the exact manner in which this emerged and the lasting effects it might exert, even after it ceased to exist. A joint genealogy of the modern public sphere and theatre therefore aims to establish how the rebirth of theatre in Europe, in the form of comedy as *commedia dell'arte*, had a decisive role in forming both the structured space that is called the 'public sphere' and the dominant attitudes related to it, even governing its functioning and broader effects.

John Carter Wood, 'Going mad is the only way of staying sane: Norbert Elias and the civilised violence of J.G. Ballard', in Jeannette Baxter and Rowland Wymer (eds.), *J. G. Ballard: Visions and Revisions* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). 272 pp. ISBN 13: 9780230278127.

Abstract: How should we evaluate J. G. Ballard's fiction as social commentary?

There has been a range of answers to this question. Many analyses of Ballard's writing – inspired not least by the author's emphasis on exploring the psychological terrain of 'inner space' – have focused on the unconscious and symbolic or emphasised the transcendence of materiality rather than engagement with social life itself. Others have stressed Ballard's attention to the media-constructed simulacra of reality: 'a concern with the material conditions of production and consumption of mass-media artefacts', Michel Delville claims, is 'conspicuously absent' from Ballard's work. But Ballard commented on numerous political and aesthetic topics, and developed a reputation for perceptive, even prophetic, analysis of social change, a view perhaps more reflected in recent criticism. Ballard's contrasting of civilisation's *potential* with its *limits* recalls a methodological approach that has yet to be connected to his writings: Norbert Elias's theory of the 'civilising process', which has become influential in the historiography of violence. Without suggesting a specific adoption (whether conscious or not) by Ballard of Elias's ideas, I do think they have had overlapping insights into the human condition. Some of Ballard's novels, for example, can be seen as staging fictional crises in the historical and sociological processes that Elias explained. From this perspective, I examine *High-Rise* (1975) and *Super-Cannes* (2000), which, although separated by a quarter century, reflect different aspects of the author's recurring interests in social alienation, violence and human psychology. Their distinct emphases also recall different aspects of Elias's thinking: 'decivilisation' and the 'quest for excitement in unexciting societies'.

David Inglis, 'What is worth defending in sociology today? Presentism, historical vision and the uses of sociology', *Cultural Sociology* 7: 1 (March 2013).

Abstract: In recent years, sociology in Britain – and in national contexts influenced by British sociology – has been diagnosed by various parties as suffering from a wide range of ailments. These forms of self-criticism

become ever more acute in terms of their potential effects as huge transformations in university funding regimes are brought to bear on the social sciences. But none of these critiques engages satisfactorily with what is a much more foundational and serious set of problems, namely the very nature of sociology itself as a historically-situated form of knowledge production. Sociology claims to know the world around it, but in Britain today much sociology seriously fails in this regard, because it operates with radically curtailed understandings of the long-term historical forces which made the social conditions it purports to analyse. A sophisticated understanding of the contemporary world is made possible only by an equally sophisticated understanding of very long-term historical processes, precisely the sort of vision that mainstream British sociology has lacked for at least the last two decades. This paper identifies the reasons for the development of this situation and the consequences it has for the nature of sociology's knowledge production, for its self-understanding, for its claims to comprehend the contemporary world, and for its apparent social 'usefulness'. A markedly more self-aware and historically-sensitive sociology is proposed as the answer to the pressing question of what aspects of sociology should be defended in the turbulent context of British higher education today.

Irem Özgören Kinli, 'Reconfiguring Ottoman gender boundaries and sexual categories by the mid nineteenth century', *Politica y Sociedad* 50:2 (2013), pp. 381–95.

Abstract: This research extends the theory of the civilising process of Norbert Elias to the gender issue in the Ottoman Empire and thereby in some respects provides a test of his original theory. This study is based on the assumption that the conscious policy of the Ottoman modernisation by the ruling elite exhibited many symptoms resembling those of the European civilising process. The socio-historical process of bureaucratisation of the Ottoman state fostered the changes in manners and forms of

cultural expression which brought with it the advance of the threshold of shame and embarrassment in gender relations during this process. Drawing on this assumption, the article looks at the changes in the way people control themselves and others in the expression of their impulses and emotions. In turn, the question of how the margins of tolerance in sexual matters and in the expression of emotions and desires changed during this civilising process formulates the major concern of this paper. Since manuals on etiquette, manners books, diaries and archives are the richest sources for this purpose, this project employs the analysis of these cultural texts, in order to make inferences from the cultural transformations within the Ottoman Empire. It is hoped that the research will offer new perspectives in reorienting the way we look at the development of the Ottoman culture within the context of figurational sociology.

