Book Reviews

Incivility: The Rude Stranger in Everyday Life

Philip Smith, Timothy L. Phillips and Ryan D. King

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, £18.99 pbk, ISBN: 9780521719803, 218 pp.

Reviewed by: Ryan Powell, Sheffield Hallam University, England

This book offers an empirical intervention into the sociological study of incivility in everyday life and aims to 'radically change the understanding of incivility in our time' (p.1). This is to be achieved by freeing incivility research from the perceived shackles of criminology and urban sociology which, it is argued, have closed down debate through a narrow focus on 'Broken Windows' theory. Wilson and Kelling's (1982) contentious theory has apparently 'set the agenda for thinking about incivility on our campuses and in our think tanks (p. 3) and the authors therefore aim to 'reorient incivility research'. This reorientation centres on incivility as a subjective reality of everyday life and therefore calls for an exploration of the everyday, mundane nature of experiences of incivility *across* social classes. In this sense the authors suggest that contemporary experiences of incivility are more about *situations* than individuals.

The book is divided into nine chapters. The first sets the scene and explores weaknesses in the existing literature pointing to an unhelpful focus of research on 'poor urban areas' and a lack of attention to the ordinary, mundane nature of incivility. Chapters two to seven present a wealth of empirical statistical data on aspects of, and responses to, the rude or 'incivil' encounter. These empirical sections represent a useful quantitative body of evidence on contemporary experiences of rudeness across different public spaces and social settings. The diversity of issues covered is not matched by the range of methods and analysis however, with the majority of the 50-plus figures and tables drawn from a large-scale telephone survey conducted in Australia. Chapter eight sets out strategies for responding to rudeness and quite rightly questions what is to be achieved by doing so. The final chapter is a curious one. Described as a 'quick and reader-friendly final summary' it reads as a kind of frequently asked questions about incivility research; and directs the time-poor reader to the sections of the book containing more detail on specific concerns. This summary may be useful for some, but this chapter was surely the space for the authors to engage in a more conceptual and theoretical debate. In reflecting on their findings, linking these to existing theoretical frameworks and acknowledging the limitations of their approach, the authors could have set out their perspectives on a future research agenda. This was perhaps a missed opportunity to engage more extensively with some of the key theorists who receive only a fleeting mention. This and the ahistorical analyses are the major weaknesses of the text.

Although the authors make reference to some of the heavyweights of social theory – Zygmunt Bauman, Emile Durkheim, Norbert Elias, Erving Goffman and Jurgen Habermas for instance – these are but references with little engagement with, or comparison of, their theoretical standpoints. Readers of *Human Figurations* will no doubt be dissatisfied that Elias' two volume *magnum opus* is reduced to the finding that rudeness produces feelings of disgust! The cursory references to prominent theorists are nowhere more glaring than in

relation to Elias. On receiving the book and glancing through it I was at first struck by the many references to 'ELIAS', if somewhat curious as to the capitalisation of his name. However, as the authors note:

> the ELIAS [Everyday Life Incivility in Australia Survey] acronym is simply convenient. It does not indicate support for the views of the noted theorist of a 'civilizing process' Norbert Elias nor represent a systematic effort to test or operationalize his ideas. (p.16)

Indeed, the ahistorical nature of the book and the lack of engagement with the existing and extensive theoretical work on civility and the development of standards of conduct in western societies are glaring omissions. Many of the problems I encountered in this book stemmed from a lack of engagement with concepts related, and intrinsic, to any understanding of incivility: civility, civilisation, civilising, decivilising, manners, etiquette, and so on. To ignore these related concepts and their development is to render in/civility as a static concept. Elias is not alone in the reduction of his work. Goffman is more prominent but engagement with his interactionist approach is largely limited to a solitary table setting his approach to incivility against the criminological tradition. Given the extensive evidence on the historical development of etiquette and manners which emphasises the centrality of power, the body, emotions and time – all four of which the authors engage with to various degrees – the lack of a theoretical underpinning is somewhat frustrating.

A lesser but still problematic gripe relates to the glib use of language in places. Controversial and politically loaded terms that are vehemently contested across disciplines such as 'underclass', 'welfare dependent' and 'ghetto' are used unproblematically, which irks given the aim of reorienting incivility research away from the usual spaces and populations.

Despite these criticisms the book makes a strong and consistent argument about the persistence of academic, political and social concerns over 'anti-civic individualism', positing that the present period is marked by a more intense anxiety related to these concerns. I would certainly agree that crises of civilisation have a long history in the western world, but would have welcomed more of a theoretical and historical engagement with these debates. Without situating contemporary concerns alongside historical precedents and developments the authors' argument is less powerful. As Elias expertly showed, historical continuities and changes are far more discernible over the very long term. It is perhaps the focus of the authors on the *contemporary* 'rude stranger' and the lack of any attempt to define (in)civility and its historical development – representing a retreat into the present of the highest order – which precludes such an engagement.

