

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

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■ FIGURATIONS UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

Barbara Górnicka has been appointed Managing Editor of *Figurations*, and the newsletter also has a brand-new email address: figurations@norberteliasfoundation.nl

All contributions to, and correspondence about, *Figurations* should henceforth be sent to the above address.

Stephen Mennell will continue as overall Editor of the newsletter, with Katie Liston as Associate Editor (although Katie now has principal responsibility for the new online journal *Human Figurations* – humanfigurations@me.com). Barbara will, however, now manage the newsletter.

Barbara is a postgraduate student at University College Dublin, where (as participants in the recent conference in Copenhagen will know), she is writing a thesis on nudism and the problem of nakedness.

The newsletter will henceforth be published in January and July each year (instead of December and June as hitherto).

■ HUMAN FIGURATIONS

By the time you are reading this issue of the newsletter, the first two issues of the new online journal *Human Figurations* will have appeared. (We are resigned to the confusion that will arise between *Figurations*, the newsletter, and *Human Figurations*, the journal.) The journal is published by MPublishing at the University of Minnesota, and sponsored by the Norbert Elias Foundation. You can find the (and submit articles online) journal at:

<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/>

The first issue, published in January 2012, contains articles by distinguished contributors from many disciplines, and is by way of a manifesto for the study of long-term processes. The second issue is on the theme of Sociology and International Relations, and contains revised versions of many of the papers presented at the conference in Dublin in 2010 (see *Figurations* 33). The third issue, to appear in January 2013 is the first 'open issue', and readers of the newsletter are urged to submit contributions

The contents of the first two issues are:
Issue 1 – January 2012

Editor's Introduction: Long-term perspectives on the human condition
Katie Liston

Norbert Elias and the social history of knowledge
Peter Burke

Elias and/or Adorno – a short personal reflection and perspective from a musicologist
Olle Edström

Long-Term Patterns of Change in Human Interconnectedness: A View from International Relations
Andrew Linklater

European body cultures and the making of the modern world: zones of prestige and established-outsider relations
Joseph Maguire

Elias in the Footsteps of Hobbes?
Gary Wickham and Barbara Evers

Energy and Civilisation
Johan Goudsblom

Civilising Earth
Peter Westbroek

Book Reviews

Issue 2 – July 2012

Norbert Elias and the Human Condition
Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh
The Taming of Economic Aristocracies
Reinhard Blomert

Politics in a World of Civilizations: Long-Term Perspectives on Relations Between Peoples
Brett Bowden

Viewing the Development of Human Society from Asia
Shogo Suzuki

Cultures of Anarchy as Figurations: Reflections on Wendt, Elias and the English School
Aurélie Lacassagne

Figurational Sociology and the Democratic Peace: Holy Allies and Liberal Threats
Bernd Bucher

About Post-National Integration in Norbert Elias's Work: Towards a Socio-Historical Approach
Florence Delmotte

Reconfiguring Elias: Historical Sociology, the English School and the Challenge of International Relations
John Hobson

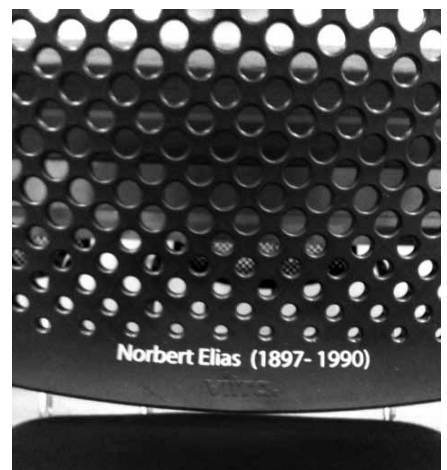
Realism and Reality Congruence: Sociology and International Relations
Stephen Mennell

■ PEOPLE

- Giseline Kuipers has been appointed to a full Professorship at the University of Amsterdam. In consequence she will be vacating the part-time Norbert Elias Chair, which she held at the Erasmus University Rotterdam, and a new appointment to that will be made in due course.
- Stefanie Ernst has been appointed Professor at the University of Münster, under the rubric 'Sociology: Work and Knowledge'.
- After a spell working as a freelance research consultant, John Lever has been appointed to a post back on his old department at the University of Cardiff.
- On 16 May 2012, Alex Laws gave his inaugural lecture as Professor of Sociology, University of Abertay, Dundee, Scotland, on 'The end of civilisation as we know it? Symbolic violence and the de-civilising process'. Alex reports that 'there was a good turnout, ... followed by a convivial reception with much talk about this Elias guy. Some controversy could have been anticipated, because Alex's lecture concluded with

a long discussion of 'Where is Scotland going?'

- Andrew Stebbins, who wrote a notable PhD thesis on 'The Chinese Civilising Process: Eliasian thought as an effective analytical tool for the Chinese cultural context' (see *Figurations* 32) at Murdoch University, Perth WA, has been appointed to a post at Mount Vernon Nazarene University in Ohio, and will be moving back from Australia to his native America in July 2012.
- On three Saturday mornings from January to May, Bernard Lacroix and Arnaud Skornicki (Nanterre) ran open seminars in the Marais area of Paris at under the title 'Norbert Elias au travail'.
- Georgi Derluguian (Northwestern University) has been hugely enjoying a spell teaching in Abu Dhabi at New York University's satellite campus there.
- Gordon Fyfe reports a University of Leicester Library scheme under which, for a small donation to library funds, a chair can be dedicated to a named person. Gordon and Chris Hughes have dedicated chairs to the memory of Norbert Elias (see photograph) and to Ilya Neustadt. There is no reason why multiple chairs cannot be dedicated to the same person, so if anyone else would like to dedicate a chair, they should contact the library: library@leicester.ac.uk.



■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Brett Bowden wins Norbert Elias Prize 2011

The Norbert Elias Prize is awarded every two years for the best first book by an author in sociology or closely cognate fields. For the 2011 prize, for a book published in 2009–10, the jury, consisting of Jason Hughes, Elizabeth Bernstein and Wilbert van Vree, chose Brett Bowden's book *The Empire of Civilization: The Evolution of an Imperial Idea* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

The jury's judgment reads as follows: Thematically pertinent and theoretically ambitious, Brett Bowden's *The Empire of Civilization* is a sweeping history of the present that interrogates the role of civilisational discourses in the making of modern imperial sensibilities. Broad in scope and reach, the book engages with the fields of International Relations, intellectual history, and social and political theory to produce an account that is highly relevant both to the historical and to the contemporary political field. His discussions of 'revived imperialisms', including the post-9/11 wars on terror and new forms of humanitarian and economic imperialism are particularly careful and nuanced. Overall, we found this book to be fascinating, insightful, and creative.

Bowden in fact departs from Elias's analysis in important respects through a focus on the conscious 'proselytising crusades' undertaken in the name of civilisation; we might think of these as akin to Elias's notion of 'civilising offensives'. In this respect, Bowden gives much greater prominence to the idea of civilisation as an amulet, a standard, and one that has been mobilised, often in the course of brutal conquest, to legitimise conscious campaigns to 'civilise' what are considered to be 'primitive' 'others'. 'Civilisation', then, is intimately interrelated with the social conditions within which the idea takes form in a dual manner. That is firstly because it expresses the self-consciousness of particular (Western) peoples in particular periods; and secondly,

because, according to Bowden, it is in itself 'performative', in the sense of being historically 'implicated' in Western triumphalism, imperialism and colonialism. For Bowden, a civilising process points less to long-term set of largely blind processes involving, simultaneously, interrelated process of state formation and shifting standards of behaviour, and more to the 'evolution of an idea' that has in itself engendered social change. To this end, we found the book overly rationalistic in terms of its overall arguments, but nonetheless often rich in terms of its analysis – particularly in its illustration of how standards become enshrined in specific watchwords.

This socio-historical research into the meaning and use of the concept 'civilisation' (and related words such as 'modernisation', 'development', 'progress', 'democracy') demonstrates that this family of words represents superiority feelings of Western societies with regard to non-western societies since early-modern times until today.

This is a wide-ranging, ambitious, well-written and insightful book. However, Bowden could have made better use of the sociological concept of civilisation developed by Norbert Elias. For instance, his analysis would have gained value if, in explaining the historical changes in the concept of civilisation, he had referred to the more embracing and 'blind', long-term processes of social differentiation and integration and trans-generational behavioural change.

Brett Bowden is Associate Professor of Politics and International Studies at the School of Humanities and Languages, and School-based Member of the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy at the University of Western Sydney. He has previously held appointments at the University of Queensland, Australian National University, and the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy. He has held visiting positions in the Centre for the Study of Democracy at the University of Westminster in London, and in the Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung at Bielefeld.

The prize will be presented to Brett by Robert van Krieken on behalf of the Norbert Elias Foundation at a gathering in Sydney later in 2012.

[Editor's Note: The continuing use of the term 'civilisation' in the sense analysed in Brett Bowden's book is shown in the continuing publication of books with titles like Niall Ferguson's *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (London: Allen Lane, 2011), Roger Osborne's *Civilization: a New History of the Western World* (London: Cape, 2006), and Jeffrey Sachs's *The Price of Civilization* (New York: Random House, 2011). The misunderstanding that arise when we try to use the word in the more technical sense developed by Elias are not likely to disappear in the foreseeable future.]

■ AT LAST! – ELIAS'S MASTERPIECE OUT IN THE COLLECTED WORKS

Norbert Elias, *On the Process of Civilisation: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, translated by Edmund Jephcott; edited by Stephen Mennell, Eric Dunning, Johan Goudsblom and Richard Kilminster (Dublin: UCD Press, 2012 [Collected Works, vol. 3]). xxii + 654 pp. ISBN: 978 1 906359 04 1. €60.00

In this sumptuous new volume, which has been several years in preparation, earlier editions have been completely revised, with many corrections and clarifications. We predict that even readers who know *The Civilising Process* well will find the new edition a revelation.