Monika Krause and Alexandra Kowalski, 'Reflexive habits: dating and rationalised conduct in New York and Berlin', *Sociological Review* 61: 1 (2013), pp. 21–41.

This paper compares courtship practices in New York and Berlin and asks how people act during the course of 'getting together' with a sexual or romantic partner. The authors build on work in the figurational tradition, which examines how conduct varies across cultural contexts. Drawing on interviews in both contexts, they find that conduct associated with the practice of 'dating' among New York respondents is more rationalised, as indicated by a greater awareness of timing, a greater degree of intentionality and planning and a greater tendency to psychologise self and others. Berlin respondents report observations of themselves and others in less detail and tend to describe themselves as passive objects of the impersonal forces of love. Whereas conduct associated with dating is more reflexive in some ways, these forms of reflexive conduct are not themselves fully conscious or the object of reflection but have in turn become taken for granted and habitual. The paper

suggests we need to conceptualise habitus in a manner that does not reproduce the opposition between habit and reflexivity but allows us to use the concept as a tool to capture variations in how self-monitoring and habit are combined in modes of conduct.

Stephen Mellennell, 'Reflections on American religiosity from an Eliasian point of view', *Historicka Sociologie [Historical Sociology: A Journal of Historical Social Sciences, Prague]*, 2 (2010), pp. 9–29.

Abstract: From a European point of view, one of the most puzzling aspects of the contemporary USA is the large proportion of its citizens who assent to belief in the supernatural. In sociology, that has given rise to a debate about whether secularising Europe or the religious USA represents 'normality' and which is 'exceptional'. In this essay, the work of Norbert Elias is used in an explanatory way to shed light on the peculiarities of America. Although Elias has often been accused of neglecting religion in his theory of civilising processes, it is argued that his closely related sociological theory of knowledge and the sciences is useful in this context.

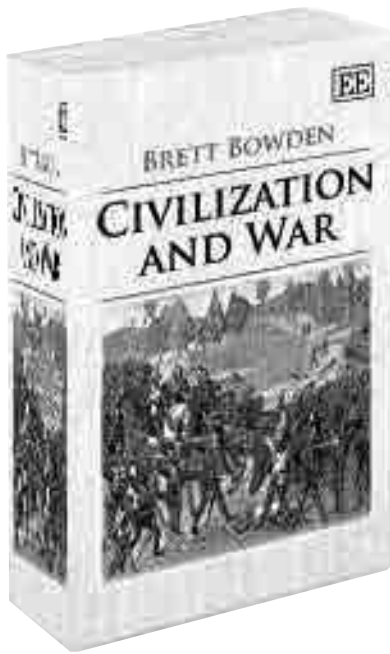
Thomas Scheff, 'Testing Elias's "invisible shame" proposition' *American Sociological Association: Sociology of Emotions Newsletter*, 26:3 (Fall 2012), pp. 7-8. [URL: http://www2.asanet.org/Emotions/newsletters/emotions_newsletter_fall-3.pdf]

Abstract: The sociologist Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process* examines European history from the fourteenth to the twentieth century: advice offered in English, German, and French etiquette manuals (for example, bedroom, bathroom, dinner). On this basis, he proposed that *shame replaced force as the main instrument of social control, but also became increasingly unspeakable*. This paper tests the latter conjecture 1800–2000 in five languages: American and British English, French, German, and Spanish, using Google Ngrams. If shame becomes less visible in modernisation, then the term itself should occur less

frequently not only in speech, but also in writing. Although there are variations in slope and shape in two graphs, *the conjecture is supported in all five of the languages tested*, as shown in the attached charts. There is some turbulence at the beginning of the Spanish chart, and much more all along in the German chart, but the downward slope is fairly even in the first three charts, suggesting more stable societies. In modernisation, perhaps shame itself became shameful. It is possible that this can sometimes be the first step in an endless series of recursive loops. If so, recursion of shame can lead to silence and recursion of shame/anger to violence.

Jan Kalenda, 'Sociogeneze přemyslovenského knížectví: Teorie Norberta Eliase a raný český stát' [The sociogenesis of the Přemyslid principality: Norbert Elias and the early Czech state], *Historicka Sociologie [Historical Sociology: A Journal of Historical Social Sciences, Prague]*, 1–2 (2012), pp. 95–19.

