

# Twenty-five years on: Norbert Elias's intellectual legacy 1990–2015

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**Abstract:** *This paper is essentially a study in the sociology of science. In the natural sciences certainly, but also in the social sciences, the work of even very prominent researchers is often forgotten after their death. This has not happened in the case of Norbert Elias, whose influence has tended rather to increase since his death in 1990. For a school of thought to survive, it has often been noted, it is essential that it has a nucleus of advocates, and also an organisational framework. This essay traces in particular the work of the Norbert Elias Foundation, based in Amsterdam, as Elias's executors, in promoting Elias's ideas, and the impact of those ideas on the work of scholars in many parts of the world.*

**Keywords:** *Norbert Elias; figurational sociology*

*The theory has become, in the 1990s more than ever before, a fixed part of the repertory of German Sociology. This has partly to do with the fact that following Elias's death this theory can be used as part of the canon of sociology, without the danger of finding oneself publicly corrected by its author (Korte 1994: 174). [1] [#Ni]*

## Introduction

That Norbert Elias achieved international intellectual celebrity only very late in his long life is well known. Equally familiar are some of the reasons. His career was severely disrupted by Hitler's accession to power in 1933, after which Elias sought refuge first in France and then in London. There he wrote *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, but, as Bryan Wilson wryly observed, 1939 was 'not the most propitious year for the publication of a large, two volume work, in German, by a Jew, on, of all things, civilisation' (Wilson 1977: 15). This, Elias's *magnum opus*, did not become familiar even among German sociologists until its republication in 1969, nor more widely until its translation into French in the early 1970s and into English as late as 1978–82.

Moreover, Elias had a difficult time establishing himself in British academic life. For a few years early in the war, he did gain a temporary post at the London School of Economics with the slightly strange title of 'Special Research Assistant'. But from 1944 he mainly scraped a bare living from extra-mural lecturing. His first permanent post in a university came in 1954, when he was already aged 57, at the University of Leicester. There, with Ilya Neustadt, he built up an outstanding Department of Sociology (see Goodwin and Hughes 2011; Rojek 2004). But although Leicester was a very respectable British provincial university, neither it nor the discipline of sociology enjoyed great prestige among the British academic establishment. This is of some significance in the light of Elias's own discussion of 'Scientific establishments' (Elias 2009a [1982]). Eric Dunning once suggested (in personal conversation) a mental experiment in counter-factual history. *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* was published only two years after Talcott Parsons's *The Structure of Social Action* (1937). Supposing that Elias's book had been translated immediately into English, how different, Dunning asked, would modern sociology now look if Elias had had a post at Harvard University, while Parsons had been at Leicester?

The question may at first glance appear preposterous. Parsons was writing an explicitly *theoretical* treatise, which played an important part in drawing Anglophone sociologists' attention to both Émile Durkheim and Max Weber (as well as, with fewer long-term consequences, Vilfredo Pareto and Alfred Marshall). In contrast, *On the Process of Civilisation* (Elias 2012a [1939]) is commonly seen as no more than a fascinating *empirical* case-study in historical sociology. It was, however, as Elias explained in his 1968 Postscript (2012a: 491–527), a great deal more than that. The 'case-study' arose out of Elias's already longstanding disagreement with the mainstream tradition of Western philosophical epistemology which ran from Descartes through Kant to modern figures including – Elias argued – Sir Karl Popper, Jürgen Habermas and Talcott Parsons. Its central preoccupation had always been with what Elias labelled the *homo clausus*: the question of how 'the individual', in the singular, knew what he or she knew. Not only was the 'subject of knowledge' a single isolated individual, but also an *adult* individual. Only through recognising the ineluctable interdependence of human beings from birth, thinking in terms of *homines aperti* and focusing on how they *become* adults through chains of generations could philosophy – and sociology – break away from the old mainstream tradition. That tradition was driven by the pursuit of *constants* underlying the flux of human life, the impulse to reduce processes to static conditions – what Elias (2012b [1970]: 107–10) labelled *Zustandsreduktion* or 'process reduction'. Within sociology, no case illustrates this diagnosis more clearly than that of Talcott Parsons (1970), who in his essay in intellectual autobiography explicitly acknowledged that his intellectual point of departure had lain in his close reading of Kant.

Now one may ask 'Who now reads Talcott Parsons?', and the energy that Elias gave to vitriolic attacks on Parsons may in retrospect seem wasted. Yet we would argue that the legacy of Parsons still permeates sociology today – especially American sociology – in the form of *homo clausus* and *Zustandsreduktion*. Arguably, Elias and Parsons (Mennell 1989) shared a common ambition of achieving a grand intellectual synthesis of sociology, anthropology, psychology, history and epistemology. But Elias recognised very early that this could not be achieved by constructing a static conceptual framework, but rather through a simultaneously theoretical *and* empirical investigation of the *structure of processes* (Bogner 1986). The many scholars – not just in sociology but in other social sciences and the humanities – who have continued to be inspired by and to use Elias's work would argue that Elias's enormous powers of intellectual synthesis far outstripped those of his contemporary, Talcott Parsons, who was so much more celebrated during their shared lifetimes. It has been contended that Elias's work potentially forms the basis for the development of a 'central theory' in the social sciences of a scope that has not been seen since the Parsonian heyday (Loyal and Quilley 2005). Again, such a claim may seem preposterous, since scholars who take their intellectual bearings from Elias constitute a tiny minority of the world's social scientists. Yet it may be observed that, in contrast to the precipitous decline that Parsons's reputation (if not his latent influence) underwent after his death in 1977, Elias's standing has only grown since he died in 1990.

Several phases can be discerned in the growth of Elias's reputation:

Phase I (1925–c. 1977): a long period when Elias's work was little known outside the circle of his personal acquaintanceship; this period is discussed in detail in Goudsblom (1977).

Phase II (1977–1990): a phase marked by an unprecedented rate of publication on Elias's part. Early in this period, three important international conferences – at the University of Aachen in 1977, in New York in 1978, and at Balliol College, Oxford in 1980 – brought together dozens of enthusiasts for Elias's ideas.

Phase III (1990–): by the time of Elias's death, there was already a network of Western European scholars who had met each other on several occasions, and the initiatives after 1990

all – or nearly all – originated in this network, which has continued to expand through the recruitment of younger social scientists in each generation.

The rest of this essay is concerned with how Elias's reputation and influence has grown and spread during the quarter-century since his death. It should be noted, however, that in accordance with Goudsblom's (1996) conceptualisation of 'phaseology' as opposed to 'chronology', characteristics of earlier phases persist alongside those of later phases. In particular, it has to be recognised that, even as Elias's standing has risen in general, there remain regions of the world and areas of the social sciences where his influence has not been felt.

## The situation in 1990

Not the least peculiarity of Elias's career was that all but one of his dozen books, and almost all of his more than a hundred essays, were published after he retired from the University of Leicester in 1962. The first of these books was *The Established and the Outsiders* (2008 [1965]), co-authored with his MA student John L. Scotson. It was not much noticed at the time, seeming to be just one of the last in a long line of British community studies, although subsequently it has become one of Elias's best known and most widely used books, even among sociologists who are not, so to speak, 'committed' Eliasians.

Elias always *wrote*, but he hesitated to *publish*. The typescripts in the Elias archive show that in virtually every case he drafted and redrafted obsessively, sometimes to the point where a clear and succinct early draft was gradually buried under mountains of additions, amendments and elaborations, until – in a few cases – it was rendered unpublishable. Most successful in helping Elias to overcome his procrastination about publishing was Dr Michael Schröter, whose editorial skills ensured that several of the late books were finally sent for publication (Schröter 1997). It also seems clear, though, that 'time's wingèd chariot' [2][#N2] – Elias's sense that he was running out of time – played its part. And so, almost certainly, did the recognition that came to Elias, at first gradually, between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s.

