Civilising offensives and decivilising processes: between the emic and the etic

Stephen Mennell

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Abstract: *'Civilising processes', in Elias's technical or 'etic' sense, are long-term, intergenerational, unplanned and unintended processes, involving changes in the balance of the typical social habitus. Paradoxically, 'civilising offensives' are in contrast planned, organised and intended. At first glance, they seem to belong to Part One of* On the Process of Civilisation*, where Elias discusses the 'emic' or native meaning of ideas of 'civility' and 'civilisation' as developed by elites as means of distinction from the lower orders of their own societies and later from people in other continents. On the other hand, civilising offensives may well be part-processes within civilising processes, if they contribute to tilting the balance from* Fremdzwang *towards* Selbstzwang. *But in this more etic sense, the means or even the objectives of a civilising offensive may not be very civilised in the emic sense. The essay concludes by asking whether it is conceptually possible to speak of* 'decivilising *offensives', and examines four possible candidate cases, without coming to any firm conclusion.*

Keywords: *Norbert Elias; civilising offensives; decivilising processes; unintended consequences; emic/etic distinction.*

Introduction

Norbert Elias was fundamentally interested in very long-term processes in the development of human society – notably what he called 'civilising processes', state formation, and the growth of knowledge – in which sociogenetic and psychogenetic changes were intertwined.'Every small step', he wrote,

> was determined by the wishes and plans of individual people and groups, but what has grown up along this path up to now, our standard of behaviour and our psychological make-up, was certainly not intended by individual people. And it is this way that human society moves forward as a whole; in this way the whole of human history has run its course:
>
> From plans arising, yet unplanned
> By purpose moved, yet purposeless (Elias 2010: 52)

The useful concept of 'civilising offensive' thus focuses more on the 'plans arising' than on the 'unplanned' and 'purposeless' outcomes. It is significant that the concept arose principally in the research group in Amsterdam centred on Abram de Swaan, which was concerned with long-term perspectives on the development of social policy (Swaan 1988), rather than in the closely allied group around Johan Goudsblom who were especially interested in the unplanned and purposeless outcomes of long-term social development. And, in consequence, I want to argue, the concept begins as an 'emic' or 'native' concept, though it can take on 'etic' meanings in the course of research.

'Emic' and 'etic'

The distinction between 'etic' and 'emic' arose in anthropology from the linguistic terms 'phonemic' and 'phonetic'. An 'emic' point of view seeks to present how 'native' members of a social group perceive and categorise their world, the meanings it has for them, their feelings about it and their own rules of behaviour and feeling. An 'etic' account is written from the point of view of the social scientist, recognising that there is much that members of a culture do not understand about their situation, and that they may not be able to understand the 'scientific' description of themselves. The distinction is closely related to that made by phenomenologists such as Alfred Schütz (1962) between constructs of the first and second degree, which became of some importance in early ethnomethodology. I have argued (in the distant past: Mennell, 1975) that Schütz was not entirely clear in his insistence that social scientific accounts be intelligible to 'natives', but that is not important for present purposes. The point I want to make first of all is that one can loosely regard Part One of *On the Process of Civilisation* (Elias 2012a:13–57) as an 'emic' account of the sociogenesis of the concept of 'civilisation', while Parts Two and Four – and to some extent Part Three – present an etic account, a *sociological* theory of civilising processes. People caught up in a long-term intergenerational civilising process do not perceive the full complexity of the process, though they may have some glimmering sight of it, as shown in Elias's famous quotation from Caxton's *Boke of Curtesy*:

> Thingis whilom used ben now leydaside ...
> Thingissometymealowed is now repruid. (Elias 2012a: 89)

But they almost certainly could not understand the theory if it were explained to them. (That is not surprising, because it would appear that most sociologists do not understand the theory either.) Elias himself admitted that he had caused widespread misunderstanding of his work by using the same word, 'civilisation', in both an emic and an etic sense; but, he said, he hadn't been able to think of a better and different word to use in the etic context, and to date neither have we been able to think of one.

Now, how does this relate to the concept of 'civilising offensives'?