Abstract: This study deals with the application of Norbert Elias's theory of sociogenesis to the case of early Czech state formation. For this purpose, we focus on the mechanism of emergence and establishment of the state monopoly, as well as on the aspects of decentralisation and privatisation of state power during the reigns of the first Přemyslid dukes – from AD 860 to 1230. In the second place, the article tries to compare the process of sociogenesis in Western Europe with the dynamics of state formation that was typical of the contemporary Czech lands. In this context we claim that Elias made several mistakes, because he supposed that the features and mechanisms of state formation were fairly unitary everywhere in Europe. We try to challenge this notion, to show that the history of state making in the Central European region has many autonomous and unique aspects that differentiate it from social dynamics in other parts of the continent. From this critical point of view, the article attempts a reformulation of Elias's theory for the Central European area.



Brett Bowden, *Civilization and War* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2013). 224pp. ISBN 13: 9781782545712.

The term ‘civilisation’ comes with considerable baggage, dichotomising people, cultures, and histories as ‘civilised’ – or not. While the idea of civilisation has been deployed throughout history to justify all manner of interventions and socio-political engineering, few scholars have stopped to consider what the concept actually means. Here, Brett Bowden examines how the idea of civilisation has informed our thinking about international relations over the course of ten centuries. From the Crusades to the colonial era to the global war on terror, this sweeping volume exposes ‘civilisation’ as a stage-managed account of history that legitimises imperialism, uniformity, and conformity to Western standards, culminating in a liberal-democratic global order. Along the way, Bowden explores the variety of confrontations and conquests – as well as those peoples and places excluded or swept aside – undertaken in the name of civilisation. Concluding that the ‘West and the rest’ have more commonalities than differences, this provocative and engaging book ultimately points the way toward an authentic inter-civilisational dialogue that emphasises cooperation over clashes.

Joshua Lavie, “Open people”, “homo clausus” and the “fifth basic assumption”: bridging concepts between Foulke’s and Bion’s traditions’ *Funzione Gamma* [Rivista telematica scientifica dell’Università “Sapienza” di Roma]. URL: <http://www.funzionegamma.it/open-people-homo-clausus-and-the-5th-basic-assumption-bridging-concepts-between-foulkess-and-bions-traditions/>

Abstract: In this article I have tried to bridge the split between the Foulkesian and the Bionian traditions, hence overcoming the outworn dispute between these two theories and practices. The main hypothesis in this article is that W. R. Bion and S. H. Foulkes tried to achieve the same goal, albeit coming from different, yet complementary, directions. The metaphor which is being used describes Bion and Foulkes as two miners digging a tunnel under a river, each of them starting from the opposite bank. Bion and his followers tried to overcome the pathologies of groups which take control over individuals and abolish their individuality (Basic Assumption Groups), while Foulkes and his followers tried to overcome the pathologies of individuals devoid of relational and communal existence (‘closed people’; ‘We-less-I’s’).

In order to overcome the split between these two traditions, I discuss and develop Gordon Lawrence’s (1996) discovery of ‘Me-ness’, the Fifth Basic Assumption in the Bionian/Tavistockian tradition regarding the psychic condition of individuals in groups, and Norbert Elias’s (1939) social/psychological theory of *homo clausus* (‘closed man’), the fundamental basic assumption in the Foulkesian Group-Analytic tradition regarding the social/psychological condition of individuals (and patients) in groups of modern societies.

Augustine Brannigan, *Beyond the Banality of Evil: Criminology and Genocide* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, forthcoming Sept 2013) ISBN: 9780199674626. [Summary of the chapters can be found at URL: http://www.ucalgary.ca/justice/files/justice/oxford_online.pdf]

The leading approach to the explanation of genocide offered 50 years ago by Stanley Milgram and Hannah Arendt suggested that perpetrators were recruited to mass murder as a result of duress created by powerful state bureaucracies that forced compliance out of fear of reprisals. Perpetrators were portrayed as automotons acting out of a banality of evil with diminished agency. The current book stresses the enthusiastic endorsement of righteous slaughter frequently associated with a strong sense of duty and a lack of subjective culpability, often in circumstances where the acts of political violence are associated with amnesties and are not defined as crimes at all. Legal responses based on individual misconduct seem incapable of coming to terms with the collective nature of such crimes. The book identifies several paradoxes of such crimes the mentality of the perpetrators, the frequency with which the crimes escape criminalisation, and the staggering consequences in terms of mortality and suffering. The work draws on the author’s fieldwork in Rwanda, and advances a new perspective based on Norbert Elias and his historical work on impulse control and barbarism. The book also examines the various legal and quasi-legal responses to atrocities, including the *ad hoc* criminal tribunals and hybrid criminal courts, the use of reparations as a tool in peacemaking, and the proliferation of truth commissions in transitional societies. While there is no easy fix to genocide, a potential key may lie in the renegotiation of the limits of sovereignty in the context of globalisation.