The real strength of *Incivility* lies in its empirical grounding, its emphasis on the spatial and temporal context of incivility, and its critique of contemporary criminological accounts which have tended to equate western incivility with the marginalised spaces and stigmatised populations of our cities. The writing style and common reference points at the end of each Chapter also make the text a very accessible one. In summation, the book provides sound quantitative evidence to contribute to an understanding of the ways in which people experience and respond to contemporary incivility – albeit one that needs to be complemented by qualitative approaches and read alongside theoretical and historical analyses.

Civilized Violence: Subjectivity, Gender and Popular Cinema

David Hansen-Miller

Farnham & Burlington: Ashgate, 2011, £55 hbk, ISBN: 9781409412588, 205 pp.

Reviewed by: Aurélie Lacassagne, Laurentian University, Sudbury, Canada

In this close examination of four classical movies, David Hansen-Miller offers his readership an explanation of how violence – concealed behind the bars in civilised societies – is represented in cinema and how modern subjects relate to this constitutive element that is violence. The first chapter is devoted to a discussion on the 'genealogy of violence and the modern subject'. This discussion is cast in largely Foucauldian terms and filtered through the lens of Balibar's work on subjection and subjectivation. But interestingly, Hansen-Miller also draws upon Elias's *Civilizing Process*. He goes as far as suggesting 'points of commonality between Foucault and Elias', an assertion that some will reject; however it remains an important dialogue to develop. This is a task already tackled by scholars such as Christopher Powell in his book *Barbaric Civilization: A Critical Sociology of Genocide* (McGill-Queen's University Press). Unfortunately, despite this promising conversation outlined both in the introduction and the first chapter, the rest of the book returns to mostly a Foucauldian reading of these cinematographic texts. But, it does remain an important contribution to a socio-historical approach of violence, with an interesting mix of psychoanalysis.

The first illustrative case study presented is *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*. It offers a good opportunity for Hansen-Miller to acknowledge and reflect on the complexity of violence in social relations, its concealment, and its cinematographic representations. He convincingly uses Elias, Foucault and Freud to unpack these complicated relations. The film itself can be understood as analogous with Freudian theory. Of course, this allows the author for the first time to introduce reflections on gender. Yet this German classic has already been analysed within the context of Nazism, notably in the seminal work of Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligary to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film*, that Hansen-Miller discusses. Here, it becomes apparent how other Eliasian works and reflections could have been useful for the discussion.

The second classical cinematographic representation selected for study, *The Sheik*, brings the reader into a rather different world. The movie analysed previously was more European in its philosophical foundations and discussions on scientific discourse; the latter, an American movie, is more naively romantic. It draws its popularity largely from an American phenomenon – the wide popularity of the romance genre. The emphasis on gender and violence is also much more apparent. In some aspects, this chapter echoes concerns expressed by Edward Said, particularly his concept of Freudian Orient and the association between the Orient, sex and violence (although Said is not referenced). What is interesting in the argumentation is how Hansen-Miller passes from hysteria in *Dr. Caligari* to neurasthenia in *The Sheik* and the socio-historical explanation offered. Indeed, after the Second World American society experienced the development of suburban middle-class families accompanied with feminine influence within the domestic sphere. This redefinition of the domestic sphere and of the place of the woman/mother/wife within this new configuration redefined power relations within marriages to give way 'to ideals of companionate marriage'.

The third film selected for analysis is Sergio Leone's *Once Upon A Time In The West*. This archetypical Western genre movie draws the reader into heart of American cultural identity and illustrates how the United States has dealt with its civilising process (on that note, see Stephen Mennell's *The American Civilizing Process*). Quite convincingly, Hansen-Miller argues that the Western works as 'a fantastical counter-narrative' by inverting 'the history that constitutes modern subjectivity'. Instead of portraying the civilising process with its centralisation and bureaucratisation processes and increasing self-restraint in the use of violence, the Western makes everyone equal before violence. The immensity of the lands to be conquered represents an important element of what we might call a fantasised decivilising process.

The final film analysed is *Deliverance*. Hansen-Miller pays particular attention to the citations, jokes and clichés derived from the film and commonly heard within American society, demonstrating how popular culture constitutes a key location of the production and reproduction of social and political discourses. The analysis offered also tackles the important dichotomy between the city and the country, the urban and the rural. This is a field that figurational sociology is well-positioned to enter following the seminal study of Elias and Scotson on the established and outsiders. In other words, it is a quiet reminder to be more attentive to spatial dimensions in our studies.