But first, why the change of title? Why not the familiar *The Civilising Process*? As the editors explain:

'One should think twice before publishing a new edition of an already famous book under an unfamiliar title. Dreadful examples are Johan Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, which became *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, and Proust's *The Remembrance of Things Past*, which became *In Search of Lost Time* – in both cases the new title was more literal

but also infinitely more pedestrian in English than the old. The board of the Norbert Elias Foundation nevertheless decided that this volume of the Collected Works should be issued not as the familiar *The Civilising Process* but under the new title *On the Process of Civilisation*. This is a more literal translation of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* but not, we hope, more pedestrian. ... There are two good reasons for amending [the title], both of them related to widespread misunderstandings to which the original English title has apparently given rise ... First, the emphasis in the original German title is – and should also be in English – on the word ‘process’, not on the word ‘civilisation’ or ‘civilising’. Second, by extension, some readers have inferred from the definite article in *The Civilising Process* that Elias believed that a singular civilising process had occurred uniquely in the course of the last half-millennium or so of European history. ... But Elias made many asides both here and in his later writings to stress that civilising processes were found in other parts of the world and in other periods of human social development. He repeatedly asserted that other instances of civilising processes could be observed in other continents and other periods throughout the development of human society.’

Of course the editors are not trying to eliminate the familiar concept of ‘civilising process’, but they have tried to use ‘a civilising process’ or ‘civilising processes’, avoiding ‘the civilising process’ in the singular.

One of the most immediately striking features of the new edition is that, probably for the first time in any language, it includes full-colour plates of all of the 14 pictures from the *Mittelalterliches Hausbuch* to which Elias refers in his celebrated discussion of ‘Scenes from the life of a knight’. The rather astonishing fact that Elias did refer to as many as 14 of the pictures we owe to Patrick Murphy, who meticulously worked through the text alongside reproductions of the *Hausbuch*. Patrick has also contributed an appendix, written with Stephen Menzell, about the drawings.

In retrospect, it seems obvious that no one could fully understand Elias’s discussion without being familiar with the drawings themselves.

Besides carefully checking and correcting the text, the editors have inserted numerous explanatory notes and cross-references to other parts of Elias’s writings. The explanatory notes are especially important in the long discussion of state-formation processes, where Elias seems to have written on the assumption that every reader would come equipped with a comprehensive detailed knowledge of European medieval and early modern history, especially of France and Germany. That assumption was probably never realistic, and has long since to be safe for later generations of English speaking readers. The notes will help to navigate the reader through the maze of the distant past and among unfamiliar monarchs (many with very similar names!).

One other new feature, among many, needs to be mentioned. Elias often hid away important discussions in extended notes which, tucked away at the end of the book in tiny print, were probably rarely studied by the exhausted reader. In line with modern practice, these have now been transformed into appendices (and sometimes themselves annotated). There are as many as 27 of these new appendices, for which the editors have created titles. They include, for example: ‘On feudalism in Europe and Asia’; ‘On law and political development’; ‘On the Chinese form of centralisation’; ‘On British national character’; ‘On the strength of tensions, population pressure and international economics in hegemonic states’; ‘Some American authors on habits and fears’; ‘On ideology, *Realpolitik*, and American sociology’. Even included is a long note that Elias dictated for the *Dutch* translation of the book.

The next volume to be published, in July 2012, will be:

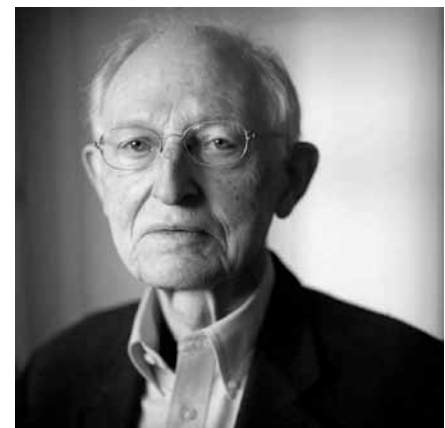
Norbert Elias, *What is Sociology?*, translated by Grace Morrissey, Stephen Menzell and Edmund Jephcott, edited by Artur Bogner, Katie Liston and Stephen Menzell (Dublin: UCD Press,

2012 [Collected Works, vol. 5]). xviii + 236 pp. ISBN: 978-1-906359-05-8. €60.00

The new edition will include a ‘missing chapter’ on Marx and another shorter text on ‘The sociogenesis of the concept of “society” as the subject matter of sociology’ never previously published in English, both translated for this edition by Edmund Jephcott. The translation of the original book made by Grace Morrissey and Stephen Menzell in the early 1970s (the first translation into English of Elias’s major works) has been substantially revised in the light of later translations – especially by Edmund Jephcott – of other works.

Buy online: Copies of any of the volumes of the Collected Works may be purchased online at a 20 per cent discount, post free, directly from the publishers, at www.ucdpress.ie

■ IN THE MEDIA



On 23 February 2012, the Dutch weekly *De Groene Amsterdammer* published a long and memorable interview with Joop (officially Johan) Goudsblom. It touches upon his nihilism, his sociology, his memoirs and the ‘omni-absence’ of his wife Maria.

As a student, Joop read Menno ter Braak, a Dutch literary critic, who introduced him to Nietzsche and to nihilism – a nagging awareness that all knowledge is enveloped in uncertainty. It became the source of many aphorisms – ‘Am I in doubt?’ and ‘Nothing is best’ – and the motivation for writing his book

Nihilism and Culture (1960). Its opening sentence reads: ‘The reason for writing this book was – how could it be otherwise? – personal’. Nietzsche and Norbert Elias feature as two major intellectual guiding stars. Although Elias’s conception of the sociologist as a hunter of myths is inconceivable without the scepticism and lack of respect for authority that go into the making of any nihilist, Elias had little patience for nihilism, whereas for Nietzsche (and Goudsblom), the ‘nihilist problematic’ is an intrinsic and unsuppressible feature of European culture. As Goudsblom already acknowledged in the preface to the original Dutch edition of the book, his wife Maria helped him make nihilism increasingly into an academic problem. In the interview he adds that the work and the example of Norbert Elias also contributed to his ‘overcoming’

the paralysing implications of the nihilistic problematic. While Ter Braak chose literature, Goudsblom, without altogether giving up his literary ambitions, chose sociology, never to his regret.

Elias’s work was welcomed by him as presenting an equivalent to the theory of evolution for sociology: ineluctable, and without any competing alternative with comparably wide scope. There have been interesting complements – as for example the work of Pierre Bourdieu – but these were perfectly compatible with Elias’s theory and approach. Without Elias’s developmental perspective on societies and people, spanning many centuries, he would not have dared to deal with topics like fire and time. The Eliasian perspective is casually demonstrated throughout the

interview, for example in his answer to the question ‘What events do you think to be characteristic of the past decade?’ Goudsblom answers in terms of simultaneously occurring trends and countertrends, and points to the invasions in Iraq and Afghanistan as examples of the twentieth-century trend of continuing imperialism with its countertrend, the irrevocable failure of these undertakings. He also points to the continued increase of wealth and welfare in this decade and the accompanying rise of financial and ecological debts: advances toward superior power and powerlessness.

When asked why Elias’s work was never fully accepted among sociologists, he answers: because it goes against some of the established pillars or cornerstones of the discipline, for example against the Popperian model of falsifiable hypotheses, and against some more generally accepted assumptions about the nature of human beings. For understanding people, Elias points to their relations of power and dependency in social networks, which goes against the dominant *homo clausus* image of people as single and autonomous individuals. These two objections against Elias, supplemented by the tendency to reduce history to fashions, biographies and anecdotes, have been consequential.

For a few years, Joop has been writing memoirs. He once said: ‘there is no subject I know more about than about myself’, so now, by writing a text only about himself, presenting a picture that he is prepared to call wholly truthful and without using one word too many, Joop has found his direction home. The death of Maria, his wife, on 31 March 2009, after the preceding discovery of a far advanced cancer (summer 2007) are for him by far the most important moments of the decade, he says, and then adds: ‘without a doubt’. The interviewers report: ‘A sob is heard, but it does not lead to further emotions. It remains stuck in his inner self, thus bending it somewhat into a primal sound. We wait a while, and then continue. [Joop:] “On the other hand, I am astonished how little has changed. (...) whether this is pleasant, or on the contrary, very sad, I don’t know. It is

Het decennium Joop Goudsblom over de oorlog, Elias en het nihilisme

‘Met rode oortjes zat ik Ter Braak te lezen’

Alle kennis is omhuld door onzekerheid, stelt emeritus hoogleraar sociologie Joop Goudsblom. Toch is hij bezig met het schrijven van zijn memoires. ‘Ik wil het alleen over mezelf hebben.’

DOOR DAAN HEERMA VAN VOSS EN DANIEL VAN DER MEER BEELD JOOST VAN DEN BROEK

ZE KLIJKEN MEE, zoals idolen behoren te doen. Een borstbeeld van Norbert Elias op een boekenplank, een fotoportret van Menno ter Braak aan de muur. Twee leermeesters van dezelfde leerling. Elias leerde hem te geloven in groote theorieën die eeuwen, zo niet millennia bestrijken en het menselijk handelen en functioneren proberen te vatton in sociologische modellen. Ter Braak leerde hem over Nietzsche, over schrijven, over de nihilistische problematiek, het ontbreken van de waarheid. Joop Goudsblom leerde zichzelf hoe de twee te combineren. Tussen de twee hoofden bevinden zich boeken, zo veel dat ze niets van muur bloot laten. Hoeveel studeerkamers zouden hun naam vandaag de dag nog waarmaken? De verstilling van deze kamer wordt verbroken door getimmer aan de andere kant van de muur. De buren zijn aan het verbouwen. Aan weerszijde van de muur achter ons wordt gestoefd. *Goudsblom*: ‘Mijn ervaring is dat geluid nooit lang duurt.’

Johan (Joop) Goudsblom (1932), emeritus hoogleraar sociologie, groeide op als enig kind in het Noord-Hollandse Krommenie. Al op zijn zestiende haalde hij met zijn histories van de Zaanse molens de lokale kranten. Hij studeerde sociale psychologie en pedagogie aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam. Net als Ter Braak schreef Goudsblom voor *Propria Cures*. Hij debuteerde als afbrist: de bundeling *Passanten* verscheen in 1958. Twee jaar later promoveerde Goudsblom, inmiddels 26, cum laude op zijn studie *Nihilisme en cultuur*. Van 1968 tot 1997 was hij hoogleraar sociologie aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam.

