

Figurations

Newsletter of the Norbert Elias Foundation

■ CONTENTS

From the Norbert Elias Foundation	1
Norbert Elias: Fotos von Unterwegs	2
In the media	3
Figurational Journals Online	3
Recent books and articles	4
Recent conferences	10
Forthcoming events	12



■ PEOPLE

- Emmanuel Taëb is now Professor, Sciences Po, Lyon from Lyon 2. where he is in charge of a main class on Political Philosophy and a seminar on Foucault
- Pieter Spierenburg, now retired as Emeritus Professor from the Erasmus University Rotterdam, has taken on the new role of Programme Leader at Institute for War and Genocide Studies (NIOD), which is affiliated to the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Science. An interview with Pieter about the global history of violence can be found on YouTube at <http://youtube/uOTdu4TfGFc>.
- Manuel Eisner has been appointed Professor of Comparative and Developmental Criminology at the University of Cambridge, in addition to his post as Deputy Director of the Institute of Criminology there.
- John Goodwin will be giving his Inaugural Lecture as Professor at the University of Leicester on 24 March, with the title 'The sociogenesis of a sociologist: Intersections of history and biography'. Henrietta O'Connor will be giving hers sometime in May; the university appears to have forgotten to invite Jason Hughes to give his, but that will also no doubt happen eventually. Further details of all three will be posted on the NEF blog as they become available.

■ FROM THE NORBERT ELIAS FOUNDATION

Support for the Foundation

At its meeting in Amsterdam on 9–10 January 2015, the Board of the Foundation welcomed a proposal from Dr Jonathan Fletcher and

other colleagues to explore ways of strengthening the Foundation's work. Jonathan has been asked to lead a committee, with Jason Hughes, John Goodwin, Stefanie Ernst and others from various countries, which will report back in mid-2015. One strong possibility is the creation of a more formal support organisation to which 'figurati' may sign up as 'Friends of the Norbert Elias Foundation'.

Final call: Norbert Elias Essay Prize

In place of the now-discontinued Norbert Elias Book Prize, it has been decided to establish a Norbert Elias Essay Prize, to be awarded every other year. Submissions will be requested for particularly topical and pertinent issues. The prize will be awarded to the paper which provides the most incisive and innovative figurational approach to the topic.

Our first call is for papers which explore the topic 'Contemporary Crises as Social Processes'.

Today there seem to be more crises in the world than ever before: banking, financial and economic, climate change, health epidemics, war and humanitarian disasters across diverse locations such as Ukraine, Venezuela, West Africa and the Middle East. All these crises have a social component to them and lead to the question 'What can be said about the crises from the perspective of process sociology?'

Essays should be no longer than 5,000 words, and be submitted by email to elias@planet.nl by the closing date of 30 April 2015. Papers must be written in English, but allowance will be made and possible support given to submissions by those for whom English is not their first language. Professor Stephen Vertigans of Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, will act as chair of the jury. The winning paper will be submitted for publication in *Human Figurations* and the author will receive a prize of €1,000. Any queries should be directed to elias@planet.nl.

Reprinting *The Court Society*

The Court Society, volume 2 of the Collected Works of Elias, was one of the first two volumes of the series to be published, back in 2006. It was also, in the autumn of 2014, the first to go (nearly) out of print. When the first print-run came very close to selling out, we took the opportunity to make some minor corrections before reprinting the book.

The minor corrections included updating the cross-references so that they now refer to volumes that were published after 2006, and inserting a few citations that Elias failed to give but have now been tracked down. A revised translation of one of the quotations from Saint-Simon was also inserted (it now coincides with the translation of the same passage given in *On the Process of Civilisation*).

There was also one major improvement. With the wisdom of hindsight and accumulated experience, we – my wife Barbara and I – were dissatisfied with the index to this volume. We have now greatly improved the index in the second impression of the book.

Of course, if you already have a copy of the 2006 version of *The Court Society*, there is no need to buy the new reprint just for the sake of these small improvements. But if you are buying now, you will receive the benefit of these obsessive corrections! (Go to www.ucdpress.ie.)

SJM

■ NORBERT ELIAS: FOTOS VON UNTERWEGS

My husband and I visited the Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach, on 8 July 2014. While Hermann was dealing with Norbert Elias Foundation business, I visited the DLA exhibition entitled 'Reisen: Fotos von unterwegs' – something like 'Journeys: Photos from away', or perhaps 'Travel: photos on the move'.

More than 1,000 photos from the collections in the archives were on

display. As the flyer informed us, they were by, among others, Harry Graf Kessler, Hermann Hesse, Ernst Jünger, Siegfried Kracauer, Hilde Domin, and Peter Handke. Not mentioned in the flyer was Norbert Elias, and so I was surprised to find five of his photos in the exhibition. Two of them show him himself, which makes it unlikely he took them. The photos were given these titles by the Marbach staff:

1. Norbert Elias (1897–1990): Stonehenge, about 1935
2. Norbert Elias (1897–1990): Palazzo Venezia in Rome, May 1938
3. Norbert Elias (1897–1990): Colosseum in Rome, May 1938
4. Norbert Elias (1897–1990): Market near Enbu, Nigeria 1977
5. Norbert Elias (1897–1990): Nigeria, 1977

Correspondence with the archive staff members in charge with Elias's papers (Christoph Willmitzer and Johannes Kempf) about the context of the photos resulted in these findings:

The photos from Rome have inscriptions on the back, not in Elias's handwriting:

'In Palazzo Venezia Rome May 1938.