Civilising offensives

'Civilising processes', in Elias's technical or 'etic' sense, are long-term, intergenerational, unplanned and unintended processes, involving changes in the balance of the typical social habitus. Paradoxically, 'civilising offensives' are in contrast planned, organised and intended, and generally fairly short-term. The Amsterdam School years ago described many such initiatives, especially in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the city was growing rapidly and industrialising. I'm thinking, for example, of Rineke van Daalen's work on the public transport system (1979), Ali de Regt's on working-class families (1984), and Anneke van Otterloo's on food and cooking (1985). The idea has been used widely, beyond the Netherlands, ever since.

At first glance, civilising offensives seem to belong to Part One of *On the Process of Civilisation*, where Elias discusses the 'emic' or native meaning of ideas of 'civility' and 'civilisation' as developed by elites as means of distinction from the lower orders of their own societies and later from people in 'less happier lands'.

This raises the question of purposive social action and its consequences, both *intended* and *unintended* consequences. The conscious purpose of many, perhaps all, of the civilising offensives we have studied in the past was to 'improve' lower orders, the colonised peoples, and so on – the 'outsiders' to the respectable

'establishments'. Besides that, their semi-conscious and unconscious purpose has often seemed to be to make the 'civilisers' feel good about being superior. Their activities were often 'offensive' in both senses of the word. A good example comes from my old research on food habits in England and France (Mennell 1985: 228). In her book *Round About a Pound a Week* (1913), Magdalen Pember Reeves reports a four-year investigation of a 'respectable' working-class area of Lambeth, south London, by members of the Fabian Women's Group, in the course of which they tried to teach women to cook 'better' food for their families. Few people in Lambeth then had gas cookers. The Fabian ladies repeatedly explained to the women the nutritional value of porridge for breakfast. No matter how often it was explained, porridge did not find its way into the family menu. The reasons only gradually came out. With only an open fire and burnt pans, it was difficult to stop the porridge 'catching' and tasting nasty. It needed constant attention, which with children milling at the mother's feet it did not receive. And, finally and fundamentally, the family did not like it: the children ''eaved at it', and one husband threatened more literally to heave it at his wife.

But these civilising offensives formed a characteristic part of the developmental process that Elias called 'colonisation and repulsion' (2012a: 472–4) – or what I have sometimes called the 'concertina effect'. That is, certain aspects of behaviour and habitus, including taste and feelings, come to be used as badges of superiority by strata that are 'higher' or more 'established' – that is, more powerful – groups. These marks of superiority are often associated with more demanding standards of self-constraint, and thus of 'civilisation' in the technical, etic, sense. But in stressing them as marks of superiority, and in declaring that their adoption and convincing practice is a *sine qua non* of acceptance into the higher ranks, the established ensure that these traits are gradually copied by aspirant, rising, lower or outsider groups; this is much the same phenomenon as that which Robert Merton (Merton 1968: 319–22) called 'anticipatory socialisation'. The outsiders thus encroach upon the claimed superiority of the established. Then, in consequence, this triggers a bout of 'repulsion' on the part of the higher ranks, in which they develop still more elaborate codes in order to distance themselves in the face of 'pressure from below' (Elias 2012a: 464–78).

Civilising offensives may well be common part-processes within civilising processes, as an especially overt manifestation of 'colonisation'. But that is true only if they contribute to tilting the balance from *Fremdzwang* towards *Selbstzwang*. [1] [#N1] Yet do they always? Is it possible to conceive of their opposite, a 'decivilising offensive' in which the goal pursued represents a tilting of the balance *back* from *Selbstzwang* towards *Fremdzwang*? Or is 'decivilising offensive' an oxymoron?

'Decivilising offensives'?

Let us examine four possible candidates for this title.

Genocides

The paradox of the Holocaust, and of other genocides in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, has often discussed. In the emic sense, they are plainly decivilising processes. But, as often noted – by Elias (2013) and by Bauman (1989) among others – the implementation of the National Socialist attempt to eliminate all of Europe's Jews rested upon a panoply of 'civilised' self-constraints on the part of the organisers. The essential image of that is Adolf Eichmann sitting in his office in Berlin working on railway timetables to Auschwitz. If the objective, the purpose of such a busy office, could scarcely be less 'civilised' in the emic sense, it may nevertheless demand higher level of self-constraint, a greater measure of emotional detachment, and thus be highly and tragically 'civilised' in the in etic sense. This is very counter-intuitive, and Abram de Swaan (2001)

has coined the new term 'dyscivilisation' to distinguish such extreme – and usually short-term – cases from the sorts of long-term, unplanned and gradual degrading of social organisation that are more usually discussed under the rubric of 'decivilising processes' (Mennell 1990: 205–23).