De carrière van Goudsblom is grotendeels bepaald door het werk van een andere socioloog, de Duits-Britse Norbert Elias (1897-1990). Zijn civilisatietheorie, waarin beschaving wordt gezien als een langdurig proces van steeds verder toenemende weerzijdigheid afhankelijkheid, vormde vanaf de jaren zestig de basis voor de zogeheten Amsterdamse school. Goudsblom haalde Elias veelvuldig naar Nederland, en trad

op als Nederlands grootste verdediger van diens theorie.

De invloed van Elias laat zich eveneens gelden in de reikwijdte van Goudsbloms interesses en publicaties. En die reikwijdte is met de jaren almaar groter geworden. In 1992 verscheen *Vuur en beschaving*, een intellectuele tour de force waarin hij de menselijke vooruitgang beschrijft aan de hand van de relatie tussen mens en vuur. In 1997 volgde *Het regime van de tijd*, waarin hij eenzelfde ambitie tentoonspreid met betrekking tot de tijd. Tegenwoordig is hij bezig met zijn memoires, waarvan enkele fragmenten zijn gepubliceerd in het mede door hem opgerichte *Trade*. Memoires, een moeilijk genre, stellen we hem voor. Hij kijkt bedenkelijk en nadenkend, een combinatie die voor hem uitgevonden lijkt te zijn. ‘De moeilijkste vraag, zo wilt hij aan, is natuurlijk: wat zijn goede memoires? En vervolgens, als je eenmaal het woord “goed” hebt gebruikt, kun je dat blijven doen. Goede memoires moeten goed geschreven zijn. Ze moeten goed in elkaar zitten, et cetera. Goed is problematisch. Waar ik zelf naar streef is mijn herinneringen op te schrijven op een manier waarvan ik nu denk: zo is het geweest. Hoe jonger ik in mijn levensverhaal ben, hoe minder bronnen ik tot mijn beschikking heb, hoe minder herinneringen ook. In mijn gymnasietijd heb ik wel dagboeken bijgehouden, maar daar staan helaas

Tien gesprekken, met tien deelnemers, ieder geboren in een ander decennium. Te beginnen bij de jaren nul van de vorige eeuw. Voor *De Groene Amsterdammer* gaan Daan Heerma van Voss en Daniël van der Meer in de komende periode in op belangrijke gebeurtenissen, het afgelopen decennium en het werk van de geïnterviewden.

meer gemoedstoringen dan feiten in. Toen Bram de Swaan onlangs een fragment van de memoires las, gaf hij als appreciërend commentaar: ‘Er staat geen woord te veel in, en het maakt de indruk allemaal waar te zijn.’ En ik maak of er ook echt in. Zo moet het gegaan zijn. Ik durf mijn hand ervoor in het vuur te steken.’

KOST HET SCHRIJVEN U VEEL MOEIE?

‘De moeilijkheid schuilt erin dat ik van mezelf eis dat ik aan die twee criteria van De Swaan voldoe.’

WAAROM ZOU HET ERG ZIJN, EEN WOORD TE VEEL?

‘Omdat dat heel makkelijk onttaardt in schmieren. Columnisten van tegenwoordig staan zichzelf vaak te veel woorden toe; ik wil het zo compact mogelijk houden. Ik heb een conservatief taalgevoel.’

ER ZIJN VERSCHILLENDE SOORTEN MEMOIRES: SOMMIGE ZIJN GERICHT OP DE POLITIEK, ANDERE OP DE MAATSCHAPPIJ, WEER ANDERE UITSLUITEND OP HET LEVEN VAN DE AUTEUR. TOT WELK GENRE BEHOEVEN DE UWEN?

‘Ik wil het alleen over mezelf hebben. Over mezelf tot op de dag van vandaag. Wat met dit tempo natuurlijk enigszins problematisch is: ik moet ofwel heel lang leven, ofwel heel snel schrijven.’ Hij lacht, achter gevouwen vingers. ‘Er komt onherroepelijk wat tijd en samenleving in, maar dat is bijzaak. Het is zoals met een oud flinterje: dat is gemeen om het geld van de kinderen vast te leggen, maar het is onvermijdelijk dat je ook ziet hoe de tuin erbij lag, en of het is opgenomen voor of na een verbouwing aan het huis.’

WELKE HISTORISCHE GEBEURTENISSEN UIT UW JEUGD HERINNER U ZICH NAG?

‘In mijn vroege jeugd zijn het losse incidenten en herinneringen. 10 mei 1940 weet ik nog goed. Een van de eerste gebeurtenissen van de oorlog was het bombardement van het militaire vliegveld van Bergen. Dat was bijna op gezichtsafstand van mijn onderlijk huis. ‘s Ochtends hoorden we het tumult, zagen we de vliegtuigen

two-fold, seems somewhat unreal. (...) But then, what [is?] not?"

Interview by Daan Heerma van Voss and Daniël van der Meer, *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 23 February 2012, pp. 32–5. Summarised by Cas Wouters.

■ ELIAS'S STUDY OF SHAME

Several scholars, like Kaufman, have argued that shame is a secret in modern life:

American society is a shame-based culture, but ... shame remains hidden. Since there is shame about shame, it remains under taboo. ... The taboo on shame is so strict ... that *we behave as if shame does not exist* (Kaufman 1989).

This note proposes that the idea of a taboo on shame can help us understand a peculiarity in the response to Norbert Elias's key study (1939). The index of *The Civilizing Process* (1994 English edition) lists hundreds of pages on which the words 'shame', 'embarrassment' or closely related terms appear. Although there are over a hundred citations on Google Scholar, only two persons have responded to Elias's shame themes (Scheff 1992, 1994, 2001, 2004; Lindner 2009).

Elias: How Shame Became Unspeakable and Invisible

The way in which shame is kept secret in modern societies was demonstrated in Elias's monumental study *The Civilizing Process* (1939: 1978; 1994, 2000, 2012). Over the last five hundreds of years of European history, Elias analysed etiquette and education manuals in five different languages. Two of his key findings involve shame: 1. As physical punishment decreased, shame became increasingly dominant as the main agent of social control; 2. As shame became more prevalent, it also became almost invisible.

The following excerpt gives the flavour of Elias's study. It is from a nineteenth-century work (von Raumer, 1857) that advises mothers how to answer the sexual questions their daughters ask:

Children should be left for as long as possible in the belief that an angel brings babies ... If girls should later ask how children come into the world, they should be told that the good Lord gives the mother her child ... 'You do not need to know nor could you understand how God gives children.' It is the mother's task to occupy her daughters' thoughts so incessantly with the good and beautiful that they are left no time to brood on such matters. ... A mother ... ought only once to say seriously: 'It would not be good for you to know such a thing, and you should take care not to listen to anything said about it.' A truly well brought-up girl will from then on feel shame at hearing things of this kind spoken of. (2012: 176)

Elias first interprets the repression of sexuality in terms of hidden shame:

'An aura of embarrassment...surrounds this sphere of life. Even among adults it is referred to officially only with caution and circumlocutions. And with children, particularly girls, such things are, as far as possible, not referred to at all. Von Raumer gives no reason why one ought not to speak of it with children. He could have said it is desirable to preserve the spiritual purity of girls for as long as possible. But even this reason is only another expression of how far the gradual submergence of these impulses in shame and embarrassment has advanced by this time. (2012: 176)

Elias raises a host of significant questions about this excerpt, concerning its motivation and its effects. His analysis goes to what may be a key causal chain in modern civilisation: denial of shame and of the threatened social bonds that both cause and reflect that denial.

'Considered rationally, the problem confronting him [von Raumer] seems unsolved, and what he says appears contradictory. He does not explain how and when the young girl should be made to understand what is happening and will happen to her. The primary concern is the necessity of instilling 'modesty' (that is, feelings of shame, fear, embarrassment, and guilt) or, more precisely, behaviour

conforming to the social standard. And one feels how infinitely difficult it is for the educator himself to overcome the resistance of the shame and embarrassment which surround this sphere for him. (1978:181)

Elias's study suggests a way of understanding the social transmission of taboo. The adult teacher, von Raumer, in this case, is not only ashamed of sex, he is ashamed of being ashamed. The nineteenth-century reader, in turn, probably reacted in a similar way: being ashamed, and being ashamed of being ashamed, and being ashamed of causing further shame in the daughter. Von Raumer's advice was part of a social system in which attempts at civilised delicacy resulted and continue to result in an endless chain reaction of hidden shame.

Elias understood the significance of the denial of shame to mean that shame goes underground, leading to behaviour that is outside of awareness:

'Neither "rational" motives nor practical reasons primarily determined this attitude, but rather the shame [*Scham*] of adults themselves, which had become compulsive. It was the social prohibitions and resistances within themselves...that made them keep silent. (2012: 177)

Like many other passages, this one implies not only to a taboo on shame, but the actual mechanisms by which it is transmitted and maintained.

This study has been widely proclaimed as a masterpiece. However, those who praise and/or use it seldom allow that shame themes are central. Elias seems to have noticed, because in his subsequent work, shame disappeared. This tactic is particularly striking in his study *The Germans* (1996). One of the central ideas is that the spell that Hitler cast over the German people arose out of shame: they felt humiliated by losing the First World War. Hitler helped them hide their shame behind anger and aggression. But in proposing this theory, Elias did not use the word shame. Neither shame nor humiliation appears in the index.

The index refers to the shame thesis indirectly, under the heading of ‘the experience of defeat’, which itself is found under the heading of ‘decivilizing processes’, pp. 320–1. The word humiliation occurs only once, on page 320. The indirectness may have been the reason that I missed his thesis about the rise of Hitler, even though my 1994 book made the same point.

Perhaps Elias would not be surprised that his shame thesis was little noticed, and the subsequent events, since he foresaw in *The Civilising Process* the disappearance of shame in modern societies.

Tom Scheff
Santa Barbara

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■ ELIAS ON THE ISLE OF MAN

Russell Kelly (University of Trier) writes to say that during a recent visit to the Isle of Man (for the TT motorcycle races) he visited the Manx Museum and asked about any references to Norbert Elias and his stay on the island when interned as an ‘enemy alien’ in 1940. The librarians informed him that a project is currently underway concerning the internees and their experiences, because more and more of them are visiting the Isle of Man before age overcomes them.