Car containing Goering + other Nazi chiefs'

'The arch of Constantine, the Colosseum, Via d'Empero, Rome'

The pictures ascribed to Nigeria were mistakenly labelled. They were taken on a journey to Kenya in 1977 with Bram van Stolk.

Adrian Jitschin has compared the handwriting on the Rome photos with Elias's way of writing. They are definitely not identical. Jitschin, with his layman's approach to analysing writing, concludes that the writer is a female English native speaker. About further research on this matter he will report himself in the next issue of *Figurations*, and all may not be quite as it seems.

The exhibition is now closed – it was on display in Marbach until 5 October.

Elke Korte

■ IN THE MEDIA

Der Spiegel: In the 9 January issue of *Der Spiegel* (no. 3/2015) there appears an interview with Professor Andreas Zick from Bielefeld in which he is asked how it can be that there is an increasing hostility towards strangers in the better parts of German society. He answers: ‘Norbert Elias analysed the phenomenon as much as 50 years ago, in his study *The Established and the Outsiders*’. Professor Zick then gives some brief but accurate information about the study and Elias and Scotson’s findings.

Jürgen Habermas recently gave an address on ‘The Jewish exiles return to Germany’, recalling philosophers and sociologists of Jewish background returning to the early Federal Republic of Germany, and mentioning Norbert Elias in this context. See Tablet, 12 November 2014, <http://tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/186720/habermas-jewish-exiles-germany>. (Thanks to Bruce Wearne for drawing this to our attention.)

■ FIGURATIONAL JOURNALS ONLINE

Human Figurations: Long-term Perspectives on the Human Condition

Not one but *two* special issues of *Human Figurations* will be published early in 2015.

Special Issue on ‘Civilising Offensives’, vol. 4, no. 1, January 2014: <http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/>

This collection of papers explores the intellectual origins and continuing relevance and application of the theoretical concept of the ‘civilising offensive’. The term was first coined in Dutch in the late 1970s as *het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief* – ‘the bourgeois civilising offensive’ – in reference to nineteenth-century, middle-class attempts at improving the lot of the lower classes and ‘raising them to a higher, civilised standard of conduct’.

It has since been disseminated more widely from its Dutch roots and utilised by scholars in application to more contemporary concerns and governance projects.

The aim of this special issue is to bring together an interdisciplinary, international and inter-generational group of scholars to assess its continued relevance in understanding historical *and* contemporary social processes and group relations characterised by unequal power balances. Implicit in this is an attempt to problematise and nuance the concept in order to move beyond the over-simplistic conceptualisation of civilising offensives as elite, moralising projects targeted at the ‘uncivilised’ lower classes, and to link the concept back to Elias’s theory of civilising processes. Contents of the special issue are:

John Flint, Bernard Kruithof and Ryan Powell, Introduction to the special issue

Bernard Kruithof, ‘The birth of a concept: *het burgerlijk beschavingsoffensief* – the bourgeois civilising offensive’

Ali de Regt, ‘Civilising offensive: from sociological concept to moral appeal’

Stephen Vertigans, ‘Home from home: civilising offensives within residential childcare?’

Paddy Dolan, ‘Balances between civilising processes and offensives: Adult–child relations in Irish primary schools from the mid-nineteenth century’

Matt Clement, ‘Thatcher’s civilising offensive: The Ridley Plan to decivilise the working class’

Rob van Ginkel, ‘Containing the Urban Poor – coercion or consent? Disciplining missions and civilising offensives in the Netherlands’

John Connolly, ‘“We are not long-haired hippies...” Civilising offensives, doping and professional cycling’

Stephen Mennell, ‘Civilising offensives and decivilising processes: between the emic and the etic’

Thematic Issue: Reflections on Global Power Relations, vol. 4, no. 2, January 2015

Unlike many other varieties of sociology, ‘figurational’ or ‘process sociology’ has a reputation for a certain reluctance to comment on matters of current political controversy. ‘Figurati’ are of course greatly influenced by Elias’s conception of the involvement–detachment balance. Yet Elias himself recognised that, after making the necessary ‘detour via detachment’, there still remained scope for ‘secondary involvement’ (perhaps Stephen Quilley’s amended term ‘secondary *re*-involvement’ is better). And yet it can be argued that Elias’s work contains ideas of great relevance to current world politics, and indeed that a knowledge of these ideas might improve the means of orientation available to practising politicians.

This thematic issue is built around a major essay by Stephen Mennell, in which he applies the theory of established–outsider relations to the Ukraine crisis of 2014, developing a perspective that may well be controversial. Also included are reflection on American power, its uses and abuses, by Bruce Mazlish and Michael Mann. The issue concludes with a re-examination of the involvement–detachment problem by André Saramago of the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University. Contents are:

Katie Liston, Introduction to the thematic issue

Stephen Mennell, ‘Explaining American hypocrisy’

Bruce Mazlish, ‘Rejected modernity’

Michael Mann, ‘*Incoherent Empire* revisited against interventionism’

Andre Saramago, ‘Problems of orientation and control: Marx, Elias and the politics of figurational sociology’



■ RECENT BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Norbert Elias, *Gruppencharisma und Gruppenschande*, herausgegeben von Erik Jentges, mit einer biographischen Skizze von Hermann Korte [Group Charisma and Group Disgrace, edited by Erik Jentges, with a biographical sketch by Hermann Korte] (Marbach am Neckar: Deutsche Schillergesellschaft, 2014). 72pp. ISBN: 978-3-944469-03-4.