With his book, David Hansen-Miller offers a much needed study of the relationship between cinematic classics and representations of violence. It examines how, in civilised societies, violence has been largely removed from public social relations. In these circumstances, popular cinema has become a site for representations of violence which allows individuals to experience, through the screen, something unknown in their daily relationships. Anyone familiar with Elias's work will automatically think of Elias and Dunning's research on sport, which, in a similar fashion as popular cinema, also represents an arena where regulated violence can be performed. Hansen-Miller refers only *The Civilizing Process* as an Elias source; other works of Elias could have perfectly complemented some of his reflections. This book can be considered an important first step in the emerging field of cultural studies and figurational sociology.

Big History and the Future of Humanity

Fred Spier

Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, £19.99 pbk, ISBN: 9781444339437, 288 pp.

Reviewed by: Steve Quilley, University of Waterloo, Canada

Elucidating common patterns operating across the entirety of what Elias called 'the great evolution', Big History, as a particular discipline, synthesises the findings from the full gamut of natural and social science disciplines – from astronomy, geology, climate science, evolutionary biology, anthropology, neuroscience, and everything in between. This new discipline perfectly captures the renewed interest in synthesis and integration. The modern sensitivity to cosmic evolution emerged, in part, in the wake of cold war rivalries in the space race. As Stewart Brand pointed out, the biosphere and the anthroposphere viewed from space presented a cognitive jolt unique in the history of humanity.

Combined with science fictional explorations of our deep future and distant past, and the possibilities of astro-biology and comparative cosmic civilisation, and against the backdrop of possible nuclear oblivion, the technological achievements of the 1960s and 1970s primed the intellectual culture for a great expansion in temporal horizons. The project of the 'Clock of the Long Now' and the *Long Now Foundation* lead by Stewart Brand provided the most graphic exemplar of this new sensibility: that all of recorded history was a blip in a wider process of cosmic evolution; and that human problems, possibilities and interventions were inextricably interwoven with wider biological and physical dynamics unfolding and cycling over much longer periods. In many ways, this incipient appreciation of the big picture is part of the long drawn out reorganisation of our temporal means of orientation which first started in the eighteenth century and gained a firm footing with the evolutionary theories of Charles Lyell, James Hutton and Charles Darwin.

The emergence of Big History as an undergraduate programme is perhaps evidence of an accelerating shift in this cognitive revolution. The first pioneering courses were taught in the late 1980s by John Mears at Southern Methodist University (Dallas, Texas) and by David Christian at Macquarie University (Australia)

and San Diego State University (USA), followed by Johan Goudsblom and (his erstwhile PhD student) Fred Spier at the University of Amsterdam, from 1993. With a high profile TED talk by David Christian, the establishment of the International Big History Association and significant sponsorship from the Bill Gates Foundation, the new field is now establishing a significant beachhead in academia.

As a nascent undergraduate discipline, Big History allows students to join the dots and to make connections between different modules, courses and disciplines. Viewing the past on multiple time scales, the emphasis is on seeking out common themes and patterns. Synthesising the headline findings from cosmology and physics, chemistry and the life sciences, history and anthropology, Big History provides the ultimate Hitch Hiker's Guide – identifying key episodes in the development of complexity in the universe and an underlying order which links the birth of stars with the origins of life and even the current social and ecological crises of civilisation. Focusing on critical threshold moments, Big History focuses on the 'Goldilocks conditions' – 'not too hot, not to cold … but just right' – which periodically allowed the emergence of entirely new forms of complexity. The fragility of these pinpricks of complexity and the Goldilocks conditions which sustain them provides a foundation for a more nuanced and long-term view of the possible futures for humanity and the biosphere.

Fred Spier has made a significant contribution to the field from the outset. *Big History and the Future of Humanity* builds on an earlier book, *The Structure of Big History* (1996). Starting with a concise introduction to the field, the new book provides a complete overview of the subject covering cosmic evolution, biological life on earth, human evolution and social development and our current global industrial civilisation as the 'greatest known complexity' in the universe. With regard to this core content, Spier's book is not dissimilar to Christian's *Maps of Time*. However, there are significant differences. Spier's contribution is shorter and perhaps more digestible for an undergraduate audience. He provides, in passing, a superb review of a (predictably) wide range of literatures and the book is worth purchasing for the bibliography alone. This historiography usefully frames the intellectual prehistory of the 'macroscopic' perspective with reference to Alexander von Humboldt, H.G. Wells and Arnold Toynbee, amongst others. More significantly, the text is focused, from the outset, on the relevance of Big History as a means of orientation, in relation to issues of long-range governance and sustainability.