They hold an archive of records of the internees. For Norbert Elias, the entry reads:

‘Central Camp, Douglas and Hutchinson Camp, Douglas. He was head of the People’s University (the camp university). He was released through the intervention of C. P. Snow, writer and scientist. From Barbed Wire on the Isle of Man B115/39: A sociologist. He wrote a ballad “The poor Jakob” for the second production of the revue *What a Life!*, performed by internees at Central Camp – Actor/singer in the revue *What a life!* held at the Palace Theatre by inmates of Central Camp From *Totally Un-English?* B115/64’.

The archivists at the Manx Museum involved in this project are Wendy Thirkettle (Wendy.Thirkettle@mnh.gov.im) and Alan Franklin (Alan.Franklin@gov.im).

■ KILMINSTER: THE PRONOUN MODEL

Someone casually observed that the idea of the ‘personal pronoun model’, of which Elias makes use in several works including *What is Sociology?*, can also be found in the writings of Edmund Husserl. So we ran this past Richard Kilminster, our resident expert on – and scourge of – philosophy. Richard replied as follows:

A discussion of the personal pronouns can indeed be found in Husserl, in a lateish work, the *Cartesian Meditations* of 1931 [English translation, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1960]. That much I knew, too. I also knew that Mannheim discusses them as ‘perspectives’ in one of his unpublished essays from the mid-20s (see David Kettler et al., eds, *The Structures of Thinking* (London: Routledge, 1982) in way reminiscent of Norbert’s remarks in *What is Sociology?* That was the time when NE was his ‘unofficial’ assistant. I referred to this in my book [*Norbert Elias: Post-Philosophical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 2007)], p. 42.

A little Googling revealed that Wilhelm von Humboldt was probably the first to see their social significance in a paper from 1907. He apparently located the same issue as Norbert and Mannheim – that is, that you need to relate the personal pronouns to human social relations where they function in communication. As far as I can gather, Husserl didn’t go down that road, only being interested in the relational logic of the concepts as a pure system of interlocking definitions. The names of Max Scheler and Edith Stein also come up. Perhaps we have here something that was ‘in the air’. But as always Elias transforms the matter into a sociological problem.

■ OBITUARY

Willfried Spohn

(6 December 1944–16 January 2012)



Willfried Spohn was a born academic. Luckily for those who knew him, he was also of the right kind – one is almost tempted to say, the rare kind: extremely erudite with an insatiable curiosity about and love of knowledge, yet unbelievably modest about the vast knowledge he himself had accumulated; intellectually generous and giving, always open to new ideas, but serious and careful in carrying them out and putting them to paper; a thoughtful and committed teacher and guide to students and younger colleagues, for whom he never grudged time and resources; a concerned and reflective researcher, for whom institutions of higher education were not only places of learning, but also sites of complex power relations in which one should carefully ponder one's own role, impact, and contribution.

Willfried Spohn had obtained his habilitation in Sociology at the Free University of Berlin in 1984. Between 1989 and 2005, he held numerous positions as a Visiting Professor of International and European Studies and of Social and Political Science at several universities in the USA, among which were New York University, the New School for Social Research,

the University of Washington, the University of Pennsylvania, and Columbia University, as well as at the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, Germany. He was also a Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ, a Senior Fellow at the European University Institute in Florence, Italy, and an Alumnus of the Institute for Advanced Study in Konstanz. From 2001 to 2004, he was the Research Director of the EU project EURONAT (together with Bo Strath and Anna Triandafyllidou) at the European University Viadrina, Frankfurt/Oder. From 2009 onward, he was Research Coordinator for the project *Europeanisation, Multiple Modernities and Collective Identities – Religion, Nation and Ethnicity in an Enlarging Europe* at the Georg-August-University Göttingen. In 2010, he became Professor of Economic and Social Sciences at the Willy Brandt Centre for German and European Studies of the University of Wrocław.

From the beginning of his career, Willfried Spohn was committed to historical and comparative sociology as one of the most fruitful approaches to social science, and one that he

consistently strove to promote both nationally and internationally. Tellingly for this endeavour, Willfried Spohn was a co-founder of the International Sociological Association's Thematic Group 02 Historical and Comparative Sociology, and its President from 2007 until 2010. Since the upgrade of TG02 to Working Group status in 2010, which involved the incorporation of members of the Figural Sociology Ad Hoc Group, Willfried Spohn had been WG02 Vice-President and an active and enthusiastic member, organiser, and dedicated participant in WG02 activities, in which he promoted the study of Latin America, East Central Europe, and the Middle East, as well as the historical and comparative sociology of religions.

We were looking forward to several sessions Willfried had organised along these lines at the IIS Congress in Delhi in February of this year and at the upcoming ISA Forum in Buenos Aires in August, as well as to several book and research projects that he had started or still wanted to embark upon in his new position at the University of Wrocław. We deeply mourn the loss of a dear friend and a most accomplished and admirable scholar and colleague, all the while knowing that we are all the richer for the knowledge and the wisdom, the kindness and the generosity, the dedication and the perseverance he bequeathed to his friends and family and to his academic community. As long as we still partake of the intellectual legacy he left to us and impart it to others, he will not have died.

Manuela Boatcă

Free University, Berlin

Secretary/Treasurer

ISA WG02 Historical and Comparative Sociology

■ REVIEW ESSAY:
'UNCONSCIOUS
MEMORIES': A CASE
OF PSYCHOANALYTIC
CONCEPT FORMATION

Hans-Peter Waldhoff
University of Hanover

A review essay on Norbert Elias,
*Au-delà de Freud: sociologie,
psychologie, psychanalyse.*
(Paris: La Découverte, 2010).

No other great sociological thinker has gone to such great lengths to incorporate the human psyche into the core of his theory than Norbert Elias. Moreover, he has successfully portrayed an image of the human being so deeply rooted in a conception of the human being as existing in the plural that in the depth of the most personal and inner self of each and every person are reflected the many people and groups we have been exposed to and that have made an impact on us.

Elias's sociology of knowledge and his rare contributions to Group Analysis, among the founders of which he must be counted, also clearly show how the personality structures of researchers, as group members and individuals, inevitably interact with the objects of their thought process and research. In a section written in collaboration with S. H. Foulkes, Elias points out that people vary considerably in their ability to apply this insight to themselves.

In his work, Elias himself only rarely affords the reader a glimpse into his own emotional life. His poems in *Gedichte und Sprüche* (volume 18 of the *Gesammelte Schriften* published by Suhrkamp) and *Autobiographisches und Interviews* (vol. 17; also vol. 17 of the English *Collected Works, Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections*, forthcoming) are among the few instances where he does offer such a glimpse. Here multiple traumatisation becomes apparent: in early childhood, as a soldier in World War I, when faced with the murder of his mother at Auschwitz, and the death of his psychoanalyst after the Second World War. These bits of personal information explain the reasons for

their rarity. Grappling with the ability to write, and to infuse his books with liveliness, appear as a main theme in Elias's intellectual life.

Then there emerged his 'telephone fantasy': *I speak into the phone ever more insistently*, he says, *but a voice at the other end of the line constantly repeats, 'I cannot hear you, please speak louder!'* In old age, Elias added that the voice told him that he could now be heard a bit – an illuminating remark by an author who for decades never ceased to address the main themes of his life, at ever new levels, in ever new variations and combinations, and who continued to work, albeit almost blind, until the last hour of his 93-year life.

Among the last passionate efforts in his life were his explicit reflections on Freud's concept of society in 1990. This was more than half a century after implicitly grappling with and attempting to go beyond Freud as a social theorist in *On the Process of Civilisation* – an attempt that had largely gone unnoticed. Elias had sent Freud a copy of the first volume of the book in 1936, a logical step in this light, and kept the postcard received in response all his life. The fragments that he left us of this explicitly revived lifelong conversation with Freud were known, yet publishing them was considered an impossible task.

The French scholar Marc Joly succeeded in assembling the fragments into a coherent text. He – and Bernard Lahire, who contributes an insightful postscript to the book – heard the voice of an important author, a voice that was becoming weaker toward the end of his life, and have made it audible and placed it in context.

This book we owe to them. The main body of the text is preceded in chronological order by a few previously unpublished or little read short pieces of Elias's work that all revolve around his key methodological issue of concern, namely a synthesis of sociology and psychology capable of bridging the disciplinary divide in their conceptions of the human being.

The book starts with a text on social psychology. It is an introduction to a university extra-mural course taught in 1950, which still is very much worth reading. The reader can clearly perceive the strong pedagogical thrust and the methodical influences of Group Analysis. To gain an initial sense of social psychology, the teacher suggests analysing the class setting together – that is, the relations among the group of students and the relationship between them and the teacher. He also adds a third perspective of an assumed researcher observing from the outside. He asks how this constellation might evolve and how it might affect the process of teaching and learning. Individuals, he points out, cannot be understood in the abstract but only within the actual relationship patterns of which they are part. This already holds true, Elias argues, in the vein of Winnicott, for the newly born infant, who does not exist as such but only in relation to its father and mother. Family structure, in turn, is affected by the structure of the society to which the family belongs.

Elias paints a picture of human beings as part of a biological process of evolution in which historical processes are embedded and which, in turn, provide the setting for individual development. Social psychology can be an academic endeavour capable of assembling the separate aspects of human development into a coherent picture. Changes in social norms affect human beings not only on the outer surface but also in the innermost core of their individual personality by shaping their emotions, which are always directed at relevant others.

Because of limited space, I will skip the articles 'Sociology and psychiatry' and 'The civilising of parents', which are both readily available in English and German, though they not only merit more attention but also blend in well with the concept of the book. From the article 'Civilization and psychosomatics', I should like to cite only the following observation typical of Elias's critical conceptual thinking: 'The notion of "environment" typically reveals a peculiar kind of innocent egocentrism. It refers

simply to that which surrounds us or me. In the historical sequence of conceptions of man, this term seems to correspond to the geocentric conception of the physical universe awaiting the Copernican revolution' (p. 119, my translation). This remark, incidentally, testifies to the fact that Elias was implicitly preoccupied with a revolutionary project involving much more than a mere synthesis of various human sciences.

Let us now turn to his Freud essay. Here, 40 years later, Elias again takes up the thought just cited. It is inadequate and anthropocentric, he argues, to describe nature as a human environment (p. 180). Instead, it is more appropriate to view humanity as representing a more complex level of integration in the process of physical and biological evolution and hence in itself constituting a part of what we call nature.