This small book is published in the series 'Aus dem Archiv', drawing on the rich resources of the Deutsches Literaturarchiv (DLA), Marbach – in this case from the papers of Norbert Elias. The German text is published here for the first time, although Johan Goudsblom and Stephen Mennell included a substantial excerpt from Elias's own English translation of it in *The Norbert Elias Reader* (Oxford, Blackwell, 1998, pp. 104–12), and this was reprinted in *Essays III: On Sociology and the Humanities* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2009 [Collected Works, vol. 16], pp. 73–81). The German typescript exists in a long and a short version; published here is principally the long version, although the short version is drawn upon to some extent. The resulting text is rather longer than the English, which Elias (not uncharacteristically) left in an unfinished state.

'Group charisma and group disgrace' was written for delivery as a contribution to the conference of the German Sociological Association held in Heidelberg in 1964 to mark the centenary of Max Weber's birth. It was also the first time Elias had attended such a gathering of German sociologists since going into exile in 1933. Elias's paper was not included in the transactions of the conference. This omission was no doubt a reflection of his humble status within sociology; a quarter of a century after the publication of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, few of his German colleagues were familiar with his work. Besides, the paper itself was not easy to accommodate in a volume of conference proceedings. It was rather long, and contained extensive quotations and footnotes.

In the first part of the text, Elias argues that the concept of *Gentilcharisma*, or 'clan charisma', introduced by Weber, can be extended into the more general concept of 'group charisma'. To substantiate this idea, he refers to his then forthcoming book *The Established and the Outsiders*, co-authored with John L. Scotson (Dublin: UCD Press, 2008 [Collected Works, vol. 4]) which showed that group charisma and its counterpart, group disgrace,

far from being something exotic, could be observed even where one might least expect to find it – in the relationship between two working-class neighbourhoods in an English town. The second part, a close examination of Weber, is a rather rare example in Elias's writings of a long textual critique and interpretation of another sociologist. It connects the discussion of group charisma to the problems of involvement and detachment. In a third part, he related group charisma and group disgrace to the caste system of India; this part is not found in the English typescript, although Elias covered this ground in his 1976 preface to the Dutch translation of *The Established and the Outsiders* (included in the Collected Works edition, pp. 1–36). In a concluding section, he makes clear how a thoroughly sociologised understanding of the concept of charisma forms an important part of his more comprehensive theory of power relations.

The volume also contains a less well-known photograph of Elias at the 1964 conference, in the company of Dr Willie Smith, a Ghanaian friend who subsequently made his career in the United States.

Norbert Elias in conversation with Johan Heilbron, 'La sociologie ... quand elle est bien faite' (1984–5), *Actes de la recherche en science sociales*, no. 205, pp. 5–19.

In 1984–5, Johan Heilbron, at the request of Pierre Bourdieu, conducted conversations (in English) with Norbert Elias, with the intention that the interview would be published in Bourdieu's journal, *Actes de la recherche en science sociales*. (Johan Heilbron has worked for many years in Bourdieu's *laboratoire* at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales.) But Elias lost interest and the interview was not published. In 2012, Richard Kilminster remembered reading the

typescript of this interview, and that it was unusual in one particular respect: that Heilbron had succeeded in eliciting from Elias comments on some books that had influenced him, such as one by Anna Freud. (Normally Elias was irritated by questions about books that had influenced him.) So, with Heilbron's agreement, we decided to include an extract from this interview in *Interviews and Autobiographical Reflections* (Dublin: UCD Press, 2013 [Collected Works, vol. 17], pp. 141–59).

Now, all of 30 years later, the interview is published in *Actes*, as was originally intended. At the front of the interview, there appears a photograph of Elias and Bourdieu together, taken by Stephen

Mennell at the meeting in Apeldoorn to celebrate Elias's 90th birthday in 1987. So far as we have been able to ascertain, this seems to be the only photograph of the two friends together.

Nicole Hirschfelder, *Oppression as Process: The Case of Bayard Rustin* (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter, 2014), 309 pp. ISBN: 978-3-8253-6390-1.

Blurb: Revisionist history or other types of recovery work are commonly considered important steps towards liberation for marginalised individual and groups. Yet this volume argues that the mere act of 'breaking the silence' should not solely be seen in line with liberation, but also with the oppressive past that made the recovery work necessary. In order to illustrate the relevance of this insight when implemented in the analysis of concrete cases, this study both conducts such an examination and offers a theoretical framework to disclose the general social dynamics of oppression and liberation. Weaving together the theories of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, this volume employs the case of Bayard Rustin (1912–87), the African-American civil, labour and human rights activist and mentor of Dr Martin Luther King Jr, to show that both liberation and oppression are ongoing, interrelated processes embedded in past and present relations of power.

Note: as the title and blurb imply, this is a book *in English* from a German publisher.



NORBERT ELIAS ET PIERRE BOURDIEU lors d'une conférence aux Pays-Bas à l'occasion du 90^e anniversaire d'Elias en 1987.

Akira Ohira (ed.), *Norbert Elias as Social Theorist: Figurational Sociology and its Applications* (Tokyo: DTP, 2014). 153 pp. ISBN: 978-4-86211-395-5.