In 1964, Elias was invited for the first time since the war to a major German sociological conference, held in Heidelberg to mark the centenary of Max Weber's birth. He was not included among the prominent figures like Talcott Parsons, and the paper he prepared for the occasion does not appear in the volume of proceedings (Stammer 1965). But at this conference he met an important figure in German sociology at the time, Professor Dieter Claessens, who invited Elias to be a visiting professor the following year at the University of Münster – the first of several such appointments in Germany and the Netherlands. [3][#N3] Then came the republication of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* in 1969, the first appearance of *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (an expanded version of his 1933 *Habilitationsschrift*) in the same year, and his major theoretical statement *Was ist Soziologie?* in 1970. Even so, it was not really until after the publication of a cheap paperback edition of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* by the great Suhrkamp publishing house in 1976 that Elias became a widely known intellectual celebrity in Germany and Austria. Siegfried Unseld, the celebrated head of Suhrkamp offered – under a 'gentleman's agreement' – to publish everything that Elias chose to submit to him. Elias was retrospectively given the title of Professor by his old university, Frankfurt; and he became the first recipient of the Theodor Adorno Prize of the City of Frankfurt. In the 1970s too, Elias's ideas were taken up in France by members of the *Annales* school of historians (Burguière 2009). It looks as though Elias's sheer dogged determination was not quite enough: even he responded to recognition and encouragement.

The upshot was that by the time of his death the following books had been added to Elias's *oeuvre*: *The Loneliness of the Dying* (2010a [1979]), *Humana Conditio* (2010b [1985]), *Quest for Excitement: Sport and Leisure in the Civilising Process* (2008 [1986]; co-authored with Eric Dunning); *Involvement and*

*Detachment* (2007a [1987]); *An Essay on Time* (2007b [1984]); *The Society of Individuals* (2010c [1987]); *Studies on the Germans* (2013a [1989]); *Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections* (2013b [1990]). *Mozart* (2010d [1991]) and, in book form, *The Symbol Theory* (2011 [1991]) appeared just after Elias's death. [4],[#N4] This late flurry of publications meant that Elias's influence on the social sciences and humanities happened much more recently than his date of birth, 1897, might lead one to expect. Moreover, English translations of the works that Elias wrote in German did not appear until 1978 onwards, so his impact in the Anglophone world was still more retarded.

Equally important as the flood of Elias's own late publications, though, was that – despite his repeated and perhaps slightly disingenuous protests that he did not wish to found a 'school' of sociology [5],[#N5] – other scholars began to publish books and articles that took inspiration from his work. At first, these were almost completely confined to people who had come into personal contact with Elias – in Leicester or in the Dutch and German universities where he served as visiting professor in the 1960s and 1970s – and the research students that they in turn influenced. Most notable was the 'Amsterdam School' that took shape around Johan Goudsblom and Abram de Swaan, with their numerous colleagues and PhD students. [6],[#N6] In Germany, something similar happened, centred especially on Hermann Korte (Bochum, later Hamburg), Peter Gleichmann (Hanover), and at Bielefeld where Elias was permanent Fellow-in-Residence at the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung from 1978–84. In England, 'early adopters' were found mainly in Leicester, notably in the group around Eric Dunning concerned with the sociology of sport, but also in Leeds under the influence of Richard Kilminster. In Exeter, Stephen Mennell was something of an outlier.

Examples of major works by followers of Elias in the period before his death include: Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard, *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players* (1979); Johan Goudsblom, *Sociology in the Balance* (1977); Bram Kempers, *Kunst, Macht en Mecenaat: Het beroep van schilder in socialeberhoudingen 1250–1600* (1982, English translation 1992); Horst-Volker Krumreys' *Entwicklungsstrukturen von Verhaltensstandarden* (1984); Stephen Mennell, *All Manners of Food* (1985); Abram de Swaan, *In Care of the State* (1988) These titles demonstrate the impressive diversity of the empirical topics that were investigated under Elias's inspiration.

At the time of Elias's eightieth birthday, he was presented with a Festschrift edited by Peter Gleichmann, Johan Goudsblom and Hermann Korte (1977). The same editors also produced a further two collections of papers (1979, 1984), the latter containing a long essay in intellectual autobiography by Elias (see Elias 2013b). To mark his ninetieth birthday, there appeared a double special issue of the journal *Theory, Culture and Society* (Featherstone 1987). Shortly before his death – and rather against his wishes – two books about Elias's work overall were published, by Hermann Korte (1988) and Stephen Mennell (1989). [7],[#N7]

All the same, at the time of his death, it was perfectly reasonable to wonder whether – as was widely predicted – that his work would gradually be forgotten and his influence wane. So why did that not happen?

## The Norbert Elias Stichting

One answer to that question is that Elias himself was determined that his work should not be forgotten. In 1983, he took the initiative in establishing the Norbert Elias Foundation (or, in Dutch, Norbert Elias Stichting). Its Board consisted of Johan Goudsblom, Hermann Korte and Bram van Stolk; upon Van Stolk's untimely death in 1997, Stephen Mennell was appointed to succeed him. Based in Amsterdam and governed by Dutch law, the aim of the Stichting has been to stimulate research in the social sciences, especially in light of Elias's own broad vision for them.

When Elias died on 1 August 1990, the Foundation was his sole legatee, thereby inheriting the copyrights on his published works and unpublished manuscripts, as well as correspondence and a not inconsiderable sum of money. Since Elias gave many interviews during the last decade of his life, and because he lived just into the age of the PC, the *Nachlaß* also included some audio cassettes and floppy disks.

The possibility was explored of preserving Elias's apartment in J. J. Viottastraat, Amsterdam, as the home both of the Stichting and of Elias's huge collection of West African sculpture. [8],[#N8]. This was found to be impracticably costly, and so the collection was – with regret – sold to raise further funds for the Stichting's work.

## The Deutsches Literaturarchiv

The Stichting's most important immediate task was to catalogue all of Elias's innumerable manuscripts and typescripts. This was carried out by two of Elias's former assistants, Rudolf Knijff and Saskia Visser; Saskia became the first Secretary to the Stichting.

After considerable thought and then negotiation, Elias's papers were sold to the Deutsches Literaturarchiv (DLA) at Marbach am Neckar, where they are preserved with all the expertise available at the pre-eminent German depository for literary and humanistic papers. There, Elias is in good company, among some of Europe's greatest writers.

A comprehensive online bibliography of Elias's publications, incorporating the catalogue of unpublished papers too, was created by Professor Ingo Moerth of the University of Linz (<http://www.kuwi.uni-linz.ac.at/hyperelias/z-elias/> [<http://www.kuwi.uni-linz.ac.at/hyperelias/z-elias/>]), and this is used by the DLA itself.

Access to the Elias papers in Marbach is easy and efficient, and a good many scholars have consulted them there. The Norbert Elias Stichting has periodically awarded a stipend to enable younger scholars to stay in Marbach while working on the Elias papers. Holders of the stipend have included:

- 2005 Vera Weiler: Elias's writings concerning Lucien Lévy-Bruhl
- 2006 Anca Parvalescu: Elias's essay on laughter.
- 2007 Marc Joly: Elias's writings on Freud
- 2008 Angela Holzer,: Die Nietzsche-Rezeption von Norbert Elias
- 2010 Ulrich van Loyen: Norbert Elias's Ghana papers
- 2010 Jean Bernard Ouédraogo, What is sociology? Sociology according to Norbert Elias.
- 2011 Jan Haut: Der Sportbegriff in der Zivilisationstheorie
- 2011 George Steinmetz: Norbert Elias in Ghana: Ein unbekanntes Kapitel der Soziologiegeschichte.
- 2012 Malgorzata Bogaczyk-Vormayr: In der Gegenwart der Anderen. Norbert Elias über Leben und Tod in der modernen Gesellschaft.
- 2013 Fabian Link: Zivilisationsprozess und Zivilisierung des Menschen: Soziologisches Wissen und Kalter Krieg bei Norbert Elias
- 2013 Angela Perulli: Individuen und Gesellschaft: die Evolution des Gedankens Elias zwischen Biographie und wissenschaftlicher Produktion.
- 2014 Marion Keller: 'Norbert Elias als Lehrer': Norbert Elias und die ersten Soziologinnen.