Where David Christian is pre-occupied with the function of Big History as a scientific origin myth and a source of meaning and re-enchantment, Spier's focus is firmly on humanity 'facing the future' (chapter 8). The point of departure for this final chapter is established at the outset with a framework which centres on the relationship between energy flows and complexity. Spier's contention is 'that "the energy flows through matter" approach combined with the Goldilocks Principle may provide a first outline of a historical theory of everything, including human history' (p. 39). His most salutary conclusion is that greater complexity is correspondingly more precarious and difficult to sustain. The long-term survival of human complexity will depend on whether we can constrain an apparently innate propensity 'to harvest more energy than is needed for survival and reproduction' (p. 204). The networked connectivity of billions of human brains presents the most astounding (and possibly cosmically rare) degree of complexity. Other things being equal, sustaining such complexity over hundreds of years, let alone millennia (or 'perpetuity') is an unlikely prospect. As Spier makes very clear, it will depend on the extent to which humanity is able to develop a more detached picture of its own metabolic constraints, as if from the outside, and, using this cognitive guide, begins to internalise entropic constraints on individual, social and institutional patterns of behaviour. In Elias's terms such a development would constitute what I have called an 'ecological civilising process'.

It is an open question as to whether the maximum scale of the 'anthroposphere', a term coined by De Vries and Goudsblom, compatible with ecological integrity overlaps with the minimum scale necessary for a globally-connected, science-based, liberal-cosmopolitan civilisation. Given the significance that Spier attaches

to this question, the only (surprising) omission is the lack of attention given to Howard T. Odum's 'energy hierarchy' and the concept of 'transformity'. Odum's framework provides the only serious attempt to quantify the prerequisite thermodynamic relationship between different orders of complexity in general, and the minimum ecological conditions for civilisation in particular. Developing a more precise, quantitative model of the relationship between different levels of complexity seems an important next step if Big History is to become more than a useful heuristic. Having said this, Spier's text provides an outstanding introduction to Big History and a perfect foundation upon which to consider the human condition 'in the round'. It should be required reading for sociologists, political scientists, ecologists, politicians and anyone with any interest in 'sustainability' or a long term future for humanity.

Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience

Alexander Etkind

Cambridge: Polity, 2011, £17.99 pbk, ISBN: 9780745651309, 264 pp.

Reviewed by: Victor Taki, University of Alberta, Canada

The cultural Westernisation of Imperial Russia offers a rich field for post-colonial scholars. For two centuries beginning with the reign of Peter the Great, the state systematically used Western technologies in order to transform and govern its subjects. Russia's serf-owning elites appropriated occidental culture in order to dominate the less privileged social elements. The responses of the empire's subjects and the lower classes to such forms of 'power through culture' produced multiple examples of subaltern subjectivities. All these phenomena constitute opportunities to apply post-colonial approaches in order to make sense of the pre-1917 period. The passivity of the post-Soviet intellectuals in the face of these opportunities can be explained by the isolating impact of the Iron Curtain, their business with updating or deconstructing national narratives or their uncertainty as to whether Russia should be placed in the category of the colonisers or that of the colonised. Alexander Etkind has been among the first scholars to tap the potential of intellectual cross-pollination between Russian history and post-colonial studies. His *Internal Colonization: Russia's Imperial Experience* (Polity Press, 2011) is sure to generate a lot of discussion, in the spirit of which the following critical remarks are made.

Etkind understands colonization as 'cultural hegemony and political domination working together', and colonialism as the latter's 'ideological system' (pp. 6–7). The author's central thesis is that Russia's imperial experience was marked by internal colonisation understood as a 'culture specific domination inside the national borders' (pp. 6–7). Since the latter are nowhere defined, the distinction between 'internal' and 'external' colonisation remains suspended in conceptual limbo. If 'national borders' designate the extent of the authority of a given ruler or government, one may wonder whether British or French imperial experience was not defined by 'internal colonization' just as much as the Russian one. By contrast, if 'national borders' mark the limits of an ideal 'national homeland' within a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional empire, one cannot speak of 'internal colonization' in Russia prior to the middle of the nineteenth century, for no Russian intellectual or bureaucrat tried to imagine such borders until that time. This automatically excludes considerable parts of Etkind's discussion and flaws an otherwise highly original and thought-provoking book.