Few scholars have done more to make the work of Norbert Elias familiar in Japan than Akira Ohira, Professor of English Literature at Waseda University. Happily, Akira Ohira is also a familiar figure and friend at many of the gatherings of 'figurati' that take place in Europe.

His latest publication is a brilliantly selected set of contributions illustrating the practical applications of Elias's ideas in ongoing research. Contents are as follows:

1. Introduction *Akira Ohira*
2. Norbert Elias and international relations *Andrew Linklater*
3. Sport, violence and the civilising process *Ivan Waddington*
4. American cornucopia: from thrifty community to consumer society *Michael K. Snyder*
5. Norbert Elias and history: the *Annales* School, the revival of narrative, and the continuing relevance of the civilising process *Matthew Stenberg*
6. Elias's view of language, with reference to the symbol theory *Paul Snowden*
7. Norbert Elias and social identity: the society of individuals *Julian Manning*
8. E-cigarettes and the 'civilising' of smoking *Jason Hughes*
9. On the Japanese civilising process: the antithesis between *Zivilisation* and *Kultur* *Akira Ohira*

Christian Dorner-Hörig, *Habitus und Politik in Kärnten: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Grundlagen des Systems Jörg Haider*. Wiesbaden: Springer VS 2014. 270 pp. ISBN: ISBN 978-3-658-04239-4 (pb); 978-3-658-04240-0 (eBook).

This process-sociological study is published as the ninth in the series *Figurationen: Schriften zur Zivilisations- und Prozesstheorie*, edited by Annette Treibel with the assistance of Helmut Kuzmics

and Reinhard Blomert, all process sociologists from Germany and Austria. The book was originally a dissertation supervised by Helmut Kuzmics.

The author, Christian Dorner-Hörig, reports on his research into the sociogenesis and psychogenesis of political relations, culture and habitus in Carinthia, geographically a huge basin surrounded by high mountains that for many centuries was an important part of the Habsburg Empire, developing a long-term account of how the province came to elect the right-wing governments of the populist politician Jörg Haider (1950–2008).

A full review of the book by Cas Wouters will appear in a future issue of *Human Figurations* journal.

Hendrik Meyer, 'Repräsentation im Vielpersonenspiel: Herausforderungen der Repräsentation sozialer Ungleichheit aus figurationstheoretischer Perspektive', in Markus Linden, Markus and Winfried Thaa (eds), *Ungleichheit und politische Repräsentation*, (Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlag, 2014), pp. 215–41.

The article focuses on the contributions of Norbert Elias to the understanding of political phenomena and therefore on a basic topic of political theory and public debate: representation and social inequality. It starts with the various reformulations of representation, which have been discussed in political science for quite some time (e.g. D. Plotke, N. Urbinati, C. Lefort). Instead of following the idea that representation should be seen as an as-perfect-as-possible mirroring of the will of the represented, representation is conceived as a relation of difference. Representation is an alternating process of decision-making and judging by both the representatives and the represented. But although these theories expose an important dimension of representation, they do not highlight the issue of social inequality, as raised and discussed by the famous Post-democracy debate. This is where Norbert Elias's theory of figurations and processes offers some promising arguments. The article shows that the 'multi-person game on several levels' [see *What is Sociology?*,

chapter 3] contains a coherent theory of representation. This theory emphasises that representation takes place in triadic figuration with horizontal and vertical balances of power. Within this constellation the claims of both the representatives and the represented, and their reception, become important. Using Elias's model of established–outsider figurations in a claim-making context, it is possible to specify general problems of the political representation of social inequality.

Andrew Linklater, 'Towards a sociology of compassion in world politics', in M. Ure and M. Frost (eds) *The Politics of Compassion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).

Recent work in International Relations has begun to explore the role of emotions in world politics. This chapter attempts to demonstrate the importance of Elias's investigation of the relations between socio- and psychogenetic forces for studies of collective emotions. It draws attention to process-sociological insights into the patterns of development that have made 'campaigns of compassion' more central to the relations between societies. A central theme is how lengthening webs of interconnectedness have raised fundamental ethical questions about how 'civilised' peoples should respond to 'distant suffering'.

Andrew Linklater, 'Anger and world politics: how collective emotions shift over time', *International Theory* 6: 3 (2014), pp. 574–78.

The interrelations between emotions, social structures, and personal and collective identities are now more central to the study of international relations than ever before. Scholars have shown that 'social institutions and politics embody and produce emotions' (see Crawford 2014). They have argued that 'emotions are social because culture influences their experience and expression', and they have demonstrated the 'who we are' depends on 'what we feel' (see Mercer 2014). The purpose of this commentary is to extend those investigations by drawing on a pioneering explanation of how collective emotions change

over time, namely process sociological analysis. Doing so reveals how, over approximately five centuries, European peoples came to exercise greater control over emotions that were deemed to clash with their 'civilised' self-images (Elias, 2012 [1939]). Emotion management in increasingly pacified societies included the suppression of open displays of anger that were seen to 'heighten risk-taking' behaviour that could lead to violence and that was linked with warfare. To explore that theme, this article analyses contrasts modern attitudes to 'negative' emotions such as anger with some classical investigations that described it in more positive terms.