Volkov: the Stalinist civilising process

Less well known is Vadim Volkov's (2001) argument about the Stalinist civilising process. The process studied by Volkov was taking place in Stalinist Russia between 1936 and 1938, the years of the Great Terror. He focused on the cultural alternatives to terror, and argued that its social significance was overestimated. One of the functional alternatives to violence was the complex of individual practices associated with the concept of 'culturedness' *(kul'turnost)* prevalent in these years. He discussed the social and individual effects of 'the acquisition of culturedness' in connection with the privatisation of life in Stalinist Russia.

Volkov [2] [#N2] addressed the question of what 'being civilised' meant with reference to the Soviet individual and society. He examined 'the process of inculcation of disciplines that proceeded without recourse to open violence and terror' (2001: 211). The main protagonists in the Stalinist civilising process were former peasants who became urban dwellers and Soviet citizens. While *kul'tura* was widely adopted in Russia in connection with the idea of cultural policy, *kul'turnost* referred to the effects of this policy in everyday practice. The sphere of appearance and fashion was first associated with the structural dynamic of *kul'turnost* in 1933–4. The aesthetic ideal of military uniforms and their derivatives was gradually replaced by smart 'civil' clothing, clean shaving for men and make-up for women. Care for one's appearance also came to include other aspects of the public self such as 'hygiene of facial and bodily skin' – that is, personal hygiene. Volkov argued that as attention to bodily hygiene heightened, practices related to this kind of self-care were also changing towards individual bath–shower complexes. Thus, cleanliness and self-discipline (*kul'turnost*) in private life corresponded to labour efficiency and discipline in the workplace, where the cultured individual was identified with the efficient worker.

Volkov shows that the wives of industrial managers and engineers played a key role in introducing workers to the basic skills of *kul'turnost*. This group of wives engaged in voluntary and public activity as part of a movement for 'the all-out civilisation of everyday life'. Both the material and social environments became instrumental in changing people's habits and attitudes. For example, army officers reported how barracks and canteens were equipped with curtains and tablecloths made by 'caring women's hands'. Curtains turned into a symbol for *kul'turnost* and served symbolically to constitute a cultured home dwelling. The tablecloth tied together diet, hygiene and manners, and its introduction in workers' canteens implied further material and psychological changes in group practices and habitus. Volkov also showed how the framework of *kul'turnost* extended to speech. 'Unlike material attributes, the culture of speech was naturally perceived as inalienable from the personality, related more to the internal rather than the external qualities' (2001: 223). The mastery of correct speech required increased and more consistent self-monitoring and was derived from 'good' literature and reading. (The parallel with Elias's discussion (2012a: 111–15) of 'the modelling of speech at court' is obvious.) Thus urban public order was formed through the individual habituation of *kul'turnost*, without explicit external compulsion. Volkov's essay successfully applies some of Elias's theoretical ideas to a non-Western European society. While he does not address state formation processes, the monopoly of the legitimate means of violence in the former Soviet Union, nor their relationship to changes at the level of individual habitus, his work is a worthwhile example of how human affective moulding is changed through a transformation of constraint by others into the apparatus of self-restraint. More importantly, while the practices of *kul'turnost* did not derive from any explicitly formulated political or social project, 'their unity can be seen with reference to their social and individual effects [and] their long-term consequences, rather than

from the point of view of intentional projects of political authorities' (2001: 211). Meanwhile, of course, people were dying in the purges and the gulags. The 'Stalinist civilising process' for some ran alongside the 'darkness at noon' (Koestler 1940) and the bullet in the back of the neck.

Right-wing economic policy as a decivilising offensive

The famous Justice of the US Supreme Court, Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr, remarked that 'Taxes are the price we pay for civilisation'. Of course, that is an instance of the emic use of the concept – but perhaps it has etic implications too. I want to raise the possibility that the now very strong extreme right-wing element in American politics may have decivilising effects.