## Gesammelte Schriften and Collected Works

An early aim of the Stichting was to ensure that the entire corpus of Elias's writing was available in scholarly editions. Some of the books Elias had composed in English, notably *Quest for Excitement* and *The Symbol Theory* had not been translated into German, while about a third of Elias's essays were unavailable in English. Moreover, in the 1990s and early 2000s, while some of Elias's late work was still appearing for the first time, publishers of some of the earlier books were allowing them to go out of print. Two notable cases of major books in English that ceased to be available for purchase were *The Court Society* and *Quest for Excitement*.

The Board of the Stichting decided to give priority to German editions, and in 1995 set up an editorial board for this purpose, chaired by Professor Annette Treibel. With only a couple of exceptions, Suhrkamp had published all of Elias's books, which simplified problems of copyright. They agreed to publish a *Gesammelte Schriften*, including new editions of the books they had issued earlier, along with new editions of *Die höfische Gesellschaft* and *Was ist Soziologie?* that had first been brought out by other publishers, three volumes of essays, one of Elias's poetry, and a consolidated index. The series amounted to nineteen volumes in all; first to appear was Heike Hammer's two-volume scholarly edition of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* in 1997, and the series was completed in 2007 (except for the *Gesamtregister*, which appeared in 2010).

In English, a Collected Works posed a knottier problem. The books had been published by no fewer than five different British publishing houses (more, if American editions are included). An additional problem was that, whereas the traditional publisher's contract always specified that if a book were allowed to go out of print, the rights reverted to the author or his heirs, in the age of digital reprints or 'books on demand' this need never happen – the contractual provision was effectively negated. The problem was not resolved until the Stichting's literary agents, Liepman AG of Zürich, pointed out a special provision for collected works under international copyright law that permits the publication of new editions despite previous publishers still selling and holding the rights for earlier editions. [\[9\]](#), [\[#N9\]](#)

As it happened, in 1995 Stephen and Barbara Mennell had – on behalf of University College Dublin – established a new university press in Dublin. In spite of its being on a very modest scale, UCD Press, through negotiations presided over by the university's Vice-President for Research, entered into a contract with the Stichting to undertake this massive project. Stephen Mennell became General Editor, and Richard Kilminster chairman of an Editorial Advisory Committee, whose other members were Eric Dunning, Johan Heilbron and Robert van Krieken. Sir Keith Thomas agreed to be 'Patron' of the Collected Works, and he read the proofs of each volume, intercepting a number of editorial mistakes along the way. Edmund Jephcott, who had translated *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* as far back as the late 1970s, and then several other major works, contracted to translate all of Elias's German writings that had not previously been available in English. Appendix I below lists all the texts that had not been published in English before their inclusion in the Collected Works, or, in a few cases, not previously published at all.

The Collected Works in English run to eighteen volumes, roughly corresponding to those of the *Gesammelte Schriften*. It was decided at an early stage not to attempt to translate Elias's German poetry. The series includes three volumes of essays (14, 15 and 16) edited by Richard Kilminster and Stephen Mennell, but some of the essays are found in other volumes: for example, Elias's essays on German Baroque poetry and on Watteau are included in volume 12, *Mozart and Other Essays on Courtly Art*. The editorial principles were not identical to those adopted by the German editors. In particular, the Suhrkamp series does not include any writings that Elias did not authorise for publication before his death. For example, the Watteau essay is included in the Collected Works, but not in the *Gesammelte Schriften*. The English editors even decided, at a very late stage, to include two important supplements in the final Index volume: the essay on Freud (2014a), left in a chaotic state at Elias's death but ingeniously edited by Marc Joly, and that on Lévy-Bruhl (2014b)

written in the 1960s; the reason was that the former had now been published in French and the latter had been critically cited by scholars who had read the typescript in Marbach; above all, both were important additions to the jigsaw puzzle of Elias's overall intellectual enterprise. The first two volumes of the Collected Works in English were published in 2006, and the final one in 2014.

## The Norbert Elias Prize

Curiously, when Elias was establishing the Stichting, the only specific idea he had for perpetuating his legacy was to establish a Norbert Elias Prize, and the statutes of the Stichting are mainly concerned with that. Fortunately – because his financial legacy would not have been big enough for the prize to compete with other famous international prizes – Hermann Korte persuaded him not to exclude other means of attaining the desired end.

In 1998, the Board of the Stichting announced the establishment of the Norbert Elias Prize, to be awarded every second year for a distinguished first book in Sociology published in Europe by a European author. (Later, the restriction to Europe was dropped.) The prize was to be awarded 'in commemoration of the sociologist Norbert Elias (1897–1990), whose writings, at once theoretical and empirical, boldly crossed disciplinary boundaries in the human sciences to develop a long-term perspective on the patterns of interdependence which human beings weave together'. At first, the Board of the Stichting acted as jury for the prize, and then it was constituted by previous winners, chaired for several years by Wilber van Vree.

Winners of the Elias Prize from its inception were:

1999 David Lepoutre, *Coeur de banlieue: Codes, rites et langages*

2001 Wilbert van Vree, *Meetings, Manners and Civilisation*

2003 Nikola Tietze, *Islamische Identitäten: Formen muslimischer Religiosität junger Männer in Deutschland und Frankreich*

2005 Jason Hughes, *Learning to Smoke: Tobacco Use in the West*

2007 Georgi Derlugian, *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*

2009 Elizabeth Bernstein, *Temporarily Yours: Intimacy, Authenticity, and the Commerce of Sex*.

2011 Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea*.

In 2012, however, the Stichting announced with regret the discontinuation of the prize. Three main reasons governed this decision. Primarily, reading and evaluating the steadily increasing number of books submitted had become too large a task both for the members of the jury and for the administrative capacities of the Foundation's modest office. Furthermore, a number of other prizes – such as the Philip Abrams Prize in Britain – have since been established for similar purposes. And also, the fact that the Prize had been won ever since 2005 by the same publisher had become an embarrassment (even if also a great tribute to the quality of University of Chicago Press's list!).

For a number of years from 2004 onwards the Stichting, in collaboration with the Goethe Institut and in recognition of Elias's love of African art, also funded a Norbert Elias Memorial Artists' Award for young Ghanaian artists. And since 2007, it has made grants to the Centre for Research into Sport and Society at the University of Chester (CCRSS) for the most distinguished Master's thesis submitted there each year.

## *Figurations* newsletter

In 1994, to coincide with the ISA World Congress of Sociology in Bielefeld, Stephen Mennell was asked to produce the first issue of *Figurations*, the twice-yearly newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation. [10] [#N10] He has edited it ever since, with the assistance successively of Aoife Rickard Diamond, Katie Liston and Barbara Górnicka. At first a very slim affair, containing principally the sessions planned for the Congress by the Ad Hoc Group on Figural Sociology, [11] [#N11] the newsletter gradually became a substantial 20–30-page publication, because it began to seek to cover as comprehensively as possible all the latest books and articles involving the use of Elias's ideas, as well as reports on conferences and other news. 'The only academic journal with a gossip column', boasted the editor. Gradually, pressure grew for it to become a real journal, but instead a slightly slimmed-down version of the newsletter has continued thus far to exist alongside the online journal *Human Figurations*.

## *Human Figurations* online journal

The desirability of a dedicated journal for figural studies had been discussed as far back as the Bielefeld World Congress, but the economics of setting up a new journal printed in the traditional way had seemed formidable. Besides, there was a certain fear that figuralists would risk becoming ghettoised in such a journal. Only at the Gothenburg World Congress in 2010 did the first (and so far only) 'business meeting' of figural sociologists from around the world adopt a proposal, presented by Dr. Katie Liston, for a new online journal.