Andy Smith and Ivan Waddington (eds), *Doing Real World Research in Sports Studies* (London: Routledge, 2014)

Most textbooks of research methods present the research process in an idealised, mechanical and sanitised fashion, in which the research moves smoothly and unproblematically from the conceptualisation of the research problem through to the development of research methods, data collection, interpretation and writing up. In the course of this process there are no hiccups and nothing ever goes wrong. Such textbooks describe how research *ought* to be done in an ideal world, rather than how it is *actually* done in the real world. But as Elias noted, humans are both thinking and feeling animals and all social action, including research, involves both cognition and emotion and it is important therefore not to neglect what has been called the 'human face' of research.

For this book, ten major research projects in sport were selected and the authors of those projects were invited to describe how they actually undertook their research – that is, their personal 'research journeys'. These are stories of good luck and bad luck; of unanticipated findings; of twists and turns in the research process; of obstacles encountered and (sometimes) obstacles overcome; of managing difficult problems of access and interpersonal relations; of risk-taking in sometimes potentially dangerous and

threatening situations; of favourable and hostile public reactions to one's findings. They are, in short, stories of doing 'real life' research in sports studies.

Dominique Memmi, *The Body's Revenge: Essay on Contemporary Forms of Identity* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2014)

Fathers have been called on to cut the umbilical cord, breastfeeding has been encouraged again, skin-to-skin contact with newborn babies is emphasised, and some mothers are urged to look at their placentas. Parents of stillborn babies are encouraged to touch their bodies and take away a photograph. Being brought face-to-face with the actual bodies of the deceased is becoming a psychological necessity, and cremation is suspected of impeding the grieving process. Individuals who were adopted or born through gamete donation are required to have access to their biological parents. The 'presence' of the donor in transplanted organs may lead to a psychological rejection of the organ ... How has the body, around birth and death, over the past twenty years, in most Western countries, come to be so invested with psychological effects supposed to strengthen ties considered to be too loose, and identities considered to be too fluid? This study examines a range of converging gestures revealing a major cultural turning point.

Dominique Memmi, *La Seconde Vie des Bébés Morts* ['The Second Life of Dead Babies'] (Paris: Editions de l'EHESS, Collection 'Cas de figure', Vol 16, 2011), 208 pp pbk, ISBN: 9782713222825.

The historiography of death remains characterised by the paradigm of its 'denial'. How then should we consider the very real revolution in practices that has come to bear on the treatment of the bodies of babies who have died just before or after birth? During the 1990s, in all Western hospitals, whenever a child died just before or after birth, mother and father were strongly encouraged to look at and touch the body. This stems partly from the individualisation of the foetus, which

has so far proved irrepressible. But the most intriguing aspect of that process is that the child's social visibility occurs through his or her *physical* visibility. More generally, a new theory of bereavement has spread. The 'mourning process' became 'difficult' or even 'impossible' if not confronted with a body. It brings into play the contemporary definition of the fragile and shifting zone between what can and cannot be shown, when flesh is dead and vanquished.

Emmanuel Taïeb, *La Guillotine au Secret: Les Exécutions Publiques en France, 1870–1939* ['The Secrets of the Guillotine: The Public Executions in France, 1870–1939'] (Paris: Belin, collection 'Socio-histoires', 2011) 320 pp. ISBN: 9782701156965 (pb).

This book questions the shift of French executions from publicity to secrecy, that is to say the end of their public character in 1939. It examines how, in the France of the Third Republic, the capital execution is, to borrow from Foucault and Elias, a '*dispositif* [apparatus] of power', a technology that favours the deployment of sensitivities. Publicity began to become problematic because of the audience scandals, because of the competition with the prison, and because of the rejection of visible violence. The civilising process of the guillotine, would then be a 'depublicisation' process. Taïeb's book demonstrates that if one wants to understand the historical transitions from one kind of sensitiveness to another, one has to understand how 'power affects the form of sensitivities, allows some of them and erases some others, which contributes further to the production of the law and of the political events that law provides with signification' (p. 79). Emmanuel Taïeb's book will be translated in English.

Christa Buschendorf and Astrid Franke, 'The implied sociology and politics of literary texts: using the tools of relational sociology in American studies', in Winfred Fluck, Erik Redling, Sabine Sielke and Hubert Zapf (eds.), *American Studies Today: New Research Agendas* (Heidelberg, Universität Winter, 2014)

Relational sociology is a well-established approach in the social sciences. It has less often been applied to the analysis of history, and it has rarely served as an arsenal of tools for the interpretation of literary texts. Convinced not only of its great methodological potential but also of the systematic analogies between the two major representatives of figurational, respectively relational sociology, Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu, we organised a conference in 2007, which for the first time brought together scholars who applied the method to a broad variety of subjects in American history, culture, and literature. Rather than presenting once more an overview of the various concepts of relational sociology, we try to explore here how Elias's theory of civilising processes applies to the present, mainly by addressing the old but never really disappearing question of the United States' peculiar characteristics, beyond the parameters set by an ideology of 'American exceptionalism'.