I am not primarily thinking now of the gun lobby or of right-wing Christians *per se*. (As the T-shirt slogan said, 'So many right-wing Christians, so few lions'.) Actually, both the advocacy of the right to kill fellow human beings *and* the promulgation of religious fantasy can be regarded as 'less civilised' in an etic sense (Mennell 2010). But I want instead to suggest that right-wing *economic* policies may also be instances of decivilising offensives, even if their advocates do not see them that way.

I have spoken of the pervasiveness in American culture of what Elias called *homo clausus* thinking (Mennell 2007; 2014). It may ultimately be the legacy, as Elias argues (see especially his 1968 Postscript to *On the Process of Civilisation* – 2012a: 491–527), of the central epistemological strain in Western philosophy running from Descartes through Kant to Popper. But its manifestation in the strong current of American opinion that sees all forms of state power (at least, those aspects of power that operate within the national territory) as an unnecessary evil is something much more concrete in its intention and its results. One could describe this demand as being for 'the reduction of the state', but it is not to be confused with conceptual 'state-reduction' or *Zustandsreduktion* – which Elias wanted translated as 'process reduction' (2012b: 108–17) – an idea that plays an important part in Elias's theory of knowledge and the sciences (2009). There seems to have taken hold a belief that we should revert to what Lasalle called the 'Nightwatchman' state, a state that does little beyond providing external defence through soldiers and sailors and internal security through police forces. [3] [#N3] But it is worth recalling the qualification that Elias made an important addition to Max Weber's definition of a state. Among social scientists, the almost universally accepted definition of a state is that provided by Max Weber (1978: I, 54): a state is an organisation which successfully upholds a claim to binding rule-making over a territory, by virtue of commanding a monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. To 'monopoly of … violence', Elias (2012a: 379–99) added '*and taxation*'. This is significant in the globalised world that has emerged especially since the collapse of the Soviet Union. Big business and very rich individuals demand that taxation be as low as possible, to finance only minimal state functions, often arguing that only by such means can countries maintain their 'competiveness' vis-à-vis all the other countries of the world. [4] [#N4] And, taking advantage of this trend towards weaker states, big international corporations – many of them American – like Google, Starbucks and Amazon contrive to paying next to no tax in a country such as the United Kingdom where their turnover amounts to billions of dollars, thus further weakening the state and in many countries clearly subordinating the state apparatus to corporate power (on which, see Flint and Powell 2013). This defunctionalisation of the state almost certainly has decivilising consequences, in the etic sense, contrary to what its advocates no doubt imagine to be their 'civilising' objectives in the emic sense. The term 'failed state' is associated with what used to be called Third World countries, and it has been argued that many have been caused to fail at least partly through pressures – for example from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank – to scale back the services they provide for their citizens, handing them over to private corporations (Gros 2011). If a country did little enough for its citizens in the first place, and then stops doing that little – shall we say by privatising its water supplies – the small degree of citizens'

dependence on and identification with the state may be still further undermined – and the legitimacy and effectiveness of the central monopolies correspondingly reduced. [5][#N5] Is the diminution of the state a source of decivilising pressures? Loïc Wacquant's famous research (2004) in black ghettoes in 1980s America seemed to show that the withdrawal of the state even from limited localities like those was directly related to the rising incidence of violence in that period.

It may be possible to argue that, as the state declines as a source of civilising external constraint, a functional equivalent is provided by the power of global capitalists. But somehow, I am not convinced.

Informalisation and provocation

An early candidate for the title of 'decivilising process' was the 'permissive society', as it was perceived in the late 1960s and 1970s. Christien Brinkgreve and Michal Korzec (1976) famously posed the question of whether this represented a reversal of the European civilising process. That triggered a great deal of research, particularly by Cas Wouters, which over the years convinced most sociologists interested in the matter that informalisation was *not* a decivilising process, but rather that the relaxation of older and more rigid codes and the decay of institutional structures that exerted *Fremdzwang* over people's feeling and behaviour actually involved the emergence of *higher* and *more demanding* standards of self-constraint and emotion management (see Elias 2013: 26–48, and Wouters 2004, 2007).