Elias criticises the following dualism in Freudian theory: Freud, Elias maintains, perceived drives as a manifestation of nature as opposed to the process of controlling drives, referred to as culture or civilisation, which he viewed as a kind of anti-nature artificially forced upon us. Human beings, however, are predisposed to acquire self-control by their very nature. Culture or civilisation would be impossible otherwise. Embedding human drives within social mechanisms for regulating behaviour does not just involve the aspect of the individual submitting to society. Elias's research gives a clear account of how individual self-control constitutes a precondition of the individual's relative autonomy, both in relation to itself and to others (p. 137).

Of course, there exist repressive forms of self-regulation, but they are not the only or universal form (p.164). Elias suspects that Freud's therapeutically motivated interest in neuroses may have led him to devote greater attention to those compulsive mechanisms of self-regulation causing mental disorders, as opposed to instances of self-control where this is not the case (p. 168). To illustrate the often pathological type of socially coerced self-regulation, Elias cites an obvious

example of Freud's time: in a society where women married at the age of 25 and were prohibited to have premarital sex, there was a gap of ten years between biological and social maturity, between burgeoning sexual desires and social permission to satisfy them. In such conditions, Elias concludes, we can indeed speak of a sharp opposition between human nature and human society (p. 157).

In principle, however, human drives require social regulation as they come to biological maturity, in the same way that the human vocal apparatus must be given structure in the course of maturing by learning a socially given language for it to be able to perform its functions in communication (p. 183). This example demonstrates that the traditional dogma of the dichotomy of nature and culture can hardly pass as an adequate account of reality.

Although Freud made occasional statements to the effect that all psychology is ultimately social psychology, according to Elias he underestimated the extent to which, in the course of social evolution, the functions of human self-control have changed in relation to the drives controlled. In spite of continual change in these functions, the founding father of psychoanalysis conceptualised them as if they were static objects, as in the case of the ego, superego and I-ideal.

In spite of Freud's innovativeness in other respects, Elias sees Freud's treatment of nature and culture or civilisation as two scarcely reconcilable worlds as reflecting a mind-set in the grip of a still prevailing traditional paradigm directing our attention more to separate events than to the connections between them, more to antagonisms than to what unites things, more to analyses of detail than to syntheses. He suspects that Freud's training in the natural sciences led him to focus more on constants as opposed to change.

To conclude, I would like to highlight one of the main themes of the text, which Bernard Lahire compares to Ludwig Wittgenstein's diagnoses of pathologies of language: Elias's

critique and extraordinarily precise analysis of the terms and concepts used in the human sciences (pp. 196–7.). Moreover, this text fragment demonstrates that psychoanalysis not only inspired Elias's own strategy of conceptualisation but his conceptual analyses as well.

First of all, Elias frequently emphasises the extraordinary advances in thought Freudian conceptualisation has brought to all the human sciences. For instance, 'By introducing the concept "libido", he has enriched our vocabulary by providing us with a symbolic representation better suited to reflect the variability of drive energy and drive objects' (my translation, p. 176). It may come as a surprise that this appreciation also extends to Freud's concept of a death drive. Here, Elias credits Freud with at least drawing attention to a problem largely ignored by all other theories (p. 141).

His scrutiny of Freud's concept of the unconscious, in my view, is an exemplary exercise in Eliasian analysis. It is easy to become caught up in words, says Elias (p. 187). The use of the adjective 'unconscious' as a noun ('the unconscious'), for instance, suggests that a property of an object – say an unconscious memory – is an object in its own right (p. 170). This isolation of the property from the object bearing it is of interest when reading Elias's description of neurotic systems. Elias describes neurotic systems, in a sense, as frozen, entrapped memories which, in an isolated manner, as an autonomous force as it were, compel people to feel and act in certain ways in the absence of any awareness that these memories exist. Psychoanalytic therapy, he argues, seeks to reintegrate these unconscious memories into the mainstream of the personality, or, in other words, seeks to overcome the isolation of these memories.

If we consider these aspects conjointly, we may conclude that this facet of Freud's theory, concerning the analysis of unconscious memories, their isolation, and the mechanisms involved in splitting them off, is reproduced at the conceptual level, in that Freud separates the property of

being 'unconscious' from the memories in question and reifies them as 'the unconscious' into an object in its own right. In his conceptual analysis, Elias, in turn, attempts to reintegrate the property of unconsciousness by adding the adjective 'unconscious' to the concept of unconscious memories to underscore the fact that there exists no 'unconscious' apart from that which is unconscious.

In this never completed discussion of Freud's concept, the main

characteristics of Elias's theory of civilisation, in terms of its roots in the sociology of knowledge and in psychoanalysis, become clearly visible. The insight given here in Elias's own (in this case) psychoanalytic strategy of concept formation is especially valuable and opens a field of inquiry into his general strategy of concept formation.

When Elias says that we can describe the insights gained from psychoanalysis without reference to 'the unconscious'

(p. 171), this may sound like heresy. When he writes elsewhere that the overall picture of the make-up of human personality Freud left us is nevertheless the most realistic account that we have, then this testifies to the fact that Elias's research programme 'beyond Freud' is the attempt to revise the Freudian conceptual apparatus in the spirit of psychoanalysis itself.

Note: A shorter version of this article was published in German in the journal *Psyche* in April 2012.



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

John Goodwin and Jason Hughes, 'Ilya Neustadt, Norbert Elias, and the Leicester Department: personal correspondence and the history of sociology in Britain', *British Journal of Sociology* 62: 4 (2011), pp. 677–95.

ABSTRACT: The central aims of this paper are: (1) to explore the utility of using personal correspondence as a source of data for sociological investigations into the history of sociology in the UK; (2) in relation to this undertaking, to advance the beginnings of a figurational analysis of epistolary forms; and (3), to provide an empirically-grounded

discussion of the historical significance of the Department of Sociology at the University of Leicester (a University largely ignored in 'standard histories' of the subject) at a formative phase in the development of the discipline within the UK. The correspondence drawn upon in the paper is between Norbert Elias and Ilya Neustadt between 1962 and 1964 when Elias was Professor of Sociology at the University of Ghana and Ilya Neustadt was Professor of Sociology and Head of the Sociology Department at the University of Leicester. From an analysis of this correspondence, we elucidate an

emergent dynamic to the relationship between Neustadt and Elias, one which, we argue, undergirds the development of sociology at Leicester and the distinctive character of the intellectual climate that prevailed there during the 1960s. The paper concludes with a consideration of whether it was a collapse of this dynamic that led to a total breakdown in the relationship between Neustadt and Elias, and by extension, an important phase in the expansion of sociology at Leicester.

Mirjam Stuij and Ruud Stokvis, 'Habituvorming: over de socialisatie van sportgedrag' [Habituation formation: On the socialisation of sports behaviour], *Sociologie* 7: 3, pp. 203–2. According to Pierre Bourdieu, habitus is an important foundation for behaviour and, because of its formation within a specific social milieu, it underlies substantial differences between social groups. However, Bourdieu hardly explains how a habitus is acquired. Based on Bernstein's elaboration of the context in which the acquisition of group-specific practices and principles takes place, this article explains how young children in different socio-economic groups obtain a habitus related to sport. It is concluded that differences in behaviour arise largely out of differences regarding the impact of socialising agents. Within the high socio-economic status group, the nuclear family has an explicit and regulating impact on exercise behaviour and the moral qualification of sports. In the lower-status group, the habitus is influenced by the extended family, the school and peers, resulting in a less strict order and a broader range of adaptable sports activities.

Idalina Conde, 'Art and Power: Contemporary Figurations', *CIES e-Working Papers*, 121(2012), pp. 1–37.

ABSTRACT: In this text the issue of art and power is approached from a perspective that addresses, in particular, the symbolical- essential- power of artists through their ideas as authors. A double perspective that relates not only to the creative figuration of those ideas, illustrated here by some of the art works presented at the last *Documenta* in Kassel (2007), one of the pinnacles of contemporary art, but also to the chessboard of powers in artistic spaces. A figuration of interdependencies that raises questions about artistic power and its sovereignty and fragilities in the contemporary situation. In the light of the various forms of hetero-determination and hetero-legitimation of art that today subordinates this kind of reflection to the role of its patronage, intermediation, markets, media coverage and reception, among other

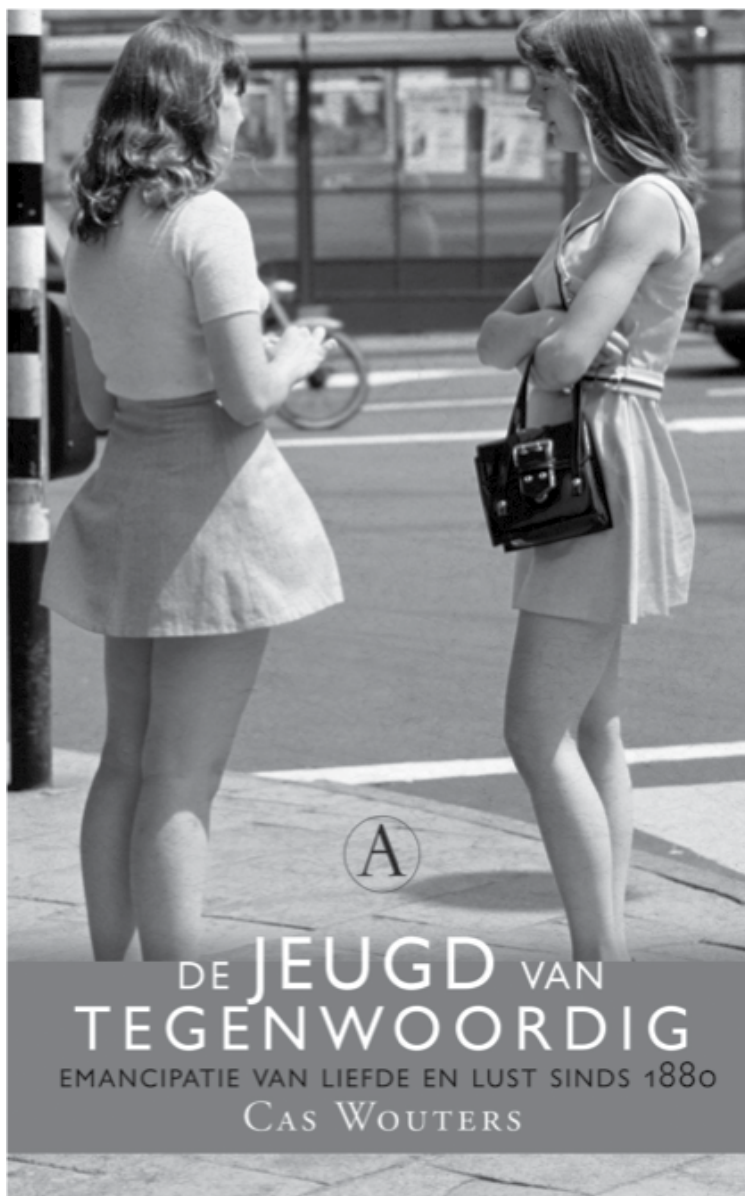
instrumental uses of art and culture, the text then attempts to (re)position the power of artists in what seems to be other powers.