Despite the contemporary squeeze impacting directly on the production of knowledge and the practice of the sciences, MPublishing – the hub of scholarly publishing at the University of Michigan that fosters a sustainable economic model for academic publishing – maintains a laudable and explicit commitment to the 'big picture' and to supporting efforts to maintain a long-term network of writers and thinkers. MPublishing also rails against the type of specialisation that prevails in the academic world today. This tends to narrow intellectual horizons and is moving towards an increasing fragmentation into ever more distinct specialities that communicate less and less with each other. The squeeze of increased financial and political pressures on academics and academic publishers comes in other varied guises and includes the 'impact' agenda and the increasing politicisation of academic research by governments. Sadly, the type of practice in which the academic thinks, speaks and acts more and more in performance terms is all too familiar. In this fashion, social scientists are increasingly prone to the *taking* rather than the *making* of the very problems they seek to examine. And not surprisingly, this agenda sits uncomfortably with critical scholarship on power, the sociology of knowledge, whose world-view counts and why, and with alternative practices that question knowledge production.

One of the guiding principles of *Human Figurations* is that history is not just 'background' but rather the very stuff out of which can be constructed a proper understanding of the human condition as we observe it today. Developments in many disciplines are pointing in the same intellectual direction, that is, away from a retreat into the present and towards the need for a longer-term perspective. Moreover, just as Elias used to



emphasise that there were no zero-points – no absolute beginnings – in the long-term processes he studied, so there are much older precursors for the broad perspectives on the study of humanity that he advocated. From among many, we may point to Cicero, who defended all those arts pertaining to humanity – *humanitas* – and to the whole development of human society from its earliest origins. For they had, in his words, ‘a common bond, and are joined among themselves as if by a common likeness’ (*Pro Archia* 1.2). The breadth of Cicero’s influence extended beyond the political and philosophical to the cosmological: Cicero’s writings were one source of Copernicus’s insight into the movement of the earth around the sun. Both Cicero and Elias sought, in different ways and at different historical junctures, to promote a systematic and liberal understanding of the human condition through a wide lens of integrated and cumulative knowledge. Conceived of in this spirit, *Human Figurations* has published 58 papers since January 2012.

*Human Figurations* can be found online at <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/> [<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/>]. Another figurational online journal is *Cambio*, founded and edited by Angela Perulli at the University of Florence, which publishes both in English and Italian (<http://www.cambio.unifi.it/CMpro-v-p-54.html> [<http://www.cambio.unifi.it/CMpro-v-p-54.html>]). Both journals aim to sustain interdisciplinary work on the human condition and social transformations.

## Conferences

Regular conferences have played an indispensable part not just in diffusing Elias’s intellectual legacy but also in fostering the research tradition that has grown out of it. That might be seen as a truism about academic life in general, but sociologists are also capable of self-examination, and one common observation is that the ‘figurational research network’ has always been open, egalitarian, un-hierarchical, and welcoming to newcomers. Perhaps this tradition of egalitarianism can be traced all the way back to the circle around Karl Mannheim in the early 1930s, but at any rate it is a characteristic not shared by every research network in the social sciences. The ‘figurational family’ as Cas Wouters called them – or to use Jason Hughes’s alternative term, the ‘figurati’ – enjoy each other’s company. One reason for their strong ‘we-feelings’ (Elias’s term) is that they have long sensed their approach to be at odds with so many aspects of the orthodox mainstream of sociology, epistemologically and methodologically.

Appendices II and III list the Elias-centred conferences held since 1990 – 68 of them, and the list is certainly incomplete. Included are a good many sessions organised as part of the World Congresses of the International Sociological Association and the International Institute of Sociology, or of the national sociological associations in various countries. Most of the conferences in the list, however, have been specifically organised by Eliasian scholars. In many cases, papers delivered at these conferences have been published in edited collections of essays, while others have been published in academic journals.

A notable set of conferences took place in 1997, the centenary of Elias’s birth, and 1998. And the series of Symposia on Civilising Processes held in Latin America is quite remarkable; they were first held in Brazil, under the influence notably of Ademir Gebara, but in recent years Argentina, Colombia and Mexico have also hosted conferences in the series.

The conference entitled ‘From the past to the present and towards possible futures’, which was held in Leicester in June 2014 to mark the completion of the publication of the Collected Works in English was notable in several respects: it attracted what was probably the largest number of participants of any of the many conferences, about 150 in all, from 23 countries; the participants included many who would not normally consider themselves to be ‘Eliasians’; and for its gender balance, including in Liz Stanley a ‘pro-Elias’ feminist opening speaker.

## Significant books and articles

To date, the *Figurations* newsletter has listed many dozens of books and hundreds of articles about Elias's theories or reporting research guided by those ideas. There is as yet no overall bibliography of books and articles emerging from the Elias research tradition, but it is hoped that one will be compiled in the near future, in a form that can be constantly added to online. It is very difficult to make a representative sample – certainly there are far too many journal articles from which to make a selection – but let us try to mention some representative books. Our selection is necessarily somewhat arbitrary.

First, one category of books consists of expositions of Elias's ideas. After the books by Korte and Mennell published in Elias's lifetime and already mentioned above, there have been many successors, written in many languages. Expositions in English have included those by Fletcher (1997), Van Krieken (1998), Kilminster (1998, 2007) and Dunning and Hughes (2013). Many of these books offer comparisons of Elias with such other contemporary theorists as Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault. Especially worthy of attention are the books by Kilminster, who – himself being expert in matters philosophical – has provocatively spoken of Elias's theory of knowledge and the sciences as presenting a 'post-philosophical sociology'. That is, he follows Elias in advocating that sociology and the other social sciences finally emancipate themselves from the thrall of the ancient and prestigious discipline of philosophy, and the presumptions of philosophers who seek to legislate on what is and what is not acceptable and valid knowledge about human society without themselves having any empirical expertise.

In French, there are outstanding studies by the cultural sociologist Nathalie Heinich (1997) and the intellectual historian Marc Joly (2012); in Italian books by Simonetta Tabboni (1993) and Angela Perulli (2012); in German by Annette Treibel (2008); in Czech by Jiří Šubr (1996); in Polish by Marta Bucholc (2013); in Japanese by Takashi Okumura (2001).

A second category of books consists of edited collections of articles not so much about Elias himself as about ways in which his ideas have been used and extended in further research on a wide variety of substantive topics. Some of these have arisen out of conferences, but in other cases the editors have commissioned chapters directly. Examples include Korte, ed. (1990), Loyal and Quilley, eds. (2004), Buschendorf, Franke and Voelz, eds. (2011), Gabriel and Mennell, eds. (2011), Landini and Dépelteau, eds. (2013), and Ohira, ed. (2014).

The third category of books, which Elias would no doubt have considered the most important, are major theoretical–empirical research studies that work out implications and applications of Elias's ideas and extend them into new areas. In Germany, Annette Treibel, Reinhard Blomert and Helmut Kuzmics have, since 2000, edited a whole series of such books, under the heading 'Figurationen: Schriften zur Zivilisations- und Prozesstheorie'. At the time of writing, eleven volumes have appeared. [\[12\]](#)[\[#N12\]](#) There is no such series in English, but a large number of studies have appeared in several of the major world languages. Choosing among them is invidious, and the following remarks are only indicative of general trends.

Johan Goudsblom's *Fire and Civilization* (1992) is especially notable in responding to Elias's concern in his last years with the study of *very* long-term processes in the development of human society. Goudsblom shows how the development of the human species-monopoly of the active use of fire involved the interweaving of biological evolution and social development extending back in time well before the emergence of the modern form of human, *Homo sapiens sapiens*. The capture and control of fire necessitated long-term civilising processes; gathering fuel for the fire, tending it, ensuring it did not endanger people, necessitated new forms of social organisation, foresight and control of fears. [\[13\]](#)[\[#N13\]](#)

David Garland's *Punishment and Modern Society: A Study in Social Theory* (1990) was highly significant in making Elias's work central to historical criminologists' studies of trends in crime. Steven Pinker was only the most prominent of many who have contributed to discussions of long-term trends in violence, in his best-selling book *The Better Angels of Our Nature* (2011), where he stressed Elias's influence on his thinking.

Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh, especially in his book *The Nuclear Revolution and the End of the Cold War: Forced Restraint* (1992) was the first scholar to begin the task of extending Elias's ideas into the field of International Relations. It has been continued more recently by Andrew Linklater (2011) in the first of a projected trilogy on *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*. Also worthy of mention in this context is Paul Kapteyn's *The Stateless Market* (1996), examining the European Union through Eliasian eyes.