The author develops his argument out of a critical reading of Sergei Sovolviev's thesis that 'Russia is a country that perpetually colonizes itself' (p. 62). However, any attempt to place colonialism at the heart of Russian history from Rurik to the Revolution, has to take account of the evident lack of clear-cut distinctions between the 'colonizer' and the 'colonized'. To counteract the evident weakness of the racial mind frame in the Russian

case, Etkind emphasises the differences between estates, which the Russian government brought into being much like the British colonial administration constructed the Indian castes. Yet, no amount of references to Russian serfs as 'white negros' can make a well-informed reader forget Balzac's comparisons of Burgundian peasants to 'the Redskins of Fenimore Cooper' or Disraeli's *Sybil, or the Two Nations*. If one is able to find such quasi-racialist pronouncements in the history of almost any European country, what then constitutes Russia's peculiarity? And if the figurative colonialism of this kind is virtually ubiquitous, what is the wisdom of working with such a hopelessly broad meaning of this term? Would it not be more useful to adopt a narrower definition and speak of colonialism only with respect to those areas of the Russian empire that bore more self-evident similarities to the British rule in India or the French one in Algeria?

In the manner of many post-modern theorists, Etkind freely crosses the disciplinary boundaries between historiography, literary criticism and philosophy producing a superbly readable text, which is no small achievement for a non-native speaker of English. Together with argumentative brilliance and provocativeness, this is sure to win the author a wide audience. However, *Internal Colonization*'s strengths are also its weaknesses. At times, this wide-ranging book all but loses the thread of the declared subject, as happens in an otherwise very solid chapter on religious sects and Russian revolutionaries (pp. 194–213) based on Etkind's earlier research on Russian sectarians. At other times, a conscious collation of such diverse subjects as German settlers, peasant communes, baroque court fireworks, military colonies and Immanuel Kant, to name but a few, generates far-fetched metaphors, explanations and comparisons.

This refers, among other things, to the parallel between contemporary Russia and early modern Muscovy as the two regimes that used their control over some valuable resource (e. g. natural gas or furs) in order to extract rent from the labouring neighbour nations (p. 72–73). A dichotomy between 'resource-bound' and 'labour-bound' states that underlies this comparison ignores the international character of the fur trade network that benefited German merchants as much as the tsar's treasury. When he attributes colonial regime to the agency of a despotic state-corporation eternally suspended over the population, Etkind implicitly confuses colonialism with authoritarianism and demonstrates a pre-Foucauldian understanding of power, which is strange on the part of someone who quotes Foucault so often. In the meantime, an informed reader will find it hard to believe that Russian serfdom resulted from the depletion of Siberian furs (p. 82) and not, as the late Richard Hellie argued, from the tensions within the Muscovite service class caused by the mounting military obsoleteness of the gentry. His or her credulity will also be stretched to the limit by Etkind's use of a passage from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* to render the feelings of the (probably illiterate) sixteenth-century Cossack explorer Ermak when he commenced the Russian conquest of Siberia (p. 79). Trained in psychology and literary criticism, the author might find it exciting to think 'from the present to the past' (p. 72), yet this is definitely not what an historian should do if he or she wants to avoid accusations of anachronism.

Internal Colonization seeks to overcome an exclusive focus on the relations between the 'First World' and the 'Third World' that has framed the early studies of Orientalism and colonialism. A critique of Edward Said's blind spots serves Etkind to draw attention to intensive colonisation processes that took place in the 'Second World', as he calls, again anachronistically, the Russian Empire. However, the price of this remarkable intellectual achievement is the relative neglect of those forms of colonialism which structured the relations between the 'First World' and the 'Second World' as well as those that framed the interaction between the latter and the 'Third World'. The discussion of Russia's internal colonialism is not systematically related either to the Western discourse of Russian despotism, or on Russian Orientalist portrayals of the rival continental empires of Turkey, Persia and China. The very projection of the tripartite division of the world characteristic of the Cold War upon the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries unduly isolates imperial Russia from other empires with which it interacted both discursively and practically. In the meantime, the

author's studied overuse of the words 'exterminations', 'lashes', 'violence' and 'brutality' threatens to turn the book into yet another specimen in the long tradition of Western Orientalising portrayals of Russia that was explored by Marshall Poe, Larry Wolff, Iver Neumann, Martin Malia, and Ezequiel Adamovsky.

The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain

Jesus Cruz

Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011, $42.50 hbk, ISBN: 9780807139196, 312 pp.

Reviewed by: Carles Sirera, Universitat de València, Spain

The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain is an indispensable book for English readers who want a thoroughly and well-documented study of the cultural changes produced by the liberal revolution. Probably, it is one of the most important contributions in English to the debates about Spanish political modernity since the monograph of *Social History* (volume 29, issue 3) coordinated by Mónica Burguera and Christopher Schmidt-Nowara. Unfortunately, stating this opinion is not saying much, because there are few books addressed to an international audience that cover the Spanish nineteenth century. This historical period is not one of the current priorities even among Spanish researchers, since the Spanish Civil War or Franco's Dictatorship have attracted the attention of the majority of new researchers.