Thus may it be argued that the student movement of the 1960s and 1970s, was a civilising offensive rather than a decivilising offensive? Probably so. In the emic sense, established groups at the time saw the movement as subverting the established order, and the students and other radicals themselves may perhaps have seen their activities as, so to speak, the adoption of short-term 'decivilising' tactics in order to produce longer-term 'civilising' consequences in a more equal society. Of particular interest perhaps is the 'extra-parliamentary opposition' – culminating at its most extreme end in the Baader–Meinhof gang and Red Army Faction – which acutely troubled Elias in the 1980s (2013: 331–407). Having lived through and witnessed at close quarters the violence associated with the collapse of the Weimar Republic, Elias can be forgiven for being more alarmed about the future of the Federal Republic of Germany than now – with the wisdom of hindsight – seems justified to us. Germany came through the episode, and German democracy seems more stable than ever. Nevertheless, the case raises the conceptual possibility that 'decivilising offensives' exist. But are we then using the term in an emic or an etic sense? Or both?

Conclusion

These ruminations are intended less to reach any definite conclusions about the concepts of 'civilising offensives' and 'decivilising processes' than to draw attention to the conceptual and empirical complexities that underlie their use. 'Civilising offensives' are a very common phenomenon. Once one is sensitised to the idea, one sees such offensives everywhere, in the past and in the present. The difficulty comes when one attempts to situate civilising offensives – by definition, purposeful and often planned campaigns – in the context of long-term civilising processes, which in Elias's view are unplanned, and 'blind' and 'purposeless'. The anthropologists' distinction between the 'emic' and the 'etic' is useful in thinking about this problem.

Notes

1. We tend to use Elias's German terms because (rather like Tönnies's *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*) one of the two terms in the pair presents serious problems of translation into English. To begin with, *Zwang* can mean (among other things) 'force', 'compulsion', 'coercion', 'constraint', 'restraint, and 'pressure'. *Fremd* means 'stranger' or alien', although here it really means 'other people'. *Fremdzwang* is sometimes translated at 'external constraint', or occasionally 'social constraint', but that makes it too disembodied: Elias is really talking about constraint *of people by other people*. *Selbstzwang* is more easily translated, but we normally speak of 'self-*constraint*' rather than using the everyday term 'self-*re*straint' because the everyday term can too easily take on psychologistic, *homo clausus* overtones. And using 'constraint' in both parts of the pair serves as a reminder that 'force' or 'compulsion' is involved in both cases. [#N1-ptr1]

2. Here I have shamelessly drawn on Katie Liston's summary of Volkov's argument, which appeared in *Figurations: Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation*, 19, July 2003. [#N2-ptr1]

3. The term *Nachtwächterstaat* was used in 1862 by the German socialist Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–64) in aspeech in Berlin. On Lassalle as a theoretician in rivalry with Karl Marx, see Kołakowski 1978: I, 238–44). [#N3-ptr1]

4. This does not preclude business interests in some circumstances simultaneously demanding more complex state regulation to reduce competition and create obstacles to new entrants into the market. [#N4-ptr1]

5. These trends have begun to be manifest to a lesser extent even in some OECD countries. For example, in the referendum of September 2014, Scottish voters came within a 10 per cent margin of approving the withdrawal of Scotland from the United Kingdom. Commentators have argued that this would have been inconceivable in the post-war decades, when the pre-Thatcherite state provided so much more employment and services through a wide range of nationalised industries and promoted a greater sense of integration into a 'British' state. [#N5-ptr1]

References

Bauman, Zygmunt(1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cambridge: Polity.

Brinkgreve, Christien and Michal Korsec (1976) 'Kan het civilisatieprocess van richting veranderen?' [Can the civilising process change direction?] *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift* 3 (3): 361–4.

Elias, Norbert (2009) *Essays I: On the Sociology of Knowledge and the Sciences*. Dublin: UCD Press [Collected Works, vol. 14].

Elias, Norbert (2010) *The Society of Individuals*. Dublin: UCD Press [Collected Works, vol. 10].

Elias, Norbert (2012a) *On the Process of Civilisation*. Dublin: UCD Press, 2012 [Collected Works, vol. 3].

Elias, Norbert (2012b) *What is Sociology?* Dublin: UCD Press [Collected Works, vol. 5].