Tending in a similar direction was Stephen Mennell's attempt (2007) to rebut the charge of 'Eurocentrism' often levelled at Elias, by showing how so many of the trends depicted in *On the Process of Civilisation* can be found equally in the development of the supposed 'exceptionalist' case of the United States of America. Also concerned with the link between habitus formation and the power structures of nation states is Helmut Kuzmics and Roland Axtmann's comparison of England and Austria, in their *Authority, State and National Character* (2007 [2000]).

Bram Kempers's *Painting, Power and Patronage: The Rise of the Professional Artist in Renaissance Italy* (1992 [1982]) deserves to be mentioned because, although Elias had a life-long interest in the history of art (and in Renaissance Italy), he produced no major work on the subject – a lacuna filled by Kempers's impressive study.

In a parallel way, Farhad Dalal's *Taking the Group Seriously* (1998) recognised Elias's role, back in the 1940s and early 1950s, in the foundation of Group Analysis as an important technique of psychotherapy. Dalal argued in effect for 'less Foulkes, more Elias' in Group Analytic theory, or, to put it another way, for a re-sociologisation of Group Analysis.

No survey of the development of Elias's intellectual legacy can be complete without mention of the work of Cas Wouters, culminating in his two influential books *Sex and Manners: Female Emancipation in the West, 1890–2000* (2004) and *Informalisation: Manners and Emotions since 1890* (2007). Elias's own interest in 'the changing balance of power between the sexes' has been taken up by Wouters, but also by several other figurational sociologists, such as Stefanie Ernst in her book *Geschlechterverhältnisse und Führungspositionen* (1999). The theory of informalisation is a major extension of the theory of civilising processes into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. And the continuity between the period studied by Elias and the present day is neatly demonstrated in Robert van Krieken's study of the contemporary cult of 'celebrity' (2012), in which he draws extensive analogies with the court society of the *ancien régime*.

Finally, mention must be made of the continuing influence of Elias in the field of the sociology of sport – the one area of sociology where the figurational approach has been described as 'hegemonic' or even as an orthodoxy against which alternative viewpoints are pitted. Such has been the significance of figurational contributions to the sociology of sport that any textbook necessarily includes engagement with this corpus of work. Tomlinson (2006), for instance, includes two excerpts from Elias and Dunning's *Quest for Excitement*, and Coakley and Pike (2009) make reference to the figurational contribution on theoretical and empirical grounds. Equally, the *Handbook of Sports Studies* (Coakley and Dunning 2000) and *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (Giulianotti 2004) incorporate theoretical chapters. As Liston (2011) has noted, figurational sociologists of sport have attained a distinctive degree of intergenerational continuity which diverges from the wider pattern of non-cumulative sociological thought and the associated tendency to reinvent the wheel. Such is the 'intellectual force' (Rojek 2008: 173) forged in this regard that they have been described as having 'attracted admirers and critics in almost equal measure' (Bairner 2008: 82). Perhaps what set Elias and

Dunning apart from their peers (most notably historians, Marxists, feminists and functionalists) in the 'early' academic study of sport was their prioritisation of social scientific knowledge about sport and leisure that was of a particular kind – that which was characterised by the desire for a greater degree of detachment and which served a primary purpose of generating reality-congruent knowledge about the problems under investigation. In other words, their work did not have a prior political or moral objective other than to understand sport and leisure. Their passion came in the first instance from the pursuit of knowledge. Conceived in these terms, *Quest for Excitement* was a pioneering text, and the authors' developmental interest in wider and more fundamental issues, above and beyond a series of apparently unconnected social and psychological data, was palpable. So too was their desire, as Elias expressed it much earlier, to pass on knowledge 'to younger men and women understanding and able enough to take it up and use it in their own way' (1952, cited in *Figurations*, No. 22, 2004). It is this developmental focus which has, perhaps, exercised earlier generations of figurational sociologists more, while younger generations have certainly strengthened the present-centred focus and applicability of the paradigm, though not to the detriment of maintaining developmental sensitivities – that is, without ignoring the impact of 'the past' on 'the present'. In this connection, figurational studies in the sociology of sport and leisure (at least in the Atlantic Isles) have so far been mainly concerned with a variety of problem areas (see Liston 2011 for a summary). The theory of civilising processes has also been applied in various ways to sports and leisure forms throughout the world. For example, Ohira's (2009) edited collection exemplifies Japanese applications of the figurational tradition in research on long distance relay running (*evident*) and baseball (*yakya*) while, in Norway, Skille and Waddington (2006) have investigated the success of 'alternative' sport and physical activities provided by the Sports City Programme. The Lusophone world has also begun to utilise the figurational approach (see, for example, Pinheiro 2006; Gebara 2004). This perceived orthodoxy has led to the kinds of debates between figurational sociologists of sports and their critics that are certainly more than a sideshow to readers. Indeed, the role played by figurational researchers of sport in challenging the differentiation and proliferation of this sub-discipline is a principal example of 'good' theoretical practice. Without taking refuge in impenetrable and theoretical obliqueness, they have sought a 'bold scale of ambition' in their theoretical enterprise while at the same time always acknowledging that 'their work should be judged as no more than an early stage in the scientific understanding of the sports process' (Rojek 2008: 173) – that is to say, this corpus of work should be viewed as a 'preliminary phase of long-term inter-generational labour' (Rojek 2008:174). Perhaps the most enduring legacy to date of the corpus of work conducted by figurational sociologists of sport is that, above all, it has enhanced Elias and Dunning's refutation of the claim that 'physical' phenomena like sport and leisure were of lower value than intellectual activities. Rather, Elias's conceptualisation of human beings 'in the round' – that is, in terms of human movement, emotions, thought and rationality – laid the basis for the development of a theoretical paradigm which has attained notable prominence in the sociology of sport and leisure around the world.

## Geographical spread, and exceptions

We are aware that in this survey, the Anglophone academic world has been overrepresented. German, French, Dutch, Italian, Japanese, Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American scholars would all be able to add far more detail about the mark made by Elias's legacy in their own languages.

There is one strikingly underpopulated region in the map of social scientists who can be described as intellectual followers of Norbert Elias: the United States of America. Despite the advocacy of sociologists such as Thomas Scheff, Doyle McCarthy and Barbara Walters, Elias does not yet seem to be a major figure in American sociology. That may, just now in the second decade of the twenty-first century, be starting to

change. Yet Steven Pinker was still able to assert that 'Norbert Elias is the most important thinker you have never heard of' (2011: 59n)! The situation in the USA is all the more interesting in light of the fact that there are several prominent Eliasians in Canadian universities just over the northern border. One may speculate about the reasons for this. American sociology is, and has long been, marked by what Elias called 'the retreat of sociologists into the present', and by lucrative research contracts for the gathering of quantitative data, often of a policy-relevant type. Perhaps, too, the intense individualism of American culture makes it difficult for US sociologists to overcome *homo clausus* and old chicken-and-egg debates about 'agency' and 'structure'. Moreover, American sociology has been marked for a long time by a certain squeamishness in dealing with the subject that is absolutely central to all realistic thinking in sociology: power ratios or imbalances. But the wittiest explanation was given by Alan Sica in an email to Chris Rojek, in which he summed up why American sociologists don't make much of Elias:

The reason Americans don't take to Elias is that he writes about European historical and cultural change and American sociologists don't feel comfortable with that sort of thing, except for [Jack] Goldstone and that small lot; and because he is theoretically very adventurous and synthetic, and they don't go for that; and because he trashed Parsons, who many of them liked back in the day; and because he could be mistaken for a closet Freudian, which they don't like; and because he brings up really obnoxious qualities of humankind, which they particularly don't like; and because he wrote a helluva lot of stuff, which takes a long time to read, they don't have time; and because 'figuration' is a word that has a distinctly effete connotations in this country, and sounds like art history (Quoted in Dunning and Hughes 2013: 44)

One characteristic of American sociologists' perceptions of Elias's ideas, in those instances where they do cite him, is the trivialising identification of his theory of civilising processes with what they call 'civility' – in the banal everyday sense of people being polite to each other. In the USA, the second volume of *The Civilizing Process* was even published under the unauthorised and misleading title *Power and Civility*. To think of Elias as being fundamentally concerned with 'civility' as a static and (in Alfred Schütz's sense) first-order concept is a gross error.