This book covers a broad range of subjects beginning with a re-analysis of the famous Milgram shocking experiments, which occurred at the time of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem. It concludes that they tell us very little about real-world perpetrators. The book distinguishes the political processes by which events are successfully labelled as genocide, from the processes that explain their occurrence. Although it is ambitious in scope, the author writes with an extremely lucid style that make this difficult topic readily accessible to specialists and general readers alike.

One of the most interesting findings is the recurrent observation that perpetrators frequently show no sense or remorse or guilt for their murderous conduct, suggesting that the dynamics of this sort of crime are radically different from more ‘garden variety’ offences.

Massimo Paci, *Lezioni di sociologia storica* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2013). 463 pp. ISBN: 978-88-15-24139-9.

Chapter 8 of Paci’s book, pp. 169–90 is entitled ‘Norbert Elias: una “psicologia storica”, and deals with the vicissitudes of Elias’s life, the central idea of civilising processes, the opposition to any individual/society dichotomy, and aspects of Elias’s method. It concludes with an excursus on Louis XIV and the court at Versailles.

The main objection one might level at Paci’s treatment is that the Elias chapter comes in Part II, on the ‘classical foundations of the discipline’ [of historical sociology], before Part III on ‘the development of modern historical sociology’. Most readers of *Figurations* will protest that the continuing figurational research tradition is very much part of the ‘modern’ scene. But it is a small fault. And, in any case, Elias always protested that he was *not* an *historical* sociologist.

■ FROM THE AUTHOR

Anthony Giddens and Philip W. Sutton, *Sociology, 7th Edition* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013). xi + 1182 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0-7456-5293-1 (pb)

Some academics do not like, and actively discourage, the use of general textbooks. Instead, they insist that students read sociological work ‘in the originals’. A laudable sentiment, but fortunately for this book’s sales figures, students rarely obey their lecturers’ exhortations. In this case I don’t blame them. As the 1130 pages of this book demonstrate, sociology is an extraordinarily diverse, broad, wide-ranging and contested discipline and it is quite unrealistic to expect new undergraduates (or anyone else)

to read around the various specialisms ‘in the originals’. After all, textbooks of this kind do not aim to replace those venerable works, they merely try to distil a vast body of research into manageable form so that students get a feel for what sociology has to offer, in advance of making decisions about which bits they will pursue for the next few years. The bald facts are that *Sociology* now has 23 chapters covering established subjects – theories and methods, families, crime and deviance, religion, education and health – as well as more recent ones such as the environment, war, terrorism, the life course, globalisation and sexuality. But of course, textbooks today do more than just present the yield of 160 years or so of sociological practice, they also actively engage with readers – and the seventh edition goes much further in this direction. So, the new end-of-chapter review sections are designed to stretch students’ knowledge and develop their research skills, encourage them to seek out original journal articles, books, online materials, films, novels, paintings and other artworks.

That’s the sales pitch, but this is *Figurations*. Why should readers of this newsletter be interested in the book? Well, anyone who teaches sociology in English-speaking universities and colleges already knows that Elias and figurational sociology are not well served by large, scary introductory textbooks. Apart from some pithy comments on the demise of spitting or brief mention of *On the Process of Civilisation* as an alternative history of the rise of the West (ouch!), textbooks barely scratch the surface of the research that goes under the general umbrella of figurational sociology. The sixth edition of *Sociology* (2009) began to rectify this omission and the seventh sets Elias and figurational research in their proper place in the development of, and contemporary practice within, the discipline. *Figurations* readers should now be able to browse the text without continually cursing or physically damaging the book. They will see *On the Process of Civilisation* presented as a ‘classic study’, Elias’s alternative (and more productive) formulation of the structure–agency problem, Wouters on informalisation, Goudsblom on fire and civilisation and lots more. Figurational sociology is

presented as a significant ‘perspective’ or ‘approach’ to sociology, taking its place alongside the classical traditions, feminism, structuration theory, poststructuralism, postmodernism, postcolonialism and the rest.

Setting the record straight, as it were, may not seem particularly exciting or revolutionary, but I suggest it does mark an important coming of age for figurational sociology. Big, scary introductory textbooks are (as far as students are concerned) gatekeepers for and gateways into the discipline and, though there is a certain *frisson* to the outsider experience, influence on the long-term development of sociology surely derives from the many advantages of gaining a strong foothold within the establishment. Thus the last word must go to Elias (1982: 38–9): ‘Textbooks indicate what the establishment of a particular academic field or sections of it, at a given time, regard as the essentials of the received knowledge of that field ... Changes in textbooks often, though not always, indicate that, and when, a scientific innovation at the theoretical or the empirical level has become canonised as part of the standard knowledge of that field’.