Elias, Norbert (2013) *Studies on the Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Dublin: UCD Press [Collected Works, vol. 11].

Flint, John and Ryan Powell (2013)'Individualization and social dis/integration in modernity: a comparative note on Zygmunt Bauman and Norbert Elias', in François Dépelteau and Tatiana Savoia Landini (eds),*Norbert Elias and Social Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 261–74.

Gros, Jean-Germain (2011) 'Failed states in theoretical, historical, and policy perspectives', in Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Stefan Malthaner, and Andrea Kirschner (eds), *Control of Violence:*

Historical and International Perspectives on Violence in Modern Societies. New York: Springer, pp. 535–61.

Koestler, Arthur (1940) *Darkness at Noon*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Kołakowski, Leszek (1978) *Main Currents of Marxism*. 3 vols, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mennell, Stephen (1975) 'Ethnomethodology and the new *Methodenstreit*', *Acta Sociologica* 18 (4): 287–302.

Mennell, Stephen (1985) *All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Mennell, Stephen (1990) 'Decivilising processes: theoretical significance and some lines for research', *International Sociology* 5 (2): 205–23.

Mennell, Stephen (2007) *The American Civilising Process*. Cambridge: Polity.

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

Mennell, Stephen (2014) 'What economists forgot (and what Wall Street and the City never learned): a sociological perspective on the crisis in economics', *History of the Human Sciences* 27 (3): 20–37.

Merton, Robert K. (1968)*Social Theory and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press, 1968).

Otterloo, Anneke van (1985) 'Voedzaam, smakelijk en gezond: Kookleraressen en pogingen tot verbetering van eetgewoonten tussen 1880 en 1940' [Nutritious, tasty and healthy: cookery teachers and attempts to improve eating habits between 1880 and 1940], *SociologischTijdschrift*12: 495–542.

Reeves, Magdalen Pember(1913) *Round About a Pound a Week*. London: G. Bell, 1913).

Regt, Ali de (1984), *Arbeidersgezinnen en Beschavingsarbeid: Ontwikkelingen in Nederland 1870–1940* [Working-class families and the civilising of workers: developments in the Netherlands, 1870–1940]. Meppel: Boom.

Rineke van Daalen (1979) 'Ongewenste ontmoetingen in de Amsterdamse tram: Klachtenaan de Gemeente Tram Amsterdam in het begin van de twintigsteeeuw' [Unwanted encounters in the Amsterdam tram: complaints to Amsterdam Municipal Tramways at the beginning of the twentieth century]. *Amsterdams Sociologisch Tijdschrift*, 6 (3): 449–73.

Schütz, Alfred (1962) *Collected Papers* 3 vols, Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, I, *The Problem of Social Reality*.

Swaan, Abram de (1988) *In Care of the State: Health Care, Education and Welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era*. Cambridge: Polity.

Swaan, Abram de (2001) 'Dyscivilisation, Mass Extermination and the State', *Theory, Culture and Society* 18 (2–3): 265–76.

Volkov, Vadim (2001)'The Concept of Kul'turnost: Notes on the Stalinist Civilising Process', in Sheila Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Stalinism: New Directions*. London: Routledge, pp. 210–31.

Wacquant, Loïc(2004) 'Decivilising and demonising: the remaking of the black American ghetto', in Steven Loyal and Stephen Quilley (eds), *The Sociology of Norbert Elias*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 95–121.

Weber, Max (1978) *Economy and Society*, 2 vols. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Wouters, Cas(2004) *Sex and Manners: Female Emancipation in the West, 1890–2000*London: Sage.

Wouters, Cas (2007) *Informalisation: Manners and Emotions since 1890*. London: Sage.

Biography

Stephen Mennell is Professor Emeritus of Sociology at University College Dublin. His books include All Manners of Food: Eating and Taste in England and France from the Middle Ages to the Present(1985), Norbert Elias: Civilization and the Human Self-Image(1989), and The American Civilizing Process(2007). He holds the degrees of Doctor in de Sociale Wetenschappen (Amsterdam) and Doctor of Letters (Cambridge). He is a member of the board of the Norbert Elias Foundation, Amsterdam, of the Royal Netherlands Academy ofArts and Sciences, the Royal Irish Academy and Academia Europaea.