John Goodwin and Henrietta

O'Connor, 'A critical reassessment of the "complexity" orthodoxy: lessons from existing data and youth "legacy" studies', in Peter Kelly and Annalies Kamp (eds), *A Critical Youth Studies for the 21st Century* (Leiden: Brill, 2014)

A central feature of the critical tradition within the social sciences is the question of established views, orthodox theoretical traditions and methodological proclivities. Whether it is the critique of abstracted empiricism and/ or grand theory by Mills or the many variants of critical theory emerging from the broader Marxist tradition, the dominant thrust of this critique 'refers to challenging the ostensible claims society makes about itself with the truth of what is actually going on' (How, 2003). However, there is perhaps much that youth studies scholars could learn from critical management studies especially the 'critical call' for a reorientation towards a historical critique of the mainstream or a wider reorientation towards 'historic turn'. For us, this call of greater historical critique resonates most clearly with our reworking of

Norbert Elias's writings on youth and the significance he placed in his published work on historically informed analyses for understanding both change and transformation across the 'diachronic gestalt'.

Artur Bogner and Gabriele

Rosenthal, 'The "untold" stories of outsiders and their significance for the analysis of (post-) conflict figurations. Interviews with victims of collective violence in Northern Uganda (West Nile)', *Forum: Qualitative Social Research (Sozialforschung) 15: 3* (2014).

We have conducted interviews with women and men who are victims of collective violence in the region of West Nile in northern Uganda, by the hands either of rebels or of members of various government armies. We show the position and relevancy of their perspectives in public discourses in and about this region. Using biographical-narrative interviews and group discussions, we highlight how their voices are subdued in public discourse in which the ex-rebels present themselves as the victims of history. The interviews illustrate that the narrative interview method is of help also in this non-European research setting as it supports the interviewees to verbalise what they have suffered. The analysis of how collective violence is thematised in the interviews as well as in public discourses brings about important insights into the perspectivity and the biases of these discourses – and how they were generated. For this reason (amongst others), it is important, when analysing the region's recent history as well as (post-) conflict figurations in general to accommodate the biographical experiences of victims of collective violence.

Brett Bowden, 'To rethink standards of civilisation, start with the end', *Millennium – Journal of International Studies 42: 3* (2014), pp. 614–31.

Many people recognise that there is a need to distinguish between states in the international system, such as on the basis of legitimacy. For much of the system's history the means of drawing such distinctions have been

standards of civilisation. For some, the need to divide and separate is unavoidable; others are more critical of standards of civilisation because of the consequences that come with exclusion or the pressure to conform. On both sides it is often downplayed that standards of civilisation are, by and large, a means to an end. If we want to rethink the way standards of civilisation work and mitigate some of their more unsavoury consequences, then we need to rethink the end they are designed to achieve, which is best captured in Kant's title 'Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View'.

Benjamin Wild, 'The civilising process and sartorial studies', *Clothing Cultures 1:3* (2014), pp. 213-224(12).

Analyses of sartorial vogues from the past and present have become increasingly cognisant of sociological paradigms, with the notable exception of Norbert Elias's seminal theory of the civilising process. This article argues for a greater awareness of the civilising process in sartorial studies, particularly its discussion of the We-I balance, which elucidates changing patterns of self-perception within a continually evolving society. Felicitously, the diachronic approach adopted by civilising process facilitates the incorporation of other, synchronic sociological models into sartorial analysis. Reference is made to the theories of Theodor Adorno, Michel de Certeau, Erving Goffman and Thorstein Veblen.

John Lever and Paul Milbourne, 'Migrant workers and migrant entrepreneurs: changing established/ outsiders relations across society and space?', *Space and Polity 18: 3* (2014), pp. 255–68.

Drawing on Elias and Scotson's theory of established-outsider relations, in this paper we argue that migrants can be outsiders in one spatial context and established in another simultaneously. Our empirical focus is the situations and experiences of migrant workers from Central and Eastern Europe in four towns across Wales. While their position as outsiders is reinforced in the

occupational spaces of meat-processing factories, outside the workplace a small but growing number of migrants are engaging in entrepreneurial activities that create new spaces of cultural diversity. We argue that this is having a wider affective impact on established/outsider relations.

Gary Sinclair, 'Retreating behind the scenes: the "less"-civilising impact of virtual spaces on the Irish heavy metal scene', in Stijn Reijnders, Koos Zwaan and Linda Duits (eds), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Fan Cultures* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2014)

There has been an increasing emphasis in fan literature on the overlap between online and 'face-to-face' music scene participation, with the consensus being that subcultural behaviour is continuous across the 'real' and 'virtual' spaces of fandom, no matter how contentious these terms may be. Typically, online spaces are used to reaffirm collective scene values, reinforce individual fan identities and facilitate face-to-face integration. This is consistent with the analysis of the Irish metal scene that is presented in this chapter. However, I focus on the high level of conflict and the ferocity of unrestrained exchanges that take place online in the battle for subcultural capital. Surprisingly overlooked in previous studies of fan cultures, Elias's figurational sociology develops explanations that consider the connections between broader structural changes and transformations in the nature of social relationships and the individual psyche, Elias locates the changing modes of behaviour through his socio-historical analysis of manners and etiquette guides from as early as the thirteenth century.

Manuel Eisner, 'From swords to words: Does macro-level change in self-control predict long-term variation in levels of homicide?', in Michael Tonry (ed.), *Crime and Justice: A Review of Research*, vol. 43. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014). ISBN: 9780226208633 (hb); 9780226208800 (ebook); ISBN: 9780226208770 (pb – April 2015).