Phil Sutton

Jerome Braun, *Democratic Culture and Moral Character: A Study in Culture and Personality*. (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012). ix + 220 pp. ISBN 978-94-007-6753-9.

This book returns critical theory to its roots in both psychology and the social sciences. It shows some of the relationships between equality in a political and social sense and personal identity that either relates well to such equality, or rebels against it. All this reflects processes of social and cultural influence that involve not only random change but also processes of social and cultural evolution that themselves have effects regarding potentials for self-fulfilment and even public morality. This book provides a framework to help one study the interaction between individual aspirations and social opportunities.

Jerome Braun, known for his writings in interdisciplinary social science, an approach he calls pragmatic critical theory, here provides a book that discusses issues relevant to the moral underpinnings of democratic society, including issues of social evolution and of culture and personality.

This book will be of particular interest to scholars and students of psychology (particularly in the areas of political psychology, psychology of personality and cultural psychology), sociology (especially those interested in sociology of alienation and sociology of culture, as well as historical sociology, political sociology and sociology of mental health), anthropology (particularly in the areas of psychological anthropology and political anthropology), cultural studies, and social theory as well as political theory in general.

Katarzyna Suwada, *Miłość Erotyczna w Procesie Cywilizacji: Próba interpretacji koncepcji Norberta Eliasa* [‘Erotic love in the civilising process: an interpretation of Norbert Elias’s concept’] (Kraków: Nomos, 2013), 195pp. ISBN: 978-83-7688-112-6.

Two basic aims are encompassed by this volume’s contents. On the one hand, it speaks of the changing nature of erotic love in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, especially about the causes and consequences of these shifts. On the other hand, these transformations are inscribed within the perspective of the civilising process theory formulated by Norbert Elias. Thus, the issue of erotic love serves here as a kind of pretext for reference to Eliasian sociology – to illustrate his social science perspective as well as to tell the story of his life which is not so familiar to Polish readers.

While the first part of the book is devoted to life of Norbert Elias and his most important theory of the civilising process, in the second part we start to deal with the issue of mentioned in the title – erotic love. It is here described in the context of contemporary society, which I call, using Anthony Giddens’s words, the ‘society of late modernity’. Since the Eliasian theory concerns the changing forms of social

control, I present a profile of our contemporary times while focusing on the shifting role of religion and ethics in life. Here references are made to Zygmunt Bauman’s theory of unstable foundations or Leszek Kołakowski’s concept of ethics without moral codex.

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

Gadi Algazi, ‘Norbert Elias’s motion pictures: history, cinema and gestures in the process of civilization’, *Studies in the History and Philosophy of Science*, 39 (2008): 444–58.

Norbert Elias’s project in *On the Process of Civilisation* involved reconstructing invisible movement – both the slow tempo of long-term historical change and the modification of psychic structures and embodied dispositions. To do this, he resorted to uncommon devices: treating historical texts as constituting a series amenable to a rudimentary discourse analysis, he constructed an imagined ‘curve of civilization’ serving as an approximation of the hidden process of change. Elias’s curve was not supposed to represent single past states, but movement itself, its direction and pace. This novel concept of historical representation was related to the perception of cinema as a new medium making actual movement visible. But beyond making it possible to imagine how one could telescope long-term historical process, cinema also held the promise of serving as a microscope, making the minute movements of the human body, gestures and manners available for close inspection. While anthropologists were devising ways of using the new medium to document fleeting gestures and bodily postures, it was used by popular audiences as a source for remodelling behaviour and acquiring polite manners and body techniques, as noticed by such acute observers as Marcel Mauss and Joseph Roth. Hence, popular appropriation of the cinema gave rise to a heightened awareness of the historicity of gestures and the changing modalities of their transmission. Cinema was itself part of the accelerated motion of history, of a perceived change of pace in the process of civilization, which in its turn shed

light on its historical antecedents and played an essential role in rethinking the notion of civilization and culture.

[Richard Kilminster comments:

Algazi has written one of the most original articles on the method of *On The Process of Civilisation* that I’ve seen by anyone outside the immediate ‘figurational family’. It supplements the hermeneutic and psychoanalytic reconstruction I attempted in my Elias book. Algazi strikes me as scholarly, serious and thorough. I found convincing his argument that the way in which Elias constructed the ‘curve of civilization’ in that book was entirely novel and related to the way in which the motion picture cinema in the early twentieth century tried to do the same. It was a way of representing movement itself.]

■ BOOKS RECEIVED

These books will be reviewed in a future issue of the *Figurations* newsletter and/or in the journal *Human Figurations*:

Jesus Rimers Moñivas, *Los Fundamentos de la Sociología de Norbert Elias* (Valencia: Tirant Humanidades, 2013), 301 pp. ISBN 978-84-15731-00-9.