## Conclusion

For many of those who knew Elias personally, it may seem hard to believe it has already been twenty-five years since his death. But what is reassuring, is the fact that all the people he inspired and touched with his work and ingenuity during his lifetime, have managed to stay together within his tradition, and more importantly build and develop his legacy together with the worldwide network of researchers and enthusiasts. His works look beyond the obvious, always with a wide lens perspective, which for some made him look extravagant, or bold and brilliant for others. He shifted what might have been considered a mere 'background' to the 'forefront'. The mundane and taken for granted elements of our everyday life gain power and new meaning in front of our eyes. Through the positioning of the fork, the way we sleep or bathe, he showed the importance of our past in order to grasp the present and the future. He was among the first who considered and investigated our history and used it as a key to understanding of the human condition. He showed humanity in a much bigger picture than ever before. Among many other things, Elias changed the way we look at history, violence, sport and mechanisms behind social inequalities. During the past twenty five years his intellectual legacy was discovered and continues to be rediscovered today. He laid foundations to many scholarly works which continue to research the problems of violence, sexuality, food, why we laugh, or

experience the death of our loved ones. Despite of being at odds with many postulates of mainstream sociology, the figurational network continues to grow. Thanks to the sense of openness of the 'figurational family', each year during various conferences and workshops, more Eliasian enthusiasts are welcomed. Despite the 'number-crunching' tendencies of the mainstream sociology today, which on many occasions has left figurational sociology in the position of an 'outsider', the Eliasian tradition continues to diffuse. Elias's life spanned two centuries, but his intellectual legacy has stretched it to three. The 'quest for Elias' carries on.

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## Endnotes

1. English text slightly modified. [↗ \[#N1-ptri\]](#)
2. Andrew Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress' was one of Elias's favourite poems, which he often quoted. [↗ \[#N2-ptri\]](#)
3. Dieter Claessens (1921–97), Professor of Sociology, University of Münster 1962–67, Free University of Berlin 1967–86. During his visit to Münster, Elias met Hermann Korte, an *Assistant* to Claessens who was assigned to Elias as his postgraduate student assistant, and who went on to play a key part in promoting Elias's work ever since. Korte (1988: 185) relates a dispiriting episode in the 1964 conference. Elias's paper, on 'Group charisma and group disgrace' (for an excerpt, see Elias 2009b) had been scheduled towards the end of a session and, because earlier speakers had overrun their allotted time, the chairman proposed that Elias's paper be taken as read – noted, or 'laid on the table' – rather than actually delivered. Dieter Claessens rose to protest vehemently at this grave discourtesy to a German exile scholar who had come such a distance to take part in the conference. [↗ \[#N3-ptri\]](#)
4. The titles given here are those adopted for the volumes of the Collected Works in English. *The Loneliness of the Dying*, *Humana Conditio*, *The Society of Individuals* and *Studies on the Germans* and *Mozart* were all first published in German. *An Essay on Time*, even though Elias wrote it in English, appeared first in Dutch and then German. Of the two most substantial items in *Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections*, one was first published in Dutch and the other in German. For details, see the editors' Notes on the text in the respective volumes of the Collected Works. [↗ \[#N4-ptri\]](#)
5. 'Slightly disingenuous' because it is clear that Elias's ambition was not so modest: he hoped to establish a 'central theory' for the social sciences in general. [↗ \[#N5-ptri\]](#)
6. For a comprehensive bibliography of the work of the Amsterdam School up to shortly before Elias's death, see Kranendonk (1990). [↗ \[#N6-ptri\]](#)
7. For an account of Elias's views about these publications, see Mennell (2006). [↗ \[#N7-ptri\]](#)
8. Professional photographs by Gerhard Holzmann of some of the notable items in the collection can be seen at <http://spinroot.com/elias/index.html> [<http://spinroot.com/elias/index.html>]. Some impression of the collection in Elias's apartment during his lifetime can be found at <http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/gallery/main.php> [<http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/gallery/main.php>]. [↗ \[#N8-ptri\]](#)

9. One problem remains: the continued availability of older and usually cheaper editions undermines sales of the newer, more scholarly collected works editions. ♣. [#N9-ptri]
10. All the back issues can be found online at, and downloaded from, [www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/figurations.php](http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/figurations.php) [http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/figurations.php] ♣. [#N10-ptri]
11. Within the ISA, an Ad Hoc Group is the lowest form of organisational life, created from scratch at each World Congress. Nevertheless, the figurationists organised their own sessions at every World Congress since 1994, with the exception of that held in Durban in 2006. They are now more formally incorporated into Working Group 02, Historical and Comparative Sociology, of which Stephen Mennell is currently President and Robert van Krieken Vice-President. The difficulty of institutionalising this approach to sociology is encapsulated in the question once posed by the ISA Secretariat: 'Yes, but *what* exactly do you study?' Apparently the answer 'everything' was found incomprehensible. ♣. [#N11-ptri]
12. Thanks to a sequence of takeovers among German publishers, the series has appeared under the imprints of Leske + Budrich (2000–4), Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften (2004–13), and Springer VS since 2013. See Treibel, Kuzmics and Blomert, eds (2000); Anders (2000); Hinz (2002); Reicher (2003); Kunze (2005); Gleichmann (2006); Kuzmics and Axtmann (2007); Barzantny (2008); Dorner-Hörig (2014); Frerichs (2014); Dörfelt-Mathey (2015). ♣. [#N12-ptri]
13. Goudsblom has continued to publish on very long-term processes in other books, including Aarts, Goudsblom et al. (1995), De Vries and Goudsblom (2002) and Goudsblom (2015). ♣. [#N13-ptri]

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## Appendix I: Collected Works of Norbert Elias: Essays and chapters not previously published in English

For the title and contents pages of all 18 volumes, see  
<http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/foundation/works.php>  
[\[http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/foundation/works.php\]](http://www.norberteliasfoundation.nl/foundation/works.php)

The great majority of the items in the following list were translated from German for the Collected Works by Edmund Jephcott. A few items, marked with an asterisk, have not previously been published in any language.

Besides those listed here, many other essays – especially in volumes 14, 15 and 16 – although previously published, were originally scattered across many journals, some of them obscure or now defunct, so that they are not easy to locate other than in the Collected Works.

### Volume

1 *Early Writings*

### Essay/Chapter

1 Three-day excursion to the Riesengebirge

2 Seeing in nature

3 Idea and individual: A critical investigation of the concept of history

4 Idea and individual: A contribution to the philosophy of history

5 Anecdotes

	6 Contribution to the debate on Karl Mannheim: The importance of competition in the intellectual sphere
	7 On primitive art
	Appendix: The genesis of the modern natural sciences
4 <i>The Established and the Outsiders</i>	Further aspects of established–outsider relations: the Maycomb model
5 <i>What is Sociology?</i>	7 Karl Marx as sociologist and political ideologist
	8 The sociogenesis of the concept of ‘society’ as the subject matter of sociology
6 <i>The Loneliness of the Dying and Humana Conditio</i>	<i>Humana Conditio: Observations on the Development of Humanity on the Fortieth Anniversary of the End of a War (8 May 1985)</i> [whole book]
7 <i>Quest for Excitement</i>	5 The genesis of sport as a sociological problem, part 2
10 <i>Mozart and Other Essays on Courtly Art</i>	The fate of German baroque poetry Watteau’s ‘Pilgrimage to the island of love’
14 <i>Essays I: On the Sociology of Knowledge and the Sciences</i>	3 On nature
	8 On the creed of a nominalist: observations on Popper’s <i>The Logic of Scientific Discovery</i>
	9 Science or sciences? Contribution to a debate with reality-blind philosophers
	10 Thomas More’s critique of the state: with some thoughts on a definition of the concept to utopia
	11 Thomas More and ‘Utopia’
15 <i>Essays II: On Civilising Processes, State Formation and National Identity</i>	1 Civilisation
	2 What I mean by civilisation: reply to Hans-Peter Duerr
	4 <i>L’espace privé</i> – ‘private space’ or ‘private room’?
	5 Foreword to Horst-Volker Krumrey, <i>Entwicklungsstrukturen von Verhaltensstandarden</i>
	7 Power and civilisation
	10 Afterword to Meike Behrmann and Carmine Abate, <i>Die Germanesi</i>
	12 The charismatic leader
	15 Public opinion in Britain
	16 National peculiarities of British public opinion
	17 Fear of death
	18 Has hope a future?
16 <i>Essays III: On Sociology and the Humanities</i>	1 Figuration
	2 Social processes
	4 Social process models on multiple levels
	8 Address on Adorno: respect and critique