Cas Wouters, *De Jeugd van Tegenwoordig: Emancipatie van Liefde en Lust sinds 1880* [Young People Today: Emancipation of Love and Lust since 1880], (Netherlands: Atheneum-Polak & Van Genneep, 2012), 328 pp.

In his book, Cas Wouters focuses on the profound changes in young people ever since the 1880s, which include the changing relations between the classes, generations, and the sexes. The reaction to these changes often made such a song and dance about it, or caused a moral panic, and yet the relationship between parents and children became

less unequal and their bonds more intimate, while decreasing numbers of educators kept clinging to obedience, changing toward teaching their children and how to steer themselves by adjusting their course in trusting and intimate ways.

Sexological research and youth studies serve as major resources for recounting how exactly young people's sexual development has changed, and how this fits into the framework of broader social developments in sexuality. The book contains consecutive series of vivid examples, thus providing an animated image of 'young people today!' since the 1880s and of their ways of coping with love and lust. The pictures of this film are refined by continuously comparing different social



classes, by comparing generations of immigrants – the new Dutch – with the established, the old Dutch, and also by drawing comparisons between the USA and Europe.

The author shows how changes in the balances of power and control can explain why the trends of informalisation and sexualisation have been more pervasive in the Netherlands than in many other western countries, and why the Americans have come to lag behind.

Jerome Braun, *To Break Our Chains: Social Cohesiveness and Modern Democracy* (Leiden: Brill, 2010)

In his foreword C. Fred Alford (University of Maryland) writes:

Most books on psychoanalysis and politics are either mostly about psychoanalysis, with a little bit of politics. Or books about politics, employing a very stereotypical and one-dimensional view of psychoanalysis. Braun's book is quite remarkable, and from one perspective is not really about psychoanalysis and politics at all. Rather, it is a book about the evolution of modern life by one who is deeply informed and thoughtful about politics, culture, and psychoanalysis. ... If I were to compare it to any recent work, the most obvious would be Christopher Lasch's *The Culture of Narcissism*. Only Braun's historical sweep is broader. Psychoanalysis and politics are not so much woven together as they are part of an intellectual background to a critique of contemporary western culture at a vulnerable point.

Quentin Deluermoz, *Policiers dans la ville: La construction d'un ordre public à Paris, 1854–1914* (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2012).

In 2010 Quentin Deluermoz was the editor the special issue of the journal *Vingtième siècle* devoted to 'Norbert Elias et le 20e siècle: le processus de civilisation à l'épreuve' (see *Figurations* 33). This book, published by the Sorbonne, is his doctoral thesis. The publisher's blurb reads: In 1854, Napoleon III imported the London model of policing into the French

capital. Daily, visible, contact with the police – what would now be called 'neighbourhood policing' – had been needed in Paris for a long time. From various angles and levels, this study examines changes in the relations between police and society in the second half of the nineteenth century. Between 1854 and 1914, the civil policeman became keeper of the peace and was gradually incorporated into the social, political and mental life of Paris, although that did not mean the end of disputes and confrontations. The same period witnessed the gradual professionalisation of the new police force, the creation of a new kind of more integrated public order – but which produced new types of resistance and marginalisation, as well as the emergence of a new perception of 'everyday urban life' and fear of 'hooligans'. This process affected the whole territory of France, but seemed to find particularly intense expression in the capital. Indeed in the twentieth-century Republic, the keeper of the peace in Paris became a symbol, both French and international, of what came to be seen as a new and ambiguous 'urban civilisation'.

Florence Delmotte, 'La sociologie historique de Norbert Elias', *Cahiers philosophiques* 128 (2012), pp. 42–58.

This essay forms part of an issue of the journal devoted to the topic of cosmopolitanism. Delmotte discusses the formation of states and nations in the course of civilising processes, and asks whether, 'after the nation state', the emotional resistance of national habitus is the principal obstacle to further integration and interdependence, in Europe and elsewhere.

Florence Delmotte and Ludivine Damay, 'Les schemas directeurs, nouvel outil du développement urbain à Bruxelles interdépendances entre acteurs et processus de construction d'espaces', in Yves Bonny, Sylvie Ollitrault, Régis Keerle et Yvonne Le Caro (eds), *Espaces de vie, espaces enjeux* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2012), pp. 273–86.

In this chapter, Florence Delmotte and her colleagues continue her project of

applying the sociological ideas of Elias to questions of urban development in the Brussels region.

John Warne Monroe, 'Surface tensions: empire, Parisian modernism, and "authenticity" in African sculpture, 1917–39', *American Historical Review* 117: 2 (2012), pp. 445–75.

'The Western aesthetic category of primitive art came into its own in Paris in the early decades of the twentieth century' – the first sentence of Monroe's article is enough to indicate its relevance to anyone interested in Norbert Elias's enthusiasm for African art.

Siniša Malešević and Kevin Ryan, 'The disfigured ontology of figural sociology: Norbert Elias and the question of violence', *Critical Sociology* (2012), 17 pp. (published online before subsequent hard-copy publication).

ABSTRACT This article scrutinises Norbert Elias's figural sociology by focusing on its ontological foundations. The analytical spotlight is on the inherent tension between Elias's stance of normative neutrality and detachment, his naturalistic ontology, and an unyielding commitment to directional development. We show how Elias's social theory does not stand apart, as an external observer, from the figurations it seeks to explain. On the contrary, it constitutes its own outside, and this has consequences when it comes to explaining the 'dark sides' of the present, and in particular the social sources of organized violence in modernity. It is our contention that Elias's ontology incorrectly posits violence as the absolute Other of civilisation, so that his theory of the 'civilising process' fails to adequately account for the persistence and proliferation of warfare in the modern age.

Lars Bo Kaspersen, 'War and social theory – a critique of the fusion theory in social theory', *Embedded: In Business, Politics & Society* 1 (2011), pp. 36–65.

ABSTRACT During the history of social theory we find remarkable few

social theorists addressing the issues of violence and warfare. In particular, since sociology as a variant of social theory became institutionalised at the end of the nineteenth century, the mainstreams of social theory neglected warfare and its implications for the social organization of human life. The purpose of this article is to analyse this tacit assumption on which sociology constructs its theory of society and state, and to discuss some of the problematic implications including an almost neglect of warfare. First, I focus on the configuration of state and society in the writings of selected classical sociologists (Marx, Durkheim, and Weber). The second part takes a closer look at the implications of those configurations for studies of social order and social transformation. Part three examines more recent sociological theories (represented by Michael Mann) and their attempts to include the state and its external relations in the studies of social transformation processes.

This first edition of *Embedded* also includes article by Len Seabrooke on 'Embeddedness in Historical Sociology and International Political Economy' (pp.6–17).

Liz Stanley and Sue Wise, 'The domestication of death: the sequestration thesis and domestic figuration', *Sociology* 45: 6 (2011), pp. 947–62.

This article by Stanley and Wise encompasses the essence and importance of the figurational sociology. The authors' thorough analysis of sequestration thesis and the domestic figuration of death by means of comparative historical evidence of rituals surrounding death and dying, leaves the previous theorising on death, modernity and sequestration quite limited and somewhat disappointing. Contrary to what the likes of Giddens argued before, the ways people perceive and deal with death it is not as if they are some sort of disconnected monads, but as members of very tight interpersonal relationships. What Stanley and Wise show here is that claims that sequestration and complete expansion of civil-institutional in regulating the private aspects of life

which took place in the late modernity, simply is not the true in the case of death and dying within the domestic figuration. The authors strongly argue here that in Elias's terms, the domestic figuration might not necessarily link the private and the public spheres, but at the same time creates the space where social relations become a type of 'liminal contact zone' which through extension interweaves with others, especially in regard of death.

Stephen Quilley, 'Entropy, the anthroposphere and the ecology of civilization: An essay on the problem of "liberalism in one village" in the long view', *The Sociological Review* 59:1 (2011), pp. 65–90.

ABSTRACT: In his theory of civilizing processes Elias drew attention, albeit obliquely, to the interweaving connections between ecological, biological, social and psychological processes operating at a variety of nested temporal scales. Elucidating a series of fundamental propositions, this paper is an attempt firstly to explicate the parameters of the general theory of humanity that is implicit in his concrete historical studies, and secondly to apply this theory to linked problems of global sustainability and cosmopolitan democracy. Building on Goudsblom's concept of the 'anthroposphere', I argue that the long-term process of social development have always been synonymous with a specific process of ecological transformation defined by 'trophic expansion'. This Eliasian approach to human ecology is then used to explore the global environmental ecological crisis through the lens of the *longue durée*. From this perspective, I question liberal assumptions about the natural affinity between democracy and ecological sustainability and, more specifically, the possibility of 'low energy cosmopolitanism'. Developing ideas hinted at by C. H. Waddington in the 1960s and more recently by James Lovelock, I argue that any long-term future for complex, cosmopolitan societies and a sustainable rapprochement between the biosphere and the anthroposphere, will depend on the emergence of technologies of 'trophic detachment'.

Bruce Mazlish, 'Social bonding, globalization, and humanity', *New Global Studies* 5:3, Article 5 (2011), pp. 1–8.

ABSTRACT: What bonds hold human society together? How have these bonds evolved over time, and where do they extend in an era of globalisation? This article shows how certain types of social bonds continue to dominate human civilization, explores some of the strains they are under at the present time, and suggests a few ways they may adapt to the global future by acquiring a more precise connection to the concept of Humanity.