Angela Perulli, *Norbert Elias: Processi e parole della sociologia* (Rome: Carocci, 2012), 141 pp. ISBN: 978-88-430-6772-5.

Claude S. Fischer, *Made in America: A Social History of American Culture and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). 51 pp. ISBN: 978-0-226-25144-8 (pb).

Andrew Deener, *Venice: A Contested Bohemia in Los Angeles* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012). 306 pp. ISBN: 978-0-226-14001-8.

Christian Postberg, *Macht und Geld: Über die gesellschaftliche Bedeutung monetärer Verfassungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2013). 188 pp. ISBN: 978-3-593-39863-1.

Lars Bo Kaspersen, *Denmark in the World* (Copenhagen: Hans Teitzels, 2013). 282 pp. ISBN: 978-87-412-5535-4.

Craig Koslofsky, *Evening's Empire: A History of the Night in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). ix + 424 pp. ISBN: 978-0-521-89643-6 (hb); ISBN: 978-0-521-72106-6 (pb).

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Conference 'Habitus, War and Civilisation: Towards an Understanding of the Bellicose Sides of Society'.

Graz, 25–27 April 2013
Department of Sociology
University of Graz
 Organised by Sabine A. Haring and Dieter Reicher

Today, inter-state wars have simply disappeared – or been transformed into terrorism or into violent inner-state antagonisms of remote 'failed states'. However, this does not mean that war (and the potential of it) has lost its significance for modern societies. Twenty years after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, more states than ever are acquiring nuclear weapons, a new kind of arm race with conventional weapons can be observed in parts of the world, and popular culture (such as movies and computer-games) is still obsessed with war. Yet 30 years after Elias's *Humana Conditio*, it seems that sociology itself has not changed fundamentally. Following Saint-Simon, sociology is still concerned with the paradigm of modern society as a peaceful place. Although the forms of war have changed, the phenomenon of organised killing is as widespread as ever. Social scientists and scholars have been dealing with the issues of war and violence since the birth of their disciplines, although the analysis of phenomena of collective violence (including wars) played only a comparatively marginal role until around 2000. In the twentieth century, however, social scientists and scholars were not only concerned with warfare and violence as theoretical and/or historical subjects; they also documented the ongoing wars of their time, and they reported about their experiences with violent internal ethnic as well as international conflicts.



Convivial group



Helmut Kuzmics



Stephen Mennell, Jon Fletcher, Andrew Linklater, Barbara Górnicka;



Jason Hughes presented Brett Bowden with the Norbert Elias Prize

In addition, they sometimes exhibit a particular sensibility with regard to future wars and their prevention.

Therefore, the aim of the conference organised in honour of Helmut Kuzmics, who retired in May 2013, was to confront sociological thinking again and intensively with war and its social consequences.

The topics of the conference reflected the most important themes of Helmut Kuzmics's academic work – after he had left the very unsettling world of investigating social indicators in his twenties.

The conference opened with Stephen Mennell's *Laudatio*, in which he touched on the many fields to which Helmut had contributed before he turned his attention to war, notably his major contributions to the study of national habitus, popular culture and the use of literature as sociological evidence.

The first session focused on questions belonging to the inner circle of a sociology of International Relations. It dealt with the different forms of violence and warfare through the ages and different spaces. The second and the third sessions emphasised the importance of the First and the Second World Wars for collective memory and their consequences for the emotional life of different groups and generations. The First World War was an industrial, but also a democratic, war. There was hardly a single family in Germany, France, Britain or Austria that was not directly and/or indirectly affected

by the war. There were very few families that did not lose a father, a son, or both. The war seemed to leave indelible impressions on the memories of the survivors, which were to influence civic actions in the period between First and Second World War. In these sessions the specific situation of the Habsburg monarchy was discussed.

The fourth and fifth sessions – organised by Jason Hughes – broached different facets of popular culture such as body performances under a gender perspective or a new popular food style. The sixth session focused on the changing faces of war and its symbols. Helmut Kuzmics has been engaged in all these questions; in particular he has been interested in the transformations of wars, starting in the Middle Ages and finishing with the analysis of the low intensity wars of nowadays. The last two sessions dealt with the topic of national habitus – as we know an affair of the heart for Helmut's academic work. In order to characterise a specific Austrian habitus he used many different sources – literature, of course, songs, films, autobiographies and biographies of Austrian officers and so on.