	9 Sociology in danger: the case for the reorientation of a discipline
	10 A diagnosis of present-day sociology
	12 The concept of everyday life
	13 The story of the shoelaces
	14 Social anxieties
	17 Civilisation and psychosomatics
	19 Football in the process of civilisation
	20 Pigeon racing *
	22 Stages of African art, social and visual
	23 Some remarks on the problem of work
	26 'Where two come together in lawful matrimony ...'
	27 Foreword to <i>Women Torn Two Ways</i> , by Bram van Stolk and Cas Wouters
	28 Renate Rubinstein
17 <i>Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections</i>	3 'Sociology ... done in the right way' (1984–5) * Interview with Johan Heilbron
	6 Sociology as the history of manners(1978) Interview with Heiko Ernst
	7 Norbert Elias: How human beings civilise themselves (1981) Interview with Didier Eribon
	9 The Janus face of states (1982) * Interview with Norbert Elias by Peter Ludes, Frank Adler and Paul Piccone
	10 'We are the late barbarians' (1988) Interview with Nikolaus Von Festenberg and Marion Schreiber
	11 'We need more empathy for the human difficulties of the process of civilisation' (1989) Interview with Ulfried Geuter
	12 'Perhaps I have had something to say that will have a future' (1989) Interview with Wolfgang Engler
	13 A 'Jewish Portrait' (1989) Interview with Helinde Koebl
	Appendix II On re-reading my doctoral dissertation
18 <i>Supplements and Index to the Collected Works</i>	1 Freud's concept of society and beyond it
	2 Lucien Lévy-Bruhl and 'the question of the logical unity of humankind' *

## Appendix II: List of Elias Conferences since 1990

See Appendix III for separate list of the Latin American series of conferences.

- 1991 Memorial Conference for Norbert Elias (*Gedenktagung für Norbert Elias*)  
*Essen University, 16–19 October 1991*
- 1994 Norbert Elias and Political Analysis  
*Paris, 7–8 April 1994*

- Organised by Bernard Lacroix and Alain Garrigou, Groupe d'analyse politique, Université de Paris X Nanterre.
- 
- 1994 Zivilisationstheorien und Destruktivitätsgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts [The Theory of Civilising Processes and the History of Destructiveness in the Twentieth Century] *Hamburg Institut für Sozialforschung, 1994*
- 
- 1994 XIII World Congress of the International Sociological Association *Bielefeld, 18–24 July 1994*  
Five Ad hoc sessions on Figural Sociology took place during the congress.
- 
- 1995 Civilisation and Decivilisation: Recent Trends in Research *Newman House, Dublin, 6–7 April 1995*  
Stephen Mennell gave his Inaugural Lecture in the Chair of Sociology at University College Dublin on 6 April 1995, entitled *Civilisation and Decivilisation, Civil Society and Violence*, and this small workshop took place the following day.
- 
- 1995 The Elias Paradigm and Social Science History *Round table at Annual Conference of the Social Science History Association (SSHA), Chicago, November 1995*
- 
- 1997 Interdependencies: First North American Norbert Elias Conference *University of British Columbia, Vancouver, March 20–22 1997*
- 
- 1997 The Construction of the Parliamentary State – Elias Centenary Conference *Paris, 15–16 May 1997*  
Organised by Bernard Lacroix and Alain Garrigou, Groupe d'analyse politique, Université de Paris X Nanterre.
- 
- 1997 Elias Foundation Centenary Conference *Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung Bielefeld, 20–22 June 1997*
- 
- 1997 Elias Centenary Session at the ASA, *Toronto, 9–13 August 1997*.  
Session organised by Jorge Arditi and Stephen Mennell at the American Sociological Association 1997 Annual Meeting in Toronto.
- 
- 1997 Norbert Elias Student Conference *Belfast, 27 November 1997*  
Organised by Ken Bishop and sponsored by the Departments of Sociology, Queen's University Belfast and University of Ulster.
- 
- 1997 Organized Violence: The Formation and Breakdown of Monopolies of Force – Conditions and Consequences. Norbert Elias Centenary Conference *Amsterdam, 18–20 December 1997*
- 
- 1998 Early Modern History and The 'Civilising Process' *University of Leicester, 14–16 April 1998*  
This conference marked the launch of the Centre for Early-Modern History at the University of Leicester
- 
- 1998 Sommes-Nous Civilisés? – Bilan du XX Siècle *Société des Gens de Lettres, Paris, 10 April 1998*.  
Organised by Bernard Lacroix and Alain Garrigou, Groupe d'analyse politique, Université de Paris X Nanterre.
- 
- 1998 Norbert Elias and the Social Sciences at the End of the Twentieth Century *International Symposium in Bucaramanga, Colombia, 24–26 June 1998*  
Organised by Professor Vera Weiler.
- 
- 1998 ISA World Congress of Sociology *Montreal 26 July–1 August 1998*  
The sessions of the Ad Hoc Group on Figural Sociology took place over two afternoons.
- 
- 1999 Civilising and Decivilising Processes *Paris, 22–23 October 1999*  
Organised by Bernard Lacroix and Alain Garrigou, Groupe d'analyse politique, Université de Paris X Nanterre.
- 
- 1999 Annual Meeting, European Sociological Association: Will Europe Work? *Amsterdam, 18–21 August 1999*  
The participants in the *Figural Studies* sessions included at least one person from every continent.
- 
- 1999 Norbert Elias in Wrocław/Breslau *Wrocław University – Collegium Antropologicum, 24–25 September 1999*.

At the beginning of this conference, a plaque in German, English and Polish was unveiled on the wall of Elias's childhood home in Wrocław.