However, grasping the social evolution of the peripheral European countries is a central issue to understand the limits and false assumptions of Modernisation Theory. Despite its critics, it is still popular among our political elites, who seek in the economic growth of GNP the master key which solves all the present problems while hoping to build a European market with limited democracy. Hence a wider and more complete view about the democratisation process in Europe is necessary, especially when the European Union is day by day more divided by an economic crisis of unexpected consequences that seems marked by forgotten coordinates as North/South or Non-Catholic/Catholic axis. Therefore, a deeper historical debate about political change and economic backwardness is fundamental and this publication by Jesus Cruz helps to clarify part of the role played by the Spanish middle class which arose after the liberal revolutions. In general terms, the traditional interpretation of Spanish history, known as 'paradigm of backwardness', has described an unsuccessful liberal revolution leaded by a weak bourgeoisie incapable of achieving significant political reforms that, in the end, had to deal with the old aristocratic elites for the settlement of a pseudo-liberal regime. This transaction represented the failure of their historical mission and was portrayed as a sterile attempt to bring modernity and economic development.

At present, this interpretation is widely criticised and the major consensus accepts a fulfilled liberal revolution in Spain, although it did not mean the first step of an automatic path to democracy and mass consumption society. Precisely, *The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain* questions the extension of economic backwardness and presents strong evidence about the consolidation of new liberal middle classes, who felt proud of their public presence, wealth and culture – a culture which was the manifestation of their liberal thought and their economic and political power. The book highlights the significant transformations of Spanish society during the nineteenth century that was driven by a new self-assured dominant group – a dominant group identified by its embracing of the new values of materialism, hedonism and individualism.

Thus, the conclusion would be that these new middle classes were as radically different from the old aristocratic families as the new liberal regime was completely different from the Ancient Regime.

Nevertheless, the concluding chapter offers a more moderate summary and refers to some kind of cultural transaction between the old elites and the new emergent groups. However, this cultural transmission by imitation or symbolic dealing is not described in detail throughout the book, so the readers may think that the author overlooks the analysis which explains how this cultural mix was produced or what the range and effects of this cultural conversion were. Actually, the study does not specifically cover this subject, as this was the purpose of the previous work of the author, *Gentlemen, Bourgeois and Revolutionaries: Political Change and Cultural Persistence among the Spanish Dominant Groups, 1750–1850*, that focused more on the private and economic behaviour of the elites of Madrid. Nevertheless, there is a conflict, because *Gentlemen, Bourgeois and Revolutionaries* emphasises the cultural continuity between the old and new dominant classes, when by contrast, *The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain* enhances the rupture elements. An ambiguity gap emerges from the reading of these two books and perhaps an audience who are not familiar with Spanish history cannot bridge this void.

Maybe one of the difficulties in this case is the preference of the author to prioritise an aspect of culture strongly related to consumption and inscribed inside the perspective of the 'consumer revolution'. In fact, that is one of the most interesting and well-documented contributions of the book; as the author states, the bourgeois culture is a consumer culture. But other elements related to culture do not have enough visibility, and concepts such as politics, education or science are too constrained by the weight of leisure activities. For instance, a demanding reader might want to know if this consumer culture was common to all political cultures shared by the middle classes or whether there were differences in the appreciation of materialism and hedonism. In this sense, maybe the Catholic heritage and their role within the definition of consumer culture would have deserved an approach more concerned with the conflicting elements and the boundaries of dispute, although the issue of the tensions between Catholicism and Liberalism could not have been reflected as problematic inside the consumption culture.

In the same way, the description of consumer culture is not easy to contrast and compare with the academic culture spread by the universities, public schools or religious institutions, because we have more studies about Spanish informal nineteenth-century sociability places than about the everyday job of the official institutions. *The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain* points out the democratic dynamics started by consumer revolution, its civilising nature and how it was spread in Spain by the middle class. However, maybe it would have been useful to provide a more profound analysis of the conflict between exclusivity and the extension of mass consumption, and relate them in more detail to political issues. Moreover, the old aristocratic elites could have been described with more accuracy to help those readers unfamiliar with the Spanish context.

In conclusion, *The Rise of Middle-Class Culture in Nineteenth-Century Spain* is a fundamental book to all those interested in Spanish history, although a broader picture of bourgeois culture is necessary. The work is too focused on the culture of consumption and an audience without knowledge of the Spanish context might need more references to understand the nature of the relationships between the new and old elites.

Les Organisations Internationales

Guillaume Devin and Marie-Claude Smouts

Paris: Armand Colin, 2011, €26.90 pbk, ISBN: 9782200355371, 253 pp.