During the conference the organisers and the participants had to fulfil two very important duties or missions: the first duty was to establish the conference as a fruitful scientific event and the second mission was to celebrate Helmut as an important scholar, a very precious human being and as a very good cordial friend. And sincere thanks are given to all of you for coming to Graz and turning this conference into an unforgettable event.

For the organisation of a conference you need help – financial and moral support. First of all, we want to thank the Elias Foundation for its material and moral support. Further we want to thank our Vice-Rector for Research, Klaus Scherrer, the governor of Styria, Franz Voves, and the Association for Sociology at the University of Graz, for sponsoring the conference. We also

want to thank the governing mayor of the city of Graz, Siegfried Nagel, for inviting the members of the conference for dinner. And we cordially thank our two secretaries Elisabeth Schober and Gerti Selbitschka and our colleges Johannes Ebner and Barbara Colette Zitturi for their help before, during and after the conference.

Sabine A. Haring

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

The civilising offensive (Het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief): prospects for future understanding, or an obsolete concept?

Thursday 24th October 2013, Sheffield Hallam University

Co-conveners: Bernard Kruithof (University of Amsterdam – B.Kruithof@uva.nl) and Ryan Powell (Sheffield Hallam University – R.S.Powell@shu.ac.uk).

It is over thirty years since the theoretical concept of the civilising offensive (*het beschavingsoffensief*) emerged from Amsterdam and the work of Norbert Elias (De Rooy, 1979; Kruithof, 1980). Since then a small but important number of studies, primarily focused on the Netherlands, have applied the concept to various historical civilising projects aimed at bringing about cultural shifts and inculcating lasting habits in working-class populations deemed to be 'immoral' or 'uncivilised'. More recently, a number of UK academics have sought to apply the concept to contemporary concerns related to welfare and social policies aimed at specific 'problematic' populations perceived to be in need of 'civilising'. These disparate but overlapping UK accounts have neglected the Dutch origins of the concept.

This symposium seeks to bring together a small number of academics from the Netherlands and the UK who have (or are) engaged with the theoretical concept of the civilising offensive.

From the Past to the Present and towards Possible Futures: The Collected Works of Norbert Elias

*College Court, University of Leicester
20–22 June 2014*

Call for Papers

‘One cannot ignore the fact that every present society has grown out of earlier societies and points beyond itself to a diversity of possible futures.’

‘Today we have basically lost the ability to think of a future. Most people do not want to go beyond their present – they do not like to see themselves as a link in the chain of generations.’ – Norbert Elias, 1987

In 2014 the eighteenth and final volume of the Collected Works of Norbert Elias in English will be published by University College Dublin Press.

The mammoth undertaking, in association with the Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam, and under the stewardship of Professor Stephen Mennell, has taken a decade to bring to fruition. It brings together the entire corpus of Elias’s works, featuring many writings previously unpublished or not hitherto translated into English, faithfully representing his core ideas and his overall sociological position.

The conference marking the completion of the whole project will appropriately be held at the University of Leicester, where Elias lived and taught from 1954 to 1977. It both honours Elias’s association with the University of Leicester, and recognises the widespread, international and interdisciplinary interest in his work, and its resurgence within the University and more generally within the human sciences.

Craig Calhoun, Director of the London School of Economics, has agreed to give the opening address.

The conference is organised around some of Elias’s key works: *On the Process of Civilisation*; *What is Sociology?*; *The Established and the*

Outsiders; *Quest for Excitement*; and *Essays I: On the Sociology of Knowledge and the Sciences*.

Despite its focus on the Collected Works of Elias, the spirit of this event is one of openness to, and dialogue with, competing sociological positions. It will pose questions including:

- How might Elias’s work be employed to address some of the challenges of the human sciences in the twenty-first century?
- Elias was not a sociologist in the narrow sense: he aimed at a grand sociological, historical, psychological synthesis. Did he succeed?
- To what extent does Elias’s work provide a means of redressing the fragmentation of the human sciences and, especially, reintegrating sociologists who have intellectually migrated to different, increasingly diverse, specialisms and sub-disciplines?
- Is Elias’s critique of sociologists’ ‘retreat into the present’ still valid today? What role might Elias’s work have in the more general ‘relational turn’ that has become a major topic of discussion in recent years?
- Is it possible to reconcile Elias’s ‘figurational’ sociological practice – marked by its emphasis on long-term processes and its caution regarding the intrusion of ‘heteronomous values’ – with the institutional demands for short-term ‘impact’, ‘accountability’, and the increasing emphasis on the short-term practical and monetary value of social scientific research for specific ‘user groups’?
- Can Elias’s approach be squared with recent calls for a more ‘public’ sociology, and indeed, more explicitly politically-involved and directed ‘partisan’ scholarship?