Linda Williams, 'Visualizing subjectivity: social theory and the role of art as metaphor of self and habitus', *Thesis Eleven* 103:1 (2010), pp. 35–44.

ABSTRACT: This paper considers the way social theorists draw on affective imagery to convey ideas about complex social processes such as the formation of subjectivity within a given habitus. The argument focuses on discussions of art in the work of Elias and Foucault to question whether imagery, and particularly imagery drawn from art, serves to simplify more complex processes of reasoning, or whether the image can be understood as a type of conceptual consolidation of an argument rather than a means to simply illustrate or augment it. The paper also raises the question of whether art is a more complex form of social agency than it was sometimes understood to be in its original social context.

Linda Williams has also more recently written a chapter on 'Norbert Elias and the Question of the Non-human World' in the book edited by Axel Goodbody and Kate Rigby called *Ecocritical Theory: New European Approaches* (University of Virginia Press, 2011).

Stephen Dunne, 'The politics of figurational sociology', *Sociological Review* 57: 1 (2009), pp. 28–57.

ABSTRACT: Figurational sociology is so often said to distance itself from the political issues of the day. Whilst this is certainly true with regards to the present day, it in no way follows that figurational sociology seeks to

distance itself from politics as such. On the contrary, as will be shown within this paper, politics is and always has been a central concern for figurational sociologists. This political concern, however, is an exclusively long-term concern; figurational sociology purposively postpones present political engagement for the sake of developing a sufficiently detached sociology that would eventually facilitate in the delivery of effective practical and political measures. This paper discusses the stakes involved in, as well as the reasoning behind, the assignment of such a place to politics. It gestures towards two distinct and separate concepts of social control that exist within figurational sociology and then proceeds to offer a critical consideration of the consequences that can be derived from any temporal demarcation of the political done on their basis. The paper ultimately suggests that figurational sociology's position on politics raises a series of as yet unanswered questions, questions which can no longer remain unanswered by the contemporary figurational sociologist.

Marc Joly, *Devenir Norbert Elias* (Paris: Fayard, 2012). 472 pp.

Unfortunately, our copy of this important book went astray in the post, and arrived in Dublin just as we were going to press. We hope to publish a full review essay in *Figurations* 38. In the meantime, here is a translation of the blurb from the book jacket: Norbert Elias today occupies a central place in the history of twentieth-century sociology, between Max Weber and Pierre Bourdieu. However, in his lifetime he was for a long time ignored or misunderstood; and when he became famous in France in the 1970s, he was seen as a precursor historian to the *Annales* school – that is to say, at the cost of a certain misconception. Elias's biography – and the history of the trajectory of his recognition, which is inseparable from it – remains to be written. Such is the challenge that Marc Joly has attempted to take up. Based on research in a large number of archives in Germany, Britain and France, his work alternates between a 'biographical' narrative

and the theorisation of processes of academic recognition. It is full of new information, whether about the 'accursed' fate of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* or about the career its author faced in London and then Leicester.

In order to explain the reception of Elias's work in France, Marc Joly deals finally with the passionate debates within French sociology in the 1960s and in the *Annales* in the 1970s. In sum, he makes us see unknown or repressed parts of the history of the humanities and social sciences in the twentieth century, and to reconsider how such a history is to be written.

Pieter Spierenburg, 'American homicide: what does the evidence mean for theories of violence and society?', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* 15: 2 (2011), pp. 123–9.

Randolph Roth, 'Yes we can: working together towards a history of homicide that is empirically, mathematically and theoretically sound', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* 15: 2 (2011), pp. 131–46.

Pieter Spierenburg, 'Questions that remain: Pieter Spierenburg's reply to Randolph Roth', *Crime, Histoire & Sociétés/Crime, History & Societies* 15: 2 (2011), pp. 147–50.

The question of long-term trends in inter-personal violence – among which homicides are the most dramatic, the best recorded, and the least ambiguous – have been much discussed by two overlapping groups of scholars: followers of Norbert Elias and historical criminologists. A prominent member of both groups is Pieter Spierenburg (see his *A History of Murder: Personal Violence in Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008) – not previously noted in *Figurations*), and Stephen Mennell has also discussed the trend and relative high incidence of murder in the USA in his *The American Civilizing Process* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007). Randy Roth is prominent among American historical criminologists, and his book *American Homicide* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2009)

has provoked considerable debate (see <http://cjrc.osu.edu/researchprojects/hvd/Ahsup/html>).

The first of Spierenburg's articles listed above was intended as a contribution to a forum on Roth's book in *Crimes, Histoires & Sociétés*. In the event, other contributors failed to deliver, so this is a simple two-person exchange between Spierenburg and Roth. One central point is that Roth places great weight on levels of 'trust in government' as an explanation for the fluctuations in and overall downward long-term trend in murder in the USA, and he sees this as undermining Elias's theory of civilising processes. Accepting much of Roth's empirical evidence (with some queries), Spierenburg contends that it does not in fact run counter to Elias's argument, and points out that Roth falls into the common trap of failing to distinguish between the 'emic' and 'etic' meanings of the concept 'civilisation'.

■ BIBLIOGRAPHICAL RETROSPECT

In this section, we mention articles overlooked by *Figurations* at the time of their first publication. In this case, Mitzman's article predates the very existence of *Figurations* by seven years, but that by Patrick Gordon Walker breaks all records: it was published almost seven decades ago!

Patrick Gordon Walker, 'History and Psychology', *The Sociological Review*, January 1945, pp. 37–49.

It has long been known that one of Elias's friends during his early years in England was Patrick Gordon Walker (1907–80), then an Oxford history don but after the war a Labour MP, cabinet minister and briefly in 1964 Foreign Secretary. Joop Goudsblom, in the account of early responses to *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* that he contributed to *Human Figurations*, the 1977 Festschrift for Elias, mentions that in his book *Restatement of Liberty* (London: Hutchinson, 1951), Gordon Walker discussed Elias's work at some length. What was less widely known until it was recently unearthed by Gordon Fyfe was this 1945 essay,

substantially about Elias, in *The Sociological Review*. The journal, which was published between 1908 and 1952, was Britain's longest established journal of sociology, and the precursor of the still prospering *Sociological Review* ('new series').

The essay begins by framing the relationship between history and sociology – and psychology – as follows:

'It is certain, unless modern psychoanalysis is all a mistake, that the dreams of the men and women of the Middle Ages must have been quite different from the dreams of modern men and women. So must the causes of laughter. The relations between the individual and society have entirely altered in the interval; the social pressures and, in consequence, the individual conscience, have altered; repressions, sublimations, compensations, defence-mechanisms, and the rest of it have changed their nature. The central question to be investigated here is why these things have come about, what social instruments have been used to bring them about? What fresh knowledge can we gain from this about the true nature of society and its evolution? This is essentially a new problem. Much light has been thrown upon it by Freud and Adler ... Other writers who have made various illuminating suggestions on this problem are: Groethuysen, Veblen, Marx and Engels, Lewis Mumford, A. E. Burt, Whitehead, Borkenau, and Max Weber have given many valuable hints. Mannheim and his pupil Norbert Elias have tackled the problem directly with more important results. As yet, however, no attempt has been made to systematize and organise the treatment of this problem as a whole.'

Gordon Walker then goes on to raise questions about social causality (including materialism) and about Renaissance science, before settling down to an extended discussion of what he calls 'new civilised behaviour' (pp. 42–9). The entire essay is built upon Eliasian themes, despite the fact that the mention of Elias just quoted is the sole reference to him by name.

By today's stricter standards, this essay would be regarded as straight plagiarism, and we would bawl out a first-year student for giving such minimal attribution. But the 'social standards of behaviour' in academic writing, as in so much else, were different then; and the fact that Patrick Gordon Walker is known to have attempted after the war to secure the publication of Elias's *magnum opus* in English translation is an important mitigating consideration. The essay is of considerable historical interest.

Arthur Mitzman, 'The civilizing offensive: mentalities, high culture, and individual psyches', *Journal of Social History* 20: 4 (1987), pp. 663–87.

To describe the proper relationship between ego and id, Sigmund Freud once used the metaphor of rider and horse; the rational ego must master and direct the instinctual id-drives in the same way that the rider masters and directs his horse. Comparable prescriptions for well being can be found centuries before Freud, among the ideologists of absolutism. In 1621, Père Maldonnat, in a dictum charged with implications for the social relations and mentalities of the past three and a half centuries, argued that the will should command the desires 'like the father his son, the pedagogue his disciple, the lord his servant, and the king his subjects.' To understand the historical connection between psychology and society implicit in this ancient wisdom, we shall have to invoke the shade of Max Weber as well as that of the creator of psychoanalysis, and consider what can be said on Père Maldonnat's subject from the triple standpoints of the history of mentalities, cultural history and psychohistory. The analysis based on these standpoints, then, examines the relation between, on the one hand, the normative psychology of secular and religious authorities in the period since the Renaissance and, on the other, traditional popular mentalities, a relation I shall call the 'civilizing offensive'. As such, it scouts out a scholarly no-man's land, adjacent to the historical *imperium*, which has been earlier subject to the wondering gaze of Norbert Elias, Michel Foucault, Jacques

Donzelot and Robert Muchembled. The present exploration attempts to extend and correct the maps they have drawn.

■ BOOKS RECEIVED

These two important books will be reviewed in the next issue of *Figurations* (and/or in the journal *Human Figurations*):

Farhad Dalal, *Thought Paralysis: The Virtues of Discrimination* (London: Karnac, 2012). x + 260 pp. ISBN: 978 1 78049 052 6.

Stephen Vertigans, *The Sociology of Terrorism: People, Places and Prospects* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011). xiv + 214 pp. ISBN: 978 0 415 57266 8 (paperback; also available in hardback and as an ebook).



Jason Hughes finally "loses" it with Cas Wouters



Looking puzzled



Kilminster looking puzzled



In the Pub



The Organisers

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Norbert Elias and Figural Sociology: Prospects for the Future.

Copenhagen, 2–4 April 2012

For the first time ever a major international conference on Norbert Elias was held in Denmark, supported by the Department of Political Science and the Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen and the Norbert Elias Foundation. The conference was organised by Lars Bo Kaspersen, University of Copenhagen and Norman Gabriel, University of Plymouth. Norman is a visiting lecturer at the Department of Sociology, University of Copenhagen where he has been teaching Elias's process sociology for MA students for the last 10 years.

The focus of the three-day conference was on the development of figurational sociology in relation to other disciplines. In ‘What is Sociology?’, Elias argued that sociology needed to develop new ways of ‘thinking’ about its relationship with other disciplines. Since that time, we have seen a rapid expansion of many new academic disciplines, yet there has not been sufficient time to consider the theoretical implications of what this would mean for the future development of a figurational sociology.

Even with most Danes on holiday an overwhelming number of people signed up, approximately 95 enrolled and about 80 participants turned up for the three days of the conference. There were participants from 18 different countries and we were delighted to welcome many newcomers to the Eliasian perspective. The conference brought together sociologists, together with other important and relevant cognate disciplines – such as history, political science and economics – to explore attempts that integrate different disciplinary perspectives. Keynote speakers included Richard Kilminster (University of Leeds), Abram de Swaan (University of Amsterdam), Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin), Andrew Linklater (Aberystwyth University), Stefanie Ernst (Universität Münster), Stephen Quilley (Keele University), Johan Goudsblom (University of Amsterdam), and Søren Nagbøl (Aarhus University). Besides these eight keynote speakers we had 14 panel sessions! An impressive number of presentations (approximately 60) offered a variety of thought-provoking perspectives on figurational sociology. Such was the enthusiasm that some of the participants at the last sessions on Thursday afternoon had to be dragged away from their conversations.

Despite the cold weather we all enjoyed wonderful Copenhagen. The first day of the conference venue took place in Vartov – a part of the Danish Free Church associated with the very important nineteenth-century Danish priest N. F. S. Grundtvig. He contributed to the Danish liberal democratic constitution of 1849, Danish nationalism, education and the Folk

high schools. In the evening we moved to the Monk Cellar under the oldest part of University of Copenhagen (founded in 1479). Here a huge buffet was served (including wonderful venison) but disappointingly only 40 bottles of wine were consumed! Days two and three took place at the Social Science Faculty Campus placed between the Botanical Garden and the lakes. The conference dinner the second night took place at the atmospheric Actor house – a part of the Royal Theatre – near the harbour front. We all enjoyed the four-course meal with spectacular views across the harbour.

We would like to thank very much the support from the Department of Political Science, Department of Sociology and the Norbert Elias Foundation. A special thanks to the wonderfully efficient student assistants, under the leadership of Kathrine Nistrup, who helped to make the conference such a success, and to Administrative Secretary Mette Cruse Skou who made it all possible.

Lars Bo Kaspersen and Norman Gabriel

And a student's eye view of the conference:

I had the great opportunity to take part in the three-day Norbert Elias conference on development of figurational sociology in relation to other disciplines, which gathered much of the international Elias community in Copenhagen. The discussions spanned numerous fields, with paper presenters and keynote speakers passionately elaborating their Elias-inspired research within for example environmental politics, education, history, organisational studies, immigration, and public spaces. Professor Lars Bo Kaspersen welcomed the participants on behalf of Copenhagen University (Department of Political Science/Sociology) and the Norbert Elias Foundation. The three days were organised around plenary sessions with keynote speeches and parallel sessions that centred on various social themes. As a student one mainly comes across Elias on a theoretical level, but at the conference

one encountered how figurational sociology is extensively used as an analytical tool within various fields, which can be drawn upon and applied in highly diverse contexts. In particular, the keynote speech by Professor Stephanie Ernst on a process-oriented methodology was fascinating, and a great inspiration on how to go about operationalising research. Overall the many presentations demonstrated the large potential of figurational sociology to integrate a range of disciplinary perspectives.

The first day I had the pleasure of guiding the presenters to the venue. Walking through the old city of Copenhagen, talking with people whose names are referenced in my curriculum, needless to say, was quite an experience. As a student one is constantly reminded of the importance of moving from theory to practice. This can sometimes be challenging to fully grasp in one's everyday studies when working with abstract and weighty theories. At the conference however, this process was illuminated and I was captivated by the presenters ability to apply Elias' framework to different kinds of research. Observing the participants enthusiastically scribble down each other's comments and suggestions I experienced the multiple functions of the conference; both as a producer of new knowledge and tester of theory but also as a platform for networking and exchanging experiences. Attending the conference created incentive for my own work and restored sense in the sometimes abstract studying of social theorists like Elias.

Although such may be the case for many schools; I ended the conference with an impression of a strong theoretical community that possibly feels ignored in some regards, but at the same time expresses a closeness and intimacy that can be difficult to become a part of. I observed a clear hierarchy among the participants, and within the community there seemed to be one way of interpreting Elias, and preferably buying into the whole package. Thus, presenters were quickly corrected or opposed if their arguments were not in accordance with the agreed interpretation. As a sociology student

experiencing an academic community up close was indeed fascinating and quite educative, and even though I find a figurational perspective highly intriguing and relevant for much research; I wonder if and how an Elias perspective combined with other theoretical perspectives may benefit the community as a whole.

Being a student I have not yet had the opportunity to participate in many conferences of a similar magnitude. These usually have high fees, may only welcome paper presenters – or I've simply been occupied with my studies. Sadly, I don't think my situation is unique. This is unfortunate as my experiences from the Elias conference are indispensable and ended up shaping the foundation for my bachelor's thesis. I therefore emphasise the importance of student participation in such events. Taking part in and experiencing ongoing academic discussions and debates are important to bridge theory with practice, but it is also inspiring and motivational, and it provides the student with a broader social context for his/her educational abilities.

Kathrine Nistrup Madsen
BScSoc Student
Copenhagen Business School

New Issues in Process Sociology

*Wissenschafts Zentrum Berlin, 5
December 2011*

The original intention was that this one-day conference, organised by Steve Loyal and Reinhard Blomert, would focus on economics and the current financial crisis. Indeed, Stephen Mennell, Reinhard Blomert and Abram de Swaan did discuss precisely that during one session. As usual at figurational gatherings, however, more people than expected wished to attend, and the range of topics was widened. Jan Haut (Saarbrücken) reported on his recent research on the Elias papers in the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach, especially on research on sport. Tabea Dörfelt-Mathey (Jena) spoke about her study of Elias's poetry and its relevance to his wider writings. And Marta Bucholc (Warsaw) talked

about the transformation of Eastern Europe.

One session was devoted to aspects of the history of sociology, with Adrian Gallistl (Trier) comparing Elias with Erich Fromm, Steve Loyal (UCD) talking about Elias's interpretation of Marx, and Johan Goudsblom advancing the proposition that 'All sociology is historical sociology'.

The final session was a roundtable on the theme of the Germans and long-term violence, the contributors being Bernard Lacroix (Nanterre), Eric Dunning (Leicester) and Abram de Swaan (Amsterdam).

Reinventing Norbert Elias: For an Open Sociology

*organized by Amsterdam Institute for
Social Science Research, 22–23 June
2012*

A report of the conference will be published in our next issue. .

■ FORTHCOMING CONFERENCES

XIV Civilizing Processes International Symposium

This will take place in Dourados, Mato Grosso in Brazil on 19-24 November 2012. The deadline for abstracts is the 23 July and the second edition of the conference newsletter plus other important information can be accessed at <http://www.ufgdgrupoelias.com/>.

Habitus, War and Civilisation

*Department of Sociology, University of
Graz.*
Graz 25–27 April 2013

Call for papers

This conference is to honour Helmut Kuzmics on the occasion of his retirement from his chair at Graz in May 2103. Over the last decade, Helmut's work has centred especially on matters relating to war, but over the course of his career he has written on a wide range of topics, including national habitus, the arts, mass media and culture, and sociological theory. We shall welcome papers, or proposals for conference sessions, on the whole range of his work. In the area specifically of war and the bellicose side of social life, we already envisage several sessions:

Proposed sessions centred on war

Today, interstate wars merely disappeared or transformed into terrorism or into violent inner-states antagonisms of far remotes 'failed states'. However, this does not mean that war (and the potential of it) has lost its significance for modern societies. Twenty years after the breakdown of the Soviet Union, more states than ever are acquiring nuclear weapons, a new kind of arms race with conventional weapons can be observed in parts of the world, and popular culture is still obsessed with war (as in movies and computer games).

Merely 30 years after Elias's *Humana Conditio* it seems that sociology itself has not changed fundamentally. Following Saint Simon, sociology is still concerned with the paradigm of modern society as a peaceful place. Thus, the aim of the conference is to confront sociological thinking with war and its social consequences. The conference is open for proposals for plenary sessions. The following sessions are proposed by the organizers.

1 *War and its effect on societies in a very long-term perspective*

What are the effects of war on historical civilisations as well as on the modern world? In order to explain societies better, are there war-orientated points of view in sociology that are able successfully to rival functionalism or economic-centred paradigms?

2 *Nuclear deterrence: Making unsafe places safer or even more insecure?*

Political science has much to say about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. However, what is the sociological perspective? How are aggressive impulses and hate towards others regulated differently in the nuclear age? Is such a kind of weaponry constitutive for modern societies?

3 *War, emotions and 'habitus'*

In order to understand war crimes and atrocities, a micro-level perspective on the battlefield uncovers the fundamental importance of emotions like fear, comradeship etc. Emotions are also central to understand public opinion and its judgement about a 'just' war. In this session, the interconnection of war, emotions and 'habitus' will be discussed.

4 *War, the economic system and financial markets*

What are the relations between capitalism, tighter nets of economic interdependencies and war? Does the current world economic crisis lead towards situations that will make war between great powers more likely? Or is it true that the conditions are very different from the world of the 1930s?

5 *Rituals of civilizing interstate violence*

The mass media focus on sport, the Eurovision Song Contest, beauty contests, the Nobel prizes, film prizes and many other cultural contests as rivalries between nations. Does modern civilisation develop certain sets of rituals helping to constrain violent impulses on the international arena? Does IR (International Relations) neglect these contests as important institutions?

The conference will consist of plenary sessions with speakers and panels of discussants.

The deadline for establishing further plenary sessions is 31 October 2012.

The deadline for registering for the conference, and for submitting abstracts of papers, is 31 January 2013.

To register, please send an abstract to following email address: dieter.reicher@uni-graz.at

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

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