Reviewed by: Nina Wilen, Royal Military Academy, Brussels, Belgium

Guillaume Devin and Marie-Claude Smouts have done something as unusual as writing a comprehensive book about international organisations without presenting one organigramme [organisational chart] 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 (IO), 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 organisation 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, role and evolution of international organisations in three parts. The book starts with a thorough analysis of how international organisations have been created, constructed and evolving through history, with empirical examples of the first international organisations to illustrate this. True to their socio-historical perspective, the different 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 two 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 categorize the organisations. On the other hand, their honest approach of recognising this insurmountable dilemma, and their effort in making a pedagogic distinction that facilitates 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 the 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 development of both the identities and the contexts of international organisations. It is also here that their strongest argument on the never-ending evolution and re-construction of the roles of IOs 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 the IO's existence most likely contribute to a more just, consolidated and peaceful world. In the third chapter the authors recognize instrumentalisation, socialisation and legitimisation as common ways for international actors to use international organisations; the focus on socialisation appears to be the most innovative through its division into two different categories – learning and appropriation.

In the third part of the book devoted to the evolution of international organizations, 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 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 international organisations is impressive. In addition, it gives the reader more than just a confirmation of what he or she already knew – that the powerful states attempt to

direct and influence the international organisations in different ways. It adds an important perspective through its detailed analysis that balances this simplistic picture.

In the chapter devoted to international security, the authors show how international organisations have gradually transformed our vision on security through the paradoxical development, *à la Elias*, of globalising threats and individualising strategies. In a socio-historical analysis of different generations of peacekeeping, the progressive enlargement of the international organisation's competencies is confirmed. It is also in this chapter that one finds perhaps the most important and clarifying quote of the book: 'the natural vocation of international organizations 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.

The last chapter, entitled 'The regularization of globalization', provides a glimpse of political economy through its profound analysis of the major economic institutions such as International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. At times, the authors' language testifies to a normative and critical stance, for example when analysing the two institutions mentioned above: 'the 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 phenomena in themselves, 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.

The Sociology of Terrorism: People, Places and Processes

Stephen Vertigans

Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2011, £26.99 pbk, ISBN: 9780415572668, 226 pp.

Reviewed by: Michael Dunning, Brunel University, England

The Sociology of Terrorism: People, Places and Processes is in many respects a pioneering book. Its examination of terrorism seeks to uncover long-term processes in relation to why and how people join terrorist organisations, the dynamics within those groups and how terrorism and terrorist careers can come to an end. Vertigans' exploration of the subject breaks new ground by being one of just a small number of sociological investigations undertaken of terrorism, especially when compared to the mass of work on offer by psychologists and political scientists.

The back cover describes the book as a textbook and in some respects this does it a disservice. It is much more than that; Vertigans provides a synthesis of theories and standpoints from sociology (Elias, Mennell, Bourdieu, Simmel, Tilly, Della Porta, Wieviorka, symbolic interactionism), psychology (e.g. Horgan, Silke) and political science (e.g. Weinberg, Crenshaw) to develop what is ultimately a sociological explanation of, and framework for the study of, terrorism. Vertigans aims to provide detached analysis and seeks to integrate both rational and emotional reasons for terrorism. In order to achieve this, he uses a number of key sociological concepts, which, to name a few, include long-term social processes, habitus, established–outsider figurations and double binds. In addition, and almost uniquely, serious consideration is given to the role of women in relation to terrorism.

A range of terrorist groups form the subject matter, including, among others, left-wing organisations from Italy, Germany and South America , the American far right, religious groups, such as al-Qaeda and Japan's Aum Supreme truth, and nationalist groups, such as those from Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland. The first part of the book focuses on some of the historical and contemporary processes that contribute towards the emergence of terrorist groups. As such, Vertigans explains how contemporary terrorists draw on ideologies, take inspiration and justify their actions from events and figures of the past. To this effect terrorists tend to draw on histories of violent struggle which in turn imbues their habitus. Moreover, he argues that terrorism can come about in relation to how regional state monopolies of violence have developed, and that the possibility of terrorism emerging becomes greater when 'weak restraints intersect with violent sediments from the past'.

The second half of the book explores the social processes involved in recruiting, retaining and leaving terrorist organisations, and for Vertigans habitus plays a key role here. For example, he points out that the legitimisation of violence by nation states, such as public execution and torture, can contribute to terrorism by reinforcing in people's habitus that violence is an acceptable solution to political problems. In addition, political manoeuvring by governments that involves aggression towards other countries can help to normalise aggression in the national habitus, and thus contribute to the emergence of terrorism. He adds that communal habitus can also contribute to the process of radicalisation and provides normative standards for feelings and behaviour. For example, shared historical memories and commonality of feeling tend to be behind wider community support for terrorism. As such, if there is support for terrorism in a community, such as has been the case in Palestine, Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka, then the emergence of terror groups and their sustainability is more likely. For Vertigans, terrorism is more likely to emerge in less stable nation states, especially unstable democracies. Therefore, he argues, the likelihood a country can avoid terrorism is influenced by the duration over which self-restraints have been internalised as well as the length of time that mutual interdependence, functional democratisation, stability and security have been in place.