In addition to a series of postgraduate workshops and keynote presentations on these and related central concerns, the conference will feature five parallel streams organised according to Elias’s key works as follows:

On the Process of Civilisation

Civilising processes, decivilising processes, ‘dyscivilising’ processes and debates about processual ‘directions’
Violence, war, terror and international relations in long-term developmental perspective
Sociogenetic and psychogenetic relationships
Critiques, revisions and extensions to Elias’s magnum opus
(Contributors may also wish to refer to related works, such as *The Court Society*, *Humana Conditio* and *Essays II: On Civilising Processes, State Formation and National Identity*)

What is Sociology?

Power, figurations, interdependence, and theoretical debates about them
Sociogenesis of sociology and the concept of ‘society’
Game models and relational thinking
Structure/agency and the society of individuals
(Contributors may also wish to refer to related works, such as *The Society of Individuals* and *Essays III: On Sociology and the Humanities*)

Essays I: The Sociology of Knowledge and the Sciences

Knowledge and scientific establishments
The politics of figurational sociology
Problems of method and methodology
Unplanned long-term processes versus planning and policy
Prospects for a grand synthesis of history, psychology and the social sciences
Elias’s sociological practice
(Contributors may also wish to refer to related works, such as *Involvement and Detachment* and *The Symbol Theory*)

Quest for Excitement

Sport, social bonding and violence
Mimetic and leisure activities
Work, leisure and consumption
Gender, power and identities in the spare time spectrum

The Established and the Outsiders

Community studies and community relations

Blame and praise gossip in the formation of communities

Developments in established-outsider relations theory

Ethnicity, migration and locality

Abstracts of no more than **500 words** for the conference should be submitted to the conference organisers, John Goodwin (jdg3@leicester.ac.uk) and Jason Hughes (jason.hughes@le.ac.uk) not later than **31 December, 2013**

Abstracts must:

- Specifically address one or more of the conference themes (and specify preferred stream)
- Include details of institutional affiliation
- Be written in English, since all presentations will be in English

Abstracts received after the closing date will not be considered. Registration for the conference will open 3 February 2014.

■ XVIII ISA WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY: FACING AN UNEQUAL WORLD – CHALLENGES FOR GLOBAL SOCIOLOGY

Yokohama, Japan, 13–19 July 2014

Pre-registration for the World Congress is already open. In order to be included in the programme participants (presenters, chairs, discussants etc.) need to pay registration fees by 1 April 2014.

Many readers of *Figurations* are members of ISA Working Group 02 (Historical and Comparative Sociology) and/or Research Committee 20 (Comparative Sociology). For details of their planned sessions (including sessions organised by Stephen Vertigans, Robert van Krieken, Fumiya Onaka, José Esteban Castro and Stephen Mennell), see:

WG02 – www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/wg/wg.php?n=WG02

RC20 – www.isa-sociology.org/congress2014/rc/rc.php?n=RC20

Closing date for the online submission of paper abstracts for these sessions is 30 September 2013

■ STOP PRESS

Joop Goudsblom just informed us that the journal *Amsterdam Social Science*, 4: 2 (2012), pp. 105–14, contains ‘a very nice piece’ by the anthropologist Femke Brandt, ‘An imaginary dinner-table conversation on trophy hunting between Norbert Elias and Elizabeth Costello’. Joop describes it as ‘entertaining and insightful’. It can be found at http://socialscience.nl/2012/11/28/4_2_complete/

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in January 2014. News and notes should be sent by 1 November 2013 to the Editors at figurations@norberteliasfoundation.nl.

Editor: Stephen Mennell
Editorial Address: School of Sociology, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland.
Tel. +353-1-295 0276; Fax: +353-1-716 1125.

Associate Editor: Dr Katie Liston, School of Sports Studies, University of Ulster, Newtownabbey, County Antrim, Northern Ireland BT37 0QB.
Phone: +44 28 90368539;
Fax: +44 28 9036 6028.

Managing Editor (Dublin): Barbara Górnicka (UCD). Email: figurations@norberteliasfoundation.nl

Honorary Assistant Editors: Florence Delmotte, Brussels (French); Sofia Gaspar, Madrid (Spanish and Portuguese); Tabea Dörfelt-Mathhey (Jena), Heike Hammer, Stuttgart (German); Tatiana Savoia Landini, São Paulo (Spanish and Portuguese, Latin America).

Contributions should preferably be e-mailed to the Editor in the form of MS Word (.doc or .docx), Rich Text (.rtf), plain text (.txt) or Open Office Text (.odt) files. Do not use embedded footnotes. Hard copy is accepted reluctantly. Photographs should be submitted in JPEG format.

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