Abstract: Over the past decade, the idea that Europe experienced a long-term

decline in homicide, interrupted by recurrent surges and at different speeds in different parts of the continent, has become widely acknowledged. So far, explanations of these trends has relied mostly on anecdotal evidence, usually broadly relying on Norbert Elias's theory of civilising processes. This paper proposes a more rigorous quantitative test of one major general theory of large-scale fluctuations in homicide rates, namely self-control theory. It presents a number of macro-level indicators for societal efforts to promote civility, self-discipline and far-sightedness, and examine the extent to which they predict fluctuations in homicide rates over the past six centuries.

[Note: Manuel Eisner's use of the word 'anecdotal' in the abstract above is unfortunate: he means 'qualitative' or 'documentary'. And I don't see that what he calls 'self-control theory' is very different from the theory of civilising processes, apart from the fact that it introduces such static concepts as 'civility', a characteristically American misunderstanding of Elias. Nevertheless, I want to draw attention to the ground-breaking importance of Manuel's labours over many years in assembling quantitative data from many countries to show general long-term trends in homicide in many countries; I drew upon his data in my 2007 book *The American Civilizing Process*.

For Eliasians, this long essay by Eisner has great theoretical significance because he proposes the use of quantifiable data on such aspects of people's behaviour as book sales and reading as *proxy* indicators for changes in habitus. Readers with long memories will remember the debates within Dutch sociological circles about the problem of 'yardsticks' for measuring changes in habitus – the *psychogenetic* dimension of civilising processes – which came to a head at the 1981 annual conference of the Dutch Sociological and Anthropological Association. (See the summary of this in my book *Norbert Elias: An Introduction* [rev. edn, Dublin: UCD Press, 1998], chapter 10.) One question was how to measure 'superego strength' and similar facts in the distant past. Manuel Eisner's idea

of using a number of proxies for this offers a new and promising approach to an old question. And, even though it was posed so long ago, the question never went away. – *SJM*

■ STOP PRESS

Sports, leisure and culture in the works of Elias

Frankfurt, 9–10 April 2015

A workshop 'Sports, leisure and culture in the works of Norbert Elias: connecting thoughts from unpublished material' will take place on 9–10 April 2015 in Frankfurt am Main. The idea of the workshop is to present some unpublished manuscripts and discuss them with international experts, in order to evaluate the material's potential to enrich figurational approaches to current research issues.

Colleagues interested in figurational sociology and the topics addressed are invited as listeners. No participation fee will be charged, but accommodation and travel costs must be paid at participants' own expense. Official registration is required by 1 March 2015 via email to haut@sport.uni-frankfurt.de. For further information please contact Jan Haut at the same address.

■ RECENT CONFERENCES

Plunging into Turmoil: Social Sciences and the Crisis – Process Sociology in Lisbon

16–17 October 2014

The conference ‘Plunging into Turmoil: Social Sciences and the Crisis’, under the auspices of the Political Observatory and Centre for Administration and Public Policies, was intended as a reflection on how the social sciences can contribute to a better understanding of crisis processes. In particular, the conference organisers, André Saramago and Isabel David, asked how the social sciences can help people to orientate themselves in crisis processes so as to better understand what these entail and how, potentially, they can come to acquire greater collective democratic control over the manner and direction of their overall development.

Andrew Linklater (Aberystwyth University), in his keynote lecture ‘Understanding crisis in long-term perspective: a process-sociological investigation’ presented an innovative process-sociological perspective on crisis processes. Further Eliasian-inspired papers were by André Saramago (Aberystwyth University) on ‘Social scientific orientation in crisis and (de)civilising processes’, and by Fernando Ampudia de Haro (European University of Lisbon) on ‘An Eliasian Approach to the Financial Crisis’.

Fittingly, the conference dinner took place in the Lisbon restaurant *Grand’ Elias* (the great Elias) – named after the famous Portuguese movie.

André Saramago

XV International Conference on Civilising Processes: The Legacy of Norbert Elias.

Mexico City, 3–7 November 2014

Organising the conference took more than a year of hard work. The call for

papers was highly successful – we received many more abstracts than we could finally accept, and we ended up with 75 papers by authors from, among other countries, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, The Netherlands, Belgium, Ireland and Canada.

Our five-day programme, with 30 sessions, was very intensive. In order to encourage discussion, we planned to make the sessions as lively as possible and for that reason all of them consisted of three papers, a prepared review by a discussant and sufficient time for questions and answers from the audience.

To promote a really international debate, for the first time in this series of conferences, 12 of the sessions were simultaneously translated from Spanish or Portuguese to English. With only three exceptions, all of the authors were able to travel to Mexico. We missed the presence of Stephen Mennell, but fortunately managed to have a presentation of his work via Skype.

The conference demonstrated how the legacy of Norbert Elias, and processual thinking in sociology, are being used for the study of diverse social settings and different countries, with special attention paid to civilising processes in Latin America.

We had sessions on: violence (including the presentation of Abram de Swaan’s new book); the history of manners; literature and society; time and knowledge; the body, sports and emotions; national and international politics; social theory, conceptualisation and methodological issues; and interdisciplinary approaches. Owing to the special interests of the Brazilian delegation, we had several sessions about the history of education. The complete program may be consulted at <http://ginazabludovsky.com/2014/10/18/congresonorbortelias/>.

Originally, it was planned to hold the conference at the Faculty of Political and Social Sciences of the University Nacional Autónoma de México, but owing to the ‘Mexican decivilising





and some of us plan to meet in the next Conference that will be held in Brazil in 2016.

I want to thank sincerely all the academics and students who attended. The Conference was possible due to the work of Monica Guitian (head of the Centro de Estudios Interdisciplinarios en Teoria Social), who worked on the organisation of the event with the support of Elena Oros and Alejandra Macías and a group of enthusiastic students. I also appreciate the co-operation of the Dean of the Political Sciences School of the UNAM, Fernando Castañeda, who gave his academic and generous financial support to the conference. Thanks also to the Norbert Elias Foundation for its interest in our work and for financially supporting Cas Wouters's air ticket, and to Ademir Gebara and the Latin American Civilisational Group for their confidence in the Mexican organising committee and the opportunity they gave us when they proposed UNAM Mexico as the venue.

Gina Zabudovsky Kuper

Science and Humanism: A Conference on the Work of Hermínio Martins

*26–27 June 2014, University of Évora,
Portugal*

This conference, jointly organised by the University of Lisbon and the University of Évora, was held to celebrate the 80th birthday of Hermínio Martins, whose name will be especially familiar to many readers of *Figurations* as co-editor with Norbert Elias and Richard Whitley of the 1982 book *Scientific Establishments and Hierarchies*.

Hermínio Martins, who was born in Mozambique, is one of the remarkable group of academics and exiles in British sociology, including among others Elias, Mannheim, Polányi, Andreski, Gellner, Dahrendorf and Mouzelis. He pursued his academic career at the universities of Leeds and Essex (where he co-founded

process, our school was closed by student protests and we were forced to move to the auditoriums of the University Science Museum during the last three days of the Conference.

The organising committee of the conference expressed its total support for the demands of the students against the terrible circumstances that led to the capture and disappearance of 43 undergraduates who were preparing themselves to be elementary school teachers at the Raúl Isidro Burgos Rural Teachers' College, Ayotzinapa. We also expressed our gratitude to the Museum authorities of UNAM who co-operated with us during the entire week and helped us to continue successfully with our programme during these difficult times. (You can see one of the photos

that Florence Delmotte took where the pictures of the disappeared students were placed below the advertisement for our congress)

The hard circumstances in some way reinforced our 'group solidarity' and did not affect at all the performance and high academic level of our programme, nor the moments for pleasurable intellectual and social encounters that we had during these days. The Conference left us with a few conclusions and a vast agenda for the future. Taking into consideration the opinion of the discussants and the audience, authors of selected papers will be working on revised versions for a forthcoming publication. We will continue discussing about Elias Legacy via different networks,

the department of sociology) and above all at the University of Oxford, where he taught for thirty years and is now Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's College. He was also a Visiting Lecturer at Harvard [where he taught and strongly influenced Stephen Mennell] and the University of Pennsylvania, and in Portugal he was adjunct Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Social Sciences in the University of Lisbon. Martins's work is also a milestone on the paths taken by Portuguese social science after the end of the dictatorship of Salazar and Caetano in 1974. His essays on the history of modern Portugal and his work in the sociology of science and technology, which bring together in sophisticated form some rarely combined historical and philosophical aspects, have become standard references for new generations of Portuguese researchers.

The conference provided a forum for discussion of his most recent book, *Experimentum Humanum: Technological Civilisation and the Human Condition*, published in Portugal in 2011 and in Brazil, in an expanded version, in 2012. In this work, Martins sets out some of his work in the sociology of science and the philosophy of technology over the last two decades. The conference was attended by two dozen Portuguese and Brazilian academic researchers, who provided an overview of current debates and the key questions in the philosophy of science and technology, social and political theory, and sociology, always in an ongoing engagement with Hermínio Martins' thought. Colleagues from some of the major Brazilian universities took part (University of São Paulo, ABC Federal University, Federal University of Pernambuco) and most of the major Portuguese universities (University of Lisbon, University of the Minho, New University of Lisbon, University of Évora).

José Luís Garcia
Helena Mateus Jerónimo
João Príncipe

■ FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Münster: a fiftieth anniversary celebration in 2015 ...

In the autumn of 2015, it will be just 50 years since Norbert Elias arrived at the University of Münster as a Visiting Professor – the first of several visiting appointments that Elias enjoyed in Germany and the Netherlands over the next decade.

The university will mark the anniversary with a series of lectures, the first of which will be given by Hermann Korte on 20 October. It is hoped that in the evening, there will be a performance of *Die Ballade vom armen Jakob*, with words by Norbert Elias and music by Hans Gál, but that is subject to confirmation. More details in the next issue of *Figurations* and on the NEF blog.

... and a date for 2016

In response to popular demand – expressed at the Leicester conference in June 2014 – a successor conference is being planned for 15–17 September 2016 in Münster. More details later.

Latin America: the next two conferences

Plans are already being made for the next two International Symposiums on Civilising Processes. The seventeenth in the series will be held at the Federal University of Espírito Santo (UFES), Vitória, Brazil, in November 2016.

Then, in 2018, it is envisaged that (in something that resembles reverse colonisation!), the eighteenth conference will be held in Portugal, thanks to the initiative of Andre Saramago and Fernando Ampudia de Haro.

Further details will be published as they become available, in the Norbert Elias Foundation blog (www.norberteliasfoundation.nl) and in *Figurations*.

■ CONTRIBUTIONS TO FIGURATIONS

The next issue of *Figurations* will be mailed in July 2015. News and notes should be sent by 1 May 2015 to the Editors at figurations@norberteliasfoundation.nl.

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

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