Vertigans' 'detached' approach to the subject matter also serves the reader well in the various points he makes about women's participation in terrorism. Unlike the vast majority of research, Vertigans does not neglect the roles that women often play in the support, planning and carrying out of terrorist attacks. He seeks to dispel some of the myths around women terrorists that often suggest that they are encouraged or coerced into terrorism by men; or when they are discussed in relation to terrorism they are often sexualised. In particular, he examines the roles played by women terrorists in places like Chechnya, Palestine, Italy, Germany and Northern Ireland. He finds, for example, that women are more likely to play prominent roles in terrorist organisations that are ideologically left-wing, and therefore, more supportive of gender equality. Nevertheless, he does concede that men are more likely to become terrorists. This is because, he argues, they generally have greater levels of social capital and are better connected in social networks that can lead to terrorism. Terror organisations tend to recruit through their existing networks, and as such, men are more likely to be available from these sources. Women are often recruited, however, if there is a shortage of men or because they are less likely to arouse the suspicions of the authorities.

Throughout the book, Vertigans draws out the relationship between habitus and established–outsider figurations and shows how the latter are integral to the development of terrorism. For example, he explains that certain examples of social protest have transformed into terrorism partly because perceived shifts in national consciousness have left militias feeling like detached outsiders. As such, the transition to terrorism happens in the context of detachment from the rest of society.

As outsiders, members of terrorist organisations can become dependent on each other and develop strong we-images through the 'collective effervescence' of their group. In this context, group cohesion is partially determined by feelings of threat they experience from their enemies (governments, other terrorist

organisations etc.). In addition, the stigmatisation of radical or terror groups can help to further strengthen their internal cohesion. On the flip-side, Vertigans points out that terror groups develop a sense of collective charisma and stigmatise outsiders, which helps to further cement their bonds. Within this context, shifting forms of we-identification are crucial and enable terrorists to justify their actions both in terms of protecting their group and associated ideology, community and nation and attacking their enemies with whom they no longer identify. Vertigans argues that terrorists tend to consider themselves as soldiers at war, and like conventional soldiers an emphasis upon we-identification strengthens at the expense of I-images.

As part of established–outsider figurations between terrorist organisations and nation states, spirals of violence can escalate and acts of terrorism and counter-terrorism can become more violent. As such, Vertigans explains how terrorists and nation states tend to form double-bind relationships with each other, whereby violence tends to escalate between opposing groups. Nevertheless, within these contexts, and at times of heightened emotion, terrorists must practice restraint if they are to carry out their activities with any chance of success. As such, for terrorists, identification with and within groups provides regulatory frameworks to restrain individuals both when expressing their emotions during challenging and exciting activities and during more mundane work associated with their organisations. Terrorist groups must practice internal pacification in order to undertake effective campaigns of violence – they must pacify themselves in order to be violent. He adds that the actions of states within these double-bind processes can help to justify to terrorists their actions and beliefs about the state; violent counter-terrorism is often driven by the fact that nation states traditionally react violently to violent attack. As such, it is in the habitus of politicians and populations to react violently to terrorism.

Vertigans explains that it is also important to focus on the reasons why people leave terrorist organisations and the processes involved in decisions by terrorists to end violence if we are to find solutions to encourage people to disengage from terrorism. Violent counter-terrorism operations rarely work on their own and the reasons for the emergence of terrorism in the first place must be addressed or undermined. Otherwise the threat will remain, as has been the case in Northern Ireland, for example.

There are perhaps two areas where the book might explore further. The first of these is the definition issue. Vertigans provides his own early in the book but admits that it, and probably all other definitions, are flawed and sensitive to location, balances of power, history, who is defining and so on. Nevertheless, a recognition that terrorism is defined in the context of complex established–outsider figurations would go some way to incorporating this issue more completely into the other themes of the book. The other minor omission is that a slightly more in-depth discussion of state terrorism and its relationship to other 'forms' of terrorism would again help to further entrench the importance that established–outsider figurations play in these contexts. That said, Vertigans points out that he excluded a detailed discussion on this area due to space limitations, but may come back to the issue in subsequent publications.

Despite these minor points, the book does achieve what it sets out to do, which is to provide a detached study of the dynamics of terrorist organisations, and routes into and out of them. It is an important and timely contribution to the small but hopefully growing sociological research on terrorism, and provides a useful framework for further sociological research on terrorism.