- 
- 1999 Norbert Elias: A Non-Normative Sociology  
*Université de Paris VII – Denis Diderot, 22–23 October, 1999*  
Organised by Simonetta Tabboni.
- 
- 2000 International Conference: Norbert Elias and Social Anthropology  
*French Society of Ethnology and University of Metz (France), 21–22 September 2000*  
Organised by Sophie Chevalier and Jean-Michel Privat, on behalf of the Association Française d'Ethnologie et d'Anthropologie.
- 
- 2000 Colloque International Norbert Elias: Issues in the Theory of Civilising Processes  
*Université de Haute Bretagne – Rennes II, 13–14 October 2000*
- 
- 2002 British Sociological Association Annual Conference  
*University of Leicester, 25–27 March 2002*  
Figurational stream title: *'Developing Elias: Figurational Sociology – research and debates'*
- 
- 2002 International Sociological Association XV World Congress of Sociology  
*Brisbane, Australia, 8–13 July 2002*  
Two sessions on figurational sociology were organised by Robert van Krieken.
- 
- 2003 Court Society and Civilising Process: Norbert Elias's Work in Interdisciplinary Perspective  
*1–3 May 2003, Akademie der Diözese Rottenburg–Stuttgart, Stuttgart–Hohenheim*  
This conference marked the publication by Suhrkamp of the new edition of *Die höfische Gesellschaft* (Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 2).
- 
- 2005 Journée d'études: Le corps et la santé: lieux d'avènement d'un 'individu auto-contrôlé' ? Dialogues autour de Norbert Elias (Towards widespread self-regulation of health, body and living? Dialogues in relation to Norbert Elias)  
*Maison des Sciences de l'Homme Paris Nord, 9 June 2005*  
Organised by Dominique Memmi.
- 
- 2005 37th World Congress of the International Institute of Sociology  
*Stockholm, Sweden, 5–9 July, 2005*  
Session entitled 'New Directions in Figurational Sociology'.
- 
- 2006 Elias in the Twenty-First Century: Call for Papers  
*A three-day residential conference 10–12 April 2006, Beaumont Hall at the University of Leicester, UK*  
Organised by Anne Witz and Jason Hughes.
- 
- 2007 Civilising and Decivilising Processes: A Figurational Approach to American Studies  
*Johann Wolfgang Goethe Universität Frankfurt, 22–24 November, 2007*  
Organised by Professor Dr Christa Buschendorf.
- 
- 2007 The Art of Counterpoint: Group Analysis as a Model for the Civilising of Conflict  
*Conference of the Seminar for Group Analysis, Zürich, 23–25 February 2007*  
Led by Professor Dr Hans-Peter Waldhoff.
- 
- 2007 Social Science History Association,  
*15–18 November 2007, Palmer House Hilton, Chicago*  
Session on 'Comparative studies and the theory of civilising processes'
- 
- 2008 Conference celebrating the completion of the publication of the Gesammelte Schriften of Norbert Elias in 19 volumes  
*Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach am Neckar, 14–15 September 2008*  
The Friday was dedicated to reminiscences of Elias and his work and life, while the Saturday focused on recent research by young sociologists in Elias's sociological tradition.
- 
- 2008 Selbstregulierung oder Selbstsorge – Zur Soziologie des Subjekts im 21. Jahrhundert / Control or Care of the Self – the Sociology of the Subject in the Twenty-First Century  
*University of Hamburg on 3–5 July 2008*  
Organised by Dr Stefanie Ernst.
- 
- 2008 International Institute of Sociology (IIS) 38th World Congress of Sociology *Budapest, 26–30 June 2008*  
Sessions on figurational sociology.
- 
- 2008 Zur Genealogie des Zivilisationsprozesses: Friedrich Nietzsche und Norbert Elias  
*Humboldt University, Berlin, 26–7 September, 2008.*  
Sponsored by the Departments of Philosophy, Humboldt University and Greifswald University.
-



- 2009 Fire in Human Evolution, Human History, and Human Society  
*KNAW Symposium, Amsterdam, 18 December, 2009*  
Organised by Johan Goudsblom
- 2010 Globalisation and Civilisation in International Relations: Towards New Models of Human Interdependence  
*Royal Irish Academy and University College Dublin, 9–10 April 2010*  
Associated with Robert van Krieken's Inaugural Lecture as Professor of Sociology at UCD, and Stephen Mennell's retirement from the same chair.
- 2010 XVII ISA World Congress of Sociology  
*Göteborg, Sweden, 11–17 July 2010*  
ISA–RC20 Comparative Sociology – Figurational Sociology Working Group. Sessions included one on the Congress Plenary Theme of Violence and War
- 2009 Beyond dichotomous thinking: the society of individuals – The legacy and continuing relevance of Norbert Elias's sociology  
*University of Florence, 7–9 October, 2009*  
Organised by Angela Perulli and Paolo Giovannini
- 2011 British Sociological Association 60th Anniversary Conference 2011  
London School of Economics, 6–8 April 2011  
*Norbert Elias in British Sociology*  
A special session of 'Norbert Elias in British Sociology' was convened by Katie Liston and Jonathan Fletcher
- 2011 New Issues in Process Sociology  
*Wissenschafts Zentrum Berlin, 5 December 2011*  
Organised by Reinhard Blomert and Steve Loyal
- 2011 Norbert Elias, Emotional Styles and Historical Change  
*University of Adelaide 14–15 June, 2011*  
An Interdisciplinary Collaboratory – ARC Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions, Change Program, University of Adelaide
- 2012 Norbert Elias and Figurational Sociology: Prospects for the Future  
*Copenhagen. 2–4 April 2012*  
Organised by Lars-Bo Kaspersen
- 2012 Reinventing Norbert Elias: for an open sociology  
*Amsterdam, 22–23 June 2012*  
Organised by Giseline Kuipers, Rineke van Daalen et al.
- 2013 Habitus, War and Civilisation  
*Department of Sociology, University of Graz, 25–27 April 2013*  
Conference in honour of Professor Helmut Kuzmics on his retirement.
- 2013 Civilising Bodies: Literature, rhetoric, and image, 1700 to the present day  
*25–26 April 2013, University of Exeter*
- 2013 The civilising offensive (Het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief): prospects for future understanding, or an obsolete concept?  
*Thursday 24th October 2013, Sheffield Hallam University*
- 2013 Workshop on Eliasian Perspectives on Early Childhood  
*School of Management, University of Leicester, 28 November 2013*
- 2014 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*  
Conference to mark the completion of publication by UCD Press of the Collected Works of Norbert Elias in 18 volumes. Organised by John Goodwin and Jason Hughes.
- 2014 A civilised evening with Norbert Elias: everything you always wanted to know about Eliasian sociology but didn't dare to ask about  
*University of Edinburgh, 20 February 2014*  
Organised by Liz Stanley, Emilia Sereva, and Jacques Human.
- 2014 Norbert Elias et l'histoire: Journée d'étude  
*Salle Julien Gracq, Lycée Henri IV, 23 rue Clovis 75005 Paris*  
*4 April 2014*  
Organised by Marc Joly, Quentin Déluermoz et al.

2015 Workshop on Sports, Leisure and Culture in the works of Norbert Elias: Connecting with Unpublished Material  
*Regionalzentrum Frankfurt der Fern Universität Hagen, Frankfurt am Main, 9–10 April 2015*  
 Organised by Jan Haut, Paddy Dolan, Dieter Reicher, Raúl Sánchez García

## Appendix III: The Latin American Series of Conferences on Civilising Processes

N.	Conference	Year	General Theme	Promotion	City /State/ Country
I	Symposium on the Civilizing Process and Violence in the Football	1996	----	State University of Campinas UNICAMP	Campinas State of São Paulo Brazil
II	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	1997	Culture, Sport and Leisure	State University of Campinas UNICAMP	Campinas State of São Paulo Brazil
III	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	1998	Education, History and Leisure	Methodist University of Piracicaba UNIMEP	Piracicaba State of São Paulo Brazil
IV	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	1999	----	State University of Campinas UNICAMP	Campinas State of São Paulo Brazil
V	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2000	The thought of Norbert Elias	Federal University of Paraná UFPR	Curitiba State of Paraná Brazil
VI	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2001	History, Education and Culture	Paulista State University UNESP	Assis State of São Paulo Brazil
VII	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2003	History, Civilization and Education	Methodist University of Piracicaba UNIMEP	Piracicaba State of São Paulo Brazil
VIII	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2004	Civilizing Process, History and Education	Federal University of João Pessoa UFPB	João Pessoa State of João Pessoa Brazil
IX	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2005	Civilization and Technology	Federal Technological University of Paraná UTFPR	Ponta Grossa State of Paraná Brazil
X	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2007	Sociability and emotions	State University of Campinas UNICAMP	Campinas State of São Paulo Brazil
XI	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2008	Civilization, Culture and Institutions	University of Buenos Aires UBA	Buenos Aires Argentina
XII	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2009	Civilization and contemporaneity	Federal University of Pernambuco UFPE/FUNDAJ	Recife State of Pernambuco Brazil

XIII	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2010	----	National University of Colombia UNAL	Bogotá Colombia
XIV	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2012	Civility, Frontier and Diversity	Federal University of Grande Dourados UFGD	Dourados State of Mato Grosso do Sul Brazil
XV	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2014	Legacy of Norbert Elias	National Autonomous University of Mexico UNAM	Mexico city Federal District Mexico
XVI	Civilizing Processes International Symposium	2016		Federal University of Espírito Santo UFES	Vitória State of Espírito Santo Brazil

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