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Norbert Elias in Troubled Times

Figurational Approaches to the
Problems of the Twenty-First Century

Edited by
Florence Delmotte
Barbara Górnicka

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Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias

Series Editor

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São Paulo, Brazil

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Florence Delmotte • Barbara Górnicka
Editors

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of the Twenty-First Century

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ISSN 2662-3102

ISSN 2662-3110 (electronic)

Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias

ISBN 978-3-030-74992-7

ISBN 978-3-030-74993-4 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

*To Billie, Esther and Marcel
And
To Maja, Iga, Nina and Mikołaj*

FOREWORD

Elias in Troubled Times is a great contribution to the understanding of contemporaneity, of political and social matters that affect a diversity of groups and countries in the twenty-first century. Based on papers presented at the 2018 Elias Conference, held at Université Saint-Louis (Brussels, Belgium), this book shows not only great advancement in terms of understanding of our *troubled times* but, concurrently, also important improvements in the knowledge and use of Elias's concepts and theoretical approach. Paraphrasing Goudsblom (1997), by reading these chapters, one can easily notice important gains for the understanding of contemporary society from 'learning to think with Elias'.

The book is organized in three parts: Classical Themes renewed; Violence and faces of war; Established-outsiders relations and habitus issues. Texts in the first section bring concepts and themes classical to figurational sociology to the understanding of contemporary societies: functional democratization, double-binds, individualization, global interdependencies and law are related to human rights, democracy, inequalities, populism, global interdependencies and so on. Besides revisiting and renewing different aspects of Elias's figurational sociology, I hope not to be too bold by saying that some of these texts may become 'classical' themselves.

The second part of the book brings to the reader the topics of homicide, mass murder, terrorism, violence against indigenous people and, on the opposite side of the spectrum, defence policy. Violence and its counterpart, the containment of violence, are important topics that permeate

Elias's entire *oeuvre*, also a scholarship that has been developed and advanced by important figurationalists. Texts here presented should be seen as an important continuation of an already established debate.

Circumscribed around the notions of habitus and established–outsiders' relations, the third part of the book brings to the front problems of integration, discrimination and conflicts involving groups of different nationalities, cosmologies, races, generations and beliefs. Established–outsiders relations are also a rooted topic and approach among academics keen to Elias, and it finds in this book a good group of articles that adds new analytical possibilities and empirical observations to the debate.

The book closes with provocative conclusive remarks from Stephen Menell, where detachment and political motives are placed together to discuss emancipatory motives that underlie Elias's work. Reading through the 18 chapters, one will most likely agree that Elias's approach strongly contributes to a more reality-congruent understanding of our time and the acute problems we face these days. That's quite an achievement for sensitive topics like many referred to in this book, especially considering the increasing number of scholars that are moving towards more involved theoretical orientations, as Menell mentions.

Another provocative view in this conclusive chapter regards political ideologies, which Menell places along the We-I continuum. In this connection, the *freedom of the individual*, one of the most appealing ideologies of contemporaneity is seen as a philosophical myth. For Elias, sociologists are (or should be) myth hunters, and the concept of figuration defies any attempt at understanding the individual as 'completely autonomous' and detached from 'society'.

Edited books, as is the case of *Elias in Troubled Times*, usually have no closing or conclusive remarks; chapters are autonomous from each other. But, taken together with the enlightening Introduction well written by Florence Delmotte and Barbara Górnicka, Menell's text does, indeed, consist of conclusive remarks, as the editors pointed by using this for a title of the Fourth Part. His provocative remarks offer an intellectual tool not only to look at many of the problems faced in contemporaneity but also underlies discussions in most chapters of the book.

Elias in Troubled Times is the fourth book in the series *Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias*. I couldn't be happier to be able to publish this excellent book, and I am also touched by Florence and Barbara's sensitivity and nice words. I honestly want to express my gratitude and appreciation for their notable work, as well as for each author. Some of the texts here presented

can establish a straight line of discussion with the three previous books—*Gaelic Games in Society*, *Beyond the Knowledge Crisis* and *Britain and Terrorism*. I am sure this book offers a great contribution to figurational sociology, and hope this series will continue publishing creative, provocative and professional pieces as this.

Campinas, Brazil
February 2021

Tatiana Savoia Landini

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is a follow-up to a conference organized at the University Saint-Louis in Brussels, Belgium, in December 2018, entitled ‘Global Interdependencies: What’s New in the Human Society of Individuals?’. It was devoted to the current political and academic relevance of the work of Norbert Elias. This conference was itself the fruit of sometimes long collaboration between certain Figurati, the members of the Norbert Elias Foundation, and from a number of universities, first and foremost those from Leicester and Dublin. The event was attended by over a hundred researchers of all ages and different disciplines from all over the world: including those who contributed to this volume, relying on the richness of the exchanges made possible during this event. It is for this very reason, we would first like to thank once again all of those who made this conference possible: Stephen Mennell (University College Dublin) and Jason Hughes (University of Leicester and Norbert Elias Foundation), Denis Duez, Anne-Alexandra Fournier and Teresa Elola-Calderon (Université Saint-Louis—Bruxelles), among many others.

Secondly, we would like to thank Tatiana Landini, the editor of this collection, for having placed her trust in us and for having accepted our proposal to rework and publish the works which, among the best presented in 2018, dealt most explicitly with the political and social problems apparently typical of ‘our time’. We would also like to thank her for having given us the beautiful title of this volume, initially reserved for another project to be carried out with her late husband. We would like to pay a tribute to all the works previously published, thanks to her and the late

François Dépelteau. It is thanks to their openness and dynamism that we are now welcomed by the 'Elias series', and we are grateful to them for that. We would also like to thank our publisher Palgrave Macmillan and its collaborators for their constant help and support at all stages. Finally, we thank our reviewers and supporters, as well as our attentive readers, among which are Hugo Canihac, Christophe Majastre and Damien Simonneau.

The publication of a book is often a long and complex process, and this one was full of pitfalls, very much unrelated to the publishing process itself. It was therefore only possible thanks to the mutual relations of friendship and esteem existing between all the protagonists, contributors, readers, editors, reviewers and colleagues. It is because of this, we are particularly pleased with the outcome of this book project and we would like to thank them all very warmly.

Praise for *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*

“Beautifully written, this book engages thoughtfully with current issues within a solid understanding of their historical background. It covers a hugely impressive range of topics, developing an innovative mobilisation of Elias’s sociological perspective that will underpin a wide variety of new research efforts. In a world becoming increasingly interdependent and complex, this book provides an essential guide to developing the kind of understanding of the world in which we live required for a genuinely democratic politics.”

—Robert van Krieken, *Emeritus Professor, The University of Sydney, Australia*

“Over thirty years ago Norbert Elias emphasised that rising levels of human interconnectedness had increased the subjection of individuals to global processes over which they had little or no control. Citing his comment, the editors of this excellent volume stress the continuing validity of that observation in the present era. They have brought together a stellar cast of international scholars to reconsider and extend Elias’s analysis of the social and political integration of human societies.

Readers will encounter in this volume an unusually wide-ranging collection of innovative papers that revisit core Eliasian ideas, provide new insights into violence and war, and explore through diverse empirical cases the classical analysis of relations between established groups and outsiders. The result is an inventive study which is essential reading for students of the endlessly surprising consequences and challenges of the global integration of modern societies.”

—Andrew Linklater, *Emeritus Professor of International Politics,
Aberystwyth University, UK*

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Troubled Times: Editors' Introduction

Florence Delmotte and Barbara Górnicka

*We may or may not welcome the increasing integration of humankind.
What is quite certain is that, to begin with, it increases the impotence of
the individual in relation to what is happening at the top level of
humanity.*

—Elias (2010a [1987], 149)

1.1 OUR TROUBLED TIMES

When we accepted with enthusiasm the title suggested by Tatiana Landini, for this book, *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*, we had no idea how relevant it would prove to be in the academic year of 2020–2021. Of course, it was already relevant in 2019, when this project was born. We could ask

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Switzerland AG 2021

F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_1

‘Are not all times “troubled”?’ That is why our aim behind this volume was to integrate figurational sociology with the long-term relational perspectives, which make it easier to understand and explain the crucial social and political problems of our times. These include in particular the re-emergence of populisms in the four corners of the globe; a dramatically hesitant, not to say calamitous, management of threats to our ecosystems; the deterioration of the conditions of migration and policies that remain mostly inhuman or have become more and more inhumane; the maintenance or even renewal of a division of the world into nations; the difficulties of democratic transitions or even the effective curbing of the fight against inequalities; the correlated resurgence of exclusion of all kinds and at all levels; and the relative, but undeniable, failure of the domestication of violence by, within, and between states. We could not have imagined in 2019, though, that these themes, both classic and prominently topical as they are, would be brutally relegated to the background of our daily concerns by COVID-19. The pandemic way of life suddenly took up all the space, both in the most intimate sphere and in the public sphere, from the most local level to the most global one.

For obvious reasons of the timing of it all, none of the contributions gathered in this volume deals with the causes and effects of the pandemic, even if some authors managed to touch upon it. At the time when most of the authors of this book were delivering their first drafts, the whole world had only just become aware of the existence of this pandemic. A majority of people living on the planet were about to enter a ‘confinement’, a physically distanced way of life or ‘lockdown’ for the months to come, and to learn the ‘new rules’ of behaviour (Blomert 2020). Those were dictated by the imperative of distancing—incorrectly called ‘*social* distancing’, when it was only meant to be *physical*, even though in reality it was also and above all social—which generated new relations and forms of exclusion. People who until then took for granted living, eating, working, studying, dancing, with each other—as well as hugging each other—and travelling regularly around the world were all of a sudden forced to stay at home, to wear a mask, no longer to touch each other, and to avoid others on the streets. Just like during wartime, politicians started to seriously discuss imposing curfews, which were finally imposed on communities. As we write this, we are still living with the shock and upheaval of the medical, economic, political, and psychological consequences of the ‘first wave’ of the pandemic and now waiting for the second series of complete

confinement and lockdowns while still grappling with the most serious side-effects and consequences of the first one.

Yet it is not the first global epidemic. Nor is it as if we were discovering for the first time that humanity could pose a very serious threat to itself, or that a global catastrophe would most probably come 'from within' (Latour 2020b), or that our lifestyles, for decades now, were not without impact on our rights, freedoms, and chances for survival. At the very least, this crisis questions our incomprehension or wilful ignorance of the messages delivered, for example, by the sociologists Ulrich Beck (1992 [1986]) or Bruno Latour (1993 [1991], 2017), by philosophers such as Michel Foucault (1976, 1977 [1975]), or in the novels of Albert Camus (2012 [1947]) and Orwell (1949). We may well think—or pretend—that the world has changed or is changing, that today's epidemics are not yesterday's, that the threats are not the same, that we have more resources—which, despite being true to some extent, does not change the 'bitter truth' that we should have been more and better prepared. Indeed, we are not. We can believe—or still pretend to believe—that Orwell's Big Brother was only intended to portray the Soviet 'enemy' or that 'China' is not 'Europe' and that 'North America' is not 'South America'. It is to ignore a double reality that is nevertheless inescapable. Firstly, the world of today, and the world of tomorrow, necessarily inherits the world of yesterday, the best and the worst. Secondly, we are more than ever interdependent with one another across the surface of the globe; to distinguish between 'us' and 'them' most of the time serves only to provide us with a version of often short-lived comfort at a cheap price. We may also believe that science and medicine will be able to solve *all* our problems and that we will be saved by the famous 'vaccine'. But did history not teach us that science and technology definitely cannot solve everything? Is this not, in other words, another example of the persistence of a 'magical' way of thinking, based on myths and long-established ethos?

The human sciences are often reluctant to intervene in the face of events (Bensa and Fassin 2002), and this is a first reason why sociologists should probably not be surprised that they are less heard and listened to than virologists and economists. Yet both groups have the understanding and the critical resources to do so differently. The sociology of Elias provides an example of this through its relentless fights against the retreat of the social sciences into the present; against the hyper-specialisation of knowledge; and against the visions sharply distinguishing societies and individuals, which inadvertently and evidently lead to the global social

welfare and individual liberties and needs being put in direct opposition to each other. This is why it is important for us not only to recall, but also to question, the messages this sociology carries, and for us to use, or even improve, the tools it has bequeathed to us to better apprehend our troubled times.

At the end of the eighteenth century, even the most reactionary thinkers were well aware that a ‘return to the world of the past’, to the *Ancien Régime*, was precisely not desirable insofar as this old world itself had directly contributed to its own destruction by the French Revolution. It is at least desirable today that even the most moderate progressives agree that we need to discover all the *mental* ‘necessary precautions’ (*gestes barrières*, in French) that would help us to guard against the return of a ‘normality’ that is actually as incapable of preventing crises as it is of coping with them (Latour 2020a). From this point of view, Elias’s thinking is imbued with the concern to help men and women act in a more ‘reality-congruent’ and less emotional way. In order to do precisely this, it aims to develop and transmit sociological tools more adapted to the most concrete problems of the time. Paradoxically on the surface, but only on the surface, it almost always begins to take a step back from them, to consider them in a more comprehensive approach, and to put them back into a longer-term perspective.

1.2 TROUBLES THAT ARE NOT ONLY OURS OR OF OUR TIMES

Some of my readers may perhaps wish me to tell only about aspects of humankind’s development that are pleasant and hopeful. But such a selection is the true meaning of the *trahison des clercs*. We may or may not welcome the increasing integration of humankind. What is quite certain is that, to begin with, it increases the impotence of the individual in relation to what is happening at the top level of humanity. (Elias 2010a [1987], 149)

This quote is from the late 1980s. More than 30 years later it seems that nothing has happened to contradict the assessment of the increasing integration of humankind as being a major trend or more exactly that ‘integration–disintegration’ tensions that are part and parcel of the contemporary world. However, we have more difficulties in imagining how it would be possible to see only the ‘pleasant and hopeful aspects’ of human

development or even what they finally are. We are less doubtful that Elias was right to wonder whether humankind would survive the violence of our times and whether the civilising processes would outweigh the de-civilising pushes. And to see Elias's theory of the processes of civilisation as a revival of the theories of progress, both optimistic and ethnocentric, even celebrating the triumph of the West, is the result of a fundamental and easily demonstrable misreading (Dunning 2003, 42–43, about Zigmunt Bauman's interpretation of Elias's theory in *Modernity and the Holocaust* [1989]; see also Dunning and Mennell 1998, 340 ff.). 'The violent disputes between people, which we call wars, have been a part of the fate of human beings, of their conditions of life, for as far back as we can see', wrote Elias in *Humana Conditio* (2010b, 78), in the context of the 40th anniversary of the end of the Second World War (see Landini 2017, 13). Is it not therefore most probable that the unpredictability of the dangers—first of all due to wars or other violent conflicts, but not only—will once again cause the 'armour of civilised conduct' to crumble (Elias 2012, 576)? Or alternatively, have the most apparently civilised societies not come to terms with 'compartmentalisation', allowing them to keep out of sight their aspects of 'dyscivilisation' (Abram de Swaan 2001), especially in regard to natives in colonial times, and to migrants, in our own?

All of the contributions gathered here are based on the conviction that the processes of civilisation that mark the long-term evolution of human societies refer to tendential transformations of their structures, which affect both the individual and psychic levels and the global level. These tendential transformations include a shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-restrains; the development of a social standard of behaviour and feeling, which generates the emergence of more even, all-round, stable, and differentiated self-restraint; and an increase in the scope of mutual identification between people. But the contributors are as strongly attached to the reality-congruent hypothesis that such long-term processes should never, by definition, be taken for granted and that, on the other hand, they are in most cases 'Janus-faced', two-sided, and ambivalent. If history is therefore not more cyclical than linear, not more inescapably inclined to progress than to decline, our contributors' common assumption is also that the past and the present enlighten each other and finally that the theoretical and the empirical enrich each other. This book thus carries a double ambition, which each chapter helps to achieve and honour. It is a question of testing Elias's proposals facing persistent, if

not completely new, political and social problems and of nourishing this sociological approach with emerging themes and innovative research fields and methods.

While all the chapters in this volume are thus necessarily marked by a strong coherence, they also show an equally strong and deliberate openness and pluralism, which is also strongly in line with the message delivered by Elias. Not only do the authors from different academic trajectories and continents—sociology, anthropology, history, political science, International Relations, and other disciplinary sub-fields—they are, moreover, often concerned to question this type of division, as well as other cleavages that continue to shape thinking on politics and policy. Above all, with regard to socio-political phenomena and psycho-social transformations, one of these erroneous dichotomies places what is happening in the state domestic or ‘internal’ or domestic order in opposition to what is happening ‘on the international scene’ or between survival units beyond their borders. It is not, of course, that national borders no longer exist—on the contrary. Let us rather say, simply, that they are changing and so are the issues at stake. It has never been possible—and no doubt this is even more true in the global era—realistically to think separately about what is happening inside and outside national borders, at the most local and individual scale and at the most international and world-wide scale.

This book thus aims to promote a diversity of views on multiple challenges of our time, illuminating them both in small details and globally, but above all without blinkers. This diversity and the openness are at the same time intended and partly fortuitous. They come from a call for papers that was intended to be as open as possible. The table of contents was then constructed in a ‘bottom up’ mode, on the basis of the selected proposals. The structure of the book reflects not only both this diversity and this overlap of the themes and approaches, but also a certain coherence of the contributions and their ability to complement each other.

1.3 RENEWING CLASSICAL THEMES

The first part of the book testifies to this diversity of themes. Some of the contributions gathered there are intended to revisit classical themes of Elias-inspired figurational sociology in the light of the challenges of time, which put them to the test, so to speak. That is the case of the second chapter of this book, by Nico Wilterdink, who re-examines the idea that the history of societies is generally marked by a tendency that Elias called

'functional democratisation'. Wilterdink questions Elias's thesis in the light of the transformations observed from the last quarter of the twentieth century, lending credence to the idea of a 'backtracking' or a reversal of the trend, above all in economic matters. Without denying that de-democratisation has been a dominant trend within Western state-societies during the past few decades, Wilterdink's chapter shows that there are nevertheless tendencies still ongoing for functional democratisation, particularly with regard to 'ethnic' or 'racial', gender and generational relations. In dissecting the figures and breaking down the processes of functional de-democratisation and democratisation into their various aspects, Wilterdink thus aims to de-legitimise an ideological reading that unilaterally conclude in positing an overall backtracking, which would not be of much help in understanding the challenges and threats of the times.

Other chapters rather contribute to diversifying the subjects classically dealt with by the sociology of processes. For some, they explore subjects which, if not totally new, have recently been renewed or brought back to the forefront. The third chapter takes note of the renewed success of populisms after the 2008 crisis, particularly but not only 'right-wing' populisms, of which the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States is just one proof, albeit a paradigmatic one, among others. In this chapter, entitled '*Vox Populi* then and now', Matt Clement gives a good example of how understanding the present and the past are mutually enriching, as he goes back to ancient Rome to better understand, through diachronic comparison, the complexity, springs, dangers, and potentialities of contemporary populisms. It is also a question of getting rid of the misleading idea that populism is only the prerogative of 'sick' societies and of restoring the plural and sometimes innovative character of populism(s). In a sense, it is also a question of 'de-ideologising' a critique of populism which, in the absence of such work, remains of little use in imagining a genuinely democratic way out of the crises of capitalism in the twenty-first century.

The next two chapters take relatively unexplored paths from the sociology of figurations and processes, those relating to the genesis of law and rights and to their transformations. In Chap. 4, Marta Bucholc returns to the long-lasting social process that comes to impose the 'rule of law' model, even in societal contexts that have proved to be relatively reluctant to enforce individual rights. She focuses more specifically on the case of former communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Her contribution shows how the sociology of Elias provides a better understanding

of the development of the model and of the crisis experienced since 2010 in state-societies that have not been able to adopt it over the long term and where political forces are gaining ground or dominating that radically challenge it. Finally, Bucholtz suggests that their study from such an approach allows them to be considered as living ‘laboratories’ and is therefore potentially instructive for other regions of the world facing similar systemic transformations and tensions.

In the following chapter, Ludivine Damay and Florence Delmotte look at human rights and return to the idea that they are only the last utopia of our time, unrelated to the Rights of Man of the eighteenth century, and the thesis that twentieth-century human rights are, on the contrary, a continuation of the latter. After recalling the complicated relationship that classical sociology has with the study of these rights, the authors show the merits of Elias’s approach, which once again overcomes frozen oppositions. Indeed, historical sociology makes it possible to understand how human rights were forged in close connection with the development of the state, and yet, in the second half of the twentieth century, they came to question it by giving individuals a new place in a now globalised world, where humanity has no enemy other than itself and is therefore the only true survival unit.

Chapters 6 and 7 for their part explore more radically ‘new’ topics. In her chapter Adele Bianco investigates the civilising potential of digitalisation. She develops and actualises Elias’s reflections on technology in a context which societies are experiencing a whole set of technical and organisational transformations, which invite the whole of society to engage in an adaptation process, based on a necessity for all to learn how to manage new technologies. Such an approach is also helpful in that, here again, it allows going beyond a commonly agreed rhetoric about the digital revolution or the dangers of de-civilisation it represents.

Ecology, through the ecological risk sociology of Ulrich and Elizabeth Beck, is also at stake in the last chapter, by Alexander Mack, of this first part. The author underlines that there has been relatively little engagement between process sociology and risk scholarship, while both share common commitment to understanding and improving ‘means of orientation’—a notion that is definitely at core of many contributions gathered in this book. Mack therefore proposes a constructive critique of the Beck’s thinking, in order to make the alliance between the sociology of processes and the sociology of risk stronger and better able to study and unravel the dual links in which contemporary societies are caught: not only in

ecological matters, but also in economic, migration, and health matters; in other words, increasingly intertwined sources of violence inequalities.

1.4 VIOLENCE AND FACES OF THE WAR

The second part of the book is in a way more homogeneous, focused on the more classical theme of violence. Each chapter, however, provides a singular and original angle on the theme. The one by Xavier Rousseaux and Quentin Verreycken casts an historian's eye on the theory of civilising processes. They are interested in its reception by historians, including 'amendments' to it, and point out that the work of Elias is a major reference for historians of violence and criminal justice. In their text, Rousseaux and Verreycken discuss more precisely the articulation that it makes possible between three historical figurations: the long-term decline of homicides in 'pacified' state-societies—associated with the civilising process in the strict sense; the sudden and massive eruptions of extreme violent behaviour that call for the notions of de- or dys-civilisation; and finally transitional or reconstructive justice, as processes that emerge at the end of certain conflicts, which suggests the existence of processes of 're-civilisation'. They also touch on their Belgian case, in which the divisive experience of the Second World War and its aftermath is as interesting and atypical as it is little known.

In their chapter, Dominique Linhardt and Cédric Moreau de Bellaing then tackle the inescapable subject of terror and terrorism, which has regularly dominated the political and scientific debate on contemporary forms of violence. Here too, however, it is a question of shifting the gaze. The authors thus consider the different interpretations that can be made of violent conflicts and their transformation in the context of a discussion, also taken up by Nico Wilterdink in the second chapter, on functional (de-)democratisation. Rather than seeing terrorism or war as a pure 'throwback' to violence of an archaic nature, Linhardt and Moreau de Bellaing argue that 'regressive' violence accompanies and reacts to the process of civilisation, becoming an integral part of it. This could only be understood if Elias's analyses of ideological radicalisation and its impact on the extreme violence of the twentieth century were taken seriously.

The two case studies-based chapters that follow show yet other ways of studying contemporary violence and some other faces of the war. That of Beatriz Rocha Ferreira, Marina Vinha and Veronice Lovato Rossato dissects, based on a historical and ethnographic survey, the physical and

symbolic violence developed by the Brazilian state against the Kaiowá and Gurarani indigenous peoples, in the *Reserva Indígena de Dourados*, and reconstructs the stages of its development. The authors show how such a socio-historical perspective is useful for considering issues that unfortunately remain highly topical for Brazil today. For its part, the final chapter of this second section, from Delphine Deschaux-Dutard, explores in an original way the domesticated face of violence in the frame of (European) defence studies. It also proves the vitality of process sociology and its ability to enter scientific fields supposed to be highly ‘specialised’ and a bit hermetic to generalist and comprehensive sociological approaches, and to long-term historical perspectives, such as EU studies and more particularly those which focus on actors and public policies. According to Deschaux-Dutard, since the 1990s the European defence policy constitutes a specific social configuration within the European Union and it is particularly interesting to investigate the way French and German politico-military actors historically shaped it as such. Drawing on extensive fieldwork, this chapter thus also reveals the relevance of the concept of habitus for analysing the recurring strategic divergences that stand in the way of making European defence policy more concrete than a long-lasting but unattainable objective.

1.5 ESTABLISHED–OUTSIDERS RELATIONS AND HABITUS ISSUES

Established–outsiders relations and figurations and their transformations logically constitute a major point of interest in Elias’s work. It proves to be helpful for apprehending how differentials of power, or very asymmetric power ratios between groups, have been shaped and to what extent they can evolve when contemporary societies seem severely in search for new balances at all levels and subject to uncertain identity reconfigurations. In the third part of this volume, the contributions illustrate the topicality and plasticity of the established and outsiders’ dynamics theory in order to highlight very different case studies.

The first chapter of this third part even definitely enlarges our intellectual horizons by proposing a particularly innovative and constructive dialogue. Aurélie Lacassagne and Dana Hickey thus provide a respectful conversation between Elias’s theory and Indigenous perspectives, which have indeed much in common. Elias’s perspective, although mainly

focused on Western civilising processes, proves to be open to the richness of outsiders' views and is precious in a context where there can be observed an enduring colonial legacy, discrimination, and violence against the formerly—or still—colonised people. That remains one of the biggest challenges of our time to overcome, for the authors of the chapter. For their part, the Indigenous perspectives, thanks to their particular ways of living and thought experiences, have as much to bring to the understanding of common—but not commonly endured—troubles as to the particular features of the living standards of the established which favour these problems. To take just one example, the contribution of indigenous knowledge is crucial in the current debates on climate issues and the place of ecosystems.

In Chap. 13, Steven Loyal introduces us to the experiences of asylum seekers in Ireland. Building on Bourdieu's and Elias's theories, he analyses the specificities of the radically asymmetric power relations between the Irish State and migrants, for it seems obvious that in terms of 'function', asylum seekers need states and that states do not need asylum seekers. Restating these issues in historical perspective characteristic of the Irish context, his study focuses on the 'Direct Provision and Dispersal' system. That is a key mechanism set up in 2000, under which asylum seekers migrants have to apply seek for satisfying housing and subsistence needs. In Chap. 14, Merle Schatz takes us then to Inner Mongolia and deals with relations between Chinese and Mongolian groups, that she describes both as convinced they are the only rightful established in this autonomous region in Northern China. It is fascinating how observations on law (minority laws and customary) and on daily life interactions and respective expressions of feelings of superiority and inferiority both confirm and enrich Elias's hypotheses of how such kind of relations work. Through the example of 'grassland management' the study reveals that officially authorised practices most often are not compatible with living practices and ideas, and more generally that co-existence between communities have perpetually to be negotiated at the confluence of institutions, convictions, and requisites and habits of the daily life.

The two following chapters deal with generational figurations or relations between generation issues in another region of the world, which is periodically at the centre of attention: Palestine. Here again, the gaze is distanced, in relation to more immediately burning issues or 'troubles', and in this also lies the interest of these two contributions. In his chapter Hendrik Hinrichsen examines the development of a figuration of an

‘established–outsiders’ kind between generations in Palestinian society in the West Bank. Hinrichsen bases his discussion not only on the reflection formulated by Elias about figurations of generations in his *Studies on the Germans*, but also on an analysis of changes in relations between classes in the West Bank. His study shows the differential of power between the ‘Intifada generation’ in the 1980s, shaped in a context of intense mobilisation, and the ‘Oslo generation’, by reference to the peace project put in place in the 1990s, which has definitely less power and its members less chances to give their life a meaning. In Chap. 16, Alon Helled then addresses the question of the role of historians in the shaping of the Israeli national habitus, in connection with the construction of the Hebrew state. This is a process in which one can detect both profound changes, since the creation of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (1926–28), and a certain continuity. Historians of the first generation, often trained in Europe, are marked by the paradigm of nation building. After the creation of the Israeli state, historians of the young state are associated with ‘civic republicanism’ in a context where there is a growing debate about memory and identity. More recently, a third generation that is keen to demystify a certain relationship with the past is openly questioning the work of the older generations. In an ultimately very Eliasian vein, this chapter thus attempts to untangle the threads knotted within Israeli society, politics, and the academic world, which contributes to a better understanding of the processes of habitus formation and reformation.

Finally, the last chapter of this third part comes back to the story of the book first and foremost associated with the theory of relations between established and outsiders. Reinhard Blomert underlines how unachieved and atypical can appear the synchronic study realised by John L. Scotson on Winston Parva communities that formed the basis of the book published under two names, his and Norbert Elias’s, at a turning point of Elias’s academic career. Discussing the critiques made of the book and notably arguing a problem of authorship, Blomert also proposes a scenario for studying how comparable figurations may develop over time, evoking trajectories of war refugees and their integration process in Germany after 1945.

1.6 CONCLUSION: THE NEED FOR NEW MEANS OF ORIENTATION

This volume does not, of course, go through *all* the problems of our time. Fortunately, it has never had this ambition, but rather that of giving an informed and stimulating overview of them, by specialists in each field, and all of them more or less in a figurational sociological perspective, concerned with history and theoretical, methodological, and disciplinary openness. One omission is religion. The question of the religious, though inescapable, is not tackled head-on in this book. It is perhaps not so surprising, for religion 'does not play a prominent role in Norbert Elias's by now classic study *The Civilising Process*', not so much because of an underestimation of its influence, but rather because of the very specific relationship that Elias's work has always had with that of Max Weber (Goudsblom 2003, 24). More surprising maybe is the absence in the present volume of the question of gender, of gender-related power differentials, and of the reconfigurations of identities relating to the transformations of these established-outsiders relations of a particular type. Yet Elias considered that the twentieth century was probably the scene of one of the most important revolutions the Western civilising process had ever known, namely, the access of women, the symbolic second half of humanity, to the recognition of a long-denied identity of their own (Heinich 2000, 16–17). There remains, therefore, the prospect of devoting a future work to the contemporary developments of this 'revolution', and to their genesis, within the framework of this same collection.

In this book, we were interested in the way Elias's thought sheds light on the political problems of our time, problems that are always 'new' but always linked to the past and never only political. We do not think that by doing so we are betraying the ideal of a detached understanding, which is the basis of the ethics of Elias's sociology and which condenses its emancipatory 'message': a message that is necessarily political and even democratic. Stephen Mennell comes back to this in his 'Concluding Reflections': the need for 'new means of orientation' does not dry up, but is indeed growing.

For Andrew Linklater (2020), no one knows whether we are currently just in a phase of transition or what transition it is. What will be the role of global ecological civilising processes? What will be the role of the 'Chinese model'? Will humanity as a whole soon become the frame of reference for developing these new 'means of orientation' on a larger scale? Or does the

national-populist answer as a ‘drag effect of the nationalist loyalties’ have a long life ahead of it in facing the increasing powerlessness of individuals? Facing all these questions and problems, what can the social sciences finally do? In the end, one must argue that we simply cannot abandon our role, but rather need to continue to work tirelessly on new ways of thinking, learning, and teaching.

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PART I

Renewing Classical Themes



The Question of Inequality: Trends of Functional Democratisation and De-democratisation

Nico Wilterdink

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Fifty years ago it seemed quite clear: societies, or at least Western or ‘advanced’ societies, were moving in the direction of more equality. Since the nineteenth century, autocratic regimes had given way to parliamentary democracies, mass parties and labour unions had gained power, and class and status inequalities had diminished. After the Second World War, this development accelerated in several respects. Unprecedented economic growth led to considerable improvements of income and consumption levels among lower and middle strata; welfare state provisions were vastly extended; women entered the labour market in large numbers and became more equal to men; young people gained autonomy in relation to parents, teachers, and bosses; minority rights were increasingly recognised and put

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into practice; and social interaction styles became more informal and egalitarian.

When Norbert Elias introduced the concept of ‘functional democratisation’ in 1970, these processes were in full swing, and there were hardly any reasons to suppose that they would not continue in the same direction. Democratisation in the wide sense could be regarded as part and parcel of modernisation processes extending over centuries.

Some ten years later, however, a counter movement set in, which was particularly manifest in the economic sphere. After decades of equalisation, income and wealth inequalities started to grow (Wilterdink 1995; OECD 2011; Piketty 2014; Alvaredo et al. 2018). Top management incomes exploded, whereas median wage incomes declined, stagnated, or rose only moderately. Material precariousness among lower and middle strata increased with declining job and income security, the pursuit of ‘flexibility’ in the labour market, and reductions in government-guaranteed social insurances and public provisions. Labour unions lost members and bargaining power. Private companies, on the other hand, increased their power in relation to national governments and organised labour. The impact of ‘big capital’ on political decision-making grew, and collusion between company managers, bankers, and wealthy entrepreneurs and shareholders, on the one hand, and politicians and public officials, on the other, appeared to become stronger, most clearly in the United States. All these tendencies of increasing inequality of power and privileges that started in the last quarter of the twentieth century continue to the present day. As some authors have argued (Mennell 2007, 311–314; Mennell 2014; Alikhani 2014, 2017; Wilterdink 2016, 2017), there are good reasons to speak of a *reversal* of the trend of functional democratisation during the past few decades—a tendency of *functional de-democratisation*.

Yet not all social changes are indicative of such a reversal. In this paper I argue that, while functional de-democratisation has been a dominant trend within Western state-societies during the past few decades, it is not an all-inclusive global trend. With respect to developments along the axes of gender and ethnicity and in the relations between Western and non-Western societies, we can see, rather, tendencies of ongoing functional democratisation. The interconnections between these different developments will be elucidated, and recent trends will be placed in a broader historical and theoretical framework.

The argument in this paper moves from general to more specific and from a long-term perspective to a focus on recent changes and current

issues. First, I will discuss the concept of functional democratisation as proposed by Elias, and its counterpart, functional de-democratisation. As I point out subsequently, these polar twin-concepts do represent not only different ‘realities’, but also a classical controversy regarding the direction of the development of social inequality. In connection to this debate, I proceed with a systematic discussion of ways to assess trends of functional democratisation and de-democratisation. This is followed by a proposal for an explanation of these trends. On this basis, I present an interpretation and explanation of recent developments. I conclude with a few remarks about the use and applicability of the concepts of functional democratisation and de-democratisation and their relevance for understanding current issues of democracy and inequality.

2.2 THE CONCEPTS OF FUNCTIONAL DEMOCRATISATION AND DE-DEMOCRATISATION

Elias introduced the concept of functional democratisation in his book on the fundamentals of sociology, *Was ist Soziologie?* (2006 [1970]; English translation *What is Sociology?* 2012b [1978]). The origins of sociology, Elias argued here, can only be understood in connection with a shift in the internal balance of power in European state-societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which comprised the ‘reduction of power differentials between governments and the governed’ and the ‘reduction of power differentials between different strata’ (Elias 2012b, 61–62). These two interconnected processes were crucial aspects of an overall social transformation in the direction of a ‘reduction of all power differentials between different groups, including those between men and women, parents and children’ (Elias 2006, 82–88; 2012b, 59–64).¹ It is this encompassing trend that Elias termed ‘functional democratisation’. He spoke of *functional* democratisation to indicate that the concept is much

¹The last quotation is my translation of a part of a sentence in Elias (2006 [1970], 88), which slightly differs from the published English translation in Elias (2012b [1978], 63). Elsewhere, Elias also refers to long-term trends of diminishing power differentials; see, for example, Elias (2012a [1994]), where he speaks of ‘diminishing contrasts’ between social classes in the course of the civilising process (422 ff.) and ‘increasing pressure from below’ on the upper class as part of this process (464 ff.); Elias (2010 [1991], 186, 205), where he connects functional democratisation with the formation of nation-states; and Elias (2013, 27–34), where he focuses on emancipatory movements in the twentieth century in relation to informalisation.

broadly than political or institutional democratisation. More specifically, the adjective ‘functional’ refers to the basic explanation of the process: it is rooted in changes in the *Funktionszusammenhänge*, the ‘functional nexuses’ between interdependent people. Functional democratisation occurs when less powerful groups become functionally more important for relatively powerful groups and/or when the latter lose functions in relation to the former. This implies that relations of interdependence become less one-sided and more symmetrical and, as a consequence, power balances more even.

For the same reasons we can speak of functional *de*-democratisation, referring to trends of widening power differences. Functional de-democratisation occurs when less powerful groups become functionally less important for relatively powerful groups and/or when the latter strengthen their functions in relation to the former. As a consequence, relations of interdependence become less symmetrical and power balances more uneven.

Though Elias never used the term ‘functional de-democratisation’, this notion is fully in line with his approach. He advanced the concept of functional democratisation to describe a dominant trend in particular societies (‘most European countries’, ‘the more developed industrial countries’) during a particular period (‘in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries’, ‘over the last two or three hundred years’).² He did not contend that this trend took place in all human societies at all times, nor that it would continue forever in the future.³ In his view, social developments are, in principle, reversible; they exhibit regularities but are not pre-determined, fixed, or inevitable; depending on varying conditions, they can change direction (Elias 2012b, 153–170).

This paper follows this approach. I will try to elucidate regularities and contingencies in trends of functional democratisation and de-democratisation and to explain these trends on the basis of the sociological notion that the relations of interdependence in which people are enmeshed are by implication power relations. More specifically, I assume, following

² The quoted specifications are on p. 60 and p. 62 of Elias (2012b).

³ In this respect I disagree with Cas Wouters (2016, 2019), who rejected the whole notion of ‘functional de-democratisation’, criticising in particular Stephen Mennell (2007, 2014), and advanced the bold but unfounded thesis that functional democratisation has been and continues to be a dominant trend throughout human history. While I do not enter into an explicit discussion with Wouters here, the present paper implies a clear rejection of his position.

Elias, that the more one-sided and asymmetrical the interdependencies between groups and individuals are, the wider the power differences, and vice versa. Power differences generate social inequalities—that is, inequalities in the distribution of social privileges or rewards, ranging from material life chances to marks of honour. I regard changes in social inequalities as manifestations and indications of changes in power–interdependence relations and attempt to explain them accordingly.

2.3 THE CLASSICAL CONTROVERSY: TOCQUEVILLE VERSUS MARX

Elias was, of course, not the first to observe a long-term trend of overall democratisation in modern societies. His most famous predecessor was Alexis de Tocqueville, who already in 1835, in the first volume of *De la démocratie en Amérique*, argued that Europe would inevitably follow America on the road to more equality (Tocqueville 1990 [1835, 1840]). In a way akin to Elias's later conceptualisation, Tocqueville conceived 'democracy' much more broadly than in the political–institutional sense; beyond that, it referred to an egalitarian ethos which permeated all spheres of social life, including everyday social intercourse in private and public settings. The living democracy that Tocqueville observed when he travelled through the United States presented for him an anticipation of what was bound to happen in Europe. Here, too, the trend towards more equality was well under way, but still at a much less advanced stage than in America. The French Revolution was one dramatic moment in this long-term development (Tocqueville 1967 [1856]).

At the time when Tocqueville wrote this, a contrary view was developed by Karl Marx and other socialist thinkers (see, e.g. Marx and Engels (1976 [1848])). For them, the French Revolution did not mark the transition to a more democratic and less unequal society, but the replacement of one ruling class, the land-owning aristocracy, by another, the capital-owning entrepreneurial bourgeoisie. Under the veil of legal equality, the transition from feudalism to industrial capitalism brought new forms of exploitation, class polarisation, and a widening gap between the rich and the poor. Only a socialist revolution could stop and reverse this trend of growing inequality.

Tocqueville and Marx represent two contrasting answers to the question that continues to evoke political and scholarly debates: the question

of whether social inequalities and power differences are decreasing or increasing. Both thinkers could sustain their views with empirical observations about the societies in which they lived. Tocqueville referred primarily to the political and ideological transformations that had taken place in Europe since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which aristocratic privileges had been eroded, and the ideas of inclusive citizenship, equality before the law, and people's sovereignty had taken root in spite of much resistance and counter movements. Marx, on the other hand, focused on material living conditions and labour relations and observed that the growth of production and the accumulation of private wealth induced by capitalist industrialisation went hand in hand with grinding poverty and worsening labour conditions among the working classes. Both Tocqueville and Marx were right, in certain respects.

This classical controversy illustrates that trends of decreasing and increasing social inequality, functional democratisation and de-democratisation, may go together at the same time in the same societies. The general question is how to assess such trends?

2.4 ASSESSING TRENDS

While 'power' is a basic and indispensable concept in the social sciences, it is notoriously difficult to investigate it empirically. As Elias (2012b, 70) remarked, power is not a personal attribute, not a thing that you carry about in your pocket; 'it is a structural characteristic of human relationships—of *all* human relationships'. Power inequalities appear most directly in relations of command-and-obedience but are also manifested in inequalities of material living conditions and in social interaction codes that express high-low distinctions. Long-term changes in the distribution of power in large and highly differentiated social figurations—such as state-societies—can only be assessed by using certain broad indicators. Assessing trends of functional democratisation or de-democratisation depends on the chosen indicators or dimensions and the criteria for determining degrees of inequality. Besides, such an assessment depends on the types of groups or social categories that are compared, the integration level for which the development is described, and the timespan taken.

1. The assessment of trends of functional (de-)democratisation depends, first of all, on the *indicators or dimensions* by which changing inequalities of power and privileges are ascertained. Following a well-known

threefold typology of dimensions of social stratification and inequality (derived from Weber 1978 [1922], 926–955), we may distinguish indicators of political power differences, such as the nature, distribution, and functioning of legal rights, the degree of parliamentary control, and the scope of the franchise; indicators of economic power differences, such as inequalities of income, wealth, and working conditions; and indicators of symbolic or affective power differences, such as codes of honour and status distinctions.

Changes along these different dimensions do not necessarily run parallel. A process of (limited) political democratisation may take place without a corresponding overall decrease of inequality in material living conditions. This can be observed, for example, in Britain from the seventeenth century onwards, when the parliament strengthened its power in relation to the Crown, the franchise was gradually extended from a small group mainly of landowners to larger segments of the population, and the principles of the ‘rule of law’ and ‘equality before the law’ were institutionalised to some extent, while overall economic inequality tended to increase until well into the nineteenth century, as indicated by data on the distribution of income and wealth and reports about the living and working conditions among the labouring classes.⁴ Similar discrepant developments took place, somewhat later, on the European continent. Starting with the French Revolution, political regimes in Western European countries changed, by leaps and bounds, from monarchical and aristocratic to parliamentary and constitutional systems, in which civic rights were extended and larger segments of the population got a say in national affairs. Yet during the greater part of the nineteenth century, economic inequalities in Western Europe tended to increase rather than decrease. It was only in the last decades of that century that the living and working conditions of members of the labouring classes started to improve not only in absolute terms, but also in comparison with other classes.⁵

⁴To give just one indication: according to estimates by Lindert (2000, 18), the share of the wealthiest 1 percent of households in England and Wales in total personal wealth rose from 39.3 percent in 1700 to 43.6 percent in 1740, 54.9 percent in 1810, and 61.1 percent in 1870.

⁵See Scheidel (2017, 103–112) for a discussion of trends in income and wealth inequality in several European countries during ‘the long nineteenth century’. In line with Piketty (2014), Scheidel rejects the thesis of a ‘Kuznets curve’ of increasing inequality in the first stages of industrialisation followed by decreasing inequality in later stages, contending, in

2. Even when one focuses on one dimension or indicator of power inequality, the assessment of functional democratisation or de-democratisation may vary depending on the specific *criteria* that are used to ‘measure’ inequality. For instance, polarisation of incomes as measured by a growing proportional distance between the top p (1, 5, 10...) percent and the bottom q (1, 5, 10...) percent in the income distribution may go together with a decrease of income differences in the middle layers between these poles, expressed in an inequality index such as the Gini coefficient (Coulter 1989). Such discrepant tendencies may also appear in qualitative approaches. Thus, middle strata may strengthen their position in relation to upper strata, while enlarging their social distance to lower strata. This double-edged development actually took place in connection with processes of capitalist modernisation in Western Europe after the Middle Ages, when capital-owning bourgeois groups (merchants, bankers, industrialists) gained power in relation to land-owning aristocracies, on the one hand, and labouring classes (workers, craftsmen, peasants), on the other.
3. The assessment of functional (de-)democratisation also depends on the *types of groups or social categories* that are compared. Power inequalities within a given society can be observed not only between different classes or strata or between governments and the governed, but also between men and women, age groups, or ethnic groups (Elias 2013, 28). Developments along these different axes do not always correspond with one another, as will be illustrated below in the section on recent trends.
4. The assessment of functional (de-)democratisation depends on the *social entities* that are taken as the units of observation and, more in particular, on the *level(s) of integration* under consideration. Trends

contrast, that a clear trend of decreasing economic inequalities in European countries only started with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, whereas in the preceding five or six decades, inequality continued to grow, remained stable, or fluctuated without a clear direction. The available data on income and wealth for this period are, however, far from complete and open to different interpretations. Moreover, material living conditions are not exhaustively indicated by monetary income and wealth; other relevant aspects are working hours and working conditions, housing, access to health care and other public provisions, and participation in pension schemes and social insurances. If we take these indicators into account, it is quite likely that overall economic inequality in most Western European countries started to decrease in the second half of the nineteenth century. Viewed in this light, the ‘egalitarian revolution’ of the twentieth century (1914–1975) was not a sudden break with the past, but rather an acceleration of a longer trend.

may vary between local, national, international–regional, and global levels. Democratisation at the national level may go together with de-democratisation within local communities, when the central state extends its control at the cost of local autonomy.⁶ And an overall trend of diminishing power differentials on the national level may go hand in hand with increasing power differences on international or global levels, or vice versa. In other words, power relations *within* state-societies may move in a direction different from that of power relations *between* societies. This occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, when processes of functional democratisation took the upper hand within Western European nation-states, and at the same time these states extended their political and economic power over non-Western societies, bringing about growing inequality on a global scale. Discrepant developments on national and global levels are currently taking place as well, though—as will be specified below—in other directions than before.

5. The assessment of functional (de-)democratisation depends, finally, on the *time-scale* under consideration. Short-term fluctuations have to be distinguished from long-term trends. The dominant long-term trend in human history since the invention of agriculture has been one of increasing power differences within and between societies—emerging stratification, sharper differentiation between rulers and ruled, growing distance between elite groups and the common people (Lenski 1966; Mann 1986; Goudsblom 1996, 27–28; Scheidel 2017). In the framework of this long-term trend, counter currents of functional democratisation took place from time to time. One may think, for example, of the establishment of ‘democratic’ rule in some city-states in Greek Antiquity (which, however, excluded women, slaves, and immigrants) or the formation of burgher councils in medieval cities in Europe. Usually, such partial democratisation was followed by changes in the direction of de-democratisation in which oligarchies or aristocratic families monopolised local political power and/or local communities lost (relative) independence. The processes of functional democratisation since the nineteenth century were more enduring and on a larger scale, yet limited to specific societies and, arguably, a specific historical

⁶This actually happened in Europe around the time of the French Revolution. Historian Maarten Prak (2018, 5) even contends that by destroying local forms of citizenship, ‘the French Revolution initially made Europe less, rather than more democratic’.

period. The current question is, are the recent counter tendencies of de-democratisation part of a new long-term trend or only a temporary phase?

2.5 EXPLAINING TRENDS

In spite of all the problems with assessing trends of functional (de-)democratisation, we can say that functional democratisation has been the dominant trend in Western societies in the period from the second half of the nineteenth century until about 1980 and that it has been succeeded since then by tendencies towards functional de-democratisation gaining dominance within these same societies. How to explain this historical trend of functional democratisation and its recent—at least partial—reversal?

As noted, functional democratisation occurs when relations of interdependence become more reciprocal and less one-sided, when less powerful groups become functionally more important for more powerful groups and/or the latter lose functions relative to the former. Elias suggested that such a development is directly connected with processes of differentiation, specialisation, and extension of interdependency networks:

Because of their particular specialised functions, all groups and individuals become more and more dependent on more and more others. Chains of interdependence become more differentiated and grow longer; consequently they become more opaque and, for any single group or individual, more uncontrollable. (Elias 2012b, 64)

While this is a plausible, if incomplete explanation of functional democratisation in highly complex, industrial societies in a particular historical phase, it falls short as a general explanation of long-term developments. As remarked, widening power differentials within and between societies were a main trend in human history since the introduction of agriculture, and this was causally connected with functional differentiation and growth of interdependency networks. In agrarian societies that grew in size and complexity, some members could profitably specialise in activities other than physical labour—in the exercise of physical force to exploit other people (warriors, slave-holders), in religious knowledge and rituals (priests), or in long-distance trade (merchants). These often overlapping groups in turn contributed to the extension of interdependency networks through military conquest, the spread of religious ideas, or the

establishment of new long-distance trade relations. In all large and differentiated agrarian societies, huge power and class inequalities developed which tended to harden into cast-like distinctions between different strata through the transmission of power resources and privileges along family lines. A recurring mechanism of disqualification in these and other societies is what can be called the principle of *selective and self-reinforcing accumulation*: groups with a power surplus accumulate advantages with the help of which they further enhance their power in relation to less powerful groups.⁷

Yet this 'logic' of selective and self-reinforcing accumulation of power resources does not work all the time. Power is not simply a zero-sum game in which it is always in the interest of the more powerful to maximise their power at the cost of the less powerful. A basic counter force consists in the competition and rivalry between powerful actors. Within a differentiated state-society, competition between groups with a different power base may induce each of these groups to try to enhance their power by seeking alliances with other, less powerful groups (see Rokkan 1975); in this way, interdependencies between the powerful and the less powerful groups become more reciprocal. Similarly, in the competition between rival state-societies, leading groups in each state may seek the cooperation of less powerful groups within the state and thereby become more dependent on these groups for the attainment of national goals, in particular the maintenance or enlargement of national power and autonomy.

In European societies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these equalising mechanisms were at work. Processes of commercialisation, urbanisation, and monetarisation since the late Middle Ages had strengthened the power of the urban bourgeoisie (merchants, bankers, industrialists) relative to the land-owning aristocracy and contributed to institutional differentiation between the state and the market, the polity and the economy. In their rivalry with the aristocracy, bourgeois groups pressed for a regulation of the economy that guaranteed private property rights and freedom of enterprise and ruled out the arbitrary exercise of political power. These interests found expression in the ideology of liberalism with its pleas for the rule of law, rights of citizenship, legal equality, and parliamentary control, which were institutionalised—to greater or

⁷ Similar to the 'Matthew effect' in the allocation of status or reputation (Merton 1968).

lesser degrees—in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁸ Initially, these reforms led to discrepant developments in the political and economic sphere, particularly where they coincided with the beginnings of industrialisation: some limited political democratisation went together with an overall growth of inequalities in material living conditions. In later stages of industrialisation, however, processes of political democratisation (extension of the franchise, growth of mass parties) and decreasing economic power differences (witness the growing significance of labour unions and the absolute and relative improvements in working-class families' living and working conditions) reinforced one another.

An important condition for this mutual reinforcement of economic and political democratisation processes in industrialising societies that underwent vast transformations in the direction of differentiation, specialisation, and growth of interdependency networks was that these transformations predominantly took place in strong, sharply bounded and increasingly centralised national states that heavily competed with one another. Within this framework, interdependencies between different groups became stronger and more reciprocal. Where economic, political, and military rivalries between the industrialising nation-states grew, governments and politicians became more dependent on large masses of the population for the realisation of national goals. In the second half of the nineteenth century, military expenditures increased and general military conscription was introduced (or reintroduced) in most European states, which not only extended governmental control but also made the government more dependent on large numbers of armed citizens who were willing to fight for their country (Andreski 1954). In other respects too, increasing government control and bureaucratic regulation—compulsory basic education, proscription of child labour, regulation of working hours and working conditions, control of food and drugs, standardisation of time, campaigns to 'civilise' the lower classes—was immediately connected with increasing mutual interdependencies between governments and the governed, also manifested in the extension of citizenship rights, including the right to vote for, and to be voted in, political bodies with legislative power (Marshall 1963). At the same time, the competition between industrialising European state-societies enhanced their power in the world at large

⁸ Moore (1966) concluded from his comparative historical research that conflicts of interest between a strong upcoming bourgeoisie and a declining landed aristocracy were a precondition for the development towards a liberal democracy.

and stimulated each of them to extend and intensify the exploitation of non-European regions.

The inter-state European rivalries culminated in two ‘total’ wars in the twentieth century, which dramatically intensified interclass interdependencies and accelerated the trends of functional democratisation on the national level. The First World War brought the demise of autocratic regimes in Middle and Eastern Europe (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Russia) and created favourable conditions for further extension of political rights in Western European states. The war also marked the beginnings of a clear trend of diminishing income and wealth inequality in Western nation-states (Piketty 2014). A further, more drastic reduction of inequality took place in and around the Second World War (Scheidel 2017, 130–173). It was in the first three decades after this war that, with the help of extraordinary economic growth, comprehensive welfare state programs with redistributive equalising effects were institutionalised.

Just as the overall trend of equalisation and functional democratisation within Western state-societies was connected with the strengthening of interclass interdependencies on the national level, the subsequent tendencies of disequalisation and functional de-democratisation from the last quarter of the twentieth century can be explained as resulting from a weakening of national interclass interdependencies, related to the widening and intensification of transnational and global interdependencies, particularly in the economic sphere.⁹ Where private companies grew in size and became increasingly transnational, spreading their investments and production over different countries and world regions, the owners and managers of these corporations became less dependent on the workers and the government of any country. Workers in a particular country, on the

⁹I have advanced and elaborated this thesis in several writings since 1993 (Wilterdink 2016). ‘Globalisation’ is the common term for this process. It is, however, not ‘globalisation’ as such that has led to growing economic inequality within nation-states, but rather the specific form that this process took from the 1970s, when cross-border money and investment flows were increasingly deregulated and started to explode and corporations became increasingly transnational (Dicken 1992; Milanovic 2019, 147–155). Globalisation processes comprise, of course, much more, including the spread of the concept of universal human rights and of feelings of identification and solidarity with humanity as a whole (see Elias 2010, 146–152). While we may assume that different (economic, political, cultural, affective) aspects of globalisation are interconnected, it is still not quite clear *how* they are interconnected; we cannot assume, for example, that the extension of transnational and global market relations will automatically lead to higher-level political integration or widening circles of identification.

other hand, had to compete increasingly with workers in other countries on a global labour market, which weakened their economic position and the bargaining power of labour unions that represented them. With the increasing international mobility of financial and physical capital, national governments became more dependent on foreign investments for economic growth and employment in their country. As a consequence of these globalisation trends, capital owners, managers of large transnational companies, bankers, and other financial specialists won power in relation to groups and institutions that remained much more tied to the nation-state: the majority of manual and non-manual workers and their organisations (labour unions), the majority of the self-employed, and local and national governments.¹⁰

Tendencies of functional de-democratisation continue until the present day under the impact of ongoing processes of economic globalisation, which have been greatly facilitated not only by technological innovations in information, communication, and transport, but also by political reforms that took away institutional barriers for international trade, investments, and finance. While the ideology of neo-liberalism which supported and legitimated these reforms has come under heavy attacks from various sides in recent years, the underlying forces that contribute to growing inequality are still at work.

2.6 RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

There are indeed several good reasons to speak of a transition from a dominant trend of functional democratisation in Western societies to one of functional de-democratisation. This pertains not only to economic but also to political developments and their interconnections. The growing power of transnational corporations, financial institutions, and private capital owners during the past four decades was reflected in political reforms of deregulation, privatisation, marketisation, lowering of tax rates and cuts on social expenditures, which in turn strengthened these actors' power and privileges and thereby contributed to growing inequality. Political parties that claimed to represent the interests of the underprivileged classes—such as the Labour Party in the United Kingdom, the

¹⁰Crouch (2004) states that we now live in a 'post-democracy' because the power of 'the global firm' has become overwhelming. As Alikhani (2017) rightly points out, this overdramatises current developments and tends to reduce an ongoing process to static categories.

Democratic Party in the United States, and the Social-Democratic parties on the European continent—largely supported or even initiated such market-oriented policies, weakening or severing their ties with labour unions. Increasingly, private companies, capital owners, and business organisations were able to influence political decision-making by professional lobbying, donating large amounts of money in election campaigns, moulding public opinion through think tanks and mass media, and financing specific political actions and movements. This development has been most apparent in the capitalist core society, the United States. While there was always a particularly intimate relationship between private wealth and economic power, on the one hand, and political power, on the other, in this country (Mills 1956), this relationship has become even stronger and more consequential since the late 1970s when business organisations, corporations, and wealthy individuals started to launch a successful counter-attack against the perceived growing influence of labour unions and consumers' organisations, mobilising vast financial and organisational resources to shape American politics in their favour (Hacker and Pierson 2010). The result is a strong increase of economic inequality, much stronger than in any other Western country, and a decline of intergenerational social mobility. These tendencies are less blatant in Europe. Yet here too, the direct impact of Big Capital on politics did grow,¹¹ coupled with a weakening impact of organised labour.

A basic aspect of de-democratisation is the weakening power and autonomy of national governments with respect to transnational corporations, large investment funds, intergovernmental regulating organisations, and the set of seemingly impersonal processes called 'the market'. To the extent that this development takes place, national parliaments become less important and national elections less relevant, which means that a basic political power resource for ordinary citizens, the right to vote, becomes weaker. This is a problem in all liberal democracies, but greater for the European countries than for the United States, whose central government—owing to the country's size, relative autonomy, and hegemonic power—has, in principle, a larger range of political options among which to choose. The project of European integration can be regarded as an

¹¹ One indication is the enormous expansion of professional lobbying. The number of registered lobbyists in Brussels, most of whom are paid by private companies or business organisations, rose from fewer than 1000 in the 1970s to more than 30,000 in 2014 (Mounk 2018, 86, 296, note 106).

institutional answer to the loss of autonomy and power of each European state, which enhances the capacity for collective action at a higher level of integration, but at the same contributes to this process of diminishing national autonomy and, therefore, to the loss of political power of the majority of citizens on the national level. The right to vote for the European parliament, whose decision-making power is much more restricted than that of national parliaments, hardly compensates for that loss, the more so since national identifications among the citizens of EU member states remain much stronger than identifications with Europe (cf. Elias 2010 [1991], 186–188, 199–204; Wilterdink 1993). Insofar as political power is shifting from the national to the European level, this ‘democratic deficit’ is an element in the process of de-democratisation.

Yet in spite of these interconnected tendencies of de-democratisation, we cannot speak of an encompassing trend of functional de-democratisation at all levels and in all respects in the present-day world. At the global level and, more specifically, in the relations between Western and non-Western societies, we see, rather, a trend of diminishing inequality. This became manifest soon after the Second World War, when colonies in Asia and Africa gained political independence from the weakened Western European powers. In this period of decolonisation, however, the income gap between Western and most non-Western countries continued to grow (Bourguignon and Morrison 2002; Wilterdink and Potharst 2001). This changed during the past few decades under the impact of processes of accelerated economic globalisation, when the economic growth rates of many ‘Third World’ countries (most notably, China) became higher than those of Western countries. All in all, income differences *between* countries diminished, whereas income differences *within* countries grew (Milanovic 2016; Alvaredo et al. 2018). Dichotomous classifications of countries as rich and poor, industrial and nonindustrial, ‘developed’ and ‘underdeveloped’ (or ‘developing’), ‘core’ and ‘peripheral’ increasingly lost significance (Rosling 2018). Globalisation processes were particularly favourable not only for wealthy capital owners and high-income groups in prosperous Western (and many non-Western) countries, but also for broad middle-income groups in relatively poor non-Western countries, particularly in Asia (Milanovic 2016, 10 ff.).

In connection with this global development, power differentials within Western societies along the axis of ethnicity and race have tended to diminish. In the United States, the Civil Rights Movement and subsequent reforms since the 1960s had increasingly eliminated official racial

segregation and discrimination and widened opportunities for upward mobility of people of colour, and these tendencies did not stop when economic inequalities started to grow in the late 1970s. While members of ethnic-racial minorities were particularly hit by reductions of welfare payments, unemployment, and stagnating or declining wage levels from the 1980s, correlations between ethnic-racial identity and class position continued to weaken, though they remained strong (Wilson 1987; Landry and Marsh 2011). Similarly, many descendants of immigrants who had come to Western Europe to fulfil low-paid jobs that required no schooling improved their position in comparison to their parents through education or entrepreneurship (Dagevos and Huijnk 2014).

More striking is the ongoing reduction of power differentials between men and women. Throughout the twentieth century and continuing in the present century, women gained power and relative independence in relation to men, as indicated by the equalisation of formal rights, the strong expansion of women's educational, occupational, and income opportunities, and their growing share in positions of power and prestige (De Swaan 2019, 80–125, 252–257).

There are also indications of an ongoing general trend of status levelling and informalisation of manners in everyday social interactions. This trend became dominant in the twentieth century and accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s, but did not stop after these decades, even if it continued at a slower pace and in different ways (Wouters 2007; Collins 2004, 268–294; Van den Haak and Wilterdink 2019). A new source of status levelling and de-hierarchisation is the enormous expansion of digital social media communication through which expert knowledge and information by professional journalists are bypassed and criticised and alternative claims to truth are spread (Mounk 2018, 137–150).

In summary, the trend of functional de-democratisation over the past few decades is not all-inclusive, even if we confine ourselves to social relations within Western state-societies. Functional de-democratisation in these societies pertains first and foremost to class relations and to political power connected with these relations. Paradoxically, the growth of class inequalities—both in the United States and Europe—went hand in hand with a weakening of class identities, connected with the shift from manufacturing to a 'post-industrial' service economy, the flexibilisation of the labour market, and the weakening of labour unions.

Another paradox is that the tendencies of decreasing power inequality along the axes of ethnicity and gender have contributed to increasing

socio-economic inequalities along class and family lines. The influx of immigrant workers from poor countries into Western Europe from the 1950s increased the supply of cheap labour and thereby mitigated income levelling in the period 1950–1975 and subsequently contributed to delevelling. Ethnic plurality among the population and particularly among the working classes increased, which tended to weaken class identities and class actions. Ethnic-racial dividedness among people with similar class positions, which had been characteristic of the United States since the late nineteenth century, became more common in Western Europe too. In the United States, the extension of formal rights and welfare provisions to non-whites in the 1960s and the growth of a non-white middle-class fuelled resentments among the white working and middle classes, particularly in the Southern States, which brought many of them to go over from the Democratic to the Republican Party, thereby supporting, intentionally or not, policies that contributed to growing income and wealth inequality (Krugman 2007; Massey 2009).

Decreasing gender inequality also contributed to growing socio-economic inequality between families, since it changed the prevailing pattern of assortative mating: as women improved their educational, occupational, and income position, homogamy according to these criteria increased; that is, the partners in a durable pair relationship (whether married or not) became more similar in these respects. To an increasing extent, high household incomes are double incomes based on similar earning capacities and educational credentials of *both* partners in the relationship. In this way, female emancipation has contributed to growing socio-economic inequalities and class differences between families and households (Schwartz 2010; Milanovic 2019, 36–40).

These tendencies of both functional democratisation and de-democratisation help to explain the recent rise and spread of nationalist populism throughout Europe and America. While nationalist populism has often been interpreted as a response to growing inequality, a revolt of underprivileged and increasingly insecure groups against privileged elites (Eichengreen 2018), it can also, and even more clearly, be seen as a response of resistance to *decreasing* inequalities—between members of Western nation-states and people in other parts of the world, between ‘natives’ within these nation-states, on the one hand, and immigrant groups and ethnic and racial minorities, on the other, and between men and women. All these developments are reflected in nationalist-populist discourses, which typically combine a downward negative targeting of

foreigners, immigrants, and ethnic-racial and sexual minorities with an upward negative targeting of members of ‘the elite’ who are accused of protecting and privileging these outsider groups to the detriment of the interests of the national we-group (Mudde 2007; Müller 2016; Wilterdink 2017, 35–39).

2.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS

‘Functional democratisation’ and ‘functional de-democratisation’ are useful as sensitising concepts to describe and explain trends in power–interdependence relations in the direction of decreasing or increasing inequality. The concepts are misleading, however, when they are taken to imply that all kinds of social relations between all kinds of groups in a given society always and necessarily move in one and the same direction. As we have seen, this is often not the case. From the late eighteenth century until at least the middle of the nineteenth century, in most Western European societies tendencies towards political democratisation went together with growing economic inequalities. Since then until the late twentieth century, overall functional democratisation became the dominant trend in these societies, manifested in the extension of the franchise to all adult citizens, the growing bargaining power of labour unions, diminishing income and wealth inequalities, the emergence and extension of the welfare state, female emancipation, the growing recognition of minority rights, and the weakening of interaction codes expressing status distinctions. On the global level, power differences tended to diminish too with post-war decolonisation, though income inequalities between richer and poorer countries continued to grow until around 1980.

During the past few decades, we have seen tendencies to functional democratisation and de-democratisation combined and intertwined: trends of de-democratisation within Western (as well as many non-Western) national societies, in which processes of growing economic inequality and increasing political power differences tend to reinforce one another, go hand in hand with an overall trend of decreasing economic inequality on the global scale and, at least within Western societies, tendencies towards diminishing power differences along the axes of gender and ethnicity and of status levelling in everyday social interactions.

Yet the current trends of functional de-democratisation within nation-states are quite alarming. Not only are these trends unfavourable for the living conditions of the majority of the population in these societies, not

only do they signify a movement away from widely accepted norms of social justice, they also contribute to social and psychological tensions and tend to undermine large-scale cooperation for collective goals and achievements.¹² In this way, the growth of inequality may work against common long-term interests, including the interests of those who profit from it in the short run.

Another, more specific reason to be worried about de-democratisation trends is that they put the very principles of liberal democracy (multi-party system, civil liberties, minority rights) at risk. These trends are part of the processes that have led to the emergence of nationalist-populist counter movements claiming to represent ‘the people’ which, if successful, will paradoxically contribute to further political de-democratisation by damaging or destroying these principles, as can be seen now in such diverse countries as Poland, Hungary, Turkey, India, Brazil, and even, to some extent, the United States. Since 2005, the liberal-democratic quality of political regimes worldwide is on the decline.¹³

It is not inevitable, however, that the current tendencies of de-democratisation will just continue in the same direction, let alone that the institutions of liberal democracy are doomed to dissolve. To say that these tendencies have negative long-term consequences for national collectivities, that they undermine large-scale cooperation and collective achievements, is to say that mutual interdependencies within nation-states remain important, even if there is an ongoing shift towards wider

¹²The thesis that more equality is ‘better for everyone’ has been advanced from a social-psychological and an economic viewpoint. The first perspective, elaborated in the much-discussed work by Wilkinson and Pickett (2010), stresses that high inequality leads to strong tensions between and within individuals, manifested in low trust, much violence, alcoholism and drugs abuse, and a host of medical and psychological disorders. In the economic perspective, represented by Stiglitz (2012, 2019), high inequality leads to economic stagnation and instability since it depresses overall consumption, has a negative effect on work performance, takes away incentives for innovation and productive investments by large companies, and makes large segments of the population dependent on private debts. We may add that high inequality is also likely to have negative effects on collective efforts for the attainment of common goals. An example of such a goal, which has become ever more urgent in recent years, is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to combat damaging climate change. As this requires large-scale cooperation on both national and international levels, it is a source of interdependence within and between nation-states.

¹³According to the evaluations by Freedom House (see, e.g. the report *Freedom in the World 2018*, published in 2019) and the Democracy Index compiled by The Economist Intelligence Unit.

interdependency networks. Mutual interdependencies on different integration levels set limits to the advantages that powerful groups can derive from growing inequality. Recognising this may help to initiate and sustain collective actions that counteract the forces of de-democratisation.

Acknowledgements I wish to thank Stephen Mennell and the editors of this volume for their comments and suggestions.

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Vox Populi Then and Now

Matt Clement

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the historical roots of the term ‘populism’—which is now widely and somewhat confusingly used when discussing various political tendencies that have surged into prominence in the wake of the global financial crash of 2007–2008. Rather like the concept of ‘radicalism’, populism as an idea is distorted by the tendency of much mainstream commentary to regard it as a largely negative phenomenon: An illness to be cured or a morbid symptom of a sick society.

This is recognised by one of the leading commentators on contemporary populism, Cas Mudde, who points out: ‘The pathological normalcy thesis does not entail that the populist radical Right is part of the mainstream of contemporary democratic societies. Rather, it holds that, ideologically and attitudinally, the populist radical Right constitutes a radicalisation of mainstream views’ (Mudde 2010). Mudde is arguing here that this viewpoint is confusing, because, by placing the concerns of ‘populism’ outside ‘normal’ attitudes, it implies that for populist ideas to take

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Switzerland AG 2021

F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_3

hold, the society concerned must necessarily be in crisis; whereas many ‘mainstream populist’ ideas—such as nativism, patriotism, and anti-immigration sentiments—are the meat and drink of most Liberal and Conservative parties in normal times. Failure to grasp this will lead to the type of misinterpretation that has often disorientated ‘mainstream’ politicians who start thinking that ‘normal’ people will not support populist politicians, or as Mudde puts it, ‘The key difference between the populist radical Right and western democracy is not to be defined in kind, i.e. by antithesis, but in degree, i.e. by moderate versus radical versions of roughly the same views’ (Mudde 2010).

I will argue that a failure to recognise the appeal of so-called extremes can have catastrophic consequences for mainstream thinking. Elias witnessed this in Weimar Germany and sought to understand these tendencies and apply the lessons of this formative period to his later life experiences. These and other historical reflections can add a further dimension to our contemporary understanding in that they point to the origins of populism on the left not the right; something which is less discussed by the likes of Mudde.

Now that the global pandemic has been added to economic and climate concerns, it appears we are far from living in the ‘normal times’ of market mechanisms and mass consumerism that constituted the neoliberal era (Harvey 2005). The idea that society is in some form of crisis has become something of a truism: At the time of writing, global economies are 12 years into the ‘long depression’ (Roberts 2016) that followed the planet’s greatest ever financial collapse which rippled out of Wall Street and the City of London that year; a depression that is threatening to become an epitaph for the era of neoliberal capitalism. The crisis has become normalised, in the sense that many people cannot imagine any other condition of society as feasible, or ‘realistic’, as we enter the 2020s in a climate of growing global protest and alarming crises occurring at the level of government, economy, and, of course, the planet itself. Extreme times breed extreme politics, as Elias would testify from his early life in Germany, and our current troubled times have ushered in a significant broadening of the spectrum of political ideologies considered feasible by those present at its graveside.

Some politicians, of course, cling to old loyalties and simply wish to revive the corpse of a globalising system claiming that growth is good and profits a universal panacea. But simply denying there are any elements of

unsustainability in actually existing government practices risks political oblivion. Hilary Clinton found this out when US voters chose an alternative who claimed to ‘feel their pain’ and promised to be their champion in the fight against corporate interests: ‘The working class fightback starts here’, Trump proclaimed on the eve of his election. This billionaire businessman was adopting very different language to his Republican predecessors. This was a battle fought on a different terrain to the likes of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher in the 1980s: These earlier leaders and pioneers of neoliberalism had promised to rein in over-powerful trade union monoliths, claiming private capitalism (‘enterprise’ was their preferred term) would set us free. Their allies were businesses, big and small; their voting base targeted the bulk of the middle class and a conservative minority of the working class. Although even then the ‘authoritarian populism’ of Thatcher was a response to ‘the form of politics in which Labour had attempted to stabilize the crisis [which]—was breaking up under internal and external pressures’ (Hall 1985). By 2016, Trump believed that this message had become toxified; neoliberalism defied economic reality for sufficient numbers to require a remedy. His answer was a rhetorical appeal to the people; he heard their cries of anger at the bankers and the system that had robbed them of their houses and their jobs, their long-term prospects of security. He would govern guided by ‘the voice of the people’: He would be a populist.

3.2 THE ORIGINS OF POPULISM

It is worth looking back in history to the origins of this idea. The word populist comes from the Latin *populares* which referred to those ancient Roman politicians that believed what the citizens wanted was paramount—and should guide the political direction of the evolving state. Indeed, the term used to describe this period of history encapsulates this idea, as Wiseman explains: ‘We call it the Roman Republic, borrowing the Latin Phrase *res publica* (originally *res populica*), which means ‘the People’s thing’ (Wiseman 2016, 10). Cicero’s description sets the scene:

There have always been two classes of men in the State who have sought to engage in public affairs and to distinguish themselves in them. Of these two classes, one aimed at being, by repute and in reality, ‘Friends of the People’, the other ‘Aristocrats’. (Cicero 1958, 167)

He gives the example of how the aristocracy consolidated their great wealth by breaking the republic's laws and buying up vast areas of land illegally. They were opposed by the famous 'Tribune of the People' Tiberius Gracchus in 133BC:

Tiberius Gracchus proposed an agrarian law. The law was acceptable to the People. The fortunes of the poorer classes seemed likely to be established. The Optimates [another word for the Aristocrats] opposed it, because they saw it as an incentive to dissension, and also thought that the State would be stripped of its champions by the eviction of the rich from their long-established tenancies. (Cicero 1958, 177)

By the time he made this speech, Cicero himself was no longer the people's friend. Just as the word for the republic had changed from *populi* to *publica*, so Cicero believed that in the above scenario 'the desire of the masses and the advantage of the People did not agree with the public interest' (Cicero 1958, 176–177). The separation of the concept of the people's and the public interest has allowed generations of rulers to justify acting against their citizens 'for their own good'. Therefore, those leading Roman families who called themselves patricians meaning roughly 'those who knew who their fathers were' (Wiseman 2016, 10) declared it their duty 'to see the State come to no harm' and several of them beat the tribune of the people to death in the forum and massacred his fleeing supporters. But Gracchus was only the first of many populist leaders to challenge the oligarchy.

Rome's ruling class was next threatened by the military prowess of Marius, the general re-elected as consul (annually elected leader) seven times in the voting assemblies which gathered in the forum for the hustings and the ballot (Taylor 1990). Marius had won vital battles through his innovation of opening army recruitment to the propertyless *proletariat*; this enfranchising of the *censi capite*, (the head count) had given the urban poor a real stake in the military imperial state. Not only did they, as proletarian soldiers, provide the 'sinews' of Rome's wealth from imperial plunder, especially in the East through the army's occupation and continued domination over 'tribute nations', but the propertyless also now asserted their own theoretical property rights in order to legitimately feel a part of the public interest within Roman society, the *res publica*. Marius's triumph had served time on the nobles' right to rule, and he savoured his

victory in one of his victory speeches that, according to contemporary historian Sallust, ‘fired the spirits of the commons’:

I shall encourage my soldiers; I shall not treat them stingily and myself lavishly, nor win my own glory at the price of their toil. Such leadership is helpful, such leadership is democratic; for to live in luxury oneself but control one’s army by punishment is to be a master of slaves, not a commander. (Sallust 86.2, 85.34–35 in Rolfe 1921, 323–321)

Plutarch describes the basis of Marius’s appeal as a ‘man of the people’, stating:

It is the most obliging sight in the world to the Roman soldier to see a commander eat the same bread as himself, or lie upon an ordinary bed, or assist in the work of drawing a trench and raising a bulwark. For they do not so much admire those that confer honours and riches upon them, as those that partake of the same labour and danger with themselves; but love them better that will vouchsafe to join their work, than those that encourage their idleness. (Plutarch 1912, 497)

For the next century, successive waves of revolution and repression characterised state formation processes in Rome’s late Republic. Many ‘Friends of the People’ were genuinely so, such as the Gracchus brothers, Saturninus, Marius, and his nephew Julius Caesar: Some—like Cicero—began as friends but switched sides. Some were fake populists, only ever ‘Friends’ ‘by repute’—disguising their loyalty to the aristocracy to curry favour with the masses: Pompey, the General, and Crassus the oligarch were two statesmen that trod this path. They would fund games and banquets to show their ‘magnificence’ and periodically champion Tribunes of the People such as Clodius who made himself popular with his gangs of supporters through terrorising their wealthy political opponents. But this show of populism was purely tactical and their loyalty to the values of the oligarchy remained unquestioned. So why did the likes of Pompey, who started his careers as a general so ruthless in murdering his populist opponents he earned the nickname the ‘teenage hangman’ in the 80s, become a populist leader by the late 60s. What were the conditions that led a millionaire businessman like Crassus (surely the Trump of his day) to present himself as the people’s friend? Wiseman begins his biography of Caesar asking the reader to ‘Imagine a democratic state based on the rule of law’. He continues:

Now imagine a huge influx of wealth in the space of a single generation. Unprecedented economic inequalities follow. The rich get richer and come to believe that their interests and privileges are what the state exists to protect. Public assets are privatised, with legal safeguards and regulations ignored or evaded. Social tensions become acute. The old ideals of consensus and co-operation seem helpless against the greed and luxury of a powerful few. (Wiseman 2016, 9)

The condition of Rome's 'late republic' ended in civil wars won by Caesar, the 'people's dictator' whose notorious assassination marked the end of republican democracy (Parenti 2003). It doubtless also compares with much of global capitalism today. To hold onto power and maintain the semblance of support in times of crisis when living standards are falling and inequality rising, any authoritarian leader will sometimes need to denounce systematic injustice and invoke the 'voice of the people' as their guide and inspiration.

3.3 MYTH MAKING IN AMERICA

In his 2020 'State of the Union' Address, President Trump orchestrated soundbites and moments of theatre to demonstrate how he is listening to popular concerns:

He said that he had spoken with Senator Chuck Grassley, Republican of Iowa and the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, to urge him to pass legislation that lowers the price of prescription drugs. 'Get a bill on my desk, and I will sign it into law immediately' Mr. Trump declared.

Trump's idea of economy with the truth involves mixing up truth and lies in a powerful cocktail to dazzle those listeners who want to believe him, Weiland reported:

He correctly pointed out that the unemployment rate was the lowest in half a century. But he incorrectly claimed that he had enacted 'record-setting tax cuts', that the economy was 'the best it has ever been' and that stock markets have 'soared 70 percent', exaggerating the real percentage. (Weiland 2020)

In his closing passage, Trump doubled down on pure rhetoric, hailing the US as 'a land of heroes. It's a place where greatness is born, where

destinies are forged, and where legends come to life'. He invoked symbols of conquest over their Mexican neighbours, recalling 'where Texas patriots made their last stand at the Alamo. The beautiful, beautiful Alamo' (Trump 2020). Although he is no fascist, Trump's language recalls Joseph Goebbels the Nazi propagandist who argued that failure to achieve control over 'the necessary space, natural forces and natural resources for material life' would lead his country to 'fall into dependence on foreign countries and lose its freedom'. Both advocate the same populist, nationalist solution, as Goebbels concluded: 'Thus a thick wall around Germany? Certainly we want to build a wall, a protective wall' (Hett 2019, 109).

Americans are, Trump claims, 'the toughest, strongest, fiercest and most determined men and women ever to walk on the face of the earth'. He saluted the labour of the working class and climaxed with an attempt to out-boast even the Romans. Americans

[l]aid down the railroads, dug out the canals, raised up the skyscrapers. Ladies and gentlemen, our ancestors built the most exceptional republic ever to exist in all of human history. And we are making it greater than ever before... This nation is our canvas and this country is our masterpiece. (Trump 2020)

This language may be bombastic, and the claims hyperbole, but Trump's imperial imagery and evocation of a people destined for greatness is nothing new. Similar claims have been made by most US presidents over the last two centuries. Making America(ns) great again can make you both popular and also manufacture a scapegoat, as Elias explains:

The feeling of group superiority appears to provide members of that group with an immense narcissistic gratification. It is strange to observe that all over the world groups of people, great and small, huddle together as it were, with a gleam in their eye and a nod of intimate understanding, assure each other how much greater, better, stronger they themselves are, than some particular other groups. (Elias 2007, 7–8)

Trump's transport ban on 'Muslim' countries and notorious demonisation of Mexicans have led to protests, but not damaged his popular support. Indian leader Modi has gone one stage further, encouraging communalism through an Islamophobic citizenship law and using Trump's endorsement on a recent visit in February 2020 to trigger off waves of

sectarian attacks by Hindu Modi supporters on mosques and Muslims, killing dozens. For nearly two decades now, the US-led ‘War on Terror’ in the Middle East has been *the* twenty-first-century ‘strategy of tension’—where enemies justify acts of violence by stressing the importance of suppressing the other side (Chomsky 2002; Clement and Scalia 2020). Take the case of the ISIS terror attack on Paris in November 2015. We need to grasp how, as Dunning puts it:

[...] ‘established’ groups in the West have an interdependent relationship with ‘outsider’ ‘jihadist terrorists.’[...] [A]n attack on Paris was regarded as an attack on Britain, Germany, the United States and other Western nation-states, and this was framed as an attack on the ‘civilized’ world by ‘barbaric outsiders,’ albeit ‘barbaric outsiders’ who, in the cases of these individuals who actually carried out the attacks, were from the West. (2016, 33)

These, then, are double-binds, and as Dunning argues, ‘brutalisation processes are, in turn, “feeding back” and contributing to the double-binds within which Western nation-states and jihadist are caught’ (2016, 31). However risky are such strategies, and Trump periodically inveighs against ‘endless wars’ and points out the cost of policing the globe in American lives, nationalist leaders of powerful states still threaten their so-called rivals (Van der Pijl 2006). This is principally to maintain their power ratio, but in the process benefits state rulers through binding their own people to supporting a policy of divide and rule. Elias notes that ‘[a] field of states without a central monopoly of physical violence is inherently unstable. There are a hundred and one reasons why tensions and conflicts between states may arise. But whatever the particular reason, the primary driving force is provided by the intrinsic competitive pressure of the figuration—by the elementary survival struggle between the constituent units’ (2007, 148). In the Cold War, the US and the Soviet Union were the hegemonic protagonists. Now, even this ‘balance’ is lacking and an increasing number of states are led by politicians who believe aggressive targeting of enemies cements their rule. Hence, Trump is currently seeking to deflect attention from his plummeting levels of support due to his mishandling of the corona virus pandemic by manufacturing fear of a new suitable enemy in the shape of China. These nationalist outbursts recall the ‘age of the dictators’, as Mussolini’s British Ambassador, Count Grandi, told *The Times* in 1933:

We must get out of our heads all our old ideas about dictators he said. The new dictator is the representative of the people. He is not against the people. He is against the oligarchy that had got the machinery of government into its hands. (Kennedy 2000, 115)

This language echoes recent right-wing populist leaders like Brazil's General Bolsanaro who successfully appealed against the corruption of his opponents to win power in 2018 and other Latin American military figures in the likes of Bolivia and Venezuela who have claimed popular authority for their coup attempts in 2019. It is worth taking the long-term view here and asking ourselves whether the current widespread recourse to populist rhetoric, especially by those on the political right, is really a novel departure from an imagined past consensus. After all, Brazil's Lula was a populist of a different type. Also, how seriously should we take their anti-establishment stance? Below, the focus shifts across the Atlantic to Europe to make some international comparisons.

3.4 THE STRANGE DEATH OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY

Today's right-wing populist style governments and opposition parties claim to share the popular disillusion with parliamentary democracy. But although they love to denounce the 'corruption' of the likes of Emmanuel Macron or Angela Merkel for being allied with the biggest corporations, they tend to also believe in tax cuts for the rich, and the efficacy of the standard neoliberal recipe of 'necessary' austerity and privatisation of public services which has the additional benefit of enriching those very same powerful corporations. This makes the 'fake populists', like Donald Trump and Boris Johnson, Matteo Salvini and Marine Le Pen, vulnerable to the same force that defeated the likes of Pompey in Rome—the true populists: Those on the left who mean what they say when they blame the established institutions and campaign for radical change. This is what made the likes of Bernie Sanders in the US and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK a real potential threat to the establishment. In the UK's 2019 election, Corbyn attacked the increasing adoption of populist language by the right, slamming the 'born-to-rule Tories claiming to be the voice of the people... Johnson and his wealthy friends are not only on the side of the establishment, they are the establishment' (New European 2019). This real voice of the people—Corbyn's election slogan was 'For the many not the

few’—can expose the ‘fake populism’ of their opponents. Both Corbyn and Sanders do not use the populist label to describe their policies, preferring to describe their politics as socialist and in line with the radical reforming mission often associated with social democracy. Of course, Sanders stood in 2016 and 2020 for the leadership of the US Democrats—a liberal and not a socialist party—which explains how the party machine was able to mobilise to prevent his winning the primaries. Both men are only populists as far as the roots of their appeal, as explained by J.W. Müller: ‘The point of going populist for voters is that current elites fail truly to represent them. They are not against representation as such; they just want different representatives, people who they consider morally pure’ (2014, 487).

Corbyn led the Labour Party in two election campaigns, but in order to get his message across, had to overcome the relentless process of demonisation that the corporate media manufactured so successfully against ‘Corbynism’ ever since he became leader in 2015. A recent study by the renowned Glasgow University ‘Bad News’ Research Centre concluded: ‘A search of eight national newspapers shows that from 12 June 2015 to 31 March 2019, there have been 5497 stories on the subject of Corbyn, anti-semitism and the Labour Party’ (Philo et al. 2019, 1). It then goes on to show how artificial and inflated are all these accusations that Labour’s most anti-racist and principled leader ever headed up a party riddled with prejudice. Other elements within the machinery of the state—who are allegedly bound to neutrality due to their role as public servants—have also weighed in to warn of the dangers of the people voting for a ‘security threat’. In April 2019, the army announced an ‘Inquiry after soldiers use Corbyn as target practice’. Not literally, the reader will be relieved to hear, but ‘footage shared on social media shows guardsmen attached to the Parachute Regiment... firing their weapons [at] an image of Mr Corbyn’ (Stubbs 2019).

As soon as Corbyn was elected, a serving British Army General claimed that in the event of him becoming prime minister, there would be ‘the very real prospect’ of ‘a mutiny’.

Feelings are running very high within the armed forces. You would see a major break in convention with senior generals directly and publicly challenging Corbyn over vital important policy decisions such as Trident, pulling out of NATO and any plans to emasculate and shrink the size of the armed forces. The Army just wouldn’t stand for it. The general staff would not

allow a prime minister to jeopardise the security of this country and I think people would use whatever means possible, fair or foul to prevent that. You can't put a maverick in charge of a country's security. (Shipman et al. 2015)

Corbyn was certainly cast as a 'folk devil' in a classic moral panic about the prospect of Labour winning the election that took in not only his Conservative opponents, including the likes of the Armed Forces, but also the corporate media, much of social media content and even a significant element of the Labour Party's own MPs. Müller (2014, 488) refines his definitions of populism by stating 'populist parties are almost always internally monolithic' and 'particularly prone to purging dissenters'. By this token, Corbyn is no populist. Like Julius Caesar, this popular leader showed too much clemency towards his enemies both within and without his party and was rewarded with his political assassination after the election defeat of December 2019; a process which is now dragging Labour back to the neoliberal 'extreme centre' (Ali 2018) under its new leader, Sir Keir Starmer. However, such practices are nothing new and are not enough in themselves to explain how the Conservatives, under right populist leader Boris Johnson, were able to substantially increase their majority in December 2019. Key to Johnson's success was the failure of Labour to respect the popular vote for the UK to leave the European Union in 2016.

3.5 THE BREXIT DOUBLE-BIND

The margin of victory in the referendum was narrow—52 per cent to 48 per cent, so remained contested. Since then many people in the UK have been experiencing rising social tensions between the claims of one section of society—the 'leavers', who are heavily invested in the ideal of the sovereignty of an individual national state—as opposed to their opponents who prefer the claims for the benefits of living in a society of states—the 'remainers'. But is either of these options really an ideal state? During the Cold War, Elias reflected on a similar dualism, that where people were asked to choose between the benefits of adherence to 'capitalism' or 'communism':

In both cases, the social practice which they have created is so far removed from an ideal state that it is impossible [...] to see how, from that sad reality, an ideal social condition can emerge. Yet that is what each of the two antagonistic states claims for its own side; that is what fires the emotions. (Elias 2007, 157)

When those against ‘Brexit’—the ‘remainers’—attacked those in favour, known as ‘leavers’, as undemocratic, demanding there be another ‘people’s vote’ on the issue, they scored a resounding own goal: ‘They want a people’s vote, and we’re not people’ became a stock phrase to expose the hypocrisy of those campaigning to overthrow the original vote, especially in the north of England, where the vote to leave had been most marked. Many working-class voters in England and Wales had voted to leave the EU in the 2016 referendum, at least in part to kick back at an establishment alliance of virtually all the political parties, the media, and big business which had wanted a vote to ‘remain’. Labour had promised to respect the leave vote in the UK’s subsequent 2017 general election, thus managing to keep many voters on their side and doing better than expected—narrowing the Tory government majority even further and terminally damaging the then Tory Leader, Theresa May. But by the time of the 2019 poll, Labour’s own conference had voted to campaign for ‘remain’ and Corbyn was pushed into sitting on the fence on the Brexit issue, calling for more negotiations and a confirmatory vote to take place if Labour won. This was manna from heaven for new Tory leader Boris Johnson and allowed the UK’s right populists to claim only they could be trusted to implement the 2016 referendum result and ‘get Brexit done’ to use the term that became Johnson’s winning election slogan. The ‘feedback’ Elias describes here could well be applied to debates about the future of any nation state in a globalising world in crisis:

The mutual threats of people and particularly of states, and the resulting insecurity, are still very great, and the restraint of affects in thinking about this area is low [...] The intrusion of ideals and values arising from power struggles within society, and carrying a strong affective charge into apparently objective discussion on the relation of ‘individual’ and ‘society’ is one of many examples of this kind of feedback. This is a vicious circle, the trap in which we are caught. (Elias 2010, 83)

It is, of course, absurd to believe that by ‘exiting’ Europe, the British will avoid the massive social harms inflicted on the likes of Greece, Ireland, and Spain in the early 2010s by the European Central Bank. The banks, states, and corporations will demand austerity, and Boris Johnson—the

Old Etonian who went to Oxford and studied Classics—represents the establishment and has always championed the right to govern of the privileged elite from which he hails. Under his party inequalities have widened, privatisation and funding cuts in public services are the cause of the misery and disillusionment (Cooper and Whyte 2017), which he has then capitalised on by presenting himself, like Trump, as a champion struggling to free the people from the grip of parliament which is seeking to frustrate them. This explains why Johnson's threat to suspend parliament to 'get Brexit done' in October 2019 actually boosted his popularity.

However, for the likes of Bolsonaro, Trump, and Johnson, the realities of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 have exposed the fact that their concern for the people is superficial at best. Their failure to implement policies that protect public health has antagonised millions. The persistence of the virus is testament to the right populist's overt prioritising of restarting business over public safety, combined with a toxic cocktail of elitism and racism only further antagonising an increasingly active political opposition coming from the streets rather than the senate. At the time of writing, these false friends of the people are seeing their mandates shrinking and facing an uncertain future.

3.6 ELIAS'S TROUBLED TIMES

What can Elias's insights into his troubled times in interwar Germany tell us about how this dangerous combination of factors may play out in our own era? In 'the character of conflicts in the early Weimar republic', he explains how:

When in an established-outsider relationship with a steep power gradient, the distribution of power weightings shifts somewhat in favour of the outsider groups, without eliminating the power superiority of the established, then with great regularity the tension between the two camps is sharpened. (Elias 2013, 470)

Elias is referring specifically to how the established rulers of the Kaiser's autocratic regime found it so difficult to come to terms with its downfall as workers and soldier's councils revolted, ended the war, and ushered in a parliamentary republic headed up the Social Democrats (SPD). This party had been banned by the Kaiser's regime from 1878 to 1890, and the rulers' aristocratic *habitus* balked at the very idea of such 'lower status

people' governing. So even though the SPD 'consistently won the largest popular vote in German elections between 1890 and 1930' (Browning 2004, 7), this 'was not perceived in many bourgeois and noble circles of the old establishment as a significant step towards the integration of the working class into the nation, but merely as a restriction of their own leading position, as a reduction of their self-worth, as a destruction of their ideals' (Elias 2013, 470). The result was the sanctioning of right-wing political violence to suppress the 'communist threat'.

This attitude was far from being merely a German problem: the British establishment expressed similar fears over the advent of Labour governments in the 1920s. Even Liberal Prime Minister Lloyd George was suspect. In 1920, General Henry Wilson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, wrote in his diary: 'I keep wondering if Lloyd George is a traitor and a Bolshevik, and I will watch him very carefully' (Aldrich and Cormac 2017, 37). As playwright J.B. Priestley once said, 'the minds of England's conservatives snapped shut at the height of the Russian Revolution and had never opened again' (Ganser 2005, 38). In both Prussian and Whitehall circles, this emotional aversion was particularly marked in the upper ranks of the military and efforts to undermine social democracy based on paranoia over 'communist conspiracies' have been the meat and drink of Generals and secret services ever since (Herman and Chomsky 1988, 29).

In Germany, the Communist Party (KPD)—formed in 1918—was founded by leading members of the SPD, the Spartakists Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, who split away large sections of its membership to join them during the revolutionary years between 1918 and 1923, and there is no doubting that for many of those mandarins who have governed states over the last century, both social democracy and communism are linked together as dangerous radical movements requiring suppression (Chomsky 2002). So, what Elias concludes about the Weimar republic also describes many instances from both the 'cold war' from 1945 to 1989 and the 'war on terror' from 2001 until now. Elias terms the KPD:

Russophile movements outside Russia which [...] set themselves against other groups which for their part planned to counter the danger of violence posed by the former with the help of their own extra-state violence. [...] If such a process, a double-bind process, is once set in motion, then it is exceedingly difficult to halt: it often gains a momentum of its own. [...] [It]

becomes a trap forcing each of the participating sides, out of the fear of the violence of the other side, to fight each other with violence. (Elias 2013, 475)

Evelyn Anderson's 'Hammer or Anvil' relates the events of December 1918, when 'the country was flooded with a furious atrocity propaganda... Huge posters appeared in the towns and villages of the country'. One of these posters read:

'Workers, Citizens'
 The Fatherland is approaching ruin
 Save it!
 It is not threatened from without, but from within:
 By the Spartakus Group
 Kill their leaders!
 Kill Liebknecht!
 Then you will have peace, work and bread!
The Front Soldiers

(Anderson 1945, 56)

For Elias, this was the tragedy of the German situation. Right-wing vigilantes fomenting the murder of left-wing revolutionaries are symptoms that all are caught in a 'mechanism of reciprocal threat and fear—I call this a double-bind process' (Elias 2013, 190). In an extended footnote, he tries to give a sense of what this meant: 'It gains a self-perpetuating and very often escalating power over the people, the opposing groups that constitute it' (Elias 2013, 475). The notion of double-binds shares some links here with the labelling theory of the likes of Becker, Cohen, and Tannenbaum, with 'escalating power' working in similar ways to Wilkins 'amplification spirals' (Wilkins 1964). As I have argued elsewhere, Elias's approach has, arguably, a more rounded holistic approach to these questions as he consistently points to the importance of the role of the more powerful or established 'labelling' group and the benefits they gain from this process of distinction (Elias and Scotson 2008; Clement 2015, 2019).

Interestingly, Elias knew Evelyn Anderson well. He was in Frankfurt at the University acting as a research assistant to Karl Mannheim, when Anderson was a student there. According to Frankfurt scholar, Marion Keller, both were members of the 'Red Student Group' an alliance of leftists who socialised together between 1930 and 1933 (Keller and Jitschin 2018). At the time they knew one another Germany was in the eye of the

storm as both Nazis, the SPD and the KPD, struggled against one another to resolve the republic's crisis of inflation, mass unemployment, and an uncertain future. Both were equally convinced that neither the tactics of the Communists nor the Social Democrats could prevent the rise to power of the Nazis. Elias was also appalled at the SPD's passivity and the KPD's sectarianism, both of which he judged were equally incapable of stopping Hitler. Anderson left the KPD she had joined in 1927 and helped to found the *Neu Beginnen* group that sought to unite the two parties to combat the Nazi menace. Her account of Germany's journey from a successful uprising that ended the war in 1918 to the nemesis of Nazism shows how Hitler's was only the last step on the road to dictatorship, preceded by a series of right-wing authoritarian governments whose actions shed light on today's tyrants in waiting. She concludes:

German democracy was dead, killed by the crisis long before Hitler buried it. The three last governments of the Weimar Republic had been so reactionary in their legislation and had based their reign to such an extent on unconstitutional emergency decrees that the fundamental novelty of the Nazi government was at first hardly visible. (Anderson 1945, 150)

Of course, things did get a lot worse, and Anderson's account of the scale of repression, the tactical mistakes of the opposition, and the practicalities of trying to maintain resistance under Nazism are fascinating and informative. Contemporary historians have also pointed out ways in which democracies pushed into austerity by economic crisis create the conditions for authoritarianism: 'Political logic pushed opponents of austerity to become opponents of liberal democracy as well. The Nazis [...] were fundamentally a protest movement against globalization and its consequences' (Hett 2019, 10). They filled a gap left by the failure of both the liberals and the left:

Defenders of the Republic often seemed little more than defenders of a corrupt system. Opponents of democracy, preaching an 'antipolitics' of unity and resurrection, could look like they were operating on a higher moral ground. (Hett 2019, 16)

Elias's journey through the interwar 'storm' doubtless had a profound effect as he sought to apply the lessons of the Weimar years to other situations. In the last year of his life, Elias saw the Berlin Wall come down,

presaging the unification of Germany in 1990. Reunification has consolidated German economic power on the continent. In its first decade, the economy expanded and modernised as investment in East Germany and other parts of central Europe enriched German corporations and extended the power of the state. The German state was now at the heart of European political leadership, leading the move to a unified currency zone which appeared overwhelmingly positive in its impact up until the financial crash of 2008. In its wake, we have seen austerity manufactured in the Eurozone—bequeathing state leaders the responsibility for imposing austerity at home and abroad (Clement 2013; Lapavistas 2012).

The German welfare cuts imposed in the early 2000s signalled the end of the economic miracle years of rising expectations and ushered in more precarious working conditions especially for younger people and migrants. Later, necessary domestic integration processes in the wake of the 2015 refugee crisis have presented the far right with a new Islamic scapegoat they are harnessing to foment social divisions—encouraging terrorist attacks, such as the murder of nine migrants in Hanau, Hesse, in February 2020. One recent acclaimed sociology of the new united Germany argues: ‘Societies of ascent and social integration [...] have become societies of downward mobility, precariousness and polarisation’ (Nachtwey 2018, 2). For Elias, when common ground is crumbling, then civilising processes are confronted with ‘decivilising spurts’. Nachtwey’s version of this story employs the trope of ‘regressive modernisation’ in a similar fashion, describing how the ‘economic miracle’ of the federal republic has evolved into a scenario where today’s younger generations face worse working conditions, higher costs, and less prospects of careers status and security than their forebears. The arrival of no less than 97 members of the national parliament representing the right populist *Alternativ für Deutschland* (AfD) Party in 2018 is a sign of an unwelcome resurgence in sympathy for the ideas of National Socialism in the German homeland.

3.7 CONCLUSION

Global economies had all been plunged into crisis following the 2008 bank crash. Although austerity on the UK has been severe since 2010, the crisis was initially even more severe in the ‘Eurozone’ (Lapavistas 2012; Clement 2013). The first wave of protest came more from the unions and the left, with *Los Indignados* in Spain, Syriza in Greece, and anti-austerity in Ireland. More recently, in the midst of the rise of ‘national populism’

(Eatwell and Goodwin 2018), the French *Gilets jaunes* social movement sprang up out of these contradictions at the end of 2018 and has since infused union struggles over pensions with a new spirit of resistance and radicalisation to the left, which has occurred *alongside* the continuing growth of the far right. The metaphor of the burgeoning storm that Elias employs seems apt today as human actions undermine the sustainability of both people and planet in a manner that leads to floods, pandemics, and firestorms.

Right populists have since gained traction in larger European states like Italy, France, Spain, and Germany with a racist Islamophobic programme because their neoliberal establishments keep failing to deliver secure employment and welfare and threatening further cuts that push more and more people to fear for their future. However, changing conditions can weaken their appeal, as in Italy where Salvini has been pushed out of power or the UK where the Brexit Party saw their clothes stolen by Boris Johnson. Left-wing movements once ridiculed as irrelevant are resurgent (Choonara 2019). For most of the globe, at the time of writing, both far left and far right remain opposition forces: The language of populism, the cause of popular justice, and a more explicit critique of capitalism are all concepts growing in popularity, mostly in a horrified reaction to the realities of what Tariq Ali has described as ‘the extreme centre’ (Ali 2018).

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Figurational Sociology of the Rule of Law: A Case of Central and Eastern Europe

Marta Bucholc

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The rule of law is one of the abstract political ideals that translate directly into individuals' quality of life. In this sense, there is indeed an intimate connection between the rule of law and the process of civilisation (van Krieken 2019, 268). The rule of law is an ideal to which many societies in the world aspire, with international agencies busily preparing rankings to reveal how societies are doing and assess their progress or regress on the path towards the unattainable ideal of a perfectly law-governed society. But how did the rule of law gain such high international standing and wide recognition as a political ideal? Specifically, why does a phrase like 'rule of law' offer so much comfort and assurance despite the blurred edges of the concept to which it refers?

The globalisation of the rule of law as a political ideal and as a legal standard is part of the answer (see May 2014): the rule of law is critical to

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the machinery of contemporary political and economic international relations; it is a factor (though not a very predictable one) in international cooperation or lack thereof (see Mendelski 2018, 113). The rule of law also plays a significant, albeit ambivalent, role in the logic of global capitalism. Capitalist structures, which are dependent on a stable legal environment and the growth of inequalities in global society, provide the rule of law with a surplus of persuasiveness for wholly unidealistic reasons (see May 2018). A recent critique of this mutual involvement of global capitalism and the rule of law was provided by Katharina Pistor, arguing that it is the legal scaffolding of global capitalism which makes its potential for creating social inequalities so unprecedented (Pistor 2019).

Last but not least, there is also a cultural pattern that is enhancing the attractions of the rule of law: international rankings, such as the World Justice Project Rule of Law Index, have the side-effect of clearly dividing the globe into clubs of law-abiding ‘haves’ and unruly ‘have-nots’, thereby creating a global structure of cultural aspirations to accompany political and economic ambitions. The rule of law has a highly specific cultural profile.

However, all of this does not fully explain the appeal of the rule of law, but rather exposes the manifold mechanisms that support or hamper its propagation. Knowledge of these mechanisms may be instrumental in attempts to understand why the charm of the rule of law seems to be wearing off in some societies that only recently endorsed the ideal as their own, notably in parts of Central and Eastern Europe, a region which only subscribed to the rule of law in the commonly accepted meaning at the end of 1980s. In order to understand the functions and malfunctions of the rule of law, we must delve into the social processes which endow the rule of law with an attractive force independent of political, economic, and cultural incentives but may also act against it. In this chapter, I argue that Norbert Elias’s theory offers us a key to both theorise the rule of law as part of long-lasting social processes and explain its crisis in historical sociological categories. I propose using Central and Eastern Europe as a laboratory for figurational sociology of law not only because this region recently gained international limelight due to the state of the rule of law in Hungary and Poland, but also because of a combination of factors which make the case relatable for researchers studying other regions that have undergone systemic transformation.

4.2 FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY OF THE RULE OF LAW: THE RESEARCH AGENDA

Robert van Krieken (2019) described Elias as a regulation theorist, explaining why the Eliasian approach was thus far most readily applied in the historical socio-legal analysis of criminal law and justice, where the regulative function of law is most conspicuous. My goal in developing a figurational sociology of law is to expand beyond this area of study towards a more inclusive analytical framework. I will focus on different aspects of law: its legitimation, the transparency of legal order, the law's connection to a specific habitus (especially national habitus), and the role of law as a symbolic resource.

4.2.1 *Social Construction of Norms: Moral Laws and Game Rules*

The gist of Elias's, and Eric Dunning's (Elias and Dunning 2008), argument is such: there are two 'ideal types' of norms that prompt deeply divergent social consequences. One of them is the 'moral-law type'. These norms 'appear not to be bound by specific figuration'; they are perceived as just being there, binding to all human beings by virtue of their genesis, content, or both. Belief in 'moral' character, that is, the reluctance to look into the social origins of the norm, provides moral laws with a highly potent source of legitimation. 'Moral laws' of this kind—the virtually unchallengeable ones—occupy one extreme of the continuum of the social construction of normativity.

On the other extreme, we find norms which are perceived as mere 'game rules'. Whatever the origin of a game rule, it is nothing more than a rule by which a game is played. The awareness of the conventional nature of a norm leads to relationist thinking: the norm is binding under some circumstances, and under some circumstances, it can be challenged, amended, or lifted. Questions such as how, by whom, under what circumstances, at what cost, and to what extent depend on many factors, including the nature of the game and its other rules.

On the continuum between pure conventionalism and pure transcendentalism, there are, of course, various combinations of game rules and moral laws. A legal system may be a combination of game rules and moral laws: the latter will be unchangeable, best illustrated by the example of the famous German *Ewigkeitsklausel* (see Rottleuthner 2010). Laws may also

be regarded as amendable and changeable, but the procedure for changing them may be sacrosanct and, in this sense, ‘moralised’: this is stressed by Luhmann’s concept of ‘legitimation by procedure’ (1983). Furthermore, in the same population, there is reason to expect differences in the attitudes towards law. The balance between moral laws and game rules, the dynamic of the development of this ratio, and the shifts in content near either of the extremes thus constitute the core of the historical sociology of law.

4.2.2 *Transparency Versus Latency of the Law*

The idea that in the course of history, legal orders become more latent, less transparent, and thus less vulnerable to challenge is a direct follow-up to the distinction between moral laws and game rules. Laws are petrified, fixed in writing, and enforced by a state monopole of violence that usually prevails over any individual. In a stable complex society, legal order becomes intransparent for its users/subjects (Elias 2012, 585). Unification, standardisation, and efficient enforcement enhance the chances of legal norms passing as moral laws rather than game rules.

The rule of law is one way to establish a link between the totality of the social and the totality of the legal. However, the causal mechanism and the interplay between the figuration and the rule of law need not be readily accessible to the subjects/users. Moreover, while some elements of legal systems may be transparent, some are not, and some may be too complex to be efficiently linked to a state of the rule of law. The impact of the aforementioned international connections is one example of this: while people in a state-society may be aware of the general principle of the rule of law and its applicability to their lives, they do not always know about the social, political, and economic forces behind it. The balance between accessibility and inaccessibility, as well as latency and transparency, is always dynamic and figuration-bound.

4.2.3 *Habitus-Dependence of Legal Norms*

But what is the source of the readiness to accept that either any single law or the legal system as such should simply be perceived as a moral law instead of as a game rule? In regard to this point, the habitual aspect of the legitimation of law must be considered. The perception of law as belonging to a certain point on the continuum between transcendental and

conventional may become a part of the habitus, as socially produced and reproduced habits of feeling, thinking, and acting that ‘feel innate’ (Mennell 2007, 6–7). Some individuals are more law-abiding and some more law-reverent than others; the same applies to groups and societies.

The figural explanation of legal change is therefore strongly related to the status of law (more moral law or more game rule), the occurrence of power-struggles that reveal the power-structure behind the law, and the resultant weakening of the legitimacy of legal order. Specifically, as a society becomes more interdependent, an increase in the latency of law and the moralisation of legal order would lead to a decrease in the readiness to challenge the legal system. In turn, the preservation of existing law is part of the cultural overhaul of figurations: even though the law itself may no longer be in the interest of some groups in the society, these groups may still support such laws out of the habit generating a law-abiding habitus, a habitus supportive of a rule of law.

In a state-society, the state dominates or monopolises the lawmaking. The vast majority of existing states have been organised as nation-states for at least several decades, with the nation as a salient identity category. It would follow that the national habitus (see Kuzmics et al. 2020; Bucholtz 2020a) may include similarities regarding the attitudes towards the law and the rule of law (some habitus are supportive of it, while others are adverting or hostile to it).

4.2.4 *Law and Symbol Theory*

Considerations similar to those regarding the role of law in national habitus, albeit phrased in different vocabulary, have given rise to the idea that various nation-states not only have different laws or legal systems, but also different legal cultures (see Cotterrell 2006; Gephardt 2010). In a certain way, a legal culture equates to an abstraction and objectivation of the law-related facets of the habitus of people in a certain society or a distinct social unit in a society.

While Elias never fully integrated his symbol theory into the conceptual framework of the process of civilisation, the connection is easily made: in the process of civilisation, habitus are created that include specific ways of selecting symbols (see Bucholtz 2013). As far as habitus is primarily a cognitive and emotional structure, it is shaped by its symbolic toolbox. Culture is the biggest toolbox from which symbols used by various habitus can be retrieved, to be reassembled, reorganised, reattached—and lost.

Consequently, law is included in the habitus insofar as it is symbolically mediated, and the effects of state formation on habitus mediated by law can be traced by way of socio-cultural analysis of law (see Bucholc and Witte 2020; Witte and Bucholc 2017). There are a number of forerunners and allies in this line of research (see, e.g. Gephart 2010; Teubner 2012; Thornhill 2011; Ackerman 2019; Rosen 2006; Christodoulidis et al. 2019).

4.3 HUNGARY AND POLAND: AN OUTLINE OF A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY

The democratic backsliding in Hungary since 2010 and in Poland since 2015 has caused much debate about the immediate and remote causes of the sinking standards in both countries concerning the rule of law. Each country's course of political and legal change has become the object of many studies (see Bucholc 2016; Bucholc and Komornik 2016, 2018, 2019a; Bucholc and Witte 2020; Halmai 2011, 2018, 2019; Krygier 2019; Sadurski 2018, 2019; Tóth 2013). I refer my reader to this rapidly growing scholarship without repeating the facts of the case, and I continue directly to an outline of a comparative figurational explanation.

4.3.1 *A Socio-historical First Look*

Historically speaking, the two countries have much in common. They have both been part of the imperial history of Central and Eastern Europe and belonged to the Hapsburg Empire (in the case of Poland, in the nineteenth century and only for a part of its current territory). Both have gone a path very different from the Eliasian depiction of European state formation. In Poland and Hungary, the national identity preceded the formation of an independent nation-state in the twentieth century. After 1918, both countries experienced a turbulent period of establishing a viable political model for the newly independent state. In World War II, they were opponents, yet this did not prevent them from both becoming part of the Eastern Bloc after 1945. The period of socialism in both countries was marked by decidedly anti-Soviet sentiments and punctuated by anti-communist protestations and manifestations. Both countries began their transition to a free market economy and liberal democracy in the late 1980s, and both joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU) at the same time (1999 and 2004,

respectively). Both countries have made a political turn to the right, starting with Hungary led by *Fidesz* and Viktor Orban in 2010, followed by Poland governed by *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (Law and Justice, PiS) under the leadership of Jarosław Kaczyński in 2015. And as of March 2020, they are the two countries against which the EU has launched the proceedings related to a threat to the rule of law.

A provisional conclusion would be that Poland and Hungary share a number of figurational characteristics. An interesting historical insight could be added to the list: both Poland and Hungary evolved politically in the Early Modern era as societies dominated by nobility representing itself as the carrier of ethnicised national identity, as opposed to the peasantry and the townspeople. However, contemporary social and cultural resemblances between the two countries are far less striking. While the reciprocal amiable feelings of the two nations have become proverbial (Hungarians invariably belong to the nations which are the most popular with Poles, after Czechs, Italians, and Slovaks, see CBOS 2019), there are significant differences in the size and composition of their populations. Crucially, while Hungary has a significant share of ethnic, linguistic, and national minorities, the territorial shifts of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the genocide of World War II have produced an almost entirely homogenous ethnic-Polish society. One further difference which cannot be underestimated is language: while Polish belongs to a big family of Slavonic languages, Hungarian is the only local representative of Finno-Ugric languages surrounded by either Slavonic or German-speaking neighbours. Religion also reveals discrepancies: while Poland is one of the most religious societies in Europe, perhaps worldwide, Hungary lies well below the European average in this respect.¹

Miklós Hadas has characterised Hungarian society as a ‘culture of mistrust’ (Hadas 2020). Indeed, both Poland and Hungary belong to the EU member states with the lowest levels of social trust and much fear of minorities (even though Poland has few ethnic minorities). Hadas also stressed the masculinisation of Hungarian political culture and the masculinity of the Hungarian national habitus in general, a phenomenon less prominent in Polish society (Hadas 2020, 142). In both countries, intolerance of homosexuality is widespread, and stress on traditional family values is strong in many areas of social life. All these cultural differences

¹ See, for example, the results of European Value Study, <https://europeanvaluesstudy.eu/about-evs/research-topics/religion/>.

contribute to anti-Western sentiments in both societies, which do not, however, translate into equally strong anti-EU attitudes. In 2019, Poland was in the group of Euroenthusiastic societies in the Union (with 76% of citizens supporting EU membership and only 9% for leaving, the fifth lowest result in the ranking), whereas 64% of Hungarian citizens were for remaining in the EU, four points below the EU27 average, and 15% of them were willing to leave the Union, the average being 14% (Eurobarometer 2019, 21).

The combination of pro-European attitudes and anti-European politics in both Hungary and Poland is a puzzle. Moreover, despite the measures applied against both countries under the EU's rule of law framework, domestic support for both governments remain stable, and the international havoc does not seem to undermine the legitimization of governing forces. Poland and Hungary alike seem immune both to symbolic international censure and to the threat of more concrete sanctions.

4.3.2 *Moral Laws and Game Rules: De-moralising the Rule of Law*

The rule of law, as a part of stock in the trade of modern constitutionalism, has a deep moralistic hueing (see Kramer 2004). This was pronounced in the public discourses in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s: establishing a rule of law was not only a ticket to the 'Western club', it was also a moral obligation. In the 1990s, adherence to the rule of law marked the moment of the 'resurrection of rights', as Jacek Kurczewski called it (1993), a contrast between the socialist legal system and the new, democratic one (see Skąpska 2005). An additional factor was the constantly stressed benefits of the rule of law for market economy. While this looks like a utilitarian argument and does not really fit the transcendentalism implied by the phrase 'moral law', market economy in the 1980s and 1990s itself was frequently posited as an indisputable ideal and supported by a normative image of human nature construed along the lines of economic liberalism (see Bucholc 2020b).

From this point of view, the liberal design of the transformation involved positioning the rule of law near the moral-law-extreme of the Eliasian continuum. The expected effect would be to provide the rule of law with a surplus of legitimization, and it probably would have happened if the rule of law had been sustained long enough to become a part of habitus.

However, according to Elias's view, a period spanning less than one generation can hardly leave a lasting habitual trace.

At the same time, critics of the transformation turned against the rule of law with a counter-agenda of de-moralising the rule of law and unveiling it as a game rule. The following analysis by Jarosław Kaczyński illustrates this strategy:

There are no grounds in Poland for the existence of the rule of law, of a law-abiding state. It is worthwhile to consider what results were brought about by the practical application in our country of principles drawing on the concept of the 'rule of law'. During the last 20 years in Poland, some elements of rule of law were construed. But these elements have rather particular effects, which may be connected to the consequences of the lack of lawfulness. As early as the 1980s, the process of juridification of the communist system had begun. Many things which were unregulated before were regulated, and some institutions were created, including the Constitutional Tribunal, the Ombudsman, the administrative courts [...]. A situation emerged in which no decision could be taken without a legal basis. In this way, the rational freedom of decision-making by the persons holding various state functions was limited. (Kaczyński 2011, 227)

The diagnosis by the then opposition's-leader identifies Poland as a country in which the game of political power cannot be played efficiently according to the rule of law ideal. Therefore, the rule of law should be changed or modified: it is a convention; it needs to be adapted to the figuration. This intellectual intervention was followed by a successful challenge to the rule of law a few years later, when the figuration in politics had changed. By the same token, the Constitution of Poland of 1997 was de-moralised in toto, in which the rule of law was set forth as a fundamental principle in the attempt to constitutionalise the 'liberal revolution' (see Ackerman 1994).

In Hungary, a revision of the rules of the game happened five years earlier, but it was less striking because, from a strictly legal point of view, Viktor Orbán played by the constitutional rules, at least up to a point. *Fidesz* managed to secure a constitutional majority and pass a new constitution. However, the notion of 'illiberal democracy', sponsored by Orbán's party, also hints at a de-moralising agenda (Halmai 2019). The idea opposes the model of transformation in Central and Eastern Europe, where a variant of democracy and, correspondingly, of the rule of law with strong liberal hueing was commonly adopted. The immediate effect of this

challenging move is pushing the rule of law further in the direction of game rule norms, easily contested and readily linked to the power balances in the figuration.

4.3.3 *Reversal of Transparency and Latency*

Questioning the moral-law status of the rule of law is accompanied by a shift in transparency and latency of power structures supporting the rule of law. This refers to both the domestic and international context. In the domestic one, the rule of law is reclassified as a part of stock in the trade of the liberal deal—not only a game rule, but also one whose workings have intentionally been kept latent from the public.

Poland's judiciary reform, which was initiated in 2017, is a textbook example of how this works (see Bucholc and Komornik 2018, 2019b). It is a continuation of the view that juridification had gone too far in Poland after 1989, and it is supported by a moral assessment of the judiciary as a relic of post-communism, expressed, for example, in the electoral Agenda of PiS before the 2019 elections:

There is [...] no doubt that the judiciary, in which only superficial changes were made after 1989, has become a very important, perhaps downright, foundation of the post-communist and late post-communist systems, particularly after 2000. That meant the repeated protection of grievances and anti-development mechanisms, and sometimes simply the protection of the world of crime. A particularly important symptom, which relates to the interest of large social groups, was and is the indolence of the courts, which relies on developed slowdown mechanisms and sometimes on the complete blockade of the judiciary. Also characteristic is the involvement of individual judges and sometimes larger groups in connection with various local and also broadly active interest groups as well as with the executive power at the different levels. (Agenda 2019, 36)

The wrongs of the judiciary are unveiled: it is presented as a carrier of post-communist mentality and criticised as an ally of the criminal world. This is a discursive operation, with work on symbols and meanings justifying a total reconstruction of the judiciary (including the constitutional tribunal). In the process, certain elements of the system were completed in full latency: the most blatant example concerned providing lists of the names of judges who supported specific candidates to the Judicial Council (a body endowed with the exclusive right to present candidates for judges

to the president). Despite the administrative court ordering such lists to be published, the executive failed to do so. This not only moved the rule of law one step closer to the game rule extreme of the normative continuum, but it also veiled a crucial part of the legal procedure culminating in a judge's nomination: it was deliberately kept secret. Examples of reducing transparency in the process of democratic backsliding in Poland are bountiful, including the striking shift after 2015 of the very process of parliamentary lawmaking to late evening and night hours.

At the same time, in figurational terms, democratic backsliding in both Poland and Hungary resulted in a definitive increase of transparency of the legal system. The moralistic myth of law as something intangible was demolished by a new concept of the sovereignty of the people, which posited the unequivocal and uncontrolled supremacy of parliaments, as emanations of popular will, over other state powers whose democratic legitimation was weaker. The remarkable similarities between the semantics of sovereignty in Hungary and Poland suggest a figurational shift from latent law to transparent law reflecting the domination of governing parties and their electorates in their respective figurational settings.

The category of the nation is key to the new concept of the division of power, evidenced by Orban's 2002 dictum: 'We can't be in opposition, as the nation cannot be in opposition'.² It is not only a change of the rules of the game in democracy (where, clearly, the nation in some meanings of the term can from time to time end up being opposition), but also an articulation of a new transparency of law. The link to the nation should be as direct as possible, and it does not need any prosthesis, such as the moralised concept of the rule of law, to increase the law's legitimation by manipulating the legal consciousness of the people. In this vein, I also read the following statement made in 2015 by a Member of Parliament for a minor right party supporting PiS: 'The law is an important thing, but the law is not sacred. [...] The well-being of the Nation is over the law!'³ The change of status of law from a 'sacred thing' to an instrument of national well-being constitutes a move towards a game rule kind of norm

² <https://balkaninsight.com/2019/06/20/the-generation-that-betrayed-hungarian-democracy/>.

³ <https://wpolityce.pl/polityka/273101-kornel-morawiecki-w-sejmie-nad-prawem-jest-dobro-narodu-prawo-ktore-nie-sluzyl-narodowi-to-bezprawie-reakcja-owacja-na-stojaco-wideo>.

accompanied by a discursive move towards divulging the figurational context of lawmaking.

4.3.4 *Articulating Habitus-Dependence of the Rule of Law*

Declaring law to be a product of a nation as direct as possible should not, of course, be taken at face value. In particular, the meaning of the concept of ‘nation’ in political discourse does not correspond to the Eliasian understanding of nation as an identity category produced by the interdependencies of a nation-state as a survival unit (see Kuzmics et al. 2020). Nonetheless, certain experiences which form a part of national identity in the everyday/political meaning of the word are also crucial from the figurational perspective. This includes, for example, collective traumata.

In his analysis of German history, Elias paid great attention to collective traumata as a factor in the formation of national habitus (Elias 2013). In this context, it is worthwhile to highlight sociological interpretations of the 1989 transformation which stress its long-lasting traumatic effect on post-socialist societies. In 2004, Piotr Sztompka wrote: ‘there cannot be any doubt that the collapse of communism was a traumatogenic change *par excellence*’ (2004, 171). From that point of view, the anti-transformation revision in Poland and Hungary was an expression of the trauma which affected the figurations of the two societies and profoundly shaped their national habitus. Hadas’s analysis suggests that in the Hungarian case, the initial trauma was the Treaty of Trianon, and later developments were part of the pattern of reproduction of a long-lasting figurational model of a ‘hatred-bound community’ based on an us/them distinction:

In the Horthy regime, bound by the spell of the Trianon-Treaty-shock (the loss of two-thirds of the country’s former territories after WWI), hatred was aimed at first at external enemies (primarily the neighboring nations), followed by the internal foe: the Jew. In the communist period, a cold war was waged in which the West and the exploiters were the arch enemies and their representatives at home: rich farmers, the bourgeoisie, and aristocrats already without power. After the collapse of communism, the main scapegoats were the communists, then, after a generation’s time—an eerie recurrence of history—the Jew would appear again, followed by the “migrant.” In all these periods, of course, Hungarians have their own underclass, the Gypsies, who can be hated at will. In all three periods, the Hungarian nation became, apart from the common language, a hatred-bounded community. (Hadas 2020, 143)

Predictably, both in Hungary and Poland, reinstating the link between law and national habitus leads towards a rejection, or at least devaluation, of elements of legal systems which are not ‘homemade’, the so-called legal transplants. The rule of law undoubtedly is one of them.

The legal philosophy behind democratic backsliding demonstrates not only the habitus-dependence of law, but also the power of targeting law by way of identity politics. The problem of allegedly postcolonial or creolised elites can yet again be reinterpreted from that perspective. While the post-communist and liberal elites in Poland would be represented the lawmakers saw as hostile to ‘authentic’ national identity by the Right, the paramount example in Hungary is George Soros. The campaign against him, which was mounted by the government, culminated in conflict around the Central European University (CEU), which illustrated not only the salience of the category of national authenticity in the Right’s narrative, but also the role assigned to law (in this case, the laws governing higher education in Hungary) in defending authenticity against transplants brought from abroad. The fact that Soros is not only a Western millionaire, but also a person of Hungarian-Jewish descent undoubtedly contributed to the fierceness of the campaign: 2010 brought a marked, though temporary, rise in anti-Semitism in Hungary (Kovács 2013, 7 ff.). An ostensible element of habitus-dependence of the depiction of Soros as a non-Hungarian was also the famous 2017 poster opposing the assignment of the migrant quota in the EU, a part of the ‘Stop Brussels’ campaign (see Hadas 2020, 143). A smiling (or grinning) Soros (who opted for Hungary to accept more migrants) was represented next to a caption: ‘Do not let Soros have the last laugh’ (*Ne hagyjuk, hogy Soros György neveszen a végén!*). The laws made in Brussels are the laws of strangers, of a ‘them’, who are different from ‘us’ (and who, in the case of the migration crisis, insisted that we accept even more ‘them’ as inhabitants of ‘our’ land).

4.3.5 *Symbolic Force of Law: Redesigning the Past*

The dynamics of the established and outsiders, as introduced by the last point on habitus-dependence of legal norms, segues into the final section of this analysis. To combine an identity project with law (both negatively, by dismissing laws which are not in accord with the national authenticity, and positively, by making new laws as an expression thereof), it is necessary to use and re-use symbols in new ways, contexts, or framings. Achieving the goal of performative efficiency in legal communication

requires intensive work on symbols by means of collective and cultural memory. While a key to a general interpretation of the Hungarian case was offered by Balázs Trencsényi and János Mátyás Kovács (2019), no universal heuristic has yet been conceived for Poland. The recurrent narrative of the legacy of *Solidarność* and its collapse covers only one aspect of the work on symbols performed—or not performed—in Poland after 1989 (see Ackerman 2019). Instead, a rise in politics of symbolic exclusion deserves attention, which in Eliasian terms would signalise that the struggle between the established and the outsiders gaining momentum (see Elias and Scotson 2008). Specific examples include the complicated relationship between anti-Semitism and of identity politics, discussed above. Another battlefield is the struggle around the Christian identity, involving an extensive reworking of the national history (see Bucholc 2020a), or the treatment of sexual minorities, including the harsh anti-LGBT campaign in Poland in 2019.

One way of conceptualising the dynamics of the established and the outsiders in both countries is to think of it as a clash of conservative and liberal utopias in the sense of Karl Mannheim (1954). The work on symbols in a liberal utopia is directed towards the future, conceived individually and rationalistically: the past is only a burden. A conservative utopia, whose emergence according to Mannheim was a direct reaction to the rise of liberalism, reverses the arrow of time: it looks backwards, projecting the sense of community and communality in order to reshape the present after the image of the imagined past.

The plurality of interplays between identity politics, memory politics, and the law in Poland and Hungary is still far from mapped. In particular, where the image of the past is directly shaped by legal means, there are numerous cases of what I dubbed ‘commemorative lawmaking’ (Bucholc 2019). These introduce symbolic contents related to history which are normatively hardly readable, thus supplementing memory laws and other forms of legal governance of both memory and history (see Belavusau and Gliszczyńska-Grabias 2017).

4.4 CONCLUSION: THE ILLUSION OF GOOD BEHAVIOUR?

Democratic rule of law requires a high civilisational standard, as does democratic politics in general. However, an application of figurational sociology of law reveals the fragility of democratically made law. It is a kind of law that voluntarily resigns some of the attributes which improve law’s

legitimation, enhance its chances of durability and stability, discourage the population from challenging it, and provide it with a stable basis in the social habitus. A democratic law is ostensibly made by humans, who are demonstrably fallible and very much of this world. Selling a product of democratic lawmaking as a moral law requires complex philosophical concepts like Habermasian *Verfassungspatriotismus*, or else a very law-abiding society for which lawlessness is the worst of horrors. Democratic laws are game rules which are easily negotiated: their hidden mechanisms easily become transparent in the political game, and the complexity of democratic procedure can easily turn against any transparency and hide the motives of lawmakers, the rationales of legal acts, and the figurational dynamics supportive of any power in place. Democratic rule of law depends on a particular habitus, which Elias insisted was hardly self-explanatory:

Tatsächlich leben wir doch in einem wunderbaren Jahrhundert, denn dieses unglaubliche Ding, diese sehr fragile Pflanze, die wir Demokratie nennen, gedieh—was bedeutet, dass politische Gegner miteinander leben können und gemeinsame Standards haben. (Elias 2017, 20)

Supporting this form of political habitus is not an easy task, and it can be undermined by an alternative habitus of a national community imagining itself as the established in the state-society, reluctant to grant any outsiders equal rights, status, and influence on the laws of the country.

This is particularly challenging for projects that bear elements of post-national politics and lawmaking, such as the European Union (see Delmotte 2007, 85 ff.). The case of Poland and Hungary demonstrates both the importance and the volatility of good manners in a political community. The second decade of twenty-first century brought the end of the ‘comfortable illusion’ of ‘the perceived commonality of political and legal cultures of the original like-minded members [of the EU], and new members recruited subsequently from within Western Europe’, which ‘created a sense of confidence in the *proper behavior* of Member States’ (Sadurski 2010, 386). Poland and Hungary refused to behave properly, and the general scolding had little effect. The rule of law in Europe has thereby been disenchanted. Instead of a moral law, it is a mere game rule to which at least two European nations show little attachment, a model based in a figuration which need not last forever. It is too transparent and yet not transparent enough and sets too high demands on the habitus of the people for whose benefit it was once introduced.

While it is still too early to speculate on the long-term consequences of the crisis unleashed in early 2020 by the pandemic caused by the new coronavirus, the developments in the European Union indicate that proper behaviour seems to be limited to one's own state territory and interest. Post-national ambitions and European law-abiding habitus, as counteroffers to the national-conservative projects, can be expected to lose weight as a result of the pandemic, which has already loosened European solidarity. The attention span of the global public is very limited: the cognitive investment in public health issues inevitably reduces the resources of time, energy, and concentration necessary to keep in sight the more abstract problems of the rule of law which do not translate into existential concerns as easily. While disintegration of international figuration may put the rule of law under further threat, it is quite possible that in the third decade of this century, nobody will be able to care much.

Acknowledgements The author acknowledges the support of Polish National Science Centre in Kraków ('National habitus formation and the process of civilisation in Poland after 1989: a figural approach', 2019/34/E/HS6/00295). I am very grateful to Candice Kerestan for her kind assistance in editing this chapter.

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Transformations of Human Rights Within Ruptures and Continuity: A Historico- Sociological Approach

Ludivine Damay and Florence Delmotte

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The origin of the reflexion proposed hereafter is twofold. It lies on the one hand in the comparison of two equally interesting and stimulating theses on human rights: that articulated by the historian Samuel Moyn and that defended by Justine Lacroix (2010) and by Justine Lacroix and Jean-Yves Pranchère (2016), who react to the positions defended by the former in

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_5

his book *The Last Utopia*, published in 2010.¹ On the other hand, this chapter stems from the reading of some Norbert Elias's texts that interrogates the relevance of those texts in order to think about national and post-national political integration in contemporary Europe and beyond (Delmotte 2012).

Human rights, according to Moyn, emerged suddenly in the 1970s, following the implosion of other utopias, in order to be invoked progressively around the world in the media and in social movements, in the manner of a slogan. Above all, these human rights have very little in common with the rights of man contained in the declarations of the eighteenth century. According to him, the rights of man of the eighteenth century, historically, entailed the development of citizenship in national political communities, while contemporary human rights are more related to a policy that takes into account the distant suffering of others (Moyn 2010, 12–13). The first are indissolubly linked to state-building and nation-building while the latter are essentially transnational. The author also criticises a hagiographic vision which is in his view dominant.

Lacroix's criticism is particularly aimed at the argument held by Moyn of a rupture between the rights of man of the eighteenth century and human rights of the end of the twentieth century. Moyn's analysis would fail to take into account the elements of strong continuity, from the point of view of political theory, between the rights of man and human rights, in particular because both in fact mix those two dimensions, nation-state and transnational, which Moyn's approach separates brusquely. Lacroix's argument refers, on the one hand, to the fact that human rights not only have a transnational dimension, insofar as certain new rights (of children, of women, of homosexuals) clearly contribute to reinventing citizenship at

¹ The thesis developed by Moyn provoked a controversy which is not unrelated to the success his book met (see e.g. Alston 2013). For Moyn, human rights constitute the 'last utopia' of our epoch, according to which the norms of human rights and their observance would ensure a better life for all. For lack of space and because it is not the object of our discussion, we will not develop here the different ways in which Moyn, on the one hand, and Elias, on the other, apprehend or define 'ideology' and 'utopia'. We will content ourselves with underlining the obvious: the utopia takes on a strong derogatory meaning for Moyn. It is less obvious with Elias. Utopia and ideology are both reality-incongruent ways of thinking, but Elias reserves most of his criticisms for the latter, even if he is relatively little interested in the content of political ideologies, and more in the obstacle than an ideological way of thinking represents for the development of a reality-congruent, sociological, knowledge. It should also be noted that Elias does not seem to associate human rights with either an ideology or a utopia.

the national level. On the other hand, the fact that the rights of man were first of all understood and recognised within ‘bounded political communities’ (Balibar 2010, 41–59) does not prevent their cosmopolitan character. At the very least, their claim to be universal is undeniable, and it did not escape the conservative and reactionary critiques (see Burke 1987 [1790]; de Maistre 1988 [1797]).

Moyn’s argument, his historical method and the criticism addressed to him from political theory offer much to ponder. However, the alternative raised by their comparison—in a word: a break or continuity between the rights of man and human rights—does not exhaust the ways in which one can respond to the question. In what follows, we defend that the historical-sociology approach developed by Norbert Elias (2010 [1987]; 2012a [1939]) suggests that there is both a certain continuity and a substantial evolution between the two ‘generations’ of human rights, due to profound social and political transformations which must be sought to explain.

The first section of this chapter attempts, without any claims to being exhaustive, to give an overall perspective of how human rights have been considered by major approaches in sociology. We first of all intend to rehearse the main reasons for the indifference or scepticism as regards ‘the rights of man’ long demonstrated by sociology and bolstered by what Saskia Sassen calls ‘methodological nationalism’ (2007, 22–23). We then address the watershed observed in the mid-1990s, marked by stirring appeals aimed at getting sociology to finally take seriously human rights and by the development of significant research programmes, first on Anglo-Saxon side. Nevertheless, these sociological approaches seem at times to lack historical depth. In the second section of the chapter we thus intend to shed light on what Elias’s (historical) sociology can offer to the contemporary understanding of human rights. Although not considered at first as a specialist on the subject, Elias is one of the rare sociologists of his time to directly address the question of the rise in importance of human rights, at the end of one of his last essays, ‘Changes in the ‘We–I’ Balance’, in 1987 (Elias 2010; see also Van Krieken 2019; Linklater 2020). In the rest of the oeuvre as well, his approach radically questions, although implicitly, the evidence of law (Bucholc 2015), and closely connects the question of rights to the destiny of the state: to its genesis in the West, to its development and also to its being transcended in the twentieth century. In an age of globalised interdependencies, the development of human rights for Elias thus corresponds and contributes to the beginnings of a

fragile process, which is not an inevitable imperative: political integration on the scale, a planetary one, of the human community.

5.2 CONTRIBUTIONS AND LIMITS OF SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO HUMAN RIGHTS

Unlike the jurists and philosophers who reflected on and accompanied the birth and the development of the notion of the rights of man, sociologists have distinguished themselves by their scepticism towards them. While the concept of citizenship, studied since the 1950s (and Marshall's keynote text in 1950), has gained importance within the discipline, suspicion towards a norm linked to the idea of a universal and a-historical human nature has long prevailed.

5.2.1 *Between Suspicion and Indifference*

Without alluding to the rights of man in particular, the perspectives adopted by the two major 'founding fathers' of sociology concerning the law already illuminate part of the resistance sociologists have displayed in confronting the rights of man. In short, in Émile Durkheim (1858–1917), the law is indicative of the types of social relations within a society and accompanies the social changes (Serverin 2000). The law (like property law) meets the needs of the division of labour and the development of capitalism. Knowing whether or not the rights of man should be protected (and if so, which ones) is not the work of sociology, which remains outside any prescriptive debate (Turner 1993, 490). Nevertheless, in *Individualism and the Intellectuals*, a more political writing, Durkheim contributes to the debate over the Dreyfus affair in order to affirm the 'sacred' character of human nature: the reference to the rights of man and the Enlightenment, 'this religion of humanity whose rational expression is individualist morality' (Durkheim 1970, 271; see also Joas 2011, 161–172). Defending these rights characterises a society in which, owing to the division of labour, owing to individualisation, respect for the individual is central (Durkheim 1970, 275–276).

In Max Weber (1864–1920), while the approach is comprehensive, more interested in the social representations of individuals, there is also a distancing as regards the law. Weber distinguishes between the law of jurists and the law of sociologists: the former are interested in 'the

prescriptive sense [...] which should be logically attributed to a certain given language construction as a standard of law', while the latter ask themselves what happens to it in practice, pondering the possibility of the actors behaving in compliance with these prescriptions (Weber 1995, 11). For that matter, Weber would go on to demonstrate that modernity and rationalisation go hand in hand with the development of bureaucratic administration and substantive law against traditions and natural law. Rights are related to the legal-rational domination wielded by one social group over others (Turner 1993, 493–495). As for the rights of man, they were viewed by Weber from the perspective of 'extreme rationalist fanatisms' (Joas 2011, 162). On this aspect, certain authors argue that the two main currents of sociology, the positivists and the Weberians, have 'formed an unusual alliance as both have come to insist that morals lie outside the scope of sociology's mission' (Sjoberg et al. 2001, 14).

The Marxian view of law and the Marxist critique of the rights of man would also impact upon sociologists. Marx's position in *On the Jewish Question* certainly sparked off divergent interpretations, and on this subject suggests a more ambiguous and nuanced position (Lacroix and Pranchère 2012). It remains that Marx has above all been remembered for his attack against the rights of man, portrayed as the rights of an egotistical individual, which goes back to the more general assumption according to which the law is nothing but an instrument intended to reproduce the power relations. Extending this perspective, the critical tradition within sociology often adopts the position of unmasking: the law in general and human rights in particular are not what they claim to be; they are instruments which perpetuate the power relations. Against an ideologically neutral view of human rights, a number of sociologists thus criticise the individualist and liberal vision of the world that these rights cover and which would disregard the material conditions of their existence (Deflem and Chicoine 2011, 104).

This position relates to another series of considerations, this time against the idea of a universal human nature. Here again, sociology's suspicions aim at an essentialist and universalist conception of human nature which could exist independently of social conditions. In *The Sociological Imagination*, Charles Wright Mills evokes 'the limits of human nature'. In fact, 'every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society', 'within some historical sequence', and contributes 'to the shaping of this society and to the course of its history', at the same time as they are produced 'by society and by its historical push and shove' (Mills 1970,

12). Sociology's difficulty in grasping human rights would appear to stem from its refusal to accept a 'universal ontology' (Turner 1993, 496). Consequently, the rights accorded to individuals would always be situated in a process of emergence, institutionalisation or of being called into question.

In substance, for sociology it is a matter of criticising an a-contextual view of human rights, in time and also in space. From a methodological perspective, sociology developed through the study of social phenomena often confined to the boundaries of a national society (Hynes et al. 2010). According to Saskia Sassen (2007), sociology is thus to a great extent marked by a national bias, insofar as the scale of reference used for the study of social realities is very often the national scale. This 'methodological nationalism' (Beck 2014) has not encouraged sociologists to think through phenomena which explicitly exceed these national boundaries, such as globalisation, cosmopolitanism and human rights.

5.2.2 *A Booming Research Area*

The last few decades have seen the spectacular development of a 'sociology of human rights' (Turner 1993). Arguing that human rights were not solely a series of legal norms, certain sociologists have considered that human rights were an integral part of social life and that they were invoked, declared, contested and implemented through diverse practices which sociology should grasp, without prejudging a normative definition of human rights nor showing concern about the possibility they had of being effectively recognised from a legal point of view (Devillé 2003). For that matter, it was a question of accepting that sociology precisely studies the distinction between saying and doing, between the ratification of treaties and actual compliance with the norms, between the contents of different declarations of rights and social realities.

The recognition of the social importance of human rights, and of the inflation of discourses formulated in these terms, does not mean therefore that all sociologists accept that these rights are based on a universal human nature. Anthony Woodiwiss (2005, 11–15), for example, calls for a 'sceptical' defence of human rights, which contests the approach in terms of natural rights, in order to grasp how the 'human rights systems' represent the state of the power relations in the social configurations which have adopted these systems. It is thus possible to take human rights seriously, even to wish to defend them, while at the same time adopting a critical

position which refuses to base these rights on a universal human nature. That said, not all sociologists share the same opinion. Bryan Turner (1993) understands human rights on the basis of the notion of human ‘fragility’ or ‘vulnerability’, in other words of a foundation common to humanity. According to him, all human beings are fragile, marked by finitude, living in conditions of a scarcity of resources, diseases and danger. Different degrees of vulnerability exist, but the strongest human beings, the more provided for, taking into account their own finitude, are capable of demonstrating empathy for the weakest. Nevertheless, for Turner, a sociology of human rights must also grasp these human fragilities in a dynamic relation with the existing social institutions, which can reduce these vulnerabilities or on the contrary contribute to their increase. While this author thus takes into consideration the foundations of human nature, the social context is not absent; it contributes, in a constant interaction, to giving them tangible form. But mainly, against Turner, sociologists think that human rights are more socially constructed than related to a human nature (Nash 2015).

This sociological perspective on human rights takes into consideration the political conditions, the power relations and the resources available for thinking through the reality of these rights (Woodiwiss 2005). It is also a question of analysing the social representations of the political communities which take up human rights or which are the subject of discourses related to human rights (Hynes et al. 2010, 812). On the latter point, sociologists seek to demonstrate that beyond the work of normative interpretation of human rights, the meaning and the content of these rights are configured by political and social struggles between actors. Nicolas Guilhot (2008), for example, argues that the growing recourse to human rights in American foreign policy has been at the cost of a change in the meaning attributed to these same rights, in connection to the power relations between liberals and neoconservatives. Other works study human rights as a special discursive register implying their transformation into a ‘cause’ (Sarat and Scheingold 1998; Israël 2001) or as a repertoire of action for social movements to have new rights extended, acknowledged or applied.

Methodologically, sociological works are marked out by their empirical approaches, which aim to grasp the reality of human rights in one or more societies, or through transnational dynamics. Risse et al. (1999) have put forward a general interpretative model what is called a ‘spiral’ model to understand the links between international standards and the changes

observed in the national spheres: how, for example, are we to understand that authoritarian states or those flouting certain human rights somehow come to respect them? Inspired by the constructivism of the sociology of international relations, these authors have developed a model enabling an understanding of these processes by which the states ‘become socialised’ with the norms of human rights. They identify different phases (from repression to behavioural changes in compliance with the norms) and different actors (the transnational civil society, the local groups which become mobilised, etc.) which influence these phases in different public arenas. For some ten years, these authors have set themselves the task of putting their model to the test through empirical studies. They adapted it to pay greater attention to the way in which international norms find a concrete existence in the field, by analysing the conditions which enable observation of these standards, for example, the presence of an effective state and not a weak or a failed state (Risse et al. 2013). Once again, it is here a question of pondering the distinction between saying (of the order of ‘commitment’) and doing (which is more in the realm of ‘compliance’), and also the conditions which favour the articulation between the two.

Another research path attempts to pinpoint the distinction between the rights linked to citizenship and the rights which originate directly from the recognition of human rights at an international level and studies the relations between the two levels. It should nevertheless be noted that while certain sociologists acknowledge the increased importance gained by human rights and their promise to address themselves to humanity in its entirety, globalisation has created for them a ‘citizenship gap’, a citizenship vacuum for non-citizens or second-class citizens, a gap which human rights, still insufficiently effective, do not make up for (Brysk and Shafir 2004). In this perspective, Kate Nash (2009) shows that human rights development allegedly helps create a multiplicity of statuses between ‘super-citizens’, protected both by their belonging to a community and their ability to play the game of globalisation, and the non-citizens, those who are in legal limbo and in the complete absence of the recognition of their rights (such as the Guantanamo prisoners).

In the same vein, evoking citizenship and human rights, Gershon Shafir (2004) convokes ‘two traditions of rights’. He thus distinguishes between the rights granted on the grounds of the belonging to a political community and the rights granted on the grounds of the belonging to humanity. This perspective seems to echo the rupture brought to the fore by Moyn. Shafir is nevertheless more nuanced, showing the similarities and the

paradoxes between these traditions, including that brought to light by Hannah Arendt: the state (the belonging to a particular political community) remains the best guarantee of enjoying rights, be they of ‘the citizen’ or of ‘the human being’.

5.3 NORBERT ELIAS’S SOCIOLOGY: ANOTHER PERSPECTIVE ON STATE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

With regard to history, the history of ideas, political philosophy or law, the sociological approaches, regardless of their divergences, offer other perspectives on human rights—on their political and social effects, the discourses and the practices associated with them, or the distortions observed between these two levels. These sociological approaches restore powerfully the socio-historically incarnate, contentious and contingent dimension of human rights and the struggles waged in their name. Sociological approaches thus nourish criticisms which are irreducible to those of the jurist and of the philosopher. Some of them nevertheless remain marked by certain *a priori* if not by a manifest mistrust towards the supposed idealism of human rights. For reasons linked to the history of the discipline in the twentieth century (Déloye 1997, 5–28), the majority of the sociological approaches bear witness to a lack of historical depth, which does not enable them to fully enter the debate which constituted our starting point, bearing on the filiation and the rupture between the rights of man proclaimed in the eighteenth century and the human rights claimed since the end of the twentieth century. At this point, a detour through Norbert Elias’s historical sociology may prove useful. Elias never stopped denouncing ‘the retreat of sociologists into the present’ (Elias 1987), and he saw humanity as sociology’s frame of reference, the social unit to be considered. These two concerns—taking into account long-term evolutions, on the one hand, and the need to go beyond the nation-state level to grasp certain social developments, on the other—were for him eminently linked.

5.3.1 *Law and Rights in a ‘Reality-Congruent’ and Long-Term Approach*

Admittedly, as Woodiwiss (2005, 25) points out, Elias ‘does not directly address the issue’ of law. In the terms of Robert van Krieken’s, Elias ‘said so little about law, buried deeply in asides and footnotes, that it is fair to

say that he neglected an analysis of legal processes and institutions, certainly in comparison to the social theorists to whom legal scholars usually turn' (2019, 268). However, defends van Krieken, 'among sociologists and social theorists more broadly, Elias is often read alongside those better known names, and there are a number of reasons why he should also be ranked alongside them in law and social science scholarship' (van Krieken 2019, 268). According to Woodowiss, Elias was even one of the first, together with Michel Foucault, to try to explain 'how the law has come to constitute an effective constraining force' in modern societies, a powerful mode of social discipline. Obviously, this could be one of the ways of summarising the subject of Elias's major work, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* (2012a [1939]). In this book, Elias proposes to link the genesis and development of the state in the West to the transformations of the ways of behaving and of 'controlling' oneself—what Elias calls the 'civilising' of behaviour and manners—by addressing the importance of the institutionalisation, by the state, of the monopoly of legitimate physical violence in extended and pacified territories already experiencing a complex division of social functions.

The strength of the law is in Elias often associated with the existence of a coercive apparatus. This is very clear when he underlines in late texts the contrast between the relative pacification of social relations operated within states, and violence and the law of the strongest which dominate relations between states in the absence of genuine international law, in other words one backed by effective constraint (Elias 2007). The idea is already present indeed in the conclusion of the text from 1939, marked by the imminent outbreak of World War II which, in the absence of centralised monopolies, would see the reproduction, between states this time, of battles for hegemony which had led to the formation of the states when they opposed feudal entities. Elias moreover predicts, at the outcome of the conflict, the formation of political entities at the least 'continental', encompassing the nation-states. For this long-term approach, the conditions for the genesis of the state in reality prefigured the conditions of its being outstripped several centuries later: the ever-increasing interdependencies between human groups which had formerly rendered obsolete the political forms of the Middle Ages had no reason to stop at the stage or at the borders of the state and would soon call upon other, expanded forms of political communities.

Fifty years after *The Civilising Process*, in an essay entitled 'Changes in the "We-I" Balance' (2010 [1987]), Elias returns to the question of

national and post-national political integration—or of citizenship, if one prefers. In both cases he accords an eminent position to the question of the rights of individuals. Thus, as regards national integration, in the framework of the nation-states, Elias writes:

The more complete integration of all citizens into the state in the European multi-party states has really only happened in the course of the twentieth century. Only in conjunction with the parliamentary representation of all classes did all the members of the state begin to perceive it more as a we-unit and less as a they-group. (Elias 2010, 186)

Political rights, political participation rights, the right to elect and to be elected here play a crucial role within the framework of a process of democratisation which also concerns the reduction of economic inequalities and the extension of social rights and which is carried out in a hitherto unseen way in the nation-state framework. At the same time, Elias's thinking nourishes no attachment to national belonging. On the contrary, he never stopped denouncing its 'mythic' and 'affective' character, which impedes the development of a wider and more 'reality-congruent' political consciousness in the face of the challenges of the times. Indeed, the nation-states are for him henceforth incapable of rising to the challenges of the issues at stake and the risks of destruction (economic, ecological and military) which are from now on global. The vision of the world which is attached to nation-states, based on restricted political entities which are also in competition with each other, even contributes directly to increasing the dangers. Against this nationalist vision, the only alternative is the development of a 'sense of responsibility' at a worldwide level, timidly attested to, among other elements, by the birth of the United Nations, whose impact it would be too soon to evaluate. Elias (2010, 202–203) also cites certain non-governmental organisations like Amnesty International. Lastly, in a way that is as powerful as it is unexpected, the text 'Changes in the "We–I" Balance' concludes with the human rights. This conclusion highlights what the rise of human rights in itself indicates, the upsurge of claims connected to human rights and the role that human rights might play, not only through the struggles led in their name but also because of their very content and meaning:

[T]here are already unambiguous signs that people are beginning to identify with something beyond state borders, that their we-group identity is mov-

ing towards the plane of humanity. One of these signs is the importance that the concept of human rights is gradually taking on. It is worthwhile at the end of our study to look in more detail at what the demand for human rights means. In its present form it includes the idea that limits should be set on the omnipotence of the state in its treatment of individual citizens. This resembles the way in which, at the earlier transition from a lower to a higher plane of integration, limits were set, by the relation to the higher level, on the power that members of the lower level could wield over other members of their association. The state claimed extensive powers over the individuals forming it. In speaking of human rights, we say that the individual as such, as a member of humanity, is entitled to rights that limit the state's power over the individual, regardless of the laws of that state. (Elias 2010, 207–208)

5.3.2 *Individualisation and Integration: Human Rights Between Continuity and Change*

Certain propositions from the text ‘Changes in the “We–I” Balance’ seem to be marked with the seal of ‘common sense’ and may appear obvious, whereas they are not that obvious in sociological approaches. In the background, the most implicit probably concerns the possibility of a transition or an articulation between a sociological approach—reconstructive and more or less descriptive, comprehensive or explanatory—and a more speculative approach, in the sense of philosophy, or prescriptive, in the sense of the law. Like a will, this late essay leads to a reflection on the conditions of possibility—and the political, if not historical, necessity—of a transition to post-national forms of political integration. But the author, while being explicit as to the hypothetical and engaged status of what he proposes, resolutely bases his reflection on the observation of past occurrences, and thus builds a bridge between the sociological approach and political theory. A second striking feature, and implicit proposal of the extract above, is: one can fairly frankly value the content, scope and role of human rights while taking a critical view of them, including their content. Not only does Elias underline the ‘stuttering’ character of the human rights at the end of the twentieth century, but he also chooses to push to the fore a right which he ‘invents’, or which at least does not exist as such in the declarations: ‘the right of freedom from the use of physical force or even the threat of physical force, and the right to decline to use or threaten to use force in the service of another’ (Elias 2010, 207–208).

According to Elias, the human rights bring or should bring into question the most essential and the most generic of the state's prerogatives, namely the monopoly of legitimate physical violence. More precisely they allow limits to be imposed on the exercise or implications of this monopoly. Elias does not go into the debate which underpins the thinking of Justine Lacroix, and which weighs on the question of knowing whether or not these rights which intend to limit the power of the state have their origins in the declarations of the eighteenth century and, before that, in the thinking of John Locke, which seems difficult to deny on a philosophical level. What interests Elias is that the human rights assume their political expansion, or a new burgeoning, through the struggles carried out in their name by individuals or by groups within the framework of a new upsurge of integration. However slender and fragile it may still be, the latter is taking place on the scale of, or is intended for, humanity as a whole. For Elias, the human rights in the twentieth century thus correspond both to a new upsurge of integration, in the direction of humanity, and to a 'new upsurge of individualisation', which is being played out in a profoundly transformed context by comparison with that of the birth of the rights, by the globalisation of planetary interdependencies, for him proven since the world wars.

Finally, according to Elias, this substantial evolution took place without a real rupture. Through the human rights, an upsurge of individualisation effectively goes beyond the level of state integration, and calls the latter into question by understanding human rights as the rights of the individual or the citizen *against* the state. The latter can be the citizen's state or any state arbitrarily threatening the citizen. However, this evolution has been prepared, fashioned and enabled by, among others, the state itself, which was at one time a powerful vector of the individualisation, the integration and even the emancipation of individuals through the law and through rights.

For all that, this (historical) sociology is not inscribed in a vision which makes of the state, the law or rights either an ultimate end or a primary cause. Instead it draws up a processual view of figurations and social change, which is neither 'progressive' nor, even less so, 'harmonious'. Change, in this approach, is born from a rupture in the balance of power. In the twentieth century, the 'institutional democratisation' that has developed through the extension, widening and deepening of rights, is not, for Elias, the cause but rather the effect of a 'functional democratisation' made necessary by the increased weight and influence, in advanced

industrial societies, of social groups dominated until then (Elias 2012b, 62–64). The civil and above all political and social rights of the citizens were thus first of all the subject of battles, conflicts and compromises in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Today, and as Hannah Arendt (1962) had somehow very well anticipated (see also Lacroix and Pranchère 2016, 299–308), the social existence and the political significance of the human rights reveal themselves through the struggles carried out in their name by certain human individuals and groups in a context which has rendered these struggles both necessary and possible.

5.4 CONCLUSION

In the perspective of a long-term historical sociology, one cannot deny that the context in which the human rights have been claimed since the 1970s is profoundly different from that of the eighteenth century, while democratisation and globalisation obviously has not the same concrete significance in both cases. Something new thus undoubtedly occurred towards the end of the twentieth century: even fragile and very minimal, a ‘sense of responsibility’ on the scale of humanity emerged through the invocation of the human rights and the claims which relate to them.

From the same sociological perspective, however, thinking through this change and this newness in no way prevents us from thinking them through in the mode of continuity. Beyond the kind of intrinsic, conceptual and political continuity pointed by political theory and philosophy, continuity underlined by historical sociology is not solely theoretical or philosophical; it also concerns the contents of the rights. What Elias’s approach suggests is that we can consider human rights in the twentieth century as rights which impose themselves—or should impose themselves—on states within which these very rights were first of all claimed and (sometimes) recognised. Without seeing there any rupture, Elias rather identifies the deepening of an individualisation process to which the state itself has powerfully contributed, distinguishing itself from other (clannish, tribal, feudal) more community-based modes of political organisation. In other words, the individualisation in which the modern state participated would ultimately contribute to its being called into question at the end of the twentieth century. It is as if the dynamic to which the state has strongly participated has partly turned against it, notably by the means of the rights of man (or ‘human rights’). Starting from the West, the latter had however developed within the states, even if always-already

with the effect or even the cause of limiting the prerogatives of the state over the individuals.

Following the socio-historical perspective, we can thus observe since the eighteenth century both an element of strong continuity, through the process of individualisation and the presence of the state as an actor, *and* a progressive yet major change of context, concerning the role and the position of this actor, the state. For Elias, as for Beck (1992), this change of context involves precisely going beyond the state as an effective survival unit in an era of globalised interdependencies. Elias, however, has maybe more proved to be attentive and worried about the resistance of national habitus to globalisation and post-national integration processes (Elias 2010). In the end, this globalisation ultimately renders possible—even necessary, through the dangers it brings about—a global mobilisation of human rights, in the twentieth century: not only by individuals against the state but also by individuals in the name of humanity, a concept which is certainly hazy, but a little more concrete in the twenty-first century than in the eighteenth century.

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Civilising Digitalisation: In Search of a New Balance with Today's Technological Innovations

Adele Bianco

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter aims to develop Norbert Elias's reflections on technology and the civilising processes and to apply his categories to today's technological innovations, particularly with reference to digitalisation. Contemporary society is experiencing a set of technological and organisational transformations, particularly in the industrial and economic fields. Working activity is also affected by this process. In facing this challenge caused by digitalisation, Elias's contribution can offer interesting indications in the attempt to find a new balance with digital processes and the diffusion and use of new technologies.

Elias's contribution is important for two reasons that show the topicality of his message. Firstly, he stressed that technological development requires the whole of society to engage in an adaptation process. Thanks

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnica (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_6

to it, human beings learn how to manage new technologies. In this sense, the civilising process occurs with reference to technology on both a socio-genetic and psychogenetic level.

Secondly, technological development, and in particular digitalisation, requires a learning and adaptation process in order to reach a new balance between society and technology, which means, with regard to today's society, a new 'civilised' societal disposition involving the labour market and new kinds of jobs as well as the appropriate behaviour required of the digital worker.

I have structured my chapter in three sections, devoted to highlight the issues mentioned above. The first deals with Elias's category of decivilisation (*Entzivilisierung*). It means that the civilising process is reversible and in this context the regression is due to the developing technology. Accordingly, I am going to focus on aspects of the concept that best fit the aims of this chapter and apply it to the current negative fall-out of the digitalisation process in the labour market.

The second section is devoted to the way in which Elias pointed out the relationship between technisation and civilisation. According to him, people have developed a self-regulating behaviour in consequence of the spreading of technology. The self-regulating behaviour enables people to use technology in a correct and safe way.

The third section deals with Elias's terms 'sociogenesis' and 'psychogenesis'. My premise is that this topic can give us stimulating input and help in explaining whether and how it is possible to 'civilise' the digital worker. On the one hand, the digital skills—a set of specific professional skills required by the twenty-first-century labour market—could be considered the 'sociogenesis' of the digitalisation process. On the other hand, soft skills could play the role of the 'psychogenesis'. In fact, the so-called social abilities enable the digital worker to interact in a proper way in the new technological and organisational context.

6.2 *ENTZIVILISIERUNG* AS REGRESSION OF DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGY

According to Elias, the process of social change—and civilising too—should be considered a spontaneous, unplanned, never-ending and purposeless process and not a sequence of phases. It is similar to a long, non-linear transition because it is the result of the interaction of social

actors (Elias 1977, 127–149; 1978a, b; Tabboni 1993, 87–91; Kuzmics and Mörth 1991; Perulli 2012, 34 ff.). It means that the civilising process has also a flip side and that it could be reversible and turn into a decivilising process (*Entzivilisierung*).¹

According to Mennell (1990), Elias has drawn attention on the *Entzivilisierung* topic with regard to four different issues. The first one concerns the so-called permissive society.² The others are the ‘long term and recent trends in the incidence of violence, the case of Nazi Germany, and [the] longer-term processes of decline in social complexity’ (Mennell 2001, 47). More recently, Nachtwey (2017) notes that individualisation today—which was originally a driver of the civilising process—has acquired negative features. Moreover, the today tendencies in Western societies are becoming increasingly regressive and, in this sense, we are witnessing a decivilising trend, such as the rise of nationalism and of populist movements as well as the crisis of democracy (Crouch 2004; Fitzi et al. 2018).

In his paper *Technisierung und Zivilisation* (2006a) Elias introduced a new feature of a decivilising process, with reference to technological innovation. More specifically, his argument not only concerns the positive and negative aspects of the technological innovations but also highlights that it is possible to overcome the regression due to technological development, to establish a new balance with it and, in so doing, to join a new civilisation.

Elias has pointed out that technical progress gives a push both in improving development and growth and, at the same time, in the opposite direction, thereby generating a regression. In this sense, he could be considered one of the first authors to theorise about the risk society. In fact, from his time onward, contemporary society has experienced several kinds of technological accidents (Beck 1986; Baldissera 1998).

Elias has noted that the negative side of technisation is the human costs. He reported and analysed the data concerning road accidents because of the increasing number of vehicles. He reported that the first road accidents were caused either by insufficient regulation or because the infrastructures were not adequate. In other words, according to Elias,

¹As usual when working with Norbert Elias’s theories, we need to think in terms of a tension balance between conflicting pressures’ (Mennell 2001, 32).

²Concerning these issues Mennell (1990, 2001, 41) mentions ‘disorders connected with politics, with industrial disputes, with sports and leisure, and with the community in general, the last serving as a catch-all for episodes of street fighting not clearly belonging in the other categories’ as an indicator of the ‘permissive society’.

automobiles were not only an element of novelty, progress and even fun but also a source of danger.

Despite a strict road code having been developed—setting speed limits, punishing drunk driving, implementing vehicle safety and improving technical-mechanical solutions and specific devices such as seat belts—Elias stresses that people's behaviour and, in particular, the self-regulation of drivers are crucial (Elias 2006a, 202). In this regard, he made a comparison between countries (Elias 2006a, 204). He has shown that fewer accidents occur in the advanced countries and that they have the fewest road deaths because of more frequently road checking by police and also because of the more careful behaviour of drivers (Elias 2006a, 203). These data are still confirmed today in the most recent reports (ERSO 2018).

Starting from Elias's point of view and looking at the current technological development driven by digitalisation, it could be possible to consider *Entzivilisierung* as the consequence of digitalisation's impact on employment and particularly job loss (Frey and Osborne 2012; Spath et al. 2013; Brynjolfsson and McAfee 2014; for a critique of this view see Pfeiffer and Suphan 2015), as well as the risks that workers face, especially in the so-called *gig economy*. The gig economy is a complex and highly diversified phenomenon in terms of both internal organisation and business model (De Stefano 2016).³ The quantitative impact of the gig economy is surprisingly limited in comparison to its social relevance. In fact, the World Bank estimates show that few people are involved: 'less than 0.5 percent of the active labour force participates in the gig economy globally' (World Bank 2019, 26).

Among the positive aspects, the platform economy facilitates the meeting of job demand and supply thanks to digital technologies. It also makes the purchase of goods and services possible at lower costs. The platform economy creates flexible job opportunities and allows professionals to develop their skills and competences.

Among the negative aspects, the platform economy fuels new social imbalances, diminishes the status of human work in micro-jobs such as gigs, tasks and so on and reduces the earning power. It also improves the flexibilisation processes in a deeper form in comparison to that known

³ The gig economy includes chiefly two forms of work: 'crowdwork' and 'work on-demand via apps'. The first term is usually referred to working activities that imply completing a series of tasks through online platforms. The second term refers to working activity organised online and carried out also offline.

over the past thirty years. The rating system referred to the performance of the workers could have a negative impact on them because of job insecurity. It means that this is a new form of vulnerable work. It is the dark side of digitalisation, particularly stressed in the gig economy (Crouch 2019). In this context the leading idea is ‘humans as a service [instead of] making the gig economy work a sustainable business model in which we all get to enjoy the benefit of the platform innovation’ (Prassl 2018, 6).

This is the reason why the debate today concerns how to determine the status of employment, to fix adequate income, to establish social protection and other benefits in favour of gig workers (Tullini 2017; ILO 2018), similarly to the first interventions that Elias mentioned as necessary to regulate the movement of motorised vehicles.

6.3 ELIAS: TECHNISATION AND CIVILISATION

This section focuses on Elias’s idea of the relationship between technisation and civilisation, that is, the progressive diffusion of technology within modern society. Although he died shortly before the coming of the internet, Elias experienced the spread of ICT.⁴ In his paper *Technisierung und Zivilisation* (2006a), he discussed technology as a social matter.⁵ He pointed out that it is the result of accumulating knowledge at the social level, and then he analysed the impact of innovation on the whole society and the use we make of technology.

There are several interesting elements in Elias’s paper. Firstly, he represents a novelty in the German sociological—and, more in generally, cultural—*panorama* concerning the relationship between technology and modernity (Weyer 2008, 58–81). Elias considered technology as an element of change, a tool to improve wealth within the society as well as presenting a risk of danger. This is the reason why, he believes, technological development requires people to adapt their behaviour if they are to use

⁴ At this regard, see Treibel (2008, 95 ff.). Moreover, the approach of Elias’s thinking to internet issues is not new: as Arditi (2001) argues human relationships in virtual space are different from those in the physical sphere but real nonetheless. The relationship in the cybernetic space can weak self-control and reduce the level of civilisation, because protected by anonymity.

⁵ The paper was presented by Elias at the German Sociological Association Conference in 1984. According to Pfeiffer (2010, 231) in the 1970s and 1980s—at the time when Elias conceived this paper—industrial sociology was strongly committed to the technological development topic.

it in a correct and safe way. It means that Elias does not have a negative idea of technological development and indeed he suggests an adaptation strategy called ‘civilisation’. This is perhaps the most important message of his paper.

Secondly, Elias presented here the concept of civilisation here in a new way. He replaced the first term of the original binomial—*Kultur und Zivilisation*—with the term *Technisierung* (technisation). This aspect should be noted because in the German cultural tradition *Kultur* has been generally opposed to technology. Consequently, it could be argued that the technology can be tamed, thanks to *Zivilisation*.

Thirdly, technisation is to be considered the result of the accumulation of knowledge⁶ at the social level, firstly because the inventions and discoveries are the result of the collective efforts of the innovator’s community, and secondly because people learn—as a social process—to use the technology in a safe way.

Lastly, referring to the stories of inventors, Elias outlines the living condition of young generations, remarking that the *chance* of young people to be successful reflects their status and the consideration they are given by society.⁷

At the beginning of the quoted paper Elias outlines the definition of technisation. It is a process by which human beings transform any kind of material to satisfy their life needs. In so doing people improve their quality of life. An example of it is the invention of the plough. Elias does not consider the development of technology as a special feature of modern times. The tendency to transform materials to satisfy human needs and to better their living conditions is a human attitude and a constant feature of human history.

Elias then highlights the idea that technical advancement is closely related to the knowledge level developed and is accumulated at the social level. This means that even if a technical innovation is attributed to an inventor, it is actually—as happened in the history of the car (Elias 2006a, 195–196)—the result of collective efforts within the innovator’s

⁶Elias refers to the sociology of science. One of the most important theorists in this field was Karl Mannheim, his teacher. About their affinities and divergences see Kilminster (2007, 40–71; 2013).

⁷This topic has been dealt with by Elias in other works, such as the ‘Mozart case’ (1993) and his young workers research project (Goodwin and O’Connor 2015), and, last but not least, in his paper devoted to the subject of work (Elias 2006b). In this paper he remarked that young people face a lot of problems in getting a good job in the contemporary society.

community, the result of a long experimentation period advancing through trial and error. The finally successful inventor is only by chance luckier or more brilliant than his colleagues.

Something similar happens today in relation to the so-called Fourth Industrial Revolution. Many scholars believe that we are witnessing a normal technological development process (Roth 2016, 1–15; Jasperneite 2012) and not a disruptive change (Schwab 2015). Many elements mentioned as peculiar to so-called Industry 4.0 had already been seen and discussed in the 1980s during automation processes. At that time, changes in human-machine interfaces in complex technological systems took place, thanks to the simulation models and first applications of artificial intelligence. In other words, we are nowadays facing a set of radical and incremental innovations which are rooted in the third technological-organisational revolution described by the Schumpeterian economists Freeman and Soete (1985).

Returning to Elias, technisation as a social learning process concerns in modern society the relationships between people and their environment made by tools, machinery and technological products. The example given by Elias is traffic. The history of the car's success is also the history of the relationship between people and the car. Beyond the necessary regulations provided by the state and the enforced checking by police, people—as drivers, passengers or pedestrians—have learned the right way to approach this new situation and how to interact appropriately with motorised vehicles. This means that the spread of technology in everyday life required modern people to self-regulate their behaviour if they were to use it individually and collectively in an appropriate and safe way.

Self-regulated behaviour is the outcome of a civilising process referred to technisation. In turn, civilisation—which induces people to inhibit impulses and passions—is based on a learning process (*Lernprozess*) that makes people fit to use, in this case, technology. In this sense, civilisation seems to be a form of adaptation to modern life characterised by an increasing spread of technology. Thanks to an appropriate behaviour, as a result of self-control (*Selbstregulierung*), it is possible to benefit from the advantages of technical development and to reduce as much as possible the risks and the negative effects coming from the spread of technology. In this sense, technisation and civilisation go hand in hand in Elias's argument.

This consideration by Elias seems to fit the challenges coming today from the emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and

biomedical sciences. In fact, they could impact many sectors of social life in an impressive way (Brühl 2015). This is the reason why they require new governance at the macro (social) level, as well as a learning process at the micro (individual) level for everybody to adapt to a technologically developing environment.

6.4 SOCIOGENESIS AND PSYCHOGENESIS OF THE DIGITAL WORKER

In the introduction to this chapter I mentioned *digital skills* as a set of professional abilities that enable people to face innovations and stay ahead of technological changes. In this sense they constitute the ‘sociogenesis’ of the digitalisation process. According to Elias, sociogenesis concerns the structural aspects of social change, also involving the psychological asset (Elias 1982).

In applying the concept of ‘sociogenesis’ to today’s technological innovations, particularly the digitalisation process, it could be possible to consider that the relation between digital technologies and skills involves all workers and not only those more oriented to technical qualifications.

The skills required by the twenty-first-century labour market mainly concern three different kind of abilities (Levy and Murnane 2012; Trilling and Fadel 2009; OECD 2015). The first one (the *technical skills*) means to be competent in digital tasks also thanks to *ad hoc* educational programmes. The second one (the *high cognitive skills*) regards the ability to think in an innovative way. It implies creativity and a problem-solving attitude (Athreya and Mouza 2017). The third kind of skills implies the social abilities, the so-called *soft* (or *non-cognitive* or *socio-emotional, relational*) *skills*. In this case people are required to be able to work in teams, to communicate, to be easily adaptable to new contexts. This kind of attitude helps people both in their career and life (Chu et al. 2017, 20–24). Roughly speaking, on the one hand there are technical skills and on the other hand the relational ones.

The increasing professional content required by digitalisation means that workers should be able not only to manage sophisticated technologies but also to handle information processes, to manage data flows in real time, to collaborate in production support processes, such as planning and

logistics management,⁸ to find and solve problems, to face possible emergencies. In some cases, the digital worker could play the role of decision maker in resolving complex situations, dealing with unexpected events and also technological accidents (Bainbridge 1983, 775; Dombrowski et al. 2014, 149; Grote 2015). In other words, in addition to the technical skills, the digital worker is asked to develop *high cognitive skills*. In fact, the activities previously carried out by technicians are done by operators specialising in complex systems (Windelband and Dworschak 2015). All of this means that more complex and interactive machines require more qualified workers (Attewell 1990; Baldissera 1996) and that the worker is required to have a critical mind.

But the technical and high cognitive skills will not be sufficient. The *soft skills* will be the further important competence⁹ for the digital worker. These three kinds of skills—*technical*, *high cognitive* and *soft skills*—will form the digital worker's professional outfit making him/her profitable when placed on the labour market (World Bank 2016, 122 ff.).

Concerning the soft skills, it is difficult to find a clear definition of them. They were originally associated with mostly monotonous, repetitive and low-paid manual tasks (Lloyd and Payne 2016, 36 ff.).¹⁰ Their function was to shape the workers to factory life and its working time and conditions, to conform the workers to the instructions of the employer. Scholars have usually referred the soft skills to specific personal vocational aspects of the worker. Generally speaking, they cover a wide range of interpersonal abilities which are difficult to develop and to improve on by increasing automation.

The soft skills also include confidence in one's ability to engage in and maintain interpersonal relationships (*social self-efficacy*), such as

⁸ An example is today's health sector characterised by large medical devices (Bauer and Schlund 2015).

⁹ Competence is the ability to do something successfully or efficiently (Woodruffe 1993).

¹⁰ Other authors identify the origins of *soft skills* in *emotional labour* (Hochschild 1983). In the services sector, sales staff are driven to tune into customers, to develop empathy for them by establishing trust and sympathy to facilitate purchasing. This means that the character and emotional predisposition of the sales employee plays a role in the work activity in bringing a commercial benefit to the company. Consequently, these abilities become an important aspect of the work and professional equipment of the worker, so much so that it assumes relevance in the context of both trade union bargaining and economic policy (Streeck 2011; Busemeyer and Trampusch 2012).

self-esteem, motivation, self-confidence and resilience, up to so-called emotional intelligence (Goleman 1995).

As remarked by Dell'Aquila et al. (2017), relational skills interact with other technical and professional (the so-called *hard*) skills. Consequently, it would be a mistake to present them in opposition. The co-existence of *hard* and *soft* skills, the fact that they are complementary to each other, enables people to be competent from the professional and working as well as from the social point of view.¹¹ In short, the soft skills cover a wide range of abilities and therefore they are pivotal for the development both of individual careers and for the growth of organisations.

The soft skills—considered as (the result of cultivated) abilities focused on the social, behavioural side of (working) life—could be seen as the ‘psychogenesis’ of the digitalisation process. Psychogenesis affects the cultural, value and psychological sides of the social change. In this sense, it can contribute to defining a possible psychological profile of the digital worker, showing how he/she will react to future labour market inputs.

Taking advantage from Elias’s lesson, the soft skills therefore seem to be the touchstone to identify the digital worker. In this regard, they would support him/her in work relations with colleagues, suppliers, clients and other partners at different levels (Böhle 2013). They would make the digital worker adaptable to changing situations, enable him/her to organise the work and to interact in different and variable groups. The soft skills would also make the digital worker collaborative, able to define work plans based on his/her knowledge and experience. The soft skills based on language and empathy, in particular, give the digital worker the best chance to fully deploy their own professional skills, techniques and cognitions. Consequently, the digital worker would be able to communicate with their colleagues and to adopt an appropriate behaviour in the working contexts that the digital economy will develop (Funken and Schulz-Schaeffer 2008).

In fact, the digital worker will experience a new context in comparison with the usual one. Firstly, one characteristic of the working places shaped

¹¹ With regard to the differences between *hard* and *soft* skills, the first ‘can be codified and transmitted and are referred to as goal directed behaviours that draw on the capability to perform a specific task within a specific area or domain. They refer to education, knowledge, training and experience. Soft skills, on the other hand, are subject independent and focus on individual and relational spheres, although as we will see the following are often employed in response to the demands of a task in order for this to be efficiently complete’ (Dell’Aquila et al. 2017, 10).

by digitalisation is linked to a more horizontal organisation. It is also expected to be structured in flexible groups where everyone will be required to be collaborative. That means that a new social configuration could emerge, significantly reducing the traditional hierarchies. In this sense, the new technologies are a challenge for internal relations at the workplace because of possible conflicts in transforming and overcoming the old balances (Zuboff 1988; Beverly 1998).

The second aspect is that the digital worker will be required to adapt to technological changes, to manage the job according to the new technologies. Moreover, he/she will not receive information on how to carry out the job and will be responsible for defining working plans thanks to his/her competences and experience. That means that he/she will be more independent and proactive. This aspect is actually not new. For at least twenty years it has been argued that work is increasingly characterised in terms of knowledge (Reich 2002; Butera 2008; for a critique of this view see Lloyd and Payne 2016, 14–42) and that the employee today acquires a professional profile closer to a collaborator than a subordinate worker.

All of this makes the digital worker autonomous and not heterodirect, responsible and conscious about what is to be done and the behaviour to be implemented. At the same time, he/she should be cooperative. In this regard, Dechaux makes clear that in Elias's idea of figuration 'the cooperative dimension [...] [is] an integral part of the idea of collective interdependence' (2013, 299). In this sense, it can be argued that the digital worker's profile is close to that of the modern human being after the civilising process and this is the reason why it could be assumed that the digital skills, especially the soft ones, 'civilise' the worker of the future and build the arrangement of the new technological-social order.

Finally, applying the categories of sociogenesis and psychogenesis to technological changes makes us more conscious of the innovation process we are witnessing and of its novelty. In fact, like the civilising process that shapes people's social as well as mental life to conform their behaviour to modern organisation, digitalisation would be a process that transforms workers, not only from the technical and professional point of view but also as citizens of twenty-first-century society. Like the civilising process that asks modern people to act more peacefully, to improve their self-control, to interact with other people in an affective-neutral way, digitalisation would ask the digital worker a greater versatility profile and at the same time to be more autonomous and responsible in carrying out the work process.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to apply Elias's categories to today's technological innovation particularly with reference to digitalisation. In so doing it is possible to show the topicality of Elias's message.

According to him, technical innovation is not only progress but also a challenge. Thanks to the Elias's category of decivilisation, it is possible to consider the dark side of digitalisation and promote an exit strategy. At the social level, the current technological innovations require a learning and adaptation process to reach a new balance between society and technology, so that the whole society can benefit from it. At the individual level, everybody develops self-regulating mechanisms, also involving their psychological structure, so that the result could be a controlled and responsible behaviour. In this sense Elias proposed a positive idea of socio-technical change.

So, considering the impact of digitalisation on the labour market, the future digital worker is required to manage an appropriate behaviour. In this sense the Elias's terms 'sociogenesis' and 'psychogenesis' help us in drafting a new civilised social set-up involving the new kinds of jobs and the way to manage technical developments.

In conclusion, applying Elias's thinking to today's technological and organisational transformations can help us to be actors rather than merely helpless witnesses of change and to keep natural intelligence (i.e. that of human beings) ahead of artificial intelligence.

Acknowledgements It was possible to write this chapter thanks to a grant received by the author from the Deutsche Schillergesellschaft e. V. and by the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach.

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Confronting Uncertainties: Process Sociology Converges with the Ecological Risk Sociology of the Becks

Alexander Mack

the crying need for human beings is the production of a solid body of reliable knowledge about themselves, the complex societies that they form and why people recurrently drift into crisis after crisis, including war.

—Eric Dunning spoken to Chris Rojek (2004, 343)

the concept of risk reveals the ‘difference of the century’ between what is threatening globally and what answers are possible within the framework of nation-state politics [...] risk as it is understood is not a state of exception—like crisis—but is instead becoming the normal situation.

—Ulrich Beck (2013b, 69)

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Switzerland AG 2021

F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_7

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In current sociological theory, modernity is a problematic concept with implicit overlapping normative, temporal and emotional preferences. First, the term may indicate normative affinities through an exclusive dichotomy with tradition. Second, it can be understood as a static temporal condition of the present stage of human societal development that excludes other stages and/or peoples. Finally, there may also be the allusion to a more optimistic progressive avenue or pessimistic regressive obstacle. In contrast, the ecological risk sociology developed by Ulrich Beck and Elizabeth Beck-Gernsheim (hereafter the Becks) (2002, xxiv) confronted the uncertainties of orientation that were insufficiently comprehended by ‘zombie’ categorisations in the social sciences such as class and family. Their efforts sought to identify and conceptualise the awareness and unawareness of changing patterns of societal relations (reflexive modernisation).

The Becks’ critique of static conceptualisations parallels process sociological resistance to the process-reduction (*Zustandsreduktion*) of dynamic relations into static substances (Elias 2012b [1978], 107). However, process scholars such as Richard Kilminster (2000, 2008, 133) have associated the Becks’ scholarship and their use of terms such as reflexive modernisation with the reductive conceptualisations of Anthony Giddens and wider Anglo-American sociology.

This chapter argues that the ecological strand of risk sociology developed by the Becks demonstrates shared commitments to furthering understandings of societal orientation familiar to researchers versed in the processual sociology of Norbert Elias.

The first section outlines the processual critique of the Becks articulated by Kilminster and clarifies their conceptualisations of reflexive modernisation, risk and individualisation. The second section contextualises the synthetic features of the Becks’ ecological risk sociology and recovers the common concerns with knowledge processes, interdependence and power relations shared with process sociology. The final section briefly demonstrates the possibilities of processual-risk engagement through understanding globalised double binds. The chapter is a necessary foregrounding exercise to refine the particular sociological synthesis developed by the Becks, in concert with process-orientated scholarship (see Mack 2018).

7.2 THE PROCESSUAL CRITIQUE OF MODERNITY

For researchers familiar with the process-orientated scholarship of Elias, the concept of modernity/modernisation reduces long-term developments of human societies into a static time phrase. Dunning and Hughes (2013, 166) note how Elias rejected popular usages of ‘modernisation’ from the 1960s onwards because the concept tacitly ‘resurrects the old ideas of social development as unilinear, inevitable, and irreversible progress as found especially in the work of Comte and, to a lesser extent, Marx, and their eighteenth-century predecessors’. Modernity became an attractive concept in late twentieth-century sociology as the personified ‘guilt-cause’, and abstract figure of blame for unpleasant, unplanned societal developments (Kilminster 2011, 101–102). In the work of Giddens (1990), modernisation and the awareness of risk assume more optimistic characteristics, as the means to a more desirable form of societal ordering through the creation of dialogical democracy.

Kilminster (2000) has developed a highly rigorous, sophisticated processual critique of Giddensian sociology. He has characterised the Becks’ sociology as another ‘social action perspective’ that complies with mainstream Anglo-American institutional sociology (Kilminster 2000, 117–119, 136–138). Charles et al. (2008, 2, 8) also portray the Becks as fellow travellers of Giddens sociology: ‘the reflexive subject of Beck and Giddens is precisely the autonomous individual of liberal thought’. They criticise the Becks conceptualisations of reflexive modernisation and individualisation as the continuation of the polarisation between tradition and modernity, as well as the presumption that individuals can exist free of structures.

This image is misplaced, possibly attributable in English-speaking research to *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in The Modern Social Order* (1994) a three-author book written by (Ulrich) Beck, Giddens and Scott Lash. It is an example of how researchers may use the same concepts (like modernisation and risk), but develop their conceptualisations in different ways. One task of more synthetic research is to evaluate the use of concepts in order to develop more consistent conceptualisations of human relations supported by verifiable evidence.

The Becks developed notions of reflexive modernisation, risk and individualisation in ways that were informed by interpretations of changing societal developments. These shifts included areas such as familial, gender, sexual, educational, environmental and techno-scientific relations across

both West Germany and the wider world in the late 1970s and early 1980s, which affected how people lived.

Their risk sociology can easily be mistaken for proposing a teleological end-condition, whether wholly optimistic or pessimistic. The conceptualisation of risks was positioned as a ‘theory of ambivalence’ that is ‘more neutral and more complex’ than Adorno and Horkheimer’s (1997 [1944]) *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* to avoid the swing to pessimistic nihilism (Beck 1994, 177; 2006, 34–35). This move also circumvented swings to optimistic utopianism by noting the need to overcome the monorationality of linear accounts of modernisation (Beck 1999, 125–126). Societies continue to shift in different ways through their awareness of globalised risk relations, which affect how people develop their own individualised life choices.

World Risk Society (1999) sought to clarify and distinguish a more dynamic account of risks and modernisation processes from the likes of Giddens. Chapter 6 highlighted the issue of closed circles of expertise with linear processes that presume sets of undisputed power relations, between people who are ‘aware’ and those who are ‘unaware’ of the consequences of societal practices. Giddens dismisses unawareness as irrelevant to an understanding of reflexive modernisation (Beck 1999, 125). The dismissal of understanding unawareness, what process-scholarship calls unplanned processes, encompasses the rejection of other forms of knowledge and the inability to admit uncertainty (Beck 1999, 131). Giddensian explanations show an unawareness of the developmental social, political, ecological and individual risks, which exceed the limits of national-societal regulation (Beck 1999, 72–73, 125, 130–131).

Understanding risks requires a sociology of knowledge (*Wissensoziologie*): ‘political sociology and theory of the risk society is in essence cognitive sociology’, which refers to the mutual expansions and contractions of human knowledge processes in ways that are both planned and unplanned (Beck 1992, 55).

Modernisation is understood as the awareness/unawareness of change. Knowledge processes contextualise changes in societal organisation that constitute and reshape understandings of reality, via forms of power, attachments, lifestyles and political participation (Beck 1992, 50 n. 1).

The term ‘reflexive’ modernisation draws attention to a more open spectrum of awareness and unawareness that includes both *reflect* and *reflex*. Reflexive is ‘tied to the *unintended consequences* of modernization [...] alongside reflection (knowledge), *Reflexivität* in German also

includes *reflex* in the sense of the effect or preventive effect of *non-knowing*' (Beck 1999, 109). In common with processual researchers, planned processes are intertwined with the unplanned developments (see Dunning and Hughes 2013, 47). The awareness (*wissen*/knowing) of side effects or risks accompanies degrees of unawareness (*nicht-wissen*/not knowing) (Beck 1999, 127).

Risks are the unplanned outcomes of globalised interconnected human relations, which oscillate between interpretations of safety and catastrophe. Societies have become engaged in an unseen, often coerced, and at times confusing banal experience of interdependence, with the development of multiple attachments and the awareness of transnational forms of life (Beck 2006, 7–10, 48). Combinations of subjective and objective knowledge of invisible side effects indicate 'a peculiar state between security and destruction, where the perception of threatening risks determines thought and action' (Beck 1992, 55; 1999, 135; cf. Elias 2007). Awareness of globalised interdependence is placed at the forefront of understanding the development of risks, which mirrors Johan Goudsblom's (1996, 16) remark that 'global interdependency has become a hard and undeniable fact' that affects ways of life and survival 'for all of us'.

Globalised risk relations are interwoven into individualised life choices. Individualisation is understood as an 'open-ended, highly ambivalent, ongoing process', the reciprocal institutionalisation of how people organise themselves across a range of relationships such as familial, gender, labour, health and reproductive bonds (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, xxi–xxii). The concept signifies 'certain subjective-biographical aspects of the civilisation process' (Beck 1992, 127). Personal development is interwoven with the growth of internalised restraints/pressures and societally enforced externalised pressures (see volume one of Elias 2012a [1939]). The Becks were a team, where Ulrich gave greater focus on the wider globalised pressures of risk relations. Elizabeth concentrated on how those pressures become individualised into peoples' lives and life choices. For example, the growth of medical technology via genome analysis and the subsequent practice of prenatal testing have repercussions for how women plan their lives and choose whether to have children (Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 145–146). There are institutionalised pressures of 'responsible parenthood' that predate the birth and conception of the child. The expansion of health as a socio-moral value means that women are forced to manage overlapping health risks, which encompass personal, societal, familial, and risks to the unborn child themselves.

7.3 ORIENTATION AND ECOLOGICAL RISK SOCIOLOGY

Understanding the development of unplanned side effects or risks across the spectrum of globalised and individualised relations became the focus of the sociology developed by the Becks. They recognised how the awareness and unawareness of risks have become a significant form of orientation for human societies. *The Society of Individuals* (Elias 2010) was summarised in an obituary of Elias written for the magazine *Der Spiegel*, the piece also noted the importance of side effects (*Nebenfolgen*) (Beck 1990). Later accounts of cosmopolitanisation processes engaged more overtly with Elias's figurational sociology, to highlight changing patterns of identifications that interweave smaller particular figurations with larger universal figurations (Beck and Levy 2013, 9–10).

The sociologies of Elias and the Becks share mutual concerns about how human groups orientate and negotiate the ambiguities of their relations. They place the examination of unplanned processes/side effects/risks at the forefront of sociological research, in ways which avoid the common tendencies in contemporary sociology to reduce the study of human relations into static concepts/situations (Elias 2012b [1978], 107; Dunning and Hughes 2013, 51; Beck 2006, 94).

Where Elias (2008 [1976]) develops a model of knowledge processes, interdependence and power relations that understands the interconnections between smaller groups and larger groups. The Becks make a comparable move from the opposite direction. Their collective efforts crafted a sociology of knowledge that recognises the developmental risks from globalised interdependencies and power relations that situate local individualised relations.

7.4 CONTEXT, RISKS AND KNOWLEDGE PROCESSES

The distinguishing feature of Becks' strand of risk sociology is the more ecological emphasis, in comparison with contemporaries such as Mary Douglas (1992) and François Ewald (1990). The immediate contextual background of *The Risk Society* (1992), first published in German in 1986, were the industrial disasters of Vila Parisi, Bhopal and Chernobyl, as well as protests against the construction of a nuclear reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf, Bavaria (Beck 1987; 992, 43–44; Scott 2000, 35). The development of human societal practices is interwoven with technoscientific regulations with non-human events/nature, which cannot be

reduced to the specialisation of ‘environmental sociology’ or ‘the environment’ as a category of study separate from the study of human relations (sociology) (Beck 2010). This outlook paralleled what process sociology has understood as the triad of basic controls. How people have unevenly orientated themselves across technised relations with/over nature and non-human relations, sociologised inter-state–intra-state relations, and psychologised personal relations (Elias 2012b [1978], 151–152; Elias 2007, 106).

The concept of ‘risk’ was sociologised, by problematising the technoeconomic reduction of global risks into controllable and dismissible industrial hazards or accidents (Beck and Willms 2004, 115). Risk sociology was an effort to ‘wrest the issue of risk away from specialists (the risk analysts) and place it on a wider social scientific and public agenda’ (Scott 2000, 34). The Becks (2002) shared Elias’s (2012b [1978], 101–102) concern with two strands of the sociology of knowledge. The first strand encompasses the development of sciences, and how terms from the biological and technological sciences have been imprecisely applied to the social sciences. Interconnected with the first strand is the second means of orientation strand: the rudimentary ways that people have come to situate themselves in their societies (see Saramago 2015).

The sociology of knowledge processes developed by the Becks was underpinned by synthetic engagement with sociological threads from the work of Karl Marx, Max Weber and Jürgen Habermas. Firstly, in contrast with Marx, societal stratifications and power relations from consciousness of risks replace and subsume class-consciousness (see Beck 2013b). Secondly, there is a modification of Weberian understandings of bureaucratic control: ‘Weber does not recognise or discuss the concept of “risk”’ and does not perceive the relationship between societal regulations, and the development of risks (Beck 1999, 139–140). Thirdly, awareness of risks is part of dialogical learning processes from changing forms of societal organisation as part of a (Habermasian) global public sphere (Lash and Wynne 1992, 8; Beck 1999, 20–22).

When compared with Elias’s triad of basic controls, it might be argued the Becks’ discuss technisation and sociologisation processes, but have an underdeveloped psychological synthesis. Risks are discussed in the plural, as a socio-psychological term. The consciousness of wider globalised risks become individualised into personal relations, in ways that may obscure the interconnection between social and individual issues, across ‘a battleground of pluralistic knowledge claims’ (Beck 1992, 100, 136; 1999,

120; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). The more socio-psychological understanding of risks has been noted by moral panic researchers (see Hier 2003). Amanda Rohloff (2011, 639) has highlighted that the individual management of risks and the expert management of moral panics interconnect with the continuum of self-regulation to societal regulation noted by Elias (2012a [1939]).

7.5 INTERDEPENDENCE, POWER RELATIONS AND VISUALISATION OF RISKS

Ambiguous experiences of globalised interdependence are interconnected with forms of societal and individualised psychological identification. ‘As the recognition of risks springing from global interdependencies increases, so too do the compulsion, the opportunity, but also resistance’ (Beck 2006, 22). Concerns about globalised risks shifts local individualised identifications and disrupts long-standing societal demarcations due to potential changes in lifestyle practices (Beck 2006, 65–66). When confronted with the unintended consequences of wider societal processes people can seek refuge into seemingly unchanging forms of societal organisation and identification (Elias and Scotson 2008 [1965], 184).

Interpretations of transnational risks circulate cooperation pressures, which are active rather than passive processes. Struggles over the definition of particular risks resist isolation into hazards whether at personal, local, national or international degrees of integration and intertwine more developed and less developed state-societies (Beck and Willms 2004, 115; Beck 1999, 34–35; 2006, 22–23; Beck and Sznaider 2006, 11).

Risk consciousness, or the visualisation of risks, concentrates attention on the aspirations for more secure regulated and concerns about the development of more insecure unregulated forms of orientation. The visualisation of risks is bound to human needs for degrees of regulation: ‘what is at stake at all levels is accordingly the compulsive pretence of control over the uncontrollable, whether in politics, law, science, the economic or everyday life’ (Beck 2006, 22). People become attached to rhythmic patterns of lifestyle, which facilitates degrees of socio-psychological regulation.

The individualised visualisation of risks disrupts these rhythms and becomes a way for groups to justify their power claims. The impetus is placed on ‘the *projected dangers of the future*’ through the forecast of possible outcomes which may or may not come about (Beck 1992, 33).

The power matrixes of global risk societies encompass an open spectrum of the things, events, people and groups defined as *harmless*, safe low risks and *harmful*, catastrophic high risks. These matrixes include ‘those who produce and profit from risks and the many who are afflicted with the same risks’ (Beck 1999, 16; 2007, 692). One example is how distributions of torture practices, waste and dangerous substances are shifted from higher protective, higher wage state-societies, to less protective state-societies, with lower wages and less appreciation of individual rights (Beck 2007, 693).

Definition struggles over harmful and harmless risks become visualised characterisations that legitimise the power claims of some societal groups, while delegitimising the claims of others. Numbers, statistics, images and wider symbols articulated by sub-state groups such as the producers, analysts, profiteers, mass media, scientific and legal professions offer possibility judgements (*Möglichkeitsurteile*) that can redefine standards of personal and collective responsibility, trust and security (safety monitoring and insurance calculation) (Beck 1987, 162; 1994, 6; 1999, 138; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002).

People are expected to live with and to manage a range of different, mutually contradictory, globalised and personal individualised risks, a ‘glocality’ that involves the simultaneous reconstitution of global and local relations (Beck 1994, 7; Beck 1999, 142; Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002). Individualised awareness of certain risks within everyday social life and the collective consequences of personal decisions prompt degrees of self-restraint via standardised general knowledge that lacks direct personal experience (Beck 1992, 72). Possibility judgements mobilise visualisations of the future that imbue everyday tasks with images of harmfulness and harmlessness.

7.6 GLOBALISED DOUBLE BINDS

The conceptualisation of globalised risks with repercussions for individualised life choices parallels Elias’s discussion of double binds. How large human societies have become intertwined in struggles between themselves in ways that perpetuate and exacerbate more insecure orientations, which incentivise the development and projection of more fantastical emotionally laden beliefs (Elias 2007, 107).

Visualisations of globalised risks encompass the interdependencies between ecological, economic, violence, health and migration struggles.

Beck (2006, 22; Beck and Sznaider 2006, 11) calls these overlapping tensions ‘interdependency crises’. The term globalised double binds is preferred in order to direct attention towards the repercussions of long-term intersecting human practices with degrees of individualised emotional regulation.

Each of these of double binds are characterised by moralised tensions between cosmopolitanisation and anti-cosmopolitanisation movements, which affect individualised life choices. The cosmopolitanisation movement emphasises toleration and the diversification of identifications (Beck 2006, 77). For example, German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s (2017) New Year Address 2018 spoke of a German society that is ‘cosmopolitan, diverse and cohesive’. Her comments are in contrast with the ‘Italians first’ sentiments expressed by ethnonationlist leader Matteo Salvini, whose statements exemplify the anti-cosmopolitanisation movement, where the ‘principle of tolerance is twisted into its opposite, namely an aggressive intolerance of others’ (Nadeau et al. 2018; Beck 2006, 117).

The struggles of cosmopolitanisation and anti-cosmopolitanisation movements corresponds with Elias’s (2013 [1989], 169) conceptualisation of the duality of nation-state normative codes, where people are often torn between idealisations towards individuals and the nation-state as the highest values in society. The recent Franco-German ‘Alliance of Multilateralism’ represents a liberal-internationalist countermovement, to the unilateral, national-isolationist tendencies of the Trump administration in the United States, through collective efforts to tackle global challenges such as climate change (DW 2019).

7.7 ECOLOGICAL, ECONOMIC, VIOLENCE, HEALTH AND MIGRATION RISKS

Ecological double binds are the ‘*wealth-driven* ecological destruction and technological-industrial dangers’ from environmental exploitation (Beck 1999, 34; cf. Rohloff 2018; 2011). The most pressing example of ecological double binds is the development of climate change risks, which have already shifted societal orientations, in ways that reinforce unequal global relations between societies and organisations that define climate change risks and those who experience the consequences of those decisions (Beck 2014, 76).

Another, earlier example of ecological double binds is the awareness of harmful and harmless degrees of radioactivity and wider toxins from techno-scientific development. As mentioned previously, the initial backdrop of *the Risk Society* was the Wackersdorf nuclear reprocessing plant protests and the Chernobyl disaster. Radioactive risks ‘completely evades human perspective abilities, but also toxins and pollutants in the air, water and foodstuffs, together with the accompanying short- and long-term effects on plants, animals and people’ and prompt definition struggles over the future harmfulness and/or harmlessness of affected areas (Beck 1992, 22). The 2011 meltdown of the Fukushima-Daiichi nuclear power plant raised concerns about the merger of climate change and radioactive risks through the awareness that rising sea levels and storm surges could catastrophically affect the safety of nuclear power plants (Flavelle and Lin 2019). The development of rising sea levels redraws societal boundaries between people living on different forms of elevation (Beck 2014, 76). Harmful levels of radioactivity would reinforce and expand sea level societal distinctions.

Economic double binds are the scarcity interconnections between the uneven development of political institutions and global economic exploitation (Beck 1999, 35). One recent example is the Rana Plaza clothing factory collapse in Dhaka (Safi and Rushe 2018). The event drew attention to the interdependencies between the aesthetic desires and consumption of relatively inexpensive clothing in Western societies with precarious working conditions in places like Bangladesh. Another example of economic double binds is the projection and acceptance of the relatively safe financial risks that inhabits a grasp of the unintended harmful consequences of austerity policies (Beck 2013a). Beck (2013a) was highly critical of Germany’s response to Greece’s sovereign debt crisis, which reinforced existing socio-cultural divides between fiscally restrained northern Europe and seemingly unrestrained southern Europe, as well as exposing wider tensions within European Union institutionalisation.

Violence double binds are the globalised societal relations that contribute and sustain the development of NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical) weapons of mass destruction and wider socio-political violence (Beck 1999, 35; cf. van Benthem van den Bergh 1992). The risks of global societal and ecological destruction from the practice of nuclear weapons have not diminished, as shown by the recent Russian deployment of nuclear capable hypersonic missiles (Osborn 2019). Elias (2007) notes that it is unwise to blame scientists for the development and expertise of

nuclear weapons when that field of knowledge was interwoven within wider globalised power struggles. Nuclear weapons have become both prestige symbols indicating status in international society and a narrow means of pursuing more secure orientations. Understanding the development of emotional restraints and releases on the practice and projection of violence has been a long-standing interest for process-orientated scholarship most recently articulated in *Violence and Civilization in the Western States Systems* written by Andrew Linklater (2016), as well as work on brutalisation processes and the development of jihadist terrorism (Dunning 2016).

Global health double binds are the ongoing public health risks vectored by transnational movements of people, animals, plants and the consequences of techno-industrial exploitation. These encompass diseases such as HIV, pandemic influenza and Ebola (McInnes and Roemer-Mahler 2017). Globalised awareness of Ebola became individualised when it was found that Scottish nurse Pauline Cafferkey had been infected with the disease, prompting the United Kingdom (UK) Health Department to reassure the British public of the lower risks of transmission (McInnes and Roemer-Mahler 2017, 1313). In places such as Sierra Leone, concerns about the catastrophic consequences of Ebola have been expressed through beliefs in witchcraft, which hamper the efforts of local and international health workers (Estrada 2014). Another example of a health double bind is the development of antibiotic resistance from the overuse of antibiotics in industrial agriculture, and prescription medication that is interconnected with uneven degrees of international regulation on the use of antibiotics in animals (Harvey 2019). The misuse of antibiotics in the production and maintenance of animals for human consumption accelerates the biological development of bacterial resistance, which enhances the likelihood for common infections to become life-threatening illness for both humans and animals. The connection between antibiotic resistance and the exacerbation of disease was expressed by the Director-General of the WHO. He noted that responses to the 'COVID19 pandemic has led to an increased use of antibiotics, which ultimately will lead to higher bacterial resistance rates that will impact the burden of disease and deaths during the pandemic and beyond' (Ghebreyesus 2020).

Migration globalised double binds are the contradictory understandings of transnational people movements as more harmful and harmless risks to the societies and communities they enter. Transnational people movements embody 'social competences [that] are not only indispensable

but also enrich cultural and public life by making it more colourful, contradictory and conflictual' (Beck 2006, 104). The guest worker (*Gastarbeiter*) programme experienced in post-war Germany exemplified the interdependencies between physical (place to place) and societal (between groups) movements (see von Koppenfels and Höhne 2017; Beck 1992, 97; cf. Elias and Scotson 2008 [1965]).

Migration double binds transcend the distinction between migration sending and receiving countries, because all societies are the consequences of ongoing long-term people movements (Castles 2010; Manning 2013). This process becomes a double bind through representations of some people movements as harmful risks in conjunction with idealised attachments towards other people with higher quantities of financial capital through the provision of 'golden passports' (Osborne and Garside 2018; Mack 2018). During this century, consecutive UK and Australian leaders have fortified their societies through more harmful representations of transnational migration (Mack 2018).

Figure 7.1 is an imperfect non-hierarchical visual representation of the interdependencies that characterise globalised double binds. Issues that may seem to be categorisable as one form of double bind quickly intersect with others. Frictions may arise when measures taken in response to one double bind often have unplanned repercussions for the other four tensions.

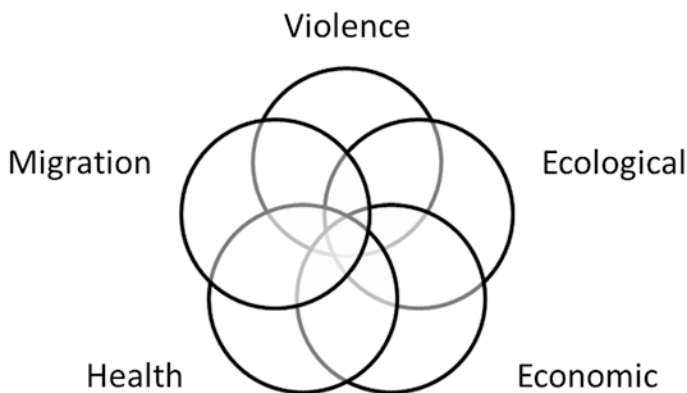


Fig. 7.1 Globalised Double Binds

Air pollution is one example that illustrates at least four¹ out of the five struggles. Over the summer of 2019/2020 major cities and smaller communities on the east coast of Australia experienced harmful degrees of air pollution from bushfires on a scale that was exacerbated by the development of climate change. The sustained visual coverage by international news media contributed to an intensification of global awareness about the bushfires, beyond the boundaries of Australian society. The smoke haze affected New Zealand and reached as far as Chile and Argentina (WMO 2020). Australian leaders who had previously minimised the interconnections between ecological and economic exploitation were reluctant to confront the wider effects of bushfires that challenged the stereotypical images of major national symbols such as the Sydney Opera House, the additional health risks brought about by the smoke haze, and the migration of people from afflicted areas (Foley 2019; Remeikis 2020; AMA 2020; Snow et al. 2020). In his speech at the UN climate conference in Madrid, the Minister for Energy and Emissions Reduction channelled nationalist-anti-cosmopolitanisation moral sentiments that reduced responses to climate change risks into techno-industrial hazards dependent on ‘commercially viable technologies’ that are exploitable for national gain (Taylor 2019). The bushfires were not mentioned.

Fear management becomes a characteristic of societal institutional responses to globalised double binds: ‘handling fear and insecurity becomes an *essential cultural qualification*, and the cultivation of the abilities demanded for it become an essential mission of pedagogical institutions’ (Beck 1992, 76).

Remarks by Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison in the year 2019 are two examples of fear management, where he lowers concerns about climate change and raises concerns about asylum seekers. In the backdrop of climate change campaigner Greta Thunberg’s speech to the UN General Assembly in September, Morrison (2019b) spoke of an idealised future for Australian children in a ‘pristine environment’ and ‘an economy they can live in’. He lowered the degrees of harmful climate change risks and dismissed the concerns of Australian children about climate change as ‘needless anxiety’, despite evidence from the Environment and Energy Ministry that Australian greenhouse gas emissions were increasing (DoEE

¹ Burkhardt et al. (2019) argue that air pollution increases incidences of violent behaviour in their study of crime, air pollution and weather data across an eight-year period in the United States. Whether that was the case in Australia 2019/20 is still to be studied.

2019). Months earlier he heightened degrees of ‘risk’ to Australian society posed by asylum seekers in Australian managed offshore detention facilities transferred to mainland Australia for medical treatment, who ‘may be’ a ‘rapist’, ‘paedophile’ or ‘murderer’ (Morrison 2019a).

The visualisation of globalised double binds can direct the development of societal change in combinations of scapegoat, catastrophic and self-critical projections of society. These can be explained by returning to the example of the Australian bushfires. The scapegoat projection is where ‘it is not the hazards, but those who point them out that provoke the general uneasiness’, with the development of blame centred attributions and stigmatisations for the experience of catastrophic events (Beck 1992, 75; van Benthem van den Bergh 1977). Morrison (2020) blamed arsonists and people resistant to hazard reduction measures in national parks as the culprits of the fires. The catastrophic projection is when exceptional situations become normalised (Beck 1992, 24). A former Fire and Rescue Commissioner highlighted that major fires have become regular events in the 2000s (Mullins 2019). The fires have also opened more self-critical learning opportunities (see Beck 1992, 176–178). The bushfire events during the Australian summer of 2019/2020 are a chance to understand the interdependencies between diverse knowledges of bushland management (see Archibald-Binge and Wyman 2020), the lifestyles in major cities experiencing smoke haze, and the wider global obligations to reduce carbon emissions.

The challenge set by Elias and the Becks is to confront the uncertainties of human relations by understanding the global interdependencies, power relations and knowledge processes that situate how people orientate themselves. The notion of globalised double binds is one contribution to a more synthetic development of an ecologically informed cosmopolitan societal science (Beck 2006, 4–5; Quilley 2011). This chapter has clarified the particular model of risk sociology developed by the Becks, to inspire more fruitful engagements and syntheses with process-orientated scholarship.

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PART II

Violence and Faces of the War



The Civilising Process, Decline of Homicide, and Mass Murder Societies: Norbert Elias and the History of Violence

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8.1 INTRODUCTION

Originally formulated at the end of the 1930s, Norbert Elias's theory of the civilising process has gradually been recognised as one of the most influential sociological theories of the twentieth century, a recognition that arose after the English and French translations of *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation* in the late 1960s and 1970s (Elias 1939; 2000). There has been a considerable amount of scholarship on Elias's intellectual trajectory and the late reception of his work, and it is not the purpose of this contribution to completely revisit this topic (van Krieken 1998; Joly 2012; Dunning and Hughes 2013). In the small world of historians, the enthusiasm generated by Elias's work occurred at a time when cultural studies,

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_8

microhistory, and historical anthropology were emerging in reaction to the domination of quantitative history in the 1950s and 1960s. At the same time, a new generation of scholars from diverse disciplines was developing a renewed interest in the study of the state ‘as an actor and an institution’ (Skocpol 1985, 3), producing a remarkable number of studies on state formation and the rise of bureaucracy. Therefore, historians saw in the historical sociology of Norbert Elias (especially his work on the development of self-constraint) a way to conciliate the study of the evolution of individual psychological structures with a more general theoretical approach towards the transformations of the social structures in which individuals are embedded (i.e. the formation of the Weberian early modern state) (van Krieken 1989; Burguière 2009; Delmotte 2007, 2012).

Although *The Civilising Process* had finally found its readership, over the years it also met with a number of divergent interpretations and critical commentaries among historians, including the monumental, four-volume *Der Mythos vom Zivilisationsprozess* by Hans-Peter Duerr (1988). Facing accusations of a so-called evolutionary reading of the civilising process that appeared to be contradicted by the rise of mass violence in the twentieth century (notably, Nazism and the Holocaust), Elias dedicated his later writings to the mechanisms of de- or dys-civilisation to explain the resurgence of barbarism in modern societies (Elias 1996). Again, these critiques and revisions have been remarkably documented (e.g. Spierenburg 2001; de Swaan 1997, 2001; Delmotte 2010; Dépelteau et al. 2013), and it would be impossible to provide an exhaustive overview of all these issues due to the limited available space in this volume. Instead, our contribution aims to discuss how, since the 1980s and 1990s, Norbert Elias’s work had particularly resonated with a sub-discipline of historical research, the burgeoning history of violence and criminal justice. We will show how the civilising process gradually occupied a central position in the debates on the (supposed) decline of violence and homicide in Western countries since the late Middle Ages, which led some historians of violence and criminal justice to offer several revisions and alternatives to the Eliasian paradigm. In that sense, we propose to articulate Elias’s theoretical framework within three historiographical discussions regarding the historical configurations of violence: the long decline of ordinary homicide in pacified societies (the civilisation process), massive outbursts of extremely violent behaviour (the de-/dys-civilisation process), and transitional justice after war or political conflict (the re-civilisation process).

8.2 NORBERT ELIAS AND THE HISTORY OF VIOLENCE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Initially a minor subfield in legal history, the history of crime, criminal justice, and violence gradually emerged in the 1970s from the converging interests of historians from various horizons, combining diverse institutional, political, economic, social, and cultural approaches (Rousseaux 1997, 2006a, 2006b; Knepper and Johansen 2016; Bretschneider et al. 2017). Abandoning the socio-economic interpretation of crime as the product of poverty and marginality that prevailed in social history, these scholars embraced a conception of criminality as a social construct produced by the coercive policies of local and central authorities. They saw in the civilising process a valuable theoretical framework to understand the transformations in late medieval and early modern attitudes towards violence, although Elias paradoxically never directly worked on criminality or criminal justice. Observing the change of various everyday socially accepted behaviours, such as publicly urinating or defecating, eating at a table, or blowing one's nose at an opponent, Elias developed his Freudian impression that the changes in European manners and the development of a certain repugnance towards aggression resulted from the internalisation of social restraints that first appeared in court societies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He argued that the monopolisation of the legitimate use of violence and the centralisation of authority by rising nation-states allowed individuals to develop new forms of social interaction and chains of interdependencies, causing people to become more self-disciplined, 'due to the strength of self-control and the permanence of compulsion, affect-inhibition and drive-control, which life at the centres of this network imposes' (Elias 2000, 379). In the eyes of criminal justice historians, the force of Elias's theoretical framework was its consistent explanation of the long-term decline of violence in European history, in line with the Weberian vision of early modern state formation (van Krieken 1989; Spierenburg 1995).

After its publication, *The Civilising Process* also gained in popularity among criminal justice historians because it resonated with other theories about the rise of the modern state and the taming of violence, such as the Marxist interpretation of the role of criminal justice in social domination (Hay 1975) as well as the work of Gerhardt Oestreich (1982) on social discipline or the work of Michel Foucault (1977) on the development of state disciplinary power and on a multilevel process of social disciplining in

early modern Europe (van Krieken 1990; Spierenburg 2004). Subsequently, Elias's theory of the civilising process became a new paradigm among criminal justice historians for interpreting the decline of violence (e.g. Spierenburg 1998; Wood 2004; Muchembled 2012), but it also encountered some serious critiques. Historians of the Middle Ages, in particular, have been extremely sceptical about Elias's assumption that the social structures pushed medieval people not to control their passions and to embrace their taste for violence and cruelty, 'making it seem necessary and practically advantageous to behave in this way' (Elias 2000, 163). Elias's depiction of medieval violence was certainly influenced by the classical—but also, in some respects, outdated—work of the famous Dutch historian Johann Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, originally published in 1919 (Huizinga 1996). Instead, since the second part of the twentieth century, historians have insisted on the instrumental or ritualised aspects of medieval violence, embedded in a complex code of honour that regulated social interactions (Gauvard 1991; Smail and Fenster 2003). They have also envisaged medieval and early modern violence as mode of a communication based on interpersonal confrontation and the defence of honour, which was characterised by a process of escalation in social conflicts, starting with tensions and insults and ending with an outbreak of violence and the committing of homicide (Schwerhoff 2007; Skoda 2013). Accordingly, the exercise of violence was not only the object of social control but also its medium. Gerd Schwerhoff (2004) considers such a view to be an opposing perspective on the theory of civilisation, for there was no general reduction of violence in the Ancien Régime but rather a succession of peaks and declines in the use of violence as a means of conflict resolution. One may remark, however, that such an interpretation does not necessarily invalidate the Elisian assumption on the decline of violence, but rather articulates this decline as a question of which authorities were able to both control and exercise the legitimate use of force, imposing their power over the other parties in conflicts.

Building on this anthropological approach to the conduct of violence in early modern France, Michel Nassiet (2011) recently proposed a fascinating alternative to the Elisian interpretation of the decline of violence. He follows Emile Durkheim's theory of individual emancipation and argues that, rather than the integration of new self-constraints, it is the emergence of individualism that freed people from traditional collective social pressures and favoured the decline of violence. For Nassiet, the rise of the state and the implosion of the extended family model over the long

term caused the breakdown of kinship solidarities and collective honours, reducing private vendettas between groups. Again, this alternative theory offers the major advantage of integrating recent findings on the meaning of violence as a tool of social control, but it is not incompatible with the theory of the civilising process, especially considering Elias's latter essays on the rise of individualisation (Elias 2001).

8.3 THE DECLINE OF HOMICIDE AND THE PACIFICATION OF SOCIETY

This last topic leads us to delve deeper into the question of how the civilising process relates to the pacification of society. When Elias elaborated his theory, he assumed that there had been a decline in violence from the Middle Ages to the present, but he never tried to quantitatively measure this decline nor—to our knowledge—did he look into the statistics of criminal justice that had developed in Western Europe since the nineteenth century (Taylor 1998). Historians of criminal justice, on the contrary, have continuously sought to measure levels of violence in societies over centuries, as have sociologists and criminologists when studying present times. Ted Gurr (1981), Lawrence Stone (1983), and, more recently, Manuel Eisner (2003) have published a series of ground-breaking quantitative studies on the long-term trends in violent crimes in Western Europe, showing how the homicide rate declined during the early modern period. They based their methodology on the collection of a vast amount of data from various local studies, focusing exclusively on the counting of violent deaths. This focus on the homicide rate has been subject to serious criticism, as it alone could hardly be a reliable indicator of the global level of interpersonal violence in society (Schwerhoff 2004). The authors' confidence in the reliability of their measurements of the percentage of violent deaths among the population has also been challenged (Aubusson de Cavarlay 2001). Indeed, to neutralise demographic variations, which were difficult to measure before the eighteenth century, Gurr, Stone, and Eisner used a homicide rate per 100,000 capita, which is questionable as few European cities even reached a population of 100,000 burghers before the end of the Ancien Régime. While most people in pre-industrial Europe lived in a rural environment, the risk of microvariations in the homicide rate of local communities (due to the size of the population and the lack of consistency of the records) also makes the comparison difficult with big

cities extremely, as well as with the global interpretation of the social causes of homicide, due to the paradox that historians are better informed about the violent behaviour of a category of the population—city dwellers—that was far from representative of the majority.

Despite these methodological biases, the major contribution of the works of Gurr, Stone, and Eisner is that they showed a fall in homicide rates in Western Europe from the fifteenth century onward, though the consistency of this global decrease has been successfully called into question by Randolph Roth (2009). For these authors, the civilising process offered a plausible theory to explore the reasons for such a decline, while at the same time they provided quantitative evidence to support Elias's theory of the pacification of society.

Criminal justice historians who mobilise the work of Norbert Elias to examine the pacification of society usually also insist on the development of social discipline or *Selbstzwang* to control interpersonal violence. These scholars therefore integrate the civilising process theory with the works of Michel Foucault (1977), Gerhard Oestreich (1982), or Charles Tilly (1992) on the parallel development of social disciplining and state formation. According to this perspective, the decline of homicide from the fifteenth century onward coincided with a global transformation of criminal justice in Western Europe, which was characterised by the decline of most traditional forms of private and legal arbitration, the dramatic increase of corporal and deadly punishment, and the development of royal or princely pardons as the only form of indulgence for criminals (Rousseaux et al. 2009).

This 'criminal revolution' (Lenman and Parker 1980) can be interpreted as an effort by the state to discipline its population through the development of legal coercive means. According to this model, the rise of corporal punishment in the legal system from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries was a manifestation of the state monopolisation of the legitimate use of violence (Spierenburg 1984), whereas the progressive softening of criminal justice from the eighteenth century onward attested to the success of the civilising and disciplining processes. As Michel Foucault (1977) remarks while describing the famous public execution of Robert-François Damiens, the man who tried to assassinate Louis XV, this case illustrates a major change in popular sentiments towards the public use of violence. Damien's execution was considered barbaric, uncivilised, and cruel, as the product of another era. In that sense, the wave of recent studies on the evolution of the criminal justice system from the end of the

Ancien Régime to the present insists on a double movement of both a softening and de-publicisation of capital punishment, partly due to the gradual disgust towards physical suffering (Bastien 2006; Friedland 2012). Therefore, the rise of corporal punishment as a means of social disciplining monopolised by public authorities served the long-term process of civilising, even though it contradicts the narrative of the global and continuous decline of violence.

8.4 THE DE-CIVILISATION PROCESS AND EXTREMELY VIOLENT SOCIETIES

Providing a valuable conceptual framework to study the long-term decline of violence, the theory of the process of civilisation has been continuously discussed, commented on, and nuanced by criminal justice historians who have confronted the Eliasian model with other theories as well as with archival documents. Although most research has confirmed a decline in homicide in Western societies over the modern period, the twentieth century brought two major changes to this trend: the explosion of wartime homicides, particularly during the two World Wars, and a peak in homicides observed in the statistics of Western societies at the end of the twentieth century (Eisner 2008).

Debating transformations in Western societies from 1950–2020, scholars in this field have noted the resurgence of reports of interpersonal violence in most European countries (Body-Gendrot and Spierenburg 2008; Eisner 2008). As summarised by Jonathan Fletcher:

The reported increases in the incidence of inter-personal violence in the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly within large urban conurbations, can be described as group decivilising processes which may occur in the context of a longer-term process of civilisation, or indeed, they may even be precursors of a decivilising process within the societal and inter-societal dimensions. (1997, 291)

Crime historians, however, have nuanced this observation. The problem of the reported incidence of interpersonal violence is complex. Considered as a fact, the increase in violence in the second half of the twentieth century could be interpreted as a symptom of a de-civilising process at the individual or group level. Yet, the growing number of reported violent crimes could also be interpreted as an increase in the

sensitivity of the population to matters of violence and as reflecting the activity of representatives of state violence (police, justices). For example, Belgian judicial statistics produced by state authorities show both a decline in homicide prosecutions and convictions from the 1880s onward and an increase in the repression of verbal and non-lethal physical violence (Kurgan-van Hentenryk 1999). A careful analysis of police records at the local level shows how many new laws have attempted to repress traditional behaviours of mild verbal or physical violence among rural and urban popular groups. The case of Belgium is interesting because one can observe both the increase of violence due to the pressure of wars and occupations in the first half of the twentieth century and the upsurge in homicide at the end of the twentieth century (Rousseaux et al. 2008). This ephemeral rise of homicide was perceptible in most Western societies, and it was mainly linked to the slight demographic rejuvenation of these societies after the baby boom of the Golden Sixties (Eisner 2008; Body-Gendrot and Spierenburg 2008).

This observation echoes another criticism usually levelled against Elias's model, particularly after the Second World War: what could seem to be its determinist tendency that does not explain contemporary increases in violence, especially acts of massive violence like genocide or ethnic cleansing (e.g. Rwanda, Ex-Yugoslavia). This debate focuses on the need to include the ultra-violent episodes of the two World Wars in the analysis. Does wartime violence represent a form of violence specific to a 'culture of war' or does it constitute a stage in the transformation of violence, and thus a weakening or even a reversion of the process of civilisation?

The Holocaust caused a major shock to research in the humanities after 1945 (Gerlach 2010, 2015). We know how haunted Elias was by the genocide committed by Nazi Germany. He initially developed his reflection about the Holocaust and 'the breakdown of civilisation' in the early 1960s, shortly after the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem, which later led to the publication of his *Studies on the Germans* in which he offered a more general interpretation of Germany's place in the civilising process (Elias 1996). We know less about how Elias's experience as a soldier on the Eastern and Western Front from 1915–18 shaped his conceptualisation of the civilising process (Audoin-Rouzeau 2010; Deluermoz 2012; Buton 2014). To answer the criticism against the so-called evolutionary reading of the civilising process, Elias focused his later writings on the mechanisms of de-civilisation, which sought to explain why a civilised society could suddenly act with great brutality. Such a revision, one may guess, was the

product of Elias's discussions with his friend George Mosse, who not only characterised the civilising process as a Darwinian interpretation of the history of states (Mosse 1978) but also developed the concept of the *brutalisation* of political life to explain the transformation of German society after the First World War (Mosse 1978, 1990; Audoin-Rouzeau et al. 2002).

These discussions highlight the importance of combining short-term and long-term historical developments (Mennell 1990, 210). Robert van Krieken deepens the reading of Elias's theory from both an anthropological and a socio-historical perspective (van Krieken 1988, 1989, 1999). Abram de Swaan, for his part, explores the consequences of the civilising process that would allow it to work in the opposite direction towards de-civilisation. He reminds us of the three levels (individual, group, and society) at which the processes of civilisation play out. He proposes to distinguish between *de-civilisation*, when these elements globally regress at the individual, group, and State level, and *dys-civilisation*, when they play out at the level of the state's monopoly of violence, making the state the main actor in barbaric acts of violence against specific groups in the population (de Swaan 2001, 273). One can also understand the difference in the level of actors of these processes: de-civilisation comes from a collapse of local societies in a global centrifugal process, while dys-civilisation is firmly conducted by the centre against focused groups or places in a centripetal move. Dunning & Mennell 1998.

Extending the analysis beyond the Nazi era, over the entire twentieth century—and even over centuries—historians have highlighted the role of genocide, ethnocide, and mass murder in the recent history of violence (Levine and Roberts 1999; Gellately and Kiernan 2003; Osiel 2009). These phenomena appear to be linked to or accelerated by modernity, for example, via scientific and social technologies used by bureaucratic apparatuses that allow for the systematic eradication of a group (Bauman 1989; de Swaan 2001). The impact of modernity on mass destruction is assessed differently by Zygmunt Bauman and Norbert Elias. For Bauman, technological and social modernity is almost responsible for genocidal practices and the disappearance of moral codes, whereas, for Elias, a disciple of the *Aufklärung*, the process of modernisation is not central and remains primarily oriented towards the process of civilisation. The widespread presence of mass violence raises again the question of homicide in three contexts that have developed particularly in the last 500 years: colonisation, wars of occupation, and totalitarian regimes. Examining a series of

recent explosions of violence (mass killings, ethnic deportations, famines, forced labour, and mass rapes) in different state configurations, historian Christian Gerlach has observed that such violence was the product of social reactions to temporary state crises (Gerlach 2010, 266). Famine, inflation, and revolution affected social mobilities and caused spatial dislocations. Corruption and nepotism destabilised popular groups by pushing them to carry out acts of violence. What Gerlach calls ‘extremely violent societies’ profoundly affects gender relation and relations between age groups. Mass violence also encompasses that aspect of conflict (perceived or real) in which victimised groups lose social standing and protection in society (Gerlach 2010, 273–274). Extreme violence manifests itself in ‘non-industrialised’ countries (productive or surplus-generating areas) in a context of imperialist domination (state vs colony or state vs state) (Bertrand 2010). The most extreme violence occurs in ‘non-Weberian’ states (Indonesia, Rwanda), that is, where the monopoly of legitimate violence is not stabilised (de-civilisation). Nevertheless, in crisis time (war, economic collapse, civil or ethnic conflict, pandemics, etc.), the Weberian state can prove to be a formidable tool of mass destruction and dys-civilisation (de Swaan 2001; Delmotte 2010).¹

In a comparative approach, Gerlach tries to deepen the link between modernised society and outbreaks of violence. He takes up the question posed by George Mosse after the First World War. War causes a brutalisation of individuals and groups, but does the return to peace allow this brutalisation to continue (which manifested itself in the radicalisation of political violence during the interwar period, as Mosse evoked in relation to Germany)? On the contrary, some historians of the First World War, such as Audouin-Rouzeau, have observed a general consent to violence during the period of the conflict, linked to a ‘culture of war’, which fades fairly quickly after the war, when people returning to normal life are mentally demobilised (Audouin-Rouzeau et al. 2002). Elias’s position on the experience of the First World War is more nuanced. He questions the

¹ Another situation, particularly underlined in Western democracies, is the supposed development or maintenance of areas of dys-civilisation (e.g. ghettos, suburbs, education systems, prisons, hospitals), usually described by medias and political actors as ‘lawless’ or ‘no-go’ zones and linked by some observers to the weakening of the state monopoly of legitimate violence. It is important, however, to remain extremely critical about the extent of these phenomena, which are often exploited either by supporters of a radical critique of the state, who see these areas as spaces of freedom and resistance, or by supporters of more severe state policies towards these areas, which are seen as clusters of anarchy and brutality (Slooter 2019).

incompleteness of the process of civilisation in Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century, with reference to the consequences of the Thirty Years' War and the late unification under the patronage of Prussian militarism. On the other hand, he notes that the emergence of the former does not prevent the process of civilisation from resuming its course, but in a fragile manner, noting the weakness of the rule of law in Weimar Germany, paving the way for processes of dys-civilisation directed against minorities (Elias 1996).

8.5 'BACK TO NORMAL': RECONCILIATION AND RE-CIVILISATION PROCESSES

The frequency of homicide remains a relatively robust indicator of state containment of physical violence. It may also be an indicator of the internalisation of a 'softening' behaviour by populations bombarded by the two World Wars. Belgium is like a laboratory for testing this theory of de-civilisation or dys-civilisation. A small liberal and bourgeois democracy, twice occupied by Germany, it has precise figures on both causes of death and prosecutions for homicide (Kurgan-van Hentenryk 1999; Rousseaux et al. 2009; Leloup et al. 2014), as showed in Fig. 8.1. Despite the absence

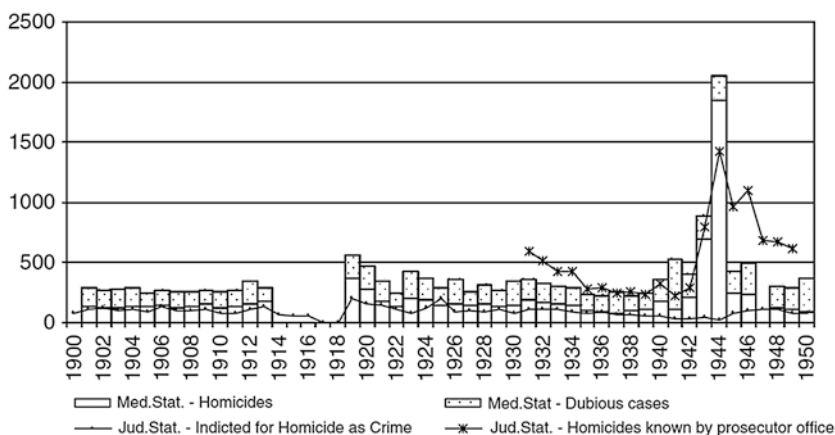


Fig. 8.1 Number of homicides (medical statistics) versus number indicted for voluntary homicide (judicial statistics) in Belgium. (Source: Rousseaux et al. 2009, 192)

of judicial data for the years 1917–18 and medical data for 1914–18 and 1947, the number of homicides listed by two independent sources shows a peak at the end of the war (1919, 1920) followed by a return to pre-war figures. For the Second World War, the data published at the national level show a remarkable peak in 1943 and 1944, which continues until 1945–1946. This growth, observed through local death reports, was one of the effects of violence between Resistance fighters and collaborators of the New Order, which continued after liberation with revenge killings (Thiry 2016).

For a behaviour as closely accounted for as homicide (the statistical records of which nonetheless contain dubious cases), the rapid return to rates comparable to those of the 1930s pleads for acknowledging the resistance to de-civilisational ‘shocks’ within a general process of civilisation. Moreover, the contrast between the First and Second World War seems clear. During the First World War and its aftermath (1914–1920), the phenomenon was of the order of de-civilisation because the civilian homicides were the product of war and occupation and not of the official holders of the monopoly of violence (police, armed groups). On the other hand, the rise in homicides from 1943–1946 corresponded to a struggle for legitimacy calling into question the foundations of the monopoly of the legitimate use of violence. In the occupied countries where the fiction of an independent rule of law remained (e.g. France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Greece), the years 1943–1946 were marked by the radicalisation of political violence between the members of collaborationist paramilitary forces supporting the Fascist and Nazi New Order and the resistant fighters contesting the authority of the occupied nation-states. As both groups claimed the legitimate use of violence to destroy their opponents (Lagrou 2011), the occupied nation-state maintained its monopoly of legitimate violence only theoretically, and so we can speak of a dys-civilisational process in the terms described by Abram de Swaan.

Similar studies should be carried out on homicide and physical violence in the countries engulfed by the two World Wars, highlighting the importance of Elias’s work for historians in this field and the potential contribution of future historical research to debates over Elias’s theories. One of the challenges will be integrating the long decline of ordinary violence in pacified societies (civilisation process) with the crisis that affects both dominated and dominant societies, manifested by the use of violence by the State in the context of domination policies (de-civilisation process).

The reflections of Elias and his successors are particularly stimulating for the interpretation of violence in Western European societies since 1800. The distinction between de- and dys-civilisation allows us to identify the specificity of Western European countries regarding violence as an instrument of domination. Since the nineteenth century, European nations have experienced a process of internal pacification, characterised by increasingly moderate uses of deadly violence (civilisation process). On the other hand, they have been the actors of domination processes the colonial conquests undertaken on a large scale after 1800, and most of them were undergoing a process of domination from 1914 to 1950 (war occupation). The comparison between colonial domination and war occupation policies shows on the one hand how, in the name of civilisation, colonising states develop specific violent policies towards indigenous populations, and how, in return, states under occupation undergo similar policies towards other particular groups (dys-civilisation). The difference lies in the maintenance of a theoretical monopoly of legitimate violence in the case of military occupation in Europe and the dissolution or strengthening of that state at the end of hostilities.

The recent history of international and national legal frameworks that follow crises of extreme violence (Koskenniemi 2001) also invites one to interpret the process of political and judicial transitions after dictatorships or civil war in Eliasian terms (i.e. as processes of re-civilisation). After the extreme violence of the Second World War, the parallel conceptualisations of ‘crime against humanity’ by Hersh Lauterpacht and ‘genocide’ by Raphaël Lemkin (Cooper 2015; Sands 2016; Irvin-Erickson 2017), as well as the construction of a network of international jurisdictions (Beigbeder 1999; Bosco 2014; Köchler 2003; Schaller and Zimmerer 2009), characterise an acceleration in the globalisation of criminal concepts, legal norms, and judicial practices. In Eliasian terms, these external ‘civilising’ pressures (values, norms, and coercive institutions) are attempts by modernised state powers to react to the extremely violent techniques developed during the colonial period and the World Wars (Archibugi and Pease 2018). On the other hand, processes of retribution or ‘transitional justice’ after dictatorships, civil wars, and armed conflicts following the end of the Cold War were attempts to integrate the external pressure exerted by NGOs and other international institutions in the political management of fractured communities in order to restore peace and civilised relations between their members (Elster 2004; Foblets and von Trotha 2004; Sullo 2018). This is not only an intellectual challenge, motivated by

the idea of one common human destiny, but also a political and social act of resistance against those who, with good or bad intentions, are dangerously fascinated by the apparent power of violence.

8.6 CONCLUSION

Recently, the ground-breaking publication of *The Better Angel of Our Nature* by Harvard psychologist Steven Pinker (2011) has brought Norbert Elias back to the forefront. In his 800-page exploration of the long-term decline of violence in the West, Pinker integrates the civilising process with a series of historical and psychological factors explaining why our inclination towards violence has diminished over time and why our world is probably getting better than it has ever been before. Yet criminal justice historians denounced his teleological interpretation of history, his continual misuse of statistics, his caricatural view of the medieval and early modern periods, as well as his weak narrative regarding the causes of the decline of violence (e.g. Hanlon 2013; Roth 2018; Smail 2018). By defending Elias's paradigm of civilisation, Pinker paradoxically rekindled some of the most recurrent criticisms against it. Nevertheless, this controversy has the merit of demonstrating the extent to which Elias's work remains debated.

Of course, the present contribution could not cover all the theoretical discussions that invite one to reconsider the process of civilising, including those among criminal justice historians. For example, recent scholarship on the process of state formation from below has considerably nuanced the Weberian classical view of the rise of the so-called early modern state that still predominated in Elias's work (Blockmans et al. 2009). Similarly, the development of a 'deep history' of humankind, incorporating the most recent advancements in neurology and primatology, may provide a new understanding of the reasons for the decline of violence in history and broaden the discussions on the integration of self-constraints in the civilising process, by considering the role of physiological responses to social and environmental situations in the irruption of violence (Smail 2008; Roth 2011).

The large interdisciplinary literature on the history of violence lays out a research agenda to closely study the interactions between civilisation, de-civilisation, and dys-civilisation processes in specific contexts of societal crisis. Identifying the situations, the ideological discourses, the violent events, and the practices of various actors helps to specify the

configurations of violent disruptions in a society (Dwyer and Damousi 2020). Interpreting these disruptions as long-term evolutions and through multiscale temporalities offers a way to understand the deep history of collective behaviour. Eventually, this refined knowledge of civilisational transformation may help to support the processes of re-civilisation that any de- or dys-civilised society faces. In the years 1945–2000, the development, under the auspices of rule-of-law states, of a global culture and international institutions for the pacification of inter-state and intra-state conflicts reflects an awareness of the fragility of the processes of violence pacification (genocide and war crimes) (Visoka 2017). It also shows the role that rule-of-law states can play in creating a variety of instruments for re-civilisation. The gradual civilisation of international justice in the 1950s, as well as the multiplication of ‘truth and reconciliation’ commissions and the processes of recognition of the stigmatisations suffered by various groups and minorities, are some of the responses, admittedly limited, to the de-legitimisation of homicidal violence on a global scale.

Acknowledgements The authors would like to thank the editors of this volume and especially Florence Delmotte for her stimulating comments and suggestions that greatly contributed to improve this chapter.

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A Throwback to Violence? Outline for a Process-Sociological Approach to ‘Terror’ and ‘Terrorism’

Dominique Linhardt and Cédric Moreau de Bellaing

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Norbert Elias has repeatedly asserted that fear of danger should be regarded as a regular thread in human history. Thereby, variations in history relate to changes in the ways members of human societies strive to cope with the dangers they face and the fears they instil in them. In this respect, Elias holds the view that social development has been marked by significant advances in knowledge and thus in the control of calamities

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_9

affecting human beings. This would explain the relationship of more advanced societies towards nature: the resigned acceptance distinctive of less developed societies has gradually given way to an intention and a capacity to manage natural phenomena and the scourges associated with them. By contrast, he observes, the dangers arising from social organisation itself have not yet brought about a comparable level of insight and mastery: in the face of the cruelties that nations, groups, and individuals still inflict on each other, human societies have scarcely got beyond the stage of fatalism (Elias 1985). Contrary to what some critics of his theory of the civilising process have implied, Elias was perfectly clear-sighted on this matter: far from any coarse self-celebration of a dominating West to which his work has occasionally been assimilated (e.g. Duerr 1988–2005), he felt that ‘our descendants, if humanity can survive the violence of our age, might consider us as late barbarians’ (Elias 1989, 536–537).

With these few words, Elias is picking up two essential tenets of his theory of the civilising process. Firstly, he reminds us that since the civilising process has neither beginning nor end, any progress made by humankind is always doomed to accommodate the ills it has not yet overcome. That is why every social type perceives the one immediately preceding it as the last representative of the barbaric times and will be seen in the same manner by the one who succeeds it. This general observation also applies to us who are living in societies that, as Elias points out a few lines above in the same text, tend to overvalue the benefits of a ‘modernity’ that we like to identify with. In picturing the distant horizon of the ‘possible development of humankind’ (Elias 1989, 536), Elias draws attention to the fact that there is no reason to think that the civilisational stage we have reached protects us from the destructive potential that we continue to cultivate in the way we behave towards each other.

But Elias does not stick to that first teaching. Assuming that we may not ‘survive the violence of *our age*’, he secondly suggests that our situation could, in some way, even be more desperate than in the past, for if the societies that preceded ours did not bring about the self-destruction of humanity, this risk now constitutes a reality we cannot avoid confronting.¹

¹ Elias has pointed to the risk of a nuclear holocaust in this regard. With the end of the Cold War, the imminence of this threat may now seem to have diminished. It should nevertheless be recalled that the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation programs conducted over the past forty years have not prevented the persistence of atomic arsenals that are more than sufficient to eradicate all life on earth several times over. Furthermore, it is reasonable to assume that Elias, if he had had to deal with the changes that have taken place since the end of the 1980s, would have been interested in the threat arising from the ecological crisis

This observation of a threat of destruction that increases while the civilising process moves forward cannot be adequately understood by attributing violence exclusively to what the civilising process has not yet been able to perform and secure at a given moment. Some part of the violence of the present cannot be reduced to it; this part is constitutive of a type of violence that can be described as regressive in the specific sense that it fixes itself on the civilising process, is formed from it and in reaction to it and, as such, proceeds from it as much as it opposes it. This is the very idea behind the notion of ‘breakdown of civilisation’ put into play by Elias in his *Studies on the Germans* (Elias 1996). Insofar as some level of civilisation has to be in order for it to collapse, this type of violence involves more than a simple reversal: it requires a *negation*, the nature of which needs to be elucidated.

Commentators of Elias’s work have, of course, not failed to notice this point, so that the possibility of the coexistence, the synchronicity of progressive and regressive trends within evolving social figurations, is now widely recognised, even if the interpretations and explanations given to it may differ (Burkitt 1996; Dépelteau 2017; Dunning and Mennell 1998; van Krieken 1999; de Swaan 2001). The following outline is in keeping with these considerations. In this regard, it is aimed at two objectives. The first is to pinpoint the social mechanisms that foster the occurrence of these regressive forms of violence. The second is to provide a basis for the hypothesis that the latter are most distinctively expressed through the experience of ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’ that societies have been witnessing since the nineteenth and, at an accelerating pace, the twentieth centuries. These notions are not to be understood in the narrow sense that prevails in common parlance. As a preliminary definition, we suggest adopting the one given by Michael Walzer. Under the term ‘terrorism’, the latter groups together forms of violence that have the characteristic of ‘resembling’ acts of war, but infringe and subvert its ‘political code’ as it has been enforced in the course of modernity and methodised in the laws of war (Walzer 1977, 197–206). In this sense, the notions of ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’ refer to a wide range of acts of violence, perpetrated by both state and non-state

and would certainly have refrained from interpreting global warming or the extinction of the Holocene as mere steps backwards, as if humanity were once again the object of the fury of a nature that is external to it. It is rather more likely, conversely, that he would have taken full measure of the anthropogenic nature of a transformation which, in its causes as well as in its possible consequences, including the threat of extreme violence of which it could become the issue, not only affects humanity but also concerns it for the first time in history as an integral part of life processes that run through, encompass, and overflow it.

actors, that, in sum, give the conflicts of the twentieth century their distinctive shape, particularly in terms of the dramatic increase in civilian casualties.² They include the indiscriminate use of bombs and bombings, practices of abduction and deportation, of rape and torture, the perpetration of pogroms and mass killings, the setting up of concentration and extermination camps—to mention but some elements of the nefarious set of techniques that states and, to some extent, other violence entrepreneurs who seek to catch up with them, put at the service of strategies of hatred that feed the *skandalon* of extreme violence as the modern world has seen it and still sees it today.

9.2 PRIMARY AND SECONDARY BARBARISM

In a footnote at the beginning of the *Studies on the Germans*, Elias points out the difference between the ‘genocide in the 1930s and 1940s’ and ‘acts of mass destruction’ in a more distant past that, without being ‘identical to those of the National Socialists’, are ‘nevertheless similar in certain respects’ and correspond to ‘what we now call genocide’ (Elias 1996, 444–445)—the example given by Elias being the siege of Melos and the subsequent massacre perpetrated by the Athenians in 416 and 415 BC.³ According to him, the difference lies essentially in the fact that, in the first case, the treatment inflicted on the Melians was perceived as ‘normal’, whereas, in the second, the ‘standards of human behaviour’ that had developed over the centuries in Europe made the crimes committed by the National Socialists to ‘appear abhorrent, and [...] regarded with spontaneous feelings of horror’. The nuance introduced by Elias suggests the need to discern two analytically distinct drivers of violence: the first obviously refers to a ‘pre-civilisational’ pattern, which the civilising process, by pushing sensitivity and conduct towards greater temperance, has precisely

² This does not mean that these violent conflicts and the actors who engage in them should be assimilated, that the crime of the Nazis against the Jews would be of similar magnitude and significance to acts of torture during the Algerian war or abuses committed by Daech. We do simply suggest that, in at least one respect, these acts of violence show a comparable social mechanism. It is this mechanism that we intend to highlight here, but not to ignore the important differences that in addition distinguish and singularize the acts of violence under consideration.

³ After six months of siege, in view of the Melians’ obstinate refusal to submit to its power, Athens executed men of the age of bearing arms and enslaved women, children and the elderly. The island was later colonized by Athens (Tritle 2000, 119–123).

the result of reducing; the second, on the other hand, denotes a 'post-civilisational' pattern, which corresponds to a form of violence that the historically acquired disgust for brutality fails to repress. The first resort to violence would thus correspond to what might be called 'primary barbarism', in the sense that it belongs to the context out of which the process of civilisation is likely to emerge and on which it exerts its transformative effects, while the second appears to be correlated with what might, by contrast, be called 'secondary barbarism', since it necessarily takes on a transgressive aspect to the ideal of non-violence that the process of civilisation has already begun to shape.

It would be misleading, however, to understand these oppositions in absolute terms. Elias has always urged for a gradualist approach to long-term social change. The Athenian city, little more than a decade after the end of Pericles's reign, does not constitute a civilisational zero-point, and it is probably just for this reason that Elias took the example of the Melos massacre, as it lets him bring out all the more clearly the distinctness of the breakdown of civilisation during the 'Second Thirty Years' War'. Hence, the notions of primary and secondary barbarism also have only relative and comparative relevance. It is when looking at different socio-historical contexts that they may be helpful in shedding light on differences in degree. Some situations would appear as characterised by the relative prevalence of primary barbarism over secondary barbarism—corresponding, in the example given by Elias, to the Athenian case; in others, a shift in this distribution would be observed—as, Elias implies, it is the case for Nazi Germany. The hypothesis that one may venture to formulate is the following: the more extreme violence appears in a context that is more advanced in the civilising process, the more likely it is to be perceived as 'abnormal', and the more intense and exorbitant is the effort of those who are led to suppress the feelings of horror that it inspires—foremost the perpetrators, but also possible supporters, occasional witnesses, and potential victims when they fail to realise the threat.

One consequence of this line of analysis is that it forces us to reconsider what has been discussed in the literature over the last three decades under the terms 'decivilising processes'. It is well known that this notion, introduced by Elias himself and then developed in his wake by some of the most eminent representatives of figurational sociology, has had the aim of showing that the theory of the civilising process in no way implies adherence to an evolutionary vision of history and that it is not based on a teleology of moral progress and does not ascribe in this regard to Western

modernity any superiority over other times and cultures. In view of these premises, the dark fate that Germany and, with it, all of Europe and part of the world experienced in the first half of the twentieth century, without constituting the sole point of fixation, has come to the fore. The reason is obvious: the issue at stake was to make the most spectacular experience of civilisational involution, which had struck at the historical and geographical heart of the developed world, describable and explainable with the *same* conceptual instruments as the civilisational breakthrough that had characterised the preceding centuries. It would be difficult to dispute that the publication of the *Studies on the Germans*, ‘at the end of a long life’, took on a certain urgency in this respect. But it is also noticeable that in the book Elias uses the terms ‘decivilisation’ and ‘decivilising process’ rather parsimoniously, and that in any case he does not provide any explicit theory of it.

Building on his work, others have aimed at completing this task. Applying a principle of inverted symmetry to the concept of the civilising process, decivilising processes have been defined, in the words of Stephen Mennell, as ‘what happens when civilising processes go into reverse’ (Mennell 1990, 205). Taking up a terminology already present in Elias—‘reverse’, *rückwärts* (Elias 1986, 46; von Festenberg and Schreiber 1988, 183)—this meaning has lastingly shaped the common understanding of the idea of decivilising processes. Its intuitive nature makes it difficult to dispute. Yet it does not spell out the sense of the ‘reversal’ at issue. To state, as Jonathan Fletcher does, that ‘the term “reversal” thus refers to a collapse or gradual erosion of specific social standards which were previously dominant within particular individuals and among particular groups or societies’ (Fletcher 1995, 290) also fails to suffice. Two interpretations are indeed possible. Either this normative collapse or erosion constitutes a *throwback*, leading to the reinstatement of attitudes and sensitivities similar to those that prevailed earlier in the process of civilisation. Or else the phenomenon of decivilisation is in fact characterised by a negative deviation from the norms and sensitivities that the civilising process has established, giving rise to behaviours that, in the light of these norms and sensitivities, are marked by degradation. However, the norms and sensitivities that have passed away are not replaced by those that have meanwhile come into being, but coexist with them in a palingenetic mode, anachronistically inserted into the present, thus creating an irreducible tension within and among subjects, providing, in this interpretation, the very criterion of decivilising processes. From this perspective, this concept

would correspond to the resurgence of a less civilised past within—and not in place of—a more civilised present and would appear, as such, less as a throwback than as a *regression* in a sense close to that psychoanalysis has given to the term, in which a move backward only appears as such in the light of the discrepancy with the ‘normal’ level of development.⁴

The question is not purely speculative. It is concretely to know whether the siege of Lisbon, the Battle of Bouvines, or the Black Death Persecutions show experiences of violence analogous to those of the Second Battle of Ypres, the Kristallnacht, or the siege of Leningrad. To answer this question affirmatively is to reject the hypothesis of secondary barbarism and to assume the throwback hypothesis. But this stance will then have to explain how it comes that in the heart of the twentieth century, within tightly integrated and differentiated societies that require a high level of self-control, individuals and groups regain the ability to vent their aggressive impulses as ‘freely’, ‘directly’, and ‘openly’ (Elias 2000, 168) as members of societies at an earlier stage of the civilising process. We intend to explore the alternative hypothesis, that of regression, by considering that twentieth-century-like extreme violence has to be understood by considering that it occurs *in spite* of a social context in which attitudes and sensitivities are, ‘normally’, more ‘subdued, moderate and calculated’, in which ‘social taboos are built much more deeply into the fabric of our drive-economy’ and in which, therefore, ‘belligerence or cruelty appears to be contradictory’ (Elias 2000, 168–169)—which, it should be noted, is not to say impossible and not even improbable.

9.3 NOOGENETICALLY DRIVEN VIOLENCE

This hypothesis is supported by another aspect that becomes manifest when looking at the sociogenetic dimension of civilising and decivilising processes. It is known that Elias conjectured a covariance of changes in the individual drive-economy and long-term morphological transformations in social organisation. In *The Civilising Process*, he has shown that the psychogenetically observable increase in ‘the social constraint towards

⁴Regression is definitely a thorny issue in psychoanalytic studies and there does not seem to exist any commonly accepted definition of the term. But whatever their divergences, the various approaches to the phenomenon all assume that the concept of regression refers to an internal breakdown within an ongoing psychological development and not to a change of the direction of that development. For first consideration, see Blum (1994).

		Civilising processes	Decivilising processes
<i>Psychogenesis</i>	Social constraint towards self-constraint	↗	↘
<i>Sociogenesis</i>	State's monopolisation of violence	↗	↘

Fig. 9.1 Civilising and decivilising processes under the throwback hypothesis

self-constraint' (Elias 2000, 365 ff.) is bound to the sociogenetic construction of a socio-political order based on the existence of states which, in the territory they control, enforce their rule through the progressively exclusive appropriation of institutionally regulated means of coercion. Throughout this interwoven transformation, the reluctance to use and tolerate violence in society therefore grows as the monopolisation of the means of violence by the state authorities advances. The view that decivilising processes are civilising processes 'going into reverse' would then mean that the increase in violent behaviour is related to a decrease in the degree of monopolisation of violence (Fig. 9.1).

It is indisputable that Elias interprets the 'brutalisation' of German society, especially in the context of the upheavals in the Weimar Republic, from this perspective (Dunning and Mennell 1998, 349–51). However, one wonders whether this apparent weakening of the state's monopoly is accurately described on the sort of assumption that the situation in Germany in the 1920s tended towards the restoration of a figuration formally equivalent to that of feudal societies, with their structurally powerless political organisation and monarchies incapable of keeping the territorial lords in line. Yet Elias gives us a hint as to what is specific to the Weimar situation:

In considering the history of the Weimar Republic, I do not think enough attention has been given to the breakdown of the state's monopoly of violence. And one can see very clearly why it was breaking down: because the *Reichswehr*, that is, the army, was itself firmly in the hand of the right. It was not a neutral instrument of the state, but an instrument of the right. (Elias 1994, 43)

This remark suggests that the observed demonopolisation does not lie in the weakening of the state caused by greater competition, but in the development which, due to ‘the expansion of military models in parts of the German middle class’ (Elias 1996, 15), has led to state power being put at the service of particular social groups and subordinated to their political struggle against other social groups. In this view, *Freikorps* or, later, SA violence appears not so much as a challenge to the state’s monopoly of violence; rather, it leads to a situation where the latter aligns with the former, up until the National Socialist leadership, once in office, normalises the situation—this is the significance of the Night of the Long Knives—while continuing and dramatically intensifying the brutalisation of society from then on, this time with the full possession of the state’s means of violence. The argument has the advantage of preventing the error of assimilating civilisation to the mere existence of the State (Delmotte and Majastre 2017). But if state formation does not provide the yardstick for civilising processes, since it can either foster the pacification of human coexistence or use its power for the worst butcheries, then this means that addressing the sole level of violence monopolisation does not offer the right criterion to grasp what is at issue when it comes to the ‘breakdown of civilisation’.

It needs to be remembered that, in the tradition of classical sociology, Elias approaches social development at its most fundamental level using the concepts of differentiation and integration. It is the joint process of deepening social differentiation and increasing scales of integration that he refers to as ‘lengthening chains of interdependence’. According to him, the socio-political outcomes of this process are advances in ‘functional democratisation’ of which the state and institutional democracy are at most only effects. Cas Wouters has repeatedly called attention to the importance of this notion, which Elias has belatedly articulated, but which was implicated from the outset by the theory of the civilising process (Wouters 2019, 120–121). Now, if it is true that the civilising process, as Wouters explains, is related to increasing functional democratisation, then decivilising processes and the brutalisation of social relations that they entail should be considered in the light of a lowering of such democratisation. This is just what Mennell is doing when, in addressing the decivilising processes in America, he finds that ‘there are very powerful forces of functional de-democratisation at work’ (quoted by Wouters 2019, 129). Similarly, Eric Dunning, using different terminology, refers to ‘unintended side effects of integration conflicts and disintegration processes, including

defunctionalisation’ (quoted by Wouters 2019, 131). Wouters’s reaction underscores his disbelief at these assertions (Wouters 2019, 128–132). Two separate questions do indeed arise. The first is to know under what conditions, in the history of humankind, the possibility of a regression in functional democratisation is given. The second is whether such a reversal can explain the outbreaks of extreme violence that the world has experienced over the last two centuries.

To address these two concerns, it is useful to refer to an aspect relating to the theory of functional integration that Elias has discussed in several parts of his work. He basically discerns two types of integration. The first corresponds to ‘simpler structures whose component part-units one level lower are not yet linked by a division of functions’, whereas the second concerns ‘more complex structures whose component part-units one level lower are linked by a division of functions’ (Elias 1987, 127). This difference has a consequence that Elias says is ‘of far-reaching significance’ (Elias 1987, 130). In the first integration type, ‘synthesis is reversible’ (Elias 1987, 127); in the second, on the other hand, we have ‘irreversibly organised units with more and more specialised part-units and more and more tiers of integration centres’. In the latter case, ‘irreversible disintegration is what we call “death”’ (Elias 1987, 130). Put back into an approach to long-term social processes, the difference thus suggests that the more functionally integrated a social entity is, the greater the risk that, in the event of a crisis, it will not simply be dismantled, but will suffer the equivalent of an annihilation that encompasses all its components. Hence, the assumption that functional democratisation, as a marker of a high level of functional integration, may regress *stepwise* appears precarious. From this point of view, Mennell is right in his attempt to identify situations in the history of human societies that correspond to processes of decivilisation, when he points out the ideal-typical character of ‘structural collapse’ (Mennell 1990, 218), like the one that occurred during the fall of the Roman Empire or the end of the Mayan civilisation. For, in such case, consistent with the throwback hypothesis, the collapse does indeed amount to a step backwards on the differentiation-integration scale and, by the same token, to the beginning of a further differentiation-integration process.

Conversely, it seems more uncertain whether the contexts and dynamics of violence characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—wars of colonisation, world wars, wars of national liberation, international terrorism and their attendant massacres—might realistically be connected

		Civilising processes	Decivilising processes
<i>Psychogenesis</i>	Social constraint towards self-constraint	↗	↘
<i>Sociogenesis</i>	Functional democratization	↗	↗

Fig. 9.2 Civilising and decivilising processes under the regression hypothesis (1)

to a decrease in the degree of differentiation-integration and thus to a relative setback of functional democratisation, which, despite the violent convulsions, arguably tended to progress overall during the same period.⁵ Against this background, the proposition that extreme violence in the last centuries is not only compatible with but also possibly determined by the pursuit of functional democratisation looks comparatively less far-fetched. One recognises here, this time under the sociogenetic viewpoint, the paradoxical nature of the regression hypothesis.

The paradox illustrated in Fig. 9.2 needs to be explained. To do so, we must clarify the effects functional democratisation has on the shaping of social relations. Elias puts us on the track when he points out that functional democratisation leads to a growing ambivalence in social relations:

As social functions and interests become increasingly complex and contradictory, we find more and more frequently in the behavior and feelings of people a peculiar split, a co-existence of positive and negative elements, a mixture of muted affection and muted dislike in varying proportions and nuances. (Elias 2000, 319)

How can we account for this ambivalence? Let us first notice this: as functional democratisation progresses, the way individuals and groups mutually identify each other increasingly adjusts to the differentiation of

⁵This observation is in line with Émile Durkheim’s view that the ‘social division of labour’ cannot be reversed within ordinary social development (Durkheim 2013). From this point of view, Eric Dunning’s criticism that this position is ‘utopian’ (Dunning 1986, 219) is itself questionable, for the impossibility of a regression from organic solidarity to mechanical solidarity does not exclude that the former takes pathological forms.

roles and functions that define the position of individuals and groups in the division of labour. This emerging pattern of mutual identification comes into tension with the previous pattern, based on naturalised social hierarchies. The gradual transition from *Ständegesellschaft* to ‘class society’ reflects this shift. This has two consequences. First, feelings of superiority and inferiority become problematic (Wouters 1999). Whereas, for instance, the superiority of the nobleman and the inferiority of the peasant were taken for granted under the Old Regime, the inequality between the boss and the worker, who have nothing to distinguish between them except their function in the relations of production, is no longer obvious. Similar developments can be observed for other types of social relationships, such as those between men and women or between colonisers and colonised—generally speaking, between ‘established’ and ‘outsiders’ (Elias and Scotson 2008). Second, this relative loosening of the absoluteness of social hierarchies has had the effect of placing competition and conflict between social groups on the ground of defining the common good and thus of ideologies. For any sociologist trained in Germany in the first decades of the twentieth century, the conception of modern societies as characterised by a strengthening of ideological expressions of social antagonism was self-evident. This is especially true for Elias, who had joined Karl Mannheim in the mid-1920s in Heidelberg before following him in 1930 to the University of Frankfurt to become his assistant.

In this respect, it would be surprising if Elias were not marked by the lecture Mannheim gave on his arrival at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University.⁶ In this course, Mannheim tackles head-on the rise of Nazism as a proper *civilisational* problem, and he does so from the perspective of an analysis of ideologies. But, in continuity with what he has argued for in *Ideology and Utopia* (Mannheim 1995), Mannheim’s approach is based on a strong, a ‘total’ conception of ideology: he conceives of ideological facts as expressions of social reflexivity, as the movement by which social experience is re-grasped by consciousness in the course of its actual realisation. Accordingly, ideology does not just refer to reality, but works within it; it digs, within reality, a distancing gap with reality. It is therefore related to what Elias would later call ‘reality congruence’, as far as *social reality* is concerned. And it has its source precisely in what Elias describes as the

⁶A transcript of this course has been edited (Mannheim 2000).

growing ambivalence of social life.⁷ Yet, in the context of deepening functional democratisation, this reflexivity is increasingly demanding. It needs to remain in constant motion to be able to keep pace with the process of differentiation-integration. But advancing functional democratisation also increases the risk of failure. As complexity raises, the progress of reflexivity may interrupt, and give rise to regressive ideological phenomena that denote a desire to re-simplify the world. It is this phenomenon of reverting ‘distancing’ that Mannheim calls ‘reprimitivisation’, and he sees in this form of regression the origin of fanatical beliefs, those on behalf of which the extreme violence that he saw emerging in Germany in the 1920s was perpetrated.

It is striking that Elias, in the *Studies on the Germans*, when he discusses the genesis of violence, argues that there is no need to go any further than to take ideological radicalisation seriously, in a manner that cannot help but show an affinity with Mannheim’s concept of ‘reprimitivisation’. When he comes to the rise of the middle class under the Wilhelminian Reich, he observes that ‘as an ideal, the concept of “progress” lost status and prestige among the middle-class intelligentsia of the countries where middle-class groups joined or replaced aristocratic groups as the ruling groups of their countries’ (Elias 1996, 135). Further, he notes that ‘[the aristocratic code] [...] lost the character of a tradition-bound and correspondingly little reflected upon pattern of behaviour, and became expressed in an explicitly formulated doctrine hardened by reflection’ (Elias 1996, 180). He shows that these transformations were of central importance in the development of Nazi ideology. Elaborating on the Solomon Group, he writes that its members ‘wrapped themselves up in their dream as in a warm and protective cloak’ and, ‘when the grim reality finally dawned on them’, ‘[t]hey busied themselves with destroying a world which denied them meaningfulness’ (Elias 1996, 196). In this line of reasoning, his explanation of the barbarism of the Nazis becomes foreseeable:

The question why the Nazi leadership decided at the beginning of the war to exterminate all the Jews under their dominion has an answer which is simple and ready to hand. [...] [T]he decision to implement the ‘Final

⁷ It is noteworthy that Mannheim identifies in this reflexivity the very origins of the ‘sociological attitude’. To appreciate the extent to which this understanding of sociology has been taken up by Elias, see Elias (1984).

Solution of the Jewish problem' [...] was simply a question of the fulfilment of a deeply rooted belief that had been central for the National Socialist movement from the beginning'. (Elias 1996, 310)

The whole of Elias's analysis has no prospect other than to determine how transformations in the power balance between groups and classes have resulted in the production of an ideological radicalisation which ultimately led to the escalation of violence. The conclusion to be drawn theoretically from this observation is that taking into account the mutual conditioning of psychogenesis and sociogenesis is insufficient. 'Decivilising spurts' can only be explained if we consider another aspect: that of the development of social reflexivity. That is precisely the aspect Elias has mostly focused on in his work on the sociology of knowledge. In this work, Elias deals with the transformation of the collective 'means of orientation' from the same long-term perspective as with progress in self-control. He insists on the fact that progress in the relatively autonomous sphere of thinking can be described in two correlated aspects: an increase in the sense of realities and an increase in the efforts for detachment required by the growing complexity of social life, and which translates in particular into greater capacities for abstraction. Elias does not name this aspect of social processes anywhere. But it corresponds quite exactly to the concept of *noogenesis* coined by Teilhard de Chardin (Teilhard de Chardin 1959). And we see how this genesis of the means of orientation is indeed likely to freeze and be reversed when, under specific social conditions, the progress of distancing and reality congruence tends to slacken. The sources of the 'breakdown of civilisation' might thus be sought in the contradiction between a social world that continues to advance in functional democratisation and the failures of social reflexivity—the belief in 'myths' (Fig. 9.3).

9.4 REASSESSING 'TERROR' AND 'TERRORISM'

It is now possible to return to the question of long-term transformations of violence. Considering what Elias has shown regarding the process of civilisation between the twelfth and eighteenth centuries, one might have expected that the following centuries would have been characterised by a continuous, though perhaps still conflicting, deepening of the psychogenetic and sociogenetic processes underlying this pacification, that is to say, of an increase in intolerance to violence and the monopolisation of that

		Civilising processes	Decivilising processes
<i>Psychogenesis</i>	Social constraint towards self-constraint	↗	↘
<i>Sociogenesis</i>	Functional democratisation	↗	↗
<i>Noogenesis</i>	Distancing social reflexivity	↗	↘

Fig. 9.3 Civilising and decivilising processes under the regression hypothesis (2)

same violence by political institutions always aiming at a higher degree of integration, the whole being determined by ongoing functional democratisation. But this is not what happened. Or more precisely, it happened, but it did not happen alone. The period that began with the nineteenth century was marked by increasing ‘contradictions’, to use Elias’s terminology, in the civilising process, that the notion of the decivilising process sought to make intelligible. This paradoxical development can be phrased as follows. On the one hand, the process of the state’s monopolisation of violence has continued, so much so that it has gradually drawn a division between what is, externally, a matter of war and what is, internally, a matter of crime. In the course of this century, maximum differentiation has thus been made between the military and police and criminal justice institutions. On the other hand, however, the same century has also seen the rise of a type of violent conflict that does not fit into this division. This is the case, for example, of the wars of colonisation or terrorist attacks in which the distinction between states of peace and states of war and the characterisation of criminal violence and warlike violence seem to have been rendered meaningless. And this paradox has been continuously reinforced and intensified in the course of the twentieth century (Linhardt and de Bellaing 2013).

However, in light of what has been discussed in the previous sections, this paradox fades away. There are indeed two concomitant social trends, one of continuing monopolisation of violence and increasing self-constraint, and one of persisting and even intensifying violent conflicts

that put this monopolisation and intolerance to the test. The paradox resolves when considering that the latter are conflicts that ‘react’ to the civilising process, and that therefore civilising and decivilising processes are *internally* related. During the nineteenth century, the weakening of statutory forms of social differentiation and integration accelerated as social classes and national societies—jointly—emerged in the context of continuously increasing differentiation and integration. This transformation has led to a reinforcement of the monopolisation of the means of violence and, correlatively, of intolerance to violence, but has also resulted in forms of social conflict that are prone to ideological radicalisation precisely because they take shape within—and in response to—social and political configurations requiring an increasing degree of distancing.

Yet, this is what specifies what we refer to as noogenetically driven violence, whether it is operated by a state machinery with massive terrorising power or by small clandestine groups seeking to compensate for the weakness of their resources with the intended destabilising effects of terrorism on the social organisation. One of the distinguishing markers for this type of violence is that it is beyond the categories of violence as they stabilised in the nineteenth century. Indeed, it seems difficult for observers to place violent acts such as those committed by the Kouachi brothers in Paris in January 2015, when they entered *Charlie Hebdo*’s office with weapons of war in their hands, into the carefully distinguished categories of war and crime. Some have described these killings as acts of war; others have argued that they should not be regarded as anything other than horrific crimes; still others have pointed to the radical ideological motivation of the killers. What the attack clearly shows is that the terrorist act is peculiar to lend itself to interpretation from three distinct registers, that of war, crime, and ideological commitment, without ever being able to be definitively drawn back to one of the three. Similarly, when, in July 1995, units of the army of the Bosnian Serb Republic entered Srebrenica and massacred more than eight thousand civilians in the space of a few days, right next to four hundred Dutch soldiers who had been charged by the United Nations with protecting the town, it is difficult to consider these acts to be acts of war within the meaning of the international conventions on which the law of armed conflict was founded.

What is true for these two examples is true for many contemporary conflict situations, in any case, for those characterised by some kind of terror and terrorism. They indeed constitute a test of the state’s monopolisation of violence; they point out to a relapse of self-control and dramatically

breach the social norms of legitimate violence; and they are ideology-oriented insofar as the radicalisation they derive from is based on political or religious motives. The latter aspect, however, needs to be specified. A misinterpretation of the above would be to consider that terrorist violence is only defined by this ideological component. What is characteristic of the type of ideological radicalisation at work in terrorist violence is the kind of noogenetic regression that can be seen there. Terrorist violence—again, in the extensive sense that Michael Walzer gives to the concept—emerges when a social tendency towards what Mannheim called ‘reprimitivisation’ opposes the degree of complexity induced by *continuing* lengthening of the chains of interdependence and progressing functional democratisation. This can only be understood if one relates the crises in social reflexivity to the gap between the continuation of functional democratisation and the failings in the political expectations it produces.

Therefore, secondary barbarism is not just about ideologically motivated acts of violence, or, specifically, it is necessary to understand the phrase ‘ideologically motivated’ in relation to the prevailing social norms that the ideological motivation leads to break. Moreover, not all acts of violence that are ideologically motivated can be assimilated. The fact that they all can bring about regressive violence, that is, violence that reacts to the process of civilisation, does not mean that they are morally equivalent. The work of differentiating these forms of violence by taking into account the variability of their social determinants only begins once they have been re-inscribed in this ‘paradoxicalised’ genealogy of the civilising process. It is also at this point that the political question of the transformation of forms of commitment must be asked, since different ideologies do not have the same propensity to give rise to radicalisation (Karsenti 2018). Describing these phenomena of ideological radicalisation—of noogenetic regression—then presupposes, from the perspective opened up by Elias, an analysis of the social processes that lead in certain social groups to express feelings of superiority, to convert them into political objectives and, possibly, to seek to achieve them through violence.

What is clear is that the specificity of this violence is imperfectly understood when it is interpreted as if it had not yet been subjected to the process of civilisation. Its outbreak is not a sign of a mere relapse; on the contrary, it indicates the reactive nature of this violence to the civilising process and thus its eminently paradoxical form. A hypothesis can therefore be put forward to guide the pursuit of a socio-processual approach to these forms of violence related to secondary barbarism: the more civilised

social relations are, the more violence is likely to be supported by ideology, and the more violence is likely to take the form of ‘terror’ and ‘terrorism’. This does not mean that further atrocious violence necessarily lies ahead; it does mean, however, that transformations in violence need to be seen in this light if we are to have any chance of coping with it. This is the necessary condition to meet Elias’s hopes for the role social sciences could have in modern societies. As he puts it:

One [cannot] know in advance whether or not the menace which human groups on many levels constitute for each other is still too great for them to be able to bear, and to act upon, an overall picture of themselves which is less coloured by wishes and fears and more consistently formed in cross-fertilization with dispassionate observation of details. And yet how else can one break the hold of the vicious circle in which high affectivity of ideas and low ability to control dangers coming from people to people reinforce our work? (Elias 1987, 34)

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Violence and Power: The Kaiowá and Guarani Indigenous Peoples

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and Veronice Lovato Rossato*

10.1 INTRODUCTION

The physical and symbolic violence in indigenous societies remains inadequately and incompletely understood if studied in isolation of the national society in which it occurs. Norbert Elias's theory on civilising processes will be fundamental to discuss the processes of physical and symbolic violence to which the Kaiowá and Guarani peoples were subjected and the case of the *Reserva Indígena de Dourados*—RID, the Dourados Indigenous Reserve in Mato Grosso do Sul.

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Switzerland AG 2021

F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_10

This text reflects the Elias's theory of interdependencies intertwined in broader processes, in an extensive network of individuals and institutions and influenced by different internal and external aspects. The processes of social individualisation and differentiation are embedded in the processes of social change in a long period of time, as well as power as a structural element of relationships.

The empirical source of information was based on publications of ethnographic and historical research on the Kaiowá and Guarani, information obtained from indigenous inhabitants in the *RID* and the authors' experiences in teaching and studying the Kaiowá and Guarani for more than ten years. The chapter addresses the following topics: current situation of the *RID*, the key ideas behind the formation of the Brazilian state, social organisation of Kaiowá and Guarani and the Indigenous Reserva of Dourados.

The physical and symbolic violence that occur in the Kaiowá and Guarani societies and the actual case of the *RID* can be studied from different perspectives. The state formation, defunctionalisation, power and figuration are the keys concepts to be discussed. We will start with a brief introduction of the actual situation of the *RID*. To discuss this issue, it is necessary to bring some historical information to understand the civilising process of the Kaiowá and Guarani societies (Rocha Ferreira and Vinha 2017). The processes of social change of the indigenous peoples became more complex after the arrival of the Portuguese, in the course of which the pendulum of power often swung in different places, mostly in favour of the colonisers.

The *Reserva Indígena de Dourados—RID*, Indigenous Reserve of Dourados, is located in the municipality of Dourados in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul, in the central-west region. The *RID* was created by the official government organisation in the country, the *Serviço de Proteção ao Índio—SPI*, Indian Protection Service, in 1917, with the aim to transfer the Kaiowá indigenous people to the reserve, the biggest population that was living in that area. The original space was 3600 hectares, initially occupied by about 300 people. Currently, it has more than 15 thousand people (60% Kaiowá, 21% Guarani, 19% Terena and 0.1% of the others) distributed in 3475 hectares (IBGE 2010; ISA 2018; Mota 2011). The city of Dourados was created in 1935, with a current population of about 210,000, and its economy is based mainly in arable agriculture (soya, maize and sugar cane) and in cattle ranching. With the demographic expansion, the city and the reserve have become an extension of each other.

The literature and the national and international broadcasts have pointed to serious social issues of the *RID* and their vulnerability to the interests of non-indigenous people for their lands and the absence of the state to solve conflicts. According to the Socio-Environmental Institute, the *RID* is known to boast some of the highest rates of violence, with an increase of population density in indigenous lands. From the indigenous point of view, the spatial boundary is incompatible with self-sustainability, social welfare, food reproduction and culture. Added to this is the policy of exclusion and discrimination of the city residents, although the Brazilian constitution theoretically guarantees their human rights (ISA 2018).

The reserve consists in two villages: Jaguapiru (where most Terena families and some Guarani families reside) and Bororó (where most Kaiowá families reside). Although the researchers claim that Terena's establishment in the *RID* is related to family connections living in the area, others claim that the main fact was the 'civilising project' promoted by Indigenous Protection Service (SPI) with the hope that Terena would be an example of diligence in obedience to this agency and teach agriculture to the Kaiowá and Guarani (Pereira 2011; ISA 2018).

10.2 FORMATION OF THE BRAZILIAN STATE

The first question we would like to discuss is how the formation of the Brazilian state can clarify the process of violence suffered by indigenous peoples. For Elias (1993, 1997, 1999, 2001a, b), a formation of state is fundamental to understand the concentration of power, which is justified through the collection of taxes, the use of physical force and other instruments that are progressively centralised and monopolised.

In the case of Latin America, the conquest of 'land' is motivated by mining and agriculture. Forceful attempts at enslaving the natives, their conversion to the Christian faith were mechanisms to explore and integrate them to the state. The civilising process that occurred in Europe differed from the Brazilian case, as Gebara suggests:

Natives, mestizos, Portuguese, African slaves and immigrants, at different times, will be types present in this process of civilization where a centralized government permanently defunctions community interdependencies, imposing the presence of the State, in a multifaceted way, in people's daily lives. (Gebara 2009, 13)

The figuration and power changes during the colonisation process help the readers to understand the defunctionalisation of the Kaiowá and Guarani peoples, in a time before the formation of the *RID*. Figuration is a key Eliasian concept which refers to an open human being, or *homines aperti*, as the ‘web of interdependent people who are bonded to each other on several inherently other-directed character of the individuals who comprise these figurations’ (Dunning 1986, 10). The complexity of the theme requires to see the different figurations related and its changes during certain time. The other key concept in his theory is power, as Elias puts it:

[...] is a structural characteristic [...]. We depend on others; others depend on us. Insofar as we are more on the others than they are on us, they have power over us, whether we have become dependent on them by their use of naked force or by our need to be loved, our need for money, healing, status, a carried, or simply for excitement. (Dunning 1986, 10)

He refuses the idea that some person/groups possess power in absolute sense and of which other are absolutely deprived. There is a power ratio between people, which ratio can hang to one side or the other, but in the long run it can change, in a blind process, in the face of interference from different situations.

A brief introduction to the formation of the state will give the reader an insight into the interference of state policies in Brazilian indigenous societies, the processual figuration changes and the power embedded into these processes. We lack space here to enquire in more detail the long-term process.

The process of the passage from warrior to gentleman as it occurred in Europe differed from the Brazilian process. Here the violence implemented by colonisers was potentiated in different physical and symbolic forms in contact with the natives, in which whole indigenous societies were defunctionalised, robbed of the possibility and/or their capacity to perform their social functions as before, resulting in a decivilising process (Gebara 2009).

The Portuguese had a monarchy power centre, highly efficient weapons, and communication by writing and maps facilitated the exchange of information. They also spread a variety of viruses generating diseases and thus devastated huge native populations (McNeill 1976). They used other mechanism to curb or accelerate behavioural changes. The colonisation

process inferred a feeling of uselessness and shame and no citizenship rights for indigenous peoples. The ‘shame’ is one of the most powerful feelings in these processes for associating with the sense of inferiority, of the person, of the family and of the wider society, being internalised in the long term in the civilising process (Goudsblom 2009). Another way to make them more docile was through the ‘supply of brandy, smoke, shaving, salt, clothes and beads’ (Monteiro 1992, 146).

The conflicts involving agribusiness and the demarcation of indigenous territories are central to understand the violence between colonisers and indigenous peoples. The colonisation process established in the country had a decivilising character, as it eliminated entire populations and/or leaderships and defunctionalised indigenous groups, as Elias puts it:

One of the most radical processes of informalisation of this kind was the destruction of the rituals that gave meaning to life and supported models of collective life among the simpler peoples in the process of colonisation and missionary work by Europeans. Perhaps it would be useful to examine this briefly. One of the most extremes examples of the devaluation of a code that provides meaning and guidance to a group in connection with the loss of power of its bearer group is the elimination of the upper classes in Central and South America during the colonisation and imposition of Christianity by the Spanish and Portuguese. (Elias 1997, 77)

The natives reacted in different ways, either as strategists, by ambushes, by making alliances with Jesuits or other groups, or by confronting the colonising enemies with the weapons they knew. They did not have a central political power; each ethnic group had its own political and cosmological structure, and each organised society being different from the other. They did not have a biological immune system to resist the European diseases and many of their societies were devastated by smallpox or other problems. The plagues were interpreted as punishments from evil forces. The 2010 demography data is an example of this loss; they represent 0.43% of the total Brazilian population (FUNAI 2019).

The awareness that the colonisers claimed to be ‘civilised’ and had a power of superior dominance occurred early on. They viewed the indigenous people as barbaric, anthropophagous and inhuman. Elias (1993, 1997) points out that the term civilisation is quite complex because it was originally used to represent the awareness that the West has of itself. The vision of European superiority has prevailed for centuries and to this day

persists in some social groups. The idea of 'generic Indian', of the non-recognition of diversity and ethnic cultural riches prevailed for years. This fact shows the strength of these power relations still present in some textbooks. The idea of 'generic Indian' is also found in sectors of Brazilian society, which disregard the rich diversity of these peoples.

From the sixteenth to the mid-eighteenth century, expeditions were organised by the members of civil society, called *Bandeiras e Entradas*, which aimed the territorial exploitation and also the capture and enslavement of indigenous peoples. This mechanism of territorial and human exploitation was one of the mechanisms of monopolisation of power, through the physical and symbolic violence. Only at the end of the eighteenth century, when slavery was abolished, were attempts at inserting the indigenous population into occupations and labour by consensual means (Almeida 1997). In this process of indigenous emancipation, the Jesuits played a fundamental role. In fact, they were important allies of the Kaiowá and Guarani to resist the *bandeirantes* and other Spanish organisations who were after slaving the natives.

The past is that the colonisers perceived the internal differences and rivalries of the indigenous peoples and used them for their own benefit, establishing alliances with some ethnic groups to wage war with other (enemies). This mechanism favoured the colonisers to advance in the territory to be conquered (Monteiro 1992).

The alliance between the indigenous and Jesuits favoured the reduction of differences between them. The Jesuits had more access to the indigenous, but they became partially dependent on the former. This new figuration strengthened both against the *bandeirantes* and adventurers of the time, although the violence still perpetuated. Problems and conflicts with the Marques of Pombal (chief minister in Portugal) and the clergy intensified tensions, culminating in the expulsion of the Jesuits from Portugal and their colonies in 1759. The departure of the Jesuit allies opened new paths for the *bandeirantes* for the conquest of the land and the clashes with the indigenous people increased (Marques 1998). The webs of interdependence and the power relation were once again modified in the relation between the *bandeirantes*, the pioneers and the indigenous peoples, in which the pendulum swung in favour of the coloniser.

Since the colonial times, a state policy was developed in which the indigenous were considered to be 'transitory subjects', in the sense that they would disappear or be integrated into 'civilisation'. At the end of 1980, the international movements pro-indigenous peoples influenced

many changes in the country referenced by international treaty such as ILO Convention 169 (ILO 1989) and the Brazilian Constitution of 1988 (Brasil 2014), which ‘recognized the social organization, customs, languages, beliefs and traditions, and the original rights over the lands the indigenous peoples traditionally occupy, and it is up to the Union to demarcate, protect and enforce all its assets’ (Brasil 2014). This decision was a victory, but its implementation has been a continued struggle over land disputes between farmers, invaders and indigenous peoples and many sectors of the state and civil society.

10.3 KAIOWÁ AND GUARANI SOCIAL ORGANISATIONS

The geographical mobility of the Kaiowá and Guarani peoples after the arrival of the settlers was driven by the state policies of exploitation of the interior, confrontations and exhaustion of natural resources. State policies interfered with the traditional way of being of these peoples, which had a mythical sense and prophetic inspiration. In the past, the Guarani (all the subgroups) sought territories with better conditions of natural resources to build the Guarani *Reko*, which means its own way of living. They chose sites free of supernatural threats with the proximity of allied relatives to help the leader reunite the kinsman and solve the problems and protect them in the incidence, diseases or deaths. For as long as they can remember, the Guarani have been searching for a place called the land-without-evil (*Terra sem males*), revealed to them by their ancestors, where people live free from pain and suffering (Monteiro 1992; Nimuendajú 1987; Pereira 2007, 2014; Colman and Azevedo 2016).

The Guarani way of being is constructed in the *tekoha*, where *teko* refers to the culture—the cosmological rules inherited by the ancient Guarani—and *ha* refers to the physical space—its weeds, fields, water, animals, plants, medicines. It represents an extensive network, or figuration, in which the balance of power is in a constant flux, instigated by interferences of the others (external people of the group and supernatural forces) and internal relations of the members.

In societies where such a monopoly of force is absent, like in indigenous societies, people confronted with such monopolies of state power find themselves in a fragile position, most of their leaders and warriors being robbed of their social function and their timeless long-term world view end up being defunctionalised (Elias 2001a).

The colonising process of organising territorial spaces through states and borders of neighbouring countries has altered the way the Kaiowá and Guaraní organise their borders. New marks were imposed and the complex networks of reciprocity and/or internal disputes were weakened. Moreover, today's cross-border system does not recognise the ancestral language *tupi-guarani* and traditional medicine, and they have to speak Portuguese in Brazil and Spanish in the other countries, with implications for education and health (Colman and Azevedo 2016; Pereira 2007).

The world view of Kaiowá and Guaraní is characterised by a sense of timelessness and poetics. The ancestral wisdom to be transmitted requires initiation ceremonies and celebrations, in order to 'purify the mind and to understand tradition', which is to learn to read the teachings recorded in the inner nature of being (Oliveira 2012, 6).

10.4 THE DOURADOS INDIGENOUS RESERVE: RID

In Brazil, the Guaraní population is approximately 52,000, subdivided into three major socio-linguistic groups—Ñandeva, Kaiowá and Mbyá—and inhabits different regions of the country. There are not only cultural differences among subgroups but also common elements in linguistic forms, ritual practices, political and social organisation, and religious orientation. The differences occur more in ways of interpreting lived reality and of interacting according to the situations in their histories, in the environments and in the present figurations (Ferreira and Brand 2007; ISA 2018).

Kaiowá subgroup or Paĩ-Tavyterã moved to the south, crossing, in the second half of the seventeenth century, the Apa River (MS), occupying the current south of Mato Grosso do Sul (ISA 2018). In the beginning of twenty-first century they were displaced to live in state-demarcated reserves on their own 'traditional' lands. The social figurations that were formed throughout these centuries were influenced by many different national and international actors and organisations, an issue which will be discussed upon in this chapter. Over the centuries, the balance of power between them was most often in favour of the colonisers, causing many problems and killing many natives.

In the eighteenth century, the Kaiowá people occupied a strip of land of 100 kilometres at each side of the current border of Paraguay and Brazil. They were grouped into small *tekoha*, formed by extended families, which in Portuguese is *parentela*. When the social life had animosities and

rivalries into the *parentela* and other ethnic group neighbours they migrated to another area to build the *tekoha*. These ‘networks’ were political and religious in nature, depending on alliances. The Guarani Ñandeva occupied an area in the same region, on the right banks of the Iguatemi River, closer to the Paraguayan border and organised themselves also into small villages, the *tekoha* (Pereira 2007, 2014).

The war and the post-war between Paraguay and the Triple Alliance (Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay), between 1864 and 1870, had a significant impact on the social changes of these ethnic groups. In addition, the situation was aggravated by pastoral and agricultural expansion, especially after 1940 (Pereira 2007, 2014).

Terena’s families were also living in the same area as the Kaiowá, which later had important interference in the *RID*. This ethnic group is from the Aruaque linguistic trunk and has been established in Brazilian territory since the eighteenth century, mainly on the banks of the rivers Aquidauana and Miranda in Mato Grosso do Sul (Vargas 2011). The Terena participated in the war between Paraguay and Brazil, which led to the degradation of their villages. Looking for survival, they spread and fragmented into small areas surrounded by farms and scattered over six municipalities of Mato Grosso do Sul (ISA 2018). At the beginning of the twentieth century there was the implementation of the telegraph network in the region of Dourados and some Terena’s families worked there. After that, they continued to inhabit the region (Pereira 2014).

The cultivation and extraction of *mate* herb was another influence on the social life of Kaiowá and Guarani. By an imperial decree in 1882, the farmer Thomas Laranjeira received from the government land use concession and established his company in the traditional territory of the Kaiowá and Guarani to cultivate and exploit *mate* herb (until 1952). He took settlers from other parts of the country and also used the labour of the indigenous for the heavy work (Mota 2011).

Migrants from other parts of Brazil came to live in the area. The indigenous labour in this project modified the power ratio, provoking dispersion and interference in the way of being of Kaiowá and Guarani peoples. After the concession of the exploitation of *mate* herb by Laranjeira ended, the national government began a policy to occupy the territory and started selling the lands considered ‘returned lands’ from Laranjeira’s company to private individuals. This situation had a tremendous impact on the forced displacement of the Kaiowá and Guarani living in the area.

At that time the *Serviço de Proteção Indígenas*—SPI, Indigenous Protection Service, was created, which lasted from 1910 to 1967. This service was replaced by the National Indigenous Foundation—FUNAI from 1967 on. The aim of the SPI was to integrate the indigenous into Western civilisation naturally, and the contact with other non-indigenous social groups would show the way. They recognised the rights of indigenous peoples to the lands but also facilitated peoples of European descent to establish new settlements in areas from their ancestors. Another action was to concentrate different ethnical groups to live in the same area (Freire 2011). The realisation of this project generated conflicts and violence of all sorts.

The case of the Kaiowá, the SPI, under pressure from landowners, managed to delimit only eight lands called *Reservas* and the indigenous peoples were relocated there, which is shared with Guarani, Terena and a few other groups (Pereira 2007). This situation accelerated the defunctionalising of their *tekoha*. They lost the autonomy to administer their daily economic, political and religious life, as they did in the past. Brand (1993, 1997) used the term confinement to explain this new figuration and Pereira (2007) the term accommodation. The formation of Reserve, whether understood as confinement or accommodation, favoured the use of the ‘returned land’ for real estate speculation and later for agribusiness.

The traditional form of leadership in the Kaiowá and Guarani indigenous villages was based on the choice of the heads of extended families, who were recognised by the relatives. The state, through the SPI, institutionalised another form of power control. It created an ‘indigenous post’ with servants hired by the government to enforce government policies, control indigenous peoples, and provide first health care and education. The ‘captain’ figure was also created, a political representative to mediate the interests of the government and their people. Almeida and Cavalcante (2019) compare this system to *indirect rule*—a British control system adopted in the colonisation of Africa and North America.

This system did not appease the problems between the different groups, and it destabilised the power relationship, with repercussions until the present day. The captains represented the integration policy of the natives in ‘civilisation’ and the use of labour force. The relationships of interdependence became more complicated, as they had to meet the demands of the state, *parentela* and other families.

Agencies have settled in the *RID* and began to interfere in the social life of these peoples, the evangelical mission Kaiowá linked to the Independent Presbyterian church has been present since 1928, and others arrived in different times: governmental agencies, schools, university projects, and other civil society organisations.

Another interference of the state was the implementation of the National Agricultural Colony of Dourados (CAND) in 1943, called the 'March to the West', whose aims was to allow access to land for families of migrants from other regions of the country, modernise agribusiness and increase the population of the border region. The narratives of the informants of Brand and Colman (2013) point out the differences in hiring strategies by the entrepreneurs, Matte Laranjeira used to take the group to work, and the recent entrepreneurs of the CAND scattered the families, requesting the men's labour.

The Kaiowá and Guarani peoples are always re-organising themselves in the face of expropriations of their lands, carried out by farmers and hired killers. With no safe space to live, they continue to move to the *RID*, causing a significant demographic increase. Traditional leaders had to enter negotiations with these external agencies in a pattern of reasoning quite different from the traditional pattern that was established in ancestral negotiations. Moreover, the captain and the head of the state post have often defended the state's decisions. As a result, the internal popularity of traditional leaders began to decline, and families had to live with the animosity of other families, without being able to build other *tekoha*, because was no more land available for doing so. The traditional way of solving problems is inadequate for the present moment in their society, and, accordingly, grievances and dislikes have constantly increased. The 1988 Constitution extinguished the captain's obligation, giving indigenous peoples the option to decide their own governance system, but with the lack of consensus they continued with the same one.

The conflict between families are common, as in the past. However, they have to deal with the problem because there is no free land to migrate. The conflict with Terena's people is always present in the *RID* and it is rooted in the Terena's self-image of superiority. The historical explanations are that they have experience in agriculture for many years and maintain a broader network of interrelationships with various organisations and governments. This issue still triggers discomfort, internal political struggles and physical fights among young people (Troquez 2006).

At the same time, non-indigenous residents of the city of Dourados feel superior to the 'indigenous' peoples. The feeling of superiority of the people living in the city reflects in prejudice, social blindness and non-recognition of *alterity*.

A school principal in the *RID*'s neighbouring city observed that the women cleaning the school required the indigenous children to remove their shoes when they showed traces of clay, so as not to dirty the corridors and classrooms. As there is no asphalt in the reserve, the rains produced mud all over in the village. The children showed embarrassed behaviour, but never said anything. The principal, after becoming aware of her insensitivity, could approach the problem differently with the staff and the children.

Another situation observed in the city was when some owners of local industries hired indigenous and had an idea of 'generic Indian', with total ignorance that in the reserve inhabit Kaiowá, Guarani and Terena peoples. This social blindness leads to an ideology that is expressed in the Elias (2001a, b) conception of *homo clausus*, as he puts it:

The idea of the 'generic Indian', without recognising the cultural differences among ethnic groups, is present in the imaginary of the city. We observed that the industrialists hired the 'Indian' and had no idea that they were the Guarani, Kaiowa and Terena with their cultural particularities. This social blindness leads to an ideology that is expressed in the Elias 2001a, b) 150–151 conception of *homo clausus*, as he puts it:

Another aspect of influence on the defunctionalisation of these groups was the introduction of mechanised agriculture in the late 1970s by Indigenous National Foundation (FUNAI) to cultivate soybeans. Many *RID* residents were opposed to this project, creating tensions between family groups because soybeans are exclusively intended for commercialisation and require larger tracts of land for cultivation. The farmers usually buy or lease lots from villagers for planting. In contact with the Federal Public Ministry (MPF), some indigenous leaders concealed the existence of a collusion between indigenous and non-indigenous leaseholders for the soybean planters (Pereira 2014).

The land issue has become more complex and conflictive. In the Jaguapiru village, the large lands are in the hands of five families and they also lease lands within the village. They have mechanisms to press the family to lease more land and many people are afraid to denounce it. This

problem is not discussed in the reserve and is not even the subject of the meetings. Another form of pressure is the use of poison on each other's plantation to force the purchase or lease lands. Families feel helpless in the face of the fragility of the system. The public prosecutor's office and the captain have not been able to solve the village's problems.

This process of physical and symbolic violence that exists in the village is an example of the imbalance of forces in relationships between inhabitants. This is an example of specific figuration, as Elias (2001a) emphasises the conditions which make men interdependent in a given situation, and how these interdependencies change under the effect of changes, both endogenous and exogenous, of the figuration as a whole. This alliance between groups against others, disfavours the weakest, is a process that has been taking place in the social life of the Kaiowá and Guarani since colonial times.

Neglect and strong interference by the government in indigenous areas have infiltrated and propelled other sectors of civil society, like the 'Missionary Indigenous Council' (CIMI) created in 1972, one of the most reliable organisations in recording violence among indigenous peoples in the country, which obtained special consultative status at the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (CIMI 2016). Loebens (2008) and Bicalho (2010) emphasise that indigenous peoples also received support from other non-governmental institutions such as the Brazilian Association of Anthropology, the Brazilian Attorneys Association and the Ecumenical Documentation and Information.

In the RID region and its surroundings, the majority of Kaiowá and Guarani are represented in rather quite strong organisations, for instance, the *Aty Guasu*—a large political gathering. It was established between 1985 and 1990 by political leaders, priests (shamans), teachers and community members. The meeting also seems like a great feast with rites, chants, dances and the debates of the problems they face and try to find collective solutions, which strengthen their rights, in particular the right to land (ISA 2018).

At present, actions from civil society organisations in conjunction with those generated by indigenous assemblies uphold the struggle for land as their main agenda and a necessary condition for combatting violence and securing the future of these peoples. These assemblies-generated activities aimed at various organisations among indigenous peoples in an attempt to live up to international and national objectives, to elaborate projects

accommodating to the demands of local groups, to unify these groups in demanding the development of public policies, and so on (Loebens 2008).

Assemblies give them a sense of identity, the idea that they are still able to deal with and solve their problems. We must stress that they have only 32 years of recognition as citizens, which is a short time. The dominant pressure that incites people to state integration is still a reality. However, they are constantly re-signifying their culture through different mechanisms and alliances with national and international civil society organisations.

The concept of drag effect that occurs in the social development process mentioned by Elias (2001a) may help to partially explain the process of resistance to the integration of indigenous peoples into the national state. Their resistance to integration has influenced the Brazilian constitution of 1988 which now emphasises their constitutional rights to be recognised as original inhabitants with consequent rights to a living habitat.

The colonisation process has defunctionalised the Kaiowá and Guarani way of life. The We-identity has been pushed in the direction of the I-identity (instead of We-identity), with few advantages for the community. It is clear that the individualisation is present in the Reserve: whereas in the past hunting and planting was shared by the entire community, in present days the indigenous receive wages, pensions are not shared with the community. We do not know if they will become museum-like reservations or have 'fragments of traditional habits and customs to survive, even if only as tourist attractions' (Elias 2001a, 213). We can see many other indigenous groups in Brazil that were dispersed, and that were able to unify and reorganise their communities.

Up to now, the trajectories of the Kaiowá, Guarani and Terena were pushed and pulled by state policies, demographic expansion in small territories, proximity to the city, drugs and alcoholism among other factors. These factors contributed to a situation of dispute and violence (CIMI 2014; Rocha Ferreira and Vinha 2017).

The loss of territories, the gathering of people getting settled in the RID and the concentration of Indigenist services, the presence of non-indigenous people through marriages and friends are factors to understand how the reserve has acquired its current demographic, political and socio-cultural figuration. The difficulty in creating internal union is attributed to the action of the various non-indigenous organisations that work in the reserve and promote divisions among the Indians. Urbanisation and the opening of new trades have positive aspects, such as the expansion of

income alternatives for some families, although this may increase the cultural shock, especially with indigenous families who cannot benefit from the resources generated by this transformation (Pereira 2014)

The new generation of leaders strive to solve local problems, but solutions always find it difficult to obtain the necessary support from state institutions. There is no indigenous policy that proposes effective and adequate actions to solve problems. The main challenge is to find alternative training, employment and income generation for the large number of young people in the *RID*. Despite the high rate of infant mortality and the deaths of young people due to violence, the population growth is quite high, and every year a large number of people reach adulthood, requiring income for the supply of new families that are formed (Pereira 2014).

The circulation of people as well as the access to the media and the internet make the incorporation of new cultural materials. Thus, new generational categories emerge, youth and adolescents, as well as segments of interest and cultural expression, such as Rapp's singers, religious groups, internet networks and drug user gangs (known as 'crazy', which often terrify other residents). This characteristic presents itself as a permanent challenge for community leaders and for public managers, given the difficulty of designing public policies that take account of all this complexity (Pereira 2014).

In many situations, the *RID* comes close to social anomia, a lack of control and a lack of positive options for younger children. It is what reveals testimonies of indigenous mothers:

Today there are many children and young people who no longer listen to what their elders teach. They do not want to know about the ancient life anymore. They listen to their colleagues, they just want to dance and drink, even since they were little they are already like that. They do not want to study, they want to go to work in the city, to drink and fight with everyone. I think there are no more children here, because it is difficult to take care of. When you go out to church at night, you see a lot of small children with bad faces expressions and machetes in hand. (Machado 2016, 96)

The anomia treated by Elias and Scotson (2000) in the book *The Established and Outsiders* may also elucidate the current state of the *RID*. The authors infer that something in society is not harmonious, there is a lack of cohesion due to contexts of sudden change or instability in society and, therefore, influences the imbalance in the behaviour of

individuals. The authors explain that we cannot see the groups as being antagonistic or nomadic, and the causes of their conflicts in a simplistic way, without analysing the figurations that led to the state of the facts. Therefore, the current situation of the Kaiowá, Guarani and Terena in the RID needs to be understood in a broad context, influenced by multiple processes of interference, interdependencies and social changes. In the social unease environment of the RID, internal violence and even suicide have been the bitter fate of many people, especially young people (CIMI 2014).

Finally, we hope to have clarified some aspects of the figurational development processes of violence of the Kaiowá and Guarani peoples, from the perspective of Norbert Elias. The theory of a civilising process pointed to the defunctionalisation of the way of being, and the processes of individualisation and social differentiation of the inhabitants in the Indigenous Reserve of Dourados. As Elias says, ‘when the national state moves towards the stage of integration, tensions in general intensify’ (Elias 2001b, 141). The RID represents one of the most violent places, since it encompasses physical and symbolic violence. Although relations are confrontational between people and groups, the residents seek a certain balance and seek forces in their ancestral mythology.

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Analysing European Defence with Elias's Historical Sociology (1990–2020)

Delphine Deschaux-Dutard

11.1 INTRODUCTION

In a world where multilateralism is more and more challenged, the European Union (EU) has been seeking for strategic autonomy for over three decades. The security challenges faced by the EU seem to work as a driver for European Defence Policy (also known as Common Security and Defence Policy or CSDP according to the Lisbon Treaty). This chapter aims at showing the interest of Elias's sociology to analyse the development of European Defence since the 1990s and to explain the divergences European Defence raises among European states in the twenty-first century. These divergences clearly appeared between Europeans at NATO's seventieth anniversary in December 2019 or at the Munich Security Conference in February 2020, for instance, although the multiple transnational threats Europeans are commonly facing should urge them to bring European Defence to more substance.

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_11

The analytical claim of this chapter is to show the relevance of historical sociology in the study of such sectors of European integration, and more precisely the potentialities of two concepts developed by Elias: the concepts of figuration and habitus. The use of Elias's historical sociology (more precisely his figurational sociology) in the study of a topic at cross-roads between international relations and European studies is not only rare (Deschaux-Beaume 2008; Faure 2019), but also stimulating as it enables a multilevel analysis as we show below. European Defence Policy is a very specific kind of cooperation as it touches the core competences of the state (defence) resulting from a long historical construction of the monopoly of state military violence (Elias 1975; Tilly 1992, 2000). Therefore, it is interesting to investigate this case not only from a macro level but also from the micro level of the individual actors' perspective, as they operate this cooperation with their own socialisation processes. Therefore, our aim is twofold here. First Elias's sociology enables to analyse the construction of European Defence as a specific social configuration within the EU configuration. In our study of the sociogenesis of European Defence Policy between the late 1990s and 2020, we particularly focus on the way the French-German politico-military actors historically shaped European Defence Policy as a specific social figuration within the European integration process (Deschaux-Beaume 2008; Deschaux-Dutard 2019a). This chapter is based on a fieldwork composed of content analysis of official documents and qualitative interviews (over 150) conducted in 2005–2008 and 2016–2018 in Paris, Berlin and Brussels with French and German officers, diplomats and political actors daily dealing with European Defence Policy. We consider the actors' discourses as not only ways of constructing European Defence Policy on a daily basis, but also as the outcome of their habitus (national and professional) shaped on a long-term perspective as we show in our second section. Thus, we conceive European Defence Policy (CSDP) as a social configuration shaped by the socialisation of its main actors institutionalised through a long-term perspective. The second aim of this chapter is indeed to assess the fruitfulness of the concept of habitus to understand the recurring divergences underlying European Defence in the twenty-first century.

The chapter is composed of two parts. The first part presents the added-value of Elias's sociological concepts to investigate European Defence Policy, and second part explains why the concept of figuration proposed by Elias is an interesting way of analysing the sociogenesis of European Defence Policy since the end of the Cold War. The second part focuses on

the concept of habitus and one of our central variables—socialising processes—which help explaining the recurring strategic divergences between the two main drivers of European Defence Policy: France and Germany. The conclusion more globally promotes the use of historical sociology in the study of European integration and the use of Norbert Elias's in particular.

11.2 ANALYSING EUROPEAN DEFENCE WITH ELIAS'S FIGURATIONAL SOCIOLOGY: EXPLAINING INTERDEPENDENCIES BETWEEN RELEVANT GROUPS OF ACTORS SHAPING EUROPEAN DEFENCE POLICY

European Defence has been often investigated by international relations theory and strategic studies and has also been studied in the field of the European studies through an institutionalist perspective. The international theorists tend to consider CSDP in its globality and assess it in strategic terms (see, e.g. Biscop 2016; Duke 2018; Tocci 2018). The rational choice institutionalists focus on the actors' calculus of benefits and disadvantages in CSDP, while the sociological institutionalists concentrate on norms and values embedded in the institutions making CSDP. Since the beginning of the 2000s, constructivist analysis of European Foreign Policy and European Defence Policy have started developing (see for instance Smith 2003; Howorth 2002). The study of social representations and ideas constitutes a growing trend in the study of CSDP since the last decade (Irondelle 2003; Mérand 2006; Pajon 2003; Bagayoko-Penone 2006; Rayroux 2016).

Here we analyse European Defence Policy relying on Elias's concepts of figuration and habitus because these two concepts help us not only conceptualise European Defence Policy as a specific social figuration within the European integration process, but also explain how this figuration is affected by the historicity materialised in the actors' national and professional habitus within this figuration.

Our starting point consist in analysing the sociogenesis¹ of the European Defence Policy by its most committed groups of functional actors: the French and German politico-military actors (diplomats, military officers,

¹ We borrowed this term from the analysis of the court society by Elias (Elias 1985) who shows how the former configuration of knighthood has been replaced over time by the configuration of the court society.

political leaders) from the 1990s until the post-Brexit period. The fieldwork led between 2006–2008 and 2016–2018 leads to one major hypothesis: when asking the question ‘why building a European Defence Policy’, the answer does not clearly show at first sight; we already showed that the latent functions of a European Defence may actually outperform its manifest functions (Deschaux-Beaume 2008). To put it clearly: Europeans—and among them French and Germans—launched a European Defence Policy in the late 1990s and relaunched it since 2016, because it is enshrined in a long-term political project and relates to the highly sensitive question of strategic dependence towards the American partner.² Thus, European Defence Policy constitutes both a social and symbolic construction. Here Elias’s figurational sociology offers a stimulating agenda to explain the genesis and relaunch of European Defence Policy mainly driven by French and German politico-military actors by developing a multilevel approach of the interdependencies underlying this figuration.

11.3 EUROPEAN DEFENCE POLICY (CSDP) AS A SPECIFIC FIGURATION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The concept of figuration proposed by Elias is fruitful to analyse European Defence in a relational dimension.³ European Defence Policy (CSDP) can be defined as a set of interdependent social relations between functional groups of actors (political actors, diplomatic actors, military actors and even industrial actors for few years)⁴ positioned at different strategic levels of the figuration enabling them to influence this figuration and induce social change. This way of analysing European Defence gives a crucial importance to the understanding of the context in which the institutionalisation of the European Defence Policy takes place and the

²We need to be clear about one thing: European Defense Policy could only be launched with the help of the United Kingdom in 1999 when European Defense Policy was officially launched after the St-Malo agreement of December 1998, but the progresses made lately have been made possible, thanks to the withdrawal of the United Kingdom since June 2016 and the referendum on Brexit (Deschaux-Dutard 2019a).

³Some authors use the field theory developed by Bourdieu but with a different aim than ours: the theory of practices (Mérand and Pouliot 2008; Forget and Rayroux 2012). Our aim is not to propose a theory of practices but to understand how the habitus of the actors, as a historically rooted socialization process, explains the recurring divergences about European defense between its main drivers.

⁴On this later group of actors, see Faure 2019.

inheritance of the prior attempts (the European Defence Community in the 1950s and the Western European Union [WEU] absorbed by the EU in 2011; see Deschaux-Beaume 2008; Deschaux-Dutard 2018). Both historical precedents have paved the way for the domination of political leaders and diplomatic actors in European Defence negotiations and put the military actors in a differentiated functional position. Analysing European Defence Policy as a social figuration within the EU helps understand the interdependencies between the different groups of actors shaping it and how these interdependencies reveal not only the trend towards institutionalisation but also a need for control on the side of the political and diplomatic actors by keeping the decision-making process intergovernmental, as defence falls under the area of high politics. It is clear not only in 1999–2001 with the launching of European Defence Policy and its dedicated organs in Brussels but also in the latest period with the search for new permanent tools for this policy (such as the European Defence Fund for instance or Permanent Structured Cooperation [or PESCO] since 2017).⁵ Indeed three organs have been created to make CSDP work: a Political and Security Comity (ambassadors from the member states), a Military Comity (military representatives of the member states) and a Military Staff working for the European diplomatic service (EEAS) and the High Representative (Josep Borrell since December 1, 2019). The concept of figuration is interesting in two main ways. Its first interest is to shed light on this seek for rationalisation: European Defence Policy as a figuration owns its own social and political logic which remains intergovernmental and mostly in the hands of the politico-diplomatic actors.⁶ As EU member states (and in our study more precisely France and Germany) are the outcome of a process of concentration and monopolisation of various forms of resources (Elias 1975), European integration process can be seen as the extension of this dynamic, which results in more interdependence between the actors positioned at the state level and the actors

⁵ PESCO is a mechanism enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty to able a group of EU countries willing to develop their cooperation further in defense matters to do it within the EU legal framework. It was launched by the European Council of December 2017 and currently covers over 47 cooperation projects among small groups of EU member states.

⁶ For instance, there is still no official formation of the Council of the EU for defense, which means that Ministers of defense of the EU member states meet informally in a different European capital each time and sometimes in Brussel, whereas the Foreign Affairs Minister have a dedicated format of the Council to meet in Brussels: the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC).

positioned in Brussels. Therefore, European Defence Policy takes place in this specific figuration in which officers, diplomats and political actors evolve and negotiate compromises between the national and the European levels. This is the second interest of the concept of figuration as designed by Elias for our analysis. The concept helps analyse the interdependencies between the main functional groups of actors within this figuration at both the national and European levels, and to show that their relations are shaped by their habitus (see the third part of the chapter).

Indeed these actors occupy specific positions both at the national (Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, Elysee Palast, Chancellery) and European (Political and Security Comity, EU Military Comity, EEAS) levels, positions which tend to influence their actions and representations of European Defence and its policy-making.

Moreover, the structuring of European Defence Policy as a figuration within the EU is largely determined by the way social and professional resources are distributed within the figuration. To put it simply, constraints weighing on the actors engaged in CSDP, both at the national and European levels, vary in function of their position and also their professional socialisation in the policy-making process in this sector of European integration. Diplomats and political actors (such as heads of states of ministers of Foreign Affairs) hold higher social resources here and taking history into account helps us understand why. Diplomatic actors were, from the beginning of the European construction, the primary actors dedicated to the development of the European Community and then European Union. They have grown into the integration process and have become experts of its negotiation culture. It is very different for military actors who entered the European construction only in 2001 and found themselves for the very first time working in a totally civilian organisation very different from NATO. Their social resources are more limited than the ones of the diplomats and political actors: it was until 2001 restricted to a 'military capital'. This introduction of the military element in the EU raises new sociological questions, among which is the question of carrier potentialities (see Rayroux 2016). In the representation of the military officers interviewed in Brussels, holding a position in the Military Comity or the Military Staff in Brussels clearly seems to constitute a good way of extending their professional networks to gain a high position when they come back to their country (Deschaux-Beaume 2008).

The other interest of the concept of figuration in our study is to analyse the interdependencies between the capitals and Brussels regarding defence

questions since the launching of European Defence Policy in 1998–1999 and its relaunch since 2016. Before the creation of the European Defence social figuration, the decision-making process used exclusively bilateral formats in the sector of military cooperation. With European Defence Policy, the decision-making process now takes place between functional groups of actors positioned in the capitals, and the permanent delegates of the states and the European actors in Brussels (diplomats in the Political and Security Committee, military actors in the Military Committee and in the EU Military Staff), who share a way of negotiating compromises. An interesting example of this change in the interdependence relations between these groups of actors is provided by the negotiations of the Berlin Plus agreements in 2002:⁷ these negotiations have been largely led by the actors positioned in Brussels and not as directly as before by the national governments.⁸ Thus the concept of figuration is interesting to investigate social change induced by the development of European Defence and may also have even more potentialities in the future to analyse the growing involvement of the European Commission in this area, even though CSDP remains intergovernmental and is led by the member states, by using the tools at its disposal: industry and the idea of developing a European Defence industry market (Haroche 2019). Yet the bilateral level of negotiation should not be ignored, as it constitutes an important way of looking for leadership at the European level in the defence sector. The best example here is the blooming of French-German proposals since the referendum on Brexit in June 2016 to relaunch European Defence. Many of these bilaterally agreed proposals made their way at the EU level, like the effective use of PESCO (adopted by the European Council in December 2017) or the creation of a military planning capacity autonomous from NATO in 2017 (the MPCC) (Deschaux-Dutard 2019a), which again shows the structural position of leadership of political and diplomatic actors within European Defence figuration.

The other interest of Elias's sociology in investigating European Defence is the concept of *habitus*, as we show below.

⁷These agreements enable the EU to use the common planning means of NATO to lead an EU military operation, as for instance in the case of the EU operation Concordia in North Macedonia in 2003.

⁸Interviews in Paris, Berlin and Brussels, October 2005 and April 2006.

11.4 HOW THE CONCEPT OF HABITUS EXPLAINS THE RECURRING STRATEGIC DIVERGENCES WITHIN THE EUROPEAN DEFENCE POLICY FIGURATION IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY?

One of our central variables in the analysis of the genesis and relaunch of European Defence in the late 1990s and since 2016 is the socialisation process of its actors. Therefore Elias's concept of habitus is key in our study of European Defence Policy and helps us to focus on the socialising processes of the (here French and German) actors involved in European Defence Policy so as to understand their positions within the CSDP figuration, the way they analyse the construction of European Defence and the resources they mobilise in the negotiations with their European partners. Even if there has been evidence of Brusselisation trends in CSDP during the last decade (Bagayoko-Penone 2006; Juncos and Pomorska 2011), EU member states' governments continue to rely on national strategic analysis first when dealing with the new strategic environment (Deschaux-Dutard 2019a).⁹

11.4.1 *Socialisation Processes as a Central Variable*

Our fieldwork shows that between France and Germany, there is a slightly different representation of European Defence Policy (Deschaux-Beaume 2010; Deschaux-Dutard 2014). Divergences can be explained by two sorts of socialising processes (or habitus in Elias's words): the national habitus of the actors and their professional habitus (see also Mérand 2006; Bagayoko-Penone 2006; Faure 2017).

Studying the actors' discourses shows that they keep constructing their interests and representations concerning European Defence nationally first. There is not yet a consistent common European strategic culture (Meyer 2013; Giegerich et al. 2013). The concept of habitus helps us understand the shift in the French and German representations of European Defence and the recurring divergences rooted in their national habitus (Elias 1991) which shapes their vision of their role in European

⁹See for instance the White Paper on German Security Policy and the Future of the Bundeswehr published in July 2016 or the French Strategic Review published in October 2017: even if European defense constitutes a fundamental aspect of both strategic documents, the analysis of the strategic priorities tends to differ significantly.

Defence. Indeed, the national context in which the different actors have been socialised plays a heavy role on their representation of European Defence. For instance, the major claim for autonomy on the French side can be explained by the strong Gaullist tradition in French foreign policy aiming at constituting a European pole as a power multiplier for France so as to weigh on international relations. This French position rooted in history has two main consequences in defence and European matters: an expeditionary tradition (the French army can be sent very soon everywhere in the world and the president is the ultimate decision-taker) and an intergovernmental aspiration for the European project, so that the French government can keep ownership of its decisions. On the contrary, Germany has long been deprived of its sovereignty and of its own foreign policy because of history (Nazi traumatism and occupation of the country by the allied powers). The consequences are a strategic culture based on restraint and a projection in the European global project inspired by a federalist claim.

The political, diplomatic and military actors evolving in the European Defence figuration embody these national habitus which also irrigate the decision-making bodies at the national level. They bring a large part of these habitus with them to Brussels, even if there are incremental learning processes developed through day-to-day interactions with other national actors (see Juncos and Pomorska 2011). But the core of their national habitus remains, as the actors interviewed in Paris, Berlin and Brussels acknowledge themselves (see also Hooghe 1999; Menon 2001).

Indeed French and German political actors, diplomats and military officials daily involved in European Defence tend to feel a part of the same security community¹⁰ but keep having important national strategic priorities and confer a slightly different signification to CSDP (Deschaux-Beaume 2008, 2010). In a nutshell, European Defence represents a means of counter-weighting American unilateralism in the French actors' representation, as it has been most of the time expressed in qualitative interviews lead between 2005 and 2008 and in 2016–2018. European Defence Policy is conceived as an opportunity of creating a European leadership in defence and thus brings the EU integration process further and maintains a multilateral world order. This vision of European Defence is consistent with the fundamental principles of French foreign policy since the Gaullian

¹⁰As expressed in the Aachen Treaty, a bilateral cooperation was signed by France and Germany on January 22, 2019.

era and continues impregnating French actors' representations of European Defence as most of these actors (mainly the political and diplomatic actors) are socialised to these fundamentals during their study in France's *grandes écoles* (Sciences Po or ENA for instance).

CSDP seen by the German actors seems more a way of enabling the Federal Republic to assume its international engagements without having to cross the difficult Rubicon of rethinking the use of armed forces, which is a bone of contention in German political culture (see Deschaux-Dutard 2017). Yet every single discourse—both official and informal—underlines the necessity to stay in good terms with NATO. Therefore, civilian aspects of European Defence Policy are strongly emphasised in Germany: a good example for that is the constant advocacy of the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, Heiko Maas, to develop CSDP's civilian aspects and tools. The European Council actually adopted a civilian compact in the framework of CSDP on November 19, 2018.¹¹

Another major advantage of using the concept of habitus is to have a close look at another kind of socialising process weighing on the actors' representations: their professional habitus.

11.4.2 *Officers and Diplomats in European Defence Policy* *Figuration: The Weight of the Professional Habitus*

Another crucial element influencing both the French and German actors' action and representation in European Defence is their professional habitus. Our fieldwork in Paris, Berlin and Brussels showed not only divergences rooted in the national habitus of these actors, but also differences rooted in the professional habitus of these actors within the national defence figurations.¹² The social representations of the actors involved in defence policy-making are closely linked with their functional position within their national defence figuration (mainly heads of states or governments, ministries of foreign affairs, ministries of defence and their respective administrations, and the armed forces). To make a parallel with Elias's work on the genesis of the maritime profession, both military and

¹¹ [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630295/EPRS_BRI\(2018\)630295_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2018/630295/EPRS_BRI(2018)630295_EN.pdf) Consulted on 4 February 2020.

¹² We arrived to this conclusion by performing a prosopography of these actors, which is the only example we would find in the literature dedicated to CSDP (Deschaux-Beaume 2008). These results have been confirmed by other studies with other analytical claims too (Mérand 2006; Faure 2017).

diplomatic actors hold a specific position within their own national figuration which has been structured over time and shapes their habitus (Elias 2003). Officers, diplomats and political actors have their own professional habitus incorporated through their socialisation phase to become professionals (Elias 2003).

Therefore, although French and German officers have two very different strategic cultures incarnated in diverging national habitus at the individual level (interventionism versus reserve culture), they share a common organisational ethos characterised by pragmatism. They are professionally trained to think and act following a rationality of finality (*zweckrational*) following Weber's distinction (Weber 1976). They develop a pragmatic way of thinking, and as we could observe while participating in some negotiations, they tend to act so as to reach a mutual satisfying solution in terms of efficiency, which does not necessarily coincide closely with their political national guidelines given by the ministries of foreign affairs. As our fieldwork in Brussels showed officers socialised in multilateral organisations such as the EU or NATO have learned how to overcome the strictly national rhetoric and to cope with their partners to reach a potential agreement.¹³

On the other hand, diplomats are socialised as representatives of their nation-state. Their representations of European Defence are therefore more political and sometimes ideological, they embody the national position of their capital (Paris and Berlin in our case study) in multilateral negotiations and rely on a form of value rationality (*wertrational*). This means that they are often summoned to negotiate following values or political imperatives more than following a logic of practical consequentialism. Their repertory appeals often to the use of political symbols in foreign and defence policy (Deschaux-Dutard 2019b). They are highly concerned with the questions of leadership and political position of their country in the making of the European Defence Policy, which is even truer in the case of high-profile political leaders like the heads of state/government or the ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence.

These two distinct kinds of professional habitus are rooted in the historical structuration of the profession of these actors (for more developments on this issue, see Deschaux-Beaume 2008). Two examples

¹³Interviews conducted in October and December 2005, and October 2006 and May 2007 in Brussels (NATO, EU Military Council, EU Military staff, French and German Permanent Representations).

particularly show these diverging professional habitus derived from the socialisation of the actors as officers or as diplomats and/or political actors. Concerning the question of the EU-NATO relations, before the French reintegration into the command structure of NATO in 2009, French military officers tended to develop much more sympathy for the Alliance than usually acknowledged among the diplomatic actors (Menon 2000). As it was regularly expressed in the qualitative interviews we conducted, they perceive NATO from an operational and practical point of view: participating in the Alliance's missions is a good way of developing interoperability and maintaining good military standards. But this position seemed quite heretical to French diplomats until 2009 and even for a time after the French reintegration. The last statement made by the French president in November 2019 when he said that NATO was 'brain dead' is typical of this French political perception of NATO (Deschaux-Dutard 2019c). Therefore, French diplomatic and political actors tend to consider the EU-NATO relationship more ideologically and keep thinking in terms of strategic autonomy inherited from the Gaullian vision of foreign and defence policy. This vision has however evolved in the last decade, even though the turmoil in the transatlantic partnership since the election of Trump in the White House in November 2016 has been seized as an opportunity by French politico-diplomatic actors to push for more European Defence (Deschaux-Dutard 2019a).

Another example concerns European military operations. The example of the EUFOR operation in Congo in June 2006 is interesting. We were able to follow the discussion directly in Berlin in spring 2006. At first, officers of both France and Germany were not very enthusiastic,¹⁴ whereas diplomats in both capitals clearly showed political concerns: this operation was both a way of legitimating European Defence by showing its credibility into action and a way of bringing Germany closer to the African field. Officers argued of the insignificance of the mission (only 4 months with 1500 soldiers, high financial costs), whereas diplomats tended to underline the symbolic utility and the political opportunity for the European Defence project by showing that Europeans could act (even if the mission was only to monitor the good running of the first democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo). Even though European Defence may exert a socialising effect on these actors by making them negotiators

¹⁴French officers felt no great enthusiasm and German officers were clearly reluctant at first. Interviews in Paris and Berlin, April–June 2006.

on a regular basis in Brussels, this effect is limited by many factors among which are their professional socialisation and, for some of them, their former experience within the framework of NATO (see also Schmitt 2015; Rayroux 2016).

This means that the cleavages take place not only between actors of the two member states but also within national defence figurations. On the other hand, despite their different national representations, diplomats and political actors across Europe advocate European Defence politically, because they see it as a way of developing a European strategic autonomy at least in discourses (Deschaux-Dutard 2019a). Military officers tend to show more concern for effectiveness, which leads them to value dialogue between EU and NATO and to emphasise the capacity building processes in European Defence Policy. Elias's habitus is therefore very helpful to document these divergences between interdependent groups of actors positioned within the European Defence figuration.

11.5 CONCLUSION: HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGY, NORBERT ELIAS AND EUROPEAN STUDIES: A STIMULATING RESEARCH AGENDA

More generally historical sociology has witnessed a growing interest in the field of European studies in the last two decades. In an issue of the French journal *Politique Européenne* (2006), Déloye underlines that the mainstream approaches to European integration often miss a crucial element of the process: its historicity (Déloye 2006, 5; Georgakakis 2009). Taking historical sociology seriously in the study of European integration means taking into account the extent to which social, cultural and political factors structured in time tend to facilitate or hinder the development of the EU in multiple sectors (McNamara 2010). Historical sociologists consider European integration as a set of interlocked social processes rooted in the historical trajectories of each member state (Marks 1997, 39).¹⁵ Norbert Elias and his figurational sociology stand in good place to analyse European integration. Elias defines a figuration as a concrete situation of interdependence between individuals and states (Elias 1991, 158). The flexibility of the concept enables to use it not only at a micro level (individual) but also

¹⁵ The constructivist analysis of European integration by Christiansen et al. (1999, 2001) also considers the EU as a social construction but historical sociology provides a long-term perspective that constructivism does not take seriously into consideration.

at a macro level (states) as Elias's figurational sociology analyses the interlocking of integration levels within social figurations (Delzescaux 2016, 66), as we have shown earlier.

Elias has been 'rediscovered' in the field of both international relations and European studies (Delmotte 2002, 2011; Devin 1995; Hobden 1998; Linklater 2004, 2005; Lawson 2006) to underline the specificity of the EU as a historical figuration, that is a set of interdependent relations between different functional groups of actors monopolising key social positions and therefore playing a major role in social change within this figuration (like in the analysis of the court society, see Elias 1985; Delzescaux 2016, 71–74). This European process is also taking place in time and space, this context influencing the way it is conceived.

The analytical perspective developed in this regard shares some connections with the neo-functional claim that 'regional integration [is] expected to occur when societal actors, in calculating their interests, decided to rely on the supranational institutions rather than their own governments to realise their demands. These institutions, in turn, would enjoy increasing authority and legitimacy as they become the sources of policies meeting the demands of societal actors' (Haas 2001, 23). This phenomenon is called the 'spill over effect' in Haas's view, activities associated with sectors initially integrated would spill over into more and more sectors not yet Europeanised, so that in the end European integration should lead to a wide political community in Europe. Historical sociology can raise the question of the integration process in a different way relying on Elias's figurational sociology (Featherstone 1987; Baur and Ernst 2011; Mennell 2017) derived from its analysis of the western civilising process (Elias 1975). Based on figurational sociology, European integration can be analysed as another form of power concentration process (see Bartolini 2005, who also relies on Hirschman's and Rokkan's work to analyse this process). This hypothesis is interesting on two levels: first, it leads us to conceive nation-states as competing arenas representing a determined level of power monopolisation rather than a fully realised figure of power (Devin 1995, 315); second, from a methodological point of view (see below), it enables the researcher to mix two levels of analysis: the macro level of member states and the micro level of actors, so as to develop a complex picture of what is at stake in European integration in a sector as European Defence.

Last but not least, what does Elias's figurational sociology bring to the study of European Defence Policy? This chapter's aim was twofold to that

extent. First Elias's sociology enables to analyse the construction of European Defence as a specific social configuration within the EU configuration. The concept is useful as it not only enables a multilevel analysis of the construction of interdependencies between the different functional groups of actors within this figuration but also allows to think social change and redistribution of resources (see the example of the Commission; Haroche 2019) within this figuration in a long-term perspective (since the late 1990s). Second, the concept of habitus proved fruitful to understand why European Defence seems to have difficulties in 2020 even though the EU is surrounded by strategic challenges which should act as an urge for European Defence. The habitus of the groups of actors involved shapes strongly the way they construct European Defence and helps shedding light on their enduring divergences.

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PART III

Established–Outsiders Relations and
Habitus Issues



Weaving Elias's Thought with Indigenous Perspectives and Lives: Proposal for a Research Agenda

Aurélie Lacassagne and Dana Hickey

12.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at creating a respectful conversation between Elias's theory and Indigenous perspectives and at sketching out a research programme to this respect. The contention rests on the idea that Eliasian thinking could be useful to help Western thinkers understand Indigenous accounts of the social world, and how they might correct some weaknesses of Elias's work. Even if Indigenous peoples have gained more visibility on the international scene, they still face many issues, including systemic discrimination and violence. We think that addressing this enduring colonial legacy is one of the biggest challenges we face before we can form a true world cosmopolitan society. In previous research, we found that Eliasian thinking shares commonalities with some Indigenous worldviews, in

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Switzerland AG 2021

F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_12

particular, a non-egocentric conception of society; a deeply relational and processual view of human (and non-human) ties; and a rejection of dualisms and reifications. The first part will be devoted to these epistemological and ontological commonalities. Despite these shared understandings, Elias has been criticised by anthropologists who believe Elias failed to notice that non-industrialised societies or tribal communities also exhibited a high degree of self-restraints and organisation (for a general discussion, see Dépelteau et al. 2013). This is a question deserving a robust reflection and the second part will be devoted to that purpose. This reflection appears paramount to understanding the violence Indigenous peoples continue to endure and the on-going exclusion of Indigenous peoples from national societies and from the international society. Therefore, the third part will propose a discussion of the effects of monopolisation processes on Indigenous peoples, the genocides experienced by Indigenous peoples and the bewildering paradox that represents the coexistence of civilising and de-civilising processes. Finally, the fourth part will look at establishing a dialogue between Indigenous conceptions of the Earth and Eliasian thinkers working on the environment. The world could greatly benefit from Indigenous knowledge to develop solutions to the most important threats to humanity and the Earth. The intent of the authors is not to detail these important questions and solutions, but to stress the value of Indigenous knowledge and create bridges. The authors understand Indigenous knowledge as knowledge transmitted by elders, within families and communities, and by storytellers including writers, poets and playwrights. Consequently we will rely not only on Indigenous scholars' works, but also on literary sources (a methodology not foreign to Eliasian scholars, see Kuzmics 2009, 116) and storytelling which is 'a valid form of Aboriginal knowledge' (Baskin 2005, 180; Deloria 1996).

12.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND ONTOLOGICAL COMMONALITIES

Norbert Elias is a unique Western thinker who offered a compelling critique of many concepts posed by Western thought, including dualisms, reifications and static thinking. In all his works, he argued for balance: balance between involvement and detachment, between the self-restraints and external social constraints, and in the relations of power. This balance is at the heart of many Indigenous worldviews and guide research in this

field. In her seminal book, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) explains that the researcher is necessarily always involved in what she is studying, which echoes a research ethos proposed by Elias in *Involvement and Detachment* (1987). This is the context in which we would like to discuss some similarities between Elias and Indigenous Weltanschauung, namely, the rejection of dualisms, and the relational, processual and interdependent nature of the world.

One of the plagues of Western thinking has been the numerous dualisms it contains. Elias's work on symbols is commonly understated. Yet his *Symbol Theory* (Elias 1991) represents a tremendous intellectual endeavour at overcoming the philosophical dichotomies of Western thinking and showing how they derive from process-reduction (Elias 1991, 43, 99). Kilminster offers a list of dualisms commonly found in Western thought: 'idealism/materialism; spirit/matter; mind/body; culture/nature; consciousness/being; human/animal; living/non-living; form/content; abstract/concrete; rational/irrational; subject/object' (2014, 132). Particularly relevant to our topic, it is worth noting that this peculiar way of thinking about the world produces direct consequences. Dualism is inherently intertwined with the many dichotomies created by colonisation: coloniser/colonised; superior/inferior; civilised/savage; men/natives. Indeed, as Dickason pinpoints:

The European approach was doomed to failure because it assumed a cultural dichotomy between 'savage' (lack of order) and 'civilised' (order) that did not, in fact, exist. Whatever the differences may be between 'tribal' societies and 'civilisations', the presence or lack of order is not one of them. The people of the New World all led highly structured lives, with or without agriculture and whatever their degree of nomadism. (1984, 273)

These binary visions have not disappeared and continue to hinder our thought process and ability to perceive everyone as members of the human community. Consequently, establishing a dialogue between Elias and Indigenous thinking could prove to be useful to produce a shift in the way we think about the world.

In her study of Indigenous worldviews of power, Hickey (2019) locates relationships at the heart of her analysis and the associated concepts—women, abuse of power, language, knowledge and sacred power source—are being examined through their relationships to one another. Thus, she

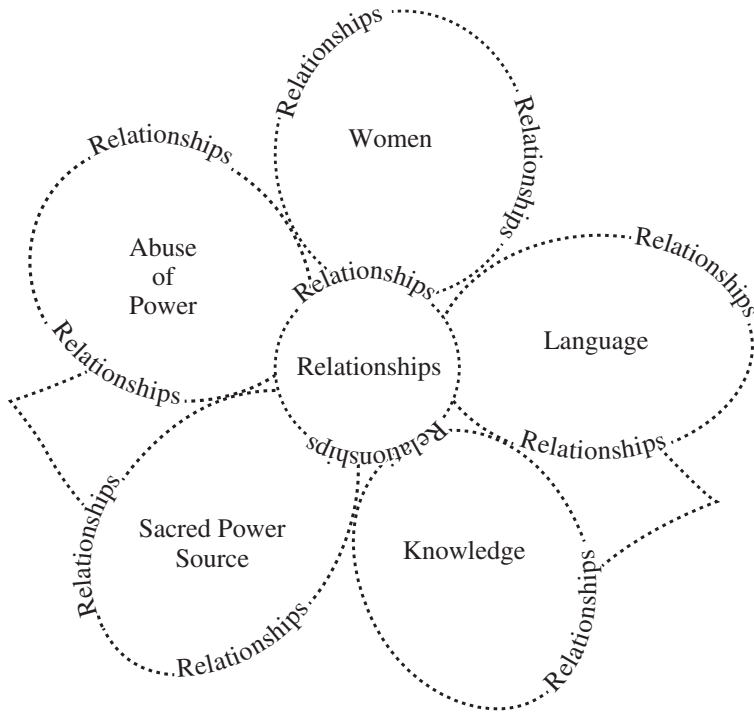


Fig. 12.1 Representation of the data collected by Hickey on Indigenous world-views of power (Hickey 2019, 47) (For the petal flower multi-layered signification, see Absolon 2011, 49)

produces a figure (Fig. 12.1) that looks somehow similar to Elias's representation of a non-egocentric view of society (Elias 2012b, 9).

The way Indigenous peoples, in our case the Anishinabek, conceptualise the world, as a multitude of interdependent relationships, echoes the Eliasian concept of figuration. First, in its postulates, figuration appears very much alike the many Indigenous *Weltanschauung* as it does not separate the individual from the community/society. Second, a figuration is flexible and open-ended, an idea illustrated for instance by the fluidity of group membership in many Indigenous nations. Third, figurations are overlapping. The interrelatedness is central.

The recognition of the fundamentally interdependent character of relationships points to the importance of the balance in the figuration if one wants a peaceful world. Alfred states:

Native ideas centre on the imperative of respectful, balanced coexistence among all human, animal, and spirit beings, together with the earth. Justice is seen as a perpetual process of maintaining that crucial balance and demonstrating true respect for the power and dignity of each part of the circle of interdependency. (2009, 66)

Alfred continues to explain that injustice is produced by the imbalances of this circle, this figuration. And this has important methodological implications as 'The concept "we are all related" informs the wholistic and relational nature of Indigenous methodologies. Indigenous thought and knowledge guides how we search for knowledge—a search that considers reciprocity and interdependence' (Absolon 2011, 30–31).

Furthermore, Elias argued that the examination of social processes should be at the core of our intellectual endeavours. Absolon notes that 'oral traditions are process oriented' (2011, 87). Elias used the metaphor of the wind 'We say, "the wind is blowing", as if the wind were actually a thing at rest which, at a given point in time, begins to move and blow. We speak as if the wind were separate from its blowing, as if a wind could exist which did not blow. This reduction of processes to static conditions, which we shall call "process-reduction" for short, appears self-explanatory to people who have grown up with such languages' (2012b, 107). This does not exist in some Indigenous languages, like Anishinaabemowin, where words are action-oriented (Absolon 2011, 90). Therefore, one can avoid the process-reduction linked to the linguistic structures of French and English for instance. Elias explains 'Our languages are constructed in such a way that we can often only express constant movement or constant change in ways which imply that it has the character of an isolated object at rest, and then, almost as an afterthought, adding a verb which expresses the fact that the thing with its character is now changing' (2012b, 106). Will Morin, Anishinaabe artist and teacher, describes:

Even something so simple as the word *nibi*, *nibiish*, *n'biish*. In that root word for those words is the '*bi*', '*bi*' meaning what water does, not what it is. And what water does is it's always flowing. It's always moving. 'He's like the way water is'. When you add that and you look at water being the signal

that a child is born, the woman's water breaks and it flows that child's path like a river, weaves and winds its own path, so does that child because that water that was in the mother then is flowing its way, its path. Not mine, not yours, that child's own path. So the word for baby is '*binoojii*'. It begins with that 'bi', with that flow because they now have their own life to lead and that life is in Ojibway *bimaadiziwin*. So all those words, that 'bi', if we understand that analogy of all us drinking from that water and that connection to another word, is the word to drink in Ojibway is *minikwe*. *Kwe* is not woman as in Anishinaabe *kwe*. *Kwe* is an action. It's a verb. It's what women do. Just like what the river does. It flows. Women are like the earth in order for a tree to grow, it needs to be planted. A seed needs to be planted. For a child to be born, there needs to be a seed planted within a woman. (Excerpt of Will Morin's interview in Hickey 2019, 72)

We briefly sketched out commonalities between Elias's figurational and processual sociology and Indigenous ways of thinking about the world. Although the Eliasian approach does not fall in the traps of most Western philosophies, it remains nevertheless that Elias's account of the civilising process in Europe, although being particularly convincing, overlooked the level of integration and interdependency, and the degree of complexity that characterised Indigenous tribal societies. A robust examination of pre-contact Indigenous community organisations could strengthen, if not amend when necessary, figurational sociology.

12.3 TAKING SERIOUSLY CIVILISING PROCESSES IN INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

'His [Elias'] use of the term "pre-state" to designate non-industrial societies is also evaluative in that it anticipates and reifies (as a societal inevitability) the complex historical process by which these societies continue to be forcibly integrated by colonial states. Elias talks of an "unplanned social process" which "urged tribes to combine in the wider integration unit of the state" [...]. Elsewhere, Elias prefers to use the term "social habitus" to describe the deep cultural beliefs of these "simpler societies"' (Tomlison 2004, 168).

Elias's theory of the interplay between the personality structure of individuals and the monopolisation of violence by the state was challenged by several anthropologists who pinpointed at the fact that some tribal societies had a high level of self-control, emotional self-restraint and highly

sophisticated behavioural codes and norms, without a State as a form of political organisation (see Fletcher 1997, 37–38). These critics were dismissed by Eliasian thinkers such as Mennell (1992) and Kilminster and Wouters (1995). Nevertheless, the contention here is that we should undertake a very serious examination of pre-contact Indigenous communities to correct Elias's theory. Dickason (1984) insists on the very high degree of organisation, pre-contact, that existed in Indigenous communities in Canada. She notes for instance, 'In any event, the cyclical pattern of agriculture, along with the winter hunt and fishing, meant a semi-sedentary mode of existence for north-eastern farming peoples. Such a cyclical life pattern whatever its degree of nomadism, called for considerable organisation. It required government, even in the absence of a state structure' (Dickason 1984, 94).

For Elias, the concept of *habitus* basically means a sort of 'second nature'. Fletcher explains the distinction between the individual *habitus* and the social *habitus*, as follows: 'the individual *habitus* refers to the learned emotional and behavioural dispositions which are unique to a particular individual, while the concept of social *habitus* refers to those learned characteristics of personality which individuals share with other members of the same groups' (1997, 65). The *habitus* then is transmitted from one generation to another, yet it is not fixed but modified through time. It is not natural, nor biological, nor innate. Only a perspective on the long duration can help us to perceive the development of the *habitus*. Feelings such as shame are changing very slowly. Three centuries ago, Europeans had no issues to sleep with strangers in a hostel. A century ago, most Europeans will share the same bedroom and bed with members of the family. Today, everyone has her own bedroom and modesty is the rule. Cas Wouters (2007) worked extensively on the concept of informalisation of manners and emotions, describing a process unfolding in Europe. We could learn much by analysing processes of formalisation and informalisation among Indigenous communities. When European settlers arrived in North America, they were surprised by Indigenous manners and judged them as lacking shame. They perceived the informalisation of Indigenous manners as a form of promiscuity because they were imbued by their self-image of superiority; Indigenous peoples had to be 'primitive', 'savage', inferior. Yet, relations between the individuals of the same community were rather pacified, because a complex set of rules and norms had been developed. That also surprised the first settlers because they could not (did not want to) understand difference. 'To accept a European interpretation

of our old ways is foolhardy. Politics arises from law. To be without politics is to be lawless. To say our politics are in opposition to European politics would be correct. European law legalizes our oppression. Our law forbids it. But to say we were lawless is to say that, indeed. We were savages' (Maracle 1996, 39).

Wouters (1986) sees the informalisation of contemporary European societies as linked to increased interdependences, the diminution of inequalities between social classes, sexes and generations. It is striking that all these arguments apply to pre-contact Indigenous societies. These Indigenous societies had almost no social class, gender equality was very strong, generational relations were marked by an uttermost respect (Dickason 1984, 97). In other words, contrary to a linear so-called evolution of human societies, one could argue that informalisation of manners was strong in pre-contact Indigenous societies. The European settlers failed to recognise this because they had not yet experienced this process. And this line of thought could be pushed further to show that colonisation, in the many things it deconstructed, also deconstructed these standards of conduct. As this process was not endogenous to the society nor the individuals, but imposed by external forces, it created many social and psychological traumas that may count as one of the many causes and reasons behind the difficulties faced by Indigenous peoples today, including violence.

Undertaking this enormous task to understand pre-contact Indigenous societies could help us to also understand why a civilising process was unfolding in Europe at the same time as Europeans were engaged in decivilising processes in their colonial adventures. That paramount question echoes the analysis made by Andrew Linklater (1990) on the division between men and citizens; the established-outsiders dynamics observed by Elias and Scotson (2008); the work of Wilmer (1993, 64–73) on the moral boundaries between colonisers and colonised; but much remains to be done in this domain. Lee Maracle (Sto:lo critic and poet) writes, '[W]ithout a firm understanding of what our history was before the settlers came to this land, I cannot understand how we are to regain our birthright as caretakers of this land and continue our history into the future' (1996, 40). It is also the task, the duty of non-Indigenous scholars, to listen to this history so that they can appreciate the extent of the trauma, and so that collectively we can overcome the coloniser/colonised divide.

12.4 VIOLENCE, EXCLUSION AND GENOCIDE

In an article on established–outsiders relations in Canada, Lacassagne (2016) outlined that the Indigenous peoples in Canada represent the most outcast outsider group in the society, with a very long list of stigma and stereotypes attached to them. The mechanisms to exclude them so deeply have not yet been analysed thoroughly. Theoretically and practically, the development of a comparative (with other settler societies) research programme could prove very fruitful (Elias 2012a, 577–579). In particular, it could fill some gaps in Eliasian conceptualisation of violence that stems from his social historical examination of two case studies: France and England. The issues at stake here pertain to temporality and forms of violence. If the monopolisation processes appear less characterised by violence in the English and French cases, it is because these processes unfolded over a very long period of time and because violence is understood only as physical and large scale, thus erasing symbolic and political forms of violence. Yet, we argue Eliasians should take seriously these other types of violence. The royal courts (Elias 2006) for instance were arenas of symbolic violence; that, yet, played an instrumental role from the Renaissance onward in the monopolising processes. But, in the case of settler states (such as Canada, the United States, Australia and New-Zealand/Aotearoa), the state formation unfolds over a short period of time; therefore the use of all forms of violence against those perceived as a hurdle to state building and monopoly is not questioned. In other words, the creation of the reservation system to exclude physically, socially, spatially Indigenous peoples; the brutal military responses (the battle of Batoche in 1885; the battle of Wounded Knee in 1890; the battle of Ōrākau in 1864); the establishment of the residential school system in North America and the Stolen Generations in Australia must be analysed for what they are, that is, acts of violence aiming at ensuring the state monopoly over the territory, the resources, the taxes and the use of violence. Colonial violence has consequences still felt in settler societies. A narrow conception of violence cannot capture the brutality and the depth of the trauma brought by colonisation. It overshadows the immensely violent character of the colonising endeavour. And yet, if there is an historical process on the long duration that impacted social relations between humans and human groupings, that shaped various types of habitus, it is colonisation, to such an extent that one could speak of a ‘colonial habitus’.

Moreover, in his book on the American civilising process, Stephen Mennell (2007) rightly points out that it would be a mistake to consider the United States as a ‘fragment of the European society’; there is an American exceptionalism due to the Conquest and the slavery. This American exceptionalism can be extended to settler societies such as Canada and Australia. These states were formed by an intense deployment of multiform violence against Indigenous peoples. The treatment of those peoples is clearly genocidal in nature (for an overview on this debate, see Woolford and Benvenuto 2015). Indeed, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948), in its article II (e), mentions the forcible transfer of children of the group to another group as a means; a means used by Australia, Canada and the United States (see Child 1998). The operative mode varied but the intent remained the same. In Australia, from the early twentieth century to the 1970s, Indigenous children were mainly sent to non-Indigenous families, although there were also school ‘missions’. These children are referred to as the Stolen Generations. In Canada and the United States, we witness clear institutionalisation with the residential school system (McKenzie et al. 2016, 3). But after the Second World War, alongside the residential schools, Canada started the large-scale sale of Indigenous babies and infants, the Sixties Scoop, during which tens of thousands of Indigenous children were removed from their families by hospitals at birth and by children’s aid societies to be sold away for adoption. An examination of current statistics shows very clearly that this system is still in effect (Aboriginal Children in Care Working Group 2015, 7). In a historical perspective, it means that ‘In Canada, it is estimated that 3 times as many Indigenous children are currently in the care of the state compared to when the residential schools populations were at their peak’ (McKenzie et al. 2016, 1). The same situation with the same astonishing figures is found in Australia (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2019, v).

The State-organised removal of Indigenous children from their families for decades, up until today, is a process of extreme violence, even if it is not perceived as such (van Krieken 1999a, 298). It seems utterly absurd to not consider a genocidal practice as not violent. Therefore, we agree with van Krieken when he writes, ‘[W]hat remains unexplored is the extent to which “civilising offensives”, the self-conscious attempts to bring about “civilisation”, have revolved around essentially violent policies and practices’ (1999a, 297). The works of Chris Powell (2011) and Damien Short (2010) offers a fruitful point of departure to understand how colonial

powers had been able to unleash such a degree of organised violence towards Indigenous peoples in the name of 'civilisation'.

In many respects, it appears the fate of Indigenous peoples throughout the world symbolises some of the key tenets of Elias's theory, more precisely the established-outsiders dynamics and the ambiguities of the civilising processes which always go, hand in hand, with de-civilising processes (see Linklater 2016, 230–231). As already briefly mentioned, some critics misread Elias's account of the civilising process in the West and would therefore be surprised that we convoke the German sociologist in this conversation. After all, the colonisation and subjugation of Indigenous peoples were done in the name of 'civilisation'. Elias is aware of this fact as he explained:

[...] from now on nations came to consider the *process* of civilisation as completed within their own societies; they came to see themselves as bearers of an existing or finished civilisation to others, as standard-bearers of expanding civilisation. Of the whole preceding process of civilisation nothing remained in their consciousness except a vague residue. Its outcome was taken simply as an expression of their higher gifts; the fact that, and the question how, in the course of many centuries, civilised behaviour had been attained was of no interest. And the consciousness of their own superiority, the consciousness of this 'civilisation', from now on served at least those nations which become colonial conquerors, and therefore a kind of upper class to large sections of the non-European world, as a justification of their rule. (Elias 2012a, 57)

This quote demonstrates that Elias was attached to uncover historical processes and not make a moral judgement about the 'superiority' of one nation over another one. We nevertheless think that Eliasian thinkers should acknowledge more clearly that Elias's account is a European account of the civilising process and that we 'would need real comparative works between various "civilising" processes' (Dépelteau et al. 2013, 42). It also highlights how paramount the role of this European civilising process was in the colonising process. Elias overlooked the interplay between the European civilising process and the conquest of non-European societies. The latter influenced profoundly the direction of the former, including up to the de-civilising processes of the twentieth century. Although it is not the object of this chapter, it is important to pinpoint that a sociological and historical analysis of this interdependence and its many dire outcomes should be a main focus of social scientists today in order to

decolonise not only knowledge, but also the very social relations between humans and between nations. It appears a necessary step before we could even speak of a true cosmopolitan world society. These questions and paradoxes have been discussed, notably by Linklater (2016, 226–267), Chris Powell (2011) and Robert van Krieken (1999a, b), but they need to become more central to sociological inquiry in the current context, and a push for authentic conversations that will allow decolonisation and ultimately reconciliation needs to occur.

12.5 ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT

‘Indigenous knowledge is earth-centered, with ecology-based philosophies derived out of respect for the harmony and balance within all living beings of Creation’ (Absolon 2011, 31).

As Quilley underlines ‘[I]n his theory of civilising 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’ (2011, 65). It is needless to remind the readers of the extreme urgency of transforming our worldview of nature in order to act decisively against climate change. Western modern conceptualisation of the relationships between humans and nature is, unsurprisingly, based on an ontological dualism separating the humanity from the nature. This Western viewpoint relies on the idea that nature could be mastered. Indigenous worldviews reject such approaches. Humans are embedded within nature. Nature is used in a respectful and sustainable manner. ‘I understand that my foremothers were very conscious of their relationship with and dependence on the land as a source of life. They believed that to destroy life without necessity was a crime. More than that, to destroy natural life needlessly was to court disaster’ (Maracle 1996, 41). There is no hierarchisation among living beings, plants, trees and water sources. This can be seen in multiple Indigenous language structures in which rivers, lakes, trees for instance will be considered animate like humans and not considered as an inanimate it. Otherwise said, ‘The indigenous view begins with the assumption that the limits of nature are ultimately immutable. In order to live within the limits of nature, their cultures have emphasised technologies of consciousness and ecosystem management. The technology of consciousness was necessary to the survival of indigenous peoples who chose to remain vulnerable to the natural world. That is, natural phenomena viewed as problems to Western civilisation were “solved” by

Western materialistic technology [...]. Western culture emphasized changing the natural world wherever it resisted human manipulation. Indigenous cultures, on the other hand, choose ways of adapting to the limits of the natural world' (Wilmer 1993, 207).

There exists a wide body of literature arguing for traditional ecological knowledge (known as TEK, we prefer the phrase Indigenous ecological knowledge—IEK—considering the moral charge of the word traditional) to be taken seriously as a tool to address the ecological crisis (for a review of pioneering literature in this field, see for instance Berkes 1993, 1–10). Yet it is noticeable that most of the literature corpus tends to focus on TEK and environmental management. It is certainly a step in the right direction, but this managerial approach of the current crisis is largely insufficient as a response. What is needed is a profound paradigmatic shift.

In the nine distinctions Berkes (1993, 4) lists to differentiate TEK from Western scientific ecological knowledge, several are relevant to Elias's theory, noticeably a holistic rather than reductionist approach, a perspective on long duration rather than short time, and the rejection of dualism. Furthermore, Berkes (1993, 5) also insists on the importance of the 'social context of TEK' which includes 'symbolic meaning through oral history, [...] Relations based on reciprocity and obligations towards both community members and other things'. Again here, it seems that Elias's *Symbol Theory* (1991) was overlooked whereas, as Quilley (2011, 67) reminds us, 'Social individuals are moulded by their immersion in symbols and the intergenerational transmission of a social stock of knowledge' [original emphasis]. Otherwise said, the research of Eliasian thinkers interested in the environment aims at showing the interweaving of processes between the psychogenesis (the change in the personality structure of individuals), the sociogenesis (in the time and space studied by Elias, the development of the modern state) but also the phylogenesis, biogenesis, and ecogenesis forming 'a family of processes involving different temporal scales and units of analysis' (Quilley 2011, 67).

If there is so much scepticism about human ability to answer the current climate crisis, it is because humans are always lagging, that the processes unfolding at the social and world-levels take time before being internalised in individuals' habitus or psyche. As Quilley (2011, 70) puts it '[F]or humanity, the critical factor will be whether the duration and speed of ecological transformations outstrips our social capacity to understand and adapt'. Indeed, but on the other hand, it is not as if humanity

did not have examples and ready-made solutions. Indigenous nations are showing the path (for a synthesis, see McGregor 2016, 167–180).

12.6 CONCLUSION

We underlined in the first section the centrality of balance in Elias's and Indigenous thinking. The current ecological crisis is due to the disruption of many natural balances. By building bridges with Indigenous thinkers who do not dichotomise humans from non-humans, the social world from the natural world, one can thicken her philosophical and sociological apparatus. Not only could we develop an academia that is allied and actively engaged to find responses to the most critical challenge humanity has ever faced, but we could in the same turn start to build a postcolonial academia, noticeably by abandoning the perceived idea that there is, on the one hand, 'scientific' knowledge, and on the other hand, 'traditional' knowledge, as if IEK were not a science of the same (if not better) value (on that note see: Clapperton 2016, 9).

Otherwise said, we argue for 'knowledge integration' (Clapperton 2016, 11) or something akin to the 'Two-Worlds' approach mentioned by Kapyrka and Dockstator (2012). Methodologically it requires scientists to start looking at commonalities rather than differences between Western knowledge and Indigenous knowledge (see Tsuji and Ho 2002). One of the promising lines of inquiry that should be pursued by researchers from different backgrounds pertains to Quilley's argument that 'historically there has been a "low-energy cosmopolitanism"' (Quilley 2011, 76), that is, how can we collectively develop a sustainable and non-harmful economic system while retaining cherished values such as cosmopolitanism and tolerance. It seems such an endeavour will necessitate a change of scale or a spatial reframing of our most important web/figuration of inter-dependent social relations. Quilley seems to equate such a relocation with a form of de-civilising process

pronounced relocation would engender a less individuated personality structure, bound by looser psychic constraints but subject to more intrusive forms of social control. [...]. In such a scenario, gender equality, class egalitarianism and sexual permissiveness and other paraphernalia of gesellschaftlich societies would not endure [Original italics]. (2011, 78–79)

We do not think this reflects an accurate assessment. While avoiding a romanticised view of pre-contact Indigenous communities, we offer in the second section some foundations to think more seriously about the degree of social integration, community solidarity, balance between self-restraints and social external constraints found in pre-contact Indigenous nations. This avenue should be carefully studied as it could help us to go beyond the State, a mode of political organisation that not only relies on violence, but also developed in an intertwined fashion alongside a capitalist mode of production that is not sustainable. The State is also responsible for a clearly demarcated distinction between 'men' and 'citizens' that prevents the emergence of a cosmopolitan community (Linklater 1990, 1998). It is therefore giving too much importance to the State (a rather new form of political organisation on long duration) to claim that the relocalisation of identities or the resurgence of local habitus will signal the end of cosmopolitanism (Quilley 2011, 79). Precisely because of the expansion of the international society of states in the last five centuries and because of global threats such as climate change, individuals have never been so aware that humanity is the last survival unit. We need to change the Eliasian narrative on this aspect: there can be two survival units—a local one and a global one, in balance. Actually, it is not only that there can be, there must be if the human species is to survive in the next century. Moreover, contrary to what Elias advanced, that is, that large-scale units such as states 'have exercised comparatively strict control over the use of physical force in relationships between their members' (Elias 2012b, 133), the tribes, as survival units, were at least as pacified as states. If there is one element that research in Indigenous studies can contribute it is indeed to show that a habitus in harmony with nature—a localised plan of integration—does not preclude cosmopolitanism. The simple fact that Indigenous peoples in North and South America and in the Pacific and Asia share many commonalities in their relationships to nature and lands, similar symbolic and philosophical assumptions illustrate that a cosmopolitan world is reconcilable with localised modes of living.

Finally, as we mentioned in our first section, Elias worked along his life to deconstruct dualisms including between the human and the non-human. Indigenous knowledge is particularly well equipped to help us do that. 'Everything in creation is there to work in conjunction with each other. [...]. The spirit of everything and everybody also comes from the same sacred source we do' (interview excerpt with Terry Debassige, elder, 2017, in Hickey 2019, 49). More precisely, as elders, storytellers and

Indigenous intellectuals (Alfred 2009, 84) reiterate quite constantly, the fundamental relationship humans have with the Earth is based on stewardship, a duty placed upon each human to take care of the earth. The Anishinaabe Creation story as well as the teachings are replete with this very idea that ‘we are human—of the Earth’ and that ‘the original instruction “walk gently upon the Earth and do each other no harm,” was given to the human family to direct their vision towards the workings of the planet’ (Wagamese 2019, 64).

In conclusion, we would like to call upon the seven Grandfather teachings. Among the seven teachings, the foundational one is humility (Wagamese 2019, 40). It is perhaps not too late for non-Indigenous societies and thinkers to become humble. Nothing is obvious and easy in this journey, to recognise the wrongs of the past and present, to decolonise habits, to get rid of a feeling of superiority. The hierarchies and dualisms constructed in the last four centuries are powerfully internalised in non-Indigenous as well as Indigenous habitus. It must start with humility so that we can listen respectfully. Considering the enormous damages made by Western thinking, behaviours and actions, on the planet and on humanity, it seems that a true paradigmatic change is in order. We could reverse the inference to the best explanation: maybe Western stories are not the best ones and we should (ought to) take seriously Indigenous stories and teachings. In face of the urgency of the climate crisis, it is worth trying. The solution requires in part that we consider humanity as the last survival unit (Elias 2001, 230; Kaspersen and Gabriel 2008) and that we work collectively in building a cosmopolitan world society. That task includes overcoming the colonial divide. The intertwined nature of the colonial legacy and the environmental crisis explains why we sketched out this humble proposal for a research programme. We hope both Indigenous and non-Indigenous scholars will find it useful in these troubled times.

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A Question of Function: Unequal Power Ratios and Asylum Seekers in Ireland

Steven Loyal

13.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter draws on Elias's established-outsider model (Elias and Scotson 2008 [1965]) to understand the steep power relation between the Irish State and asylum seekers, as well as supplementing this with Bourdieu's work on the state (1994, 2014). Elias has forcefully argued that a power relation is determined by the interrelation and function that one individual or group has for the other. In this case, asylum seekers need states in a way that states do not need asylum seekers. The chapter argues that the Irish State's treatment of immigration has historically been determined by three criteria: a question of costs and benefits, questions of ethno-national homogeneity, and security and social order considerations. The controversial institution of Direct Provision and Dispersal (DPD) through which asylum seekers are currently managed also shares many historical continuities and family resemblances with other power-ridden

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Switzerland AG 2021

F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_13

institutions of confinement—Magdalen Laundries, workhouses, and reform schools. However, although as a nation-state Ireland has ultimately a high degree of control over asylum seekers in determining their social career, its sovereign power to refuse applications and deport them is mitigated by international protocols and limited by internal legal constitutional obstacles. Nevertheless, this skewed power relation is manifested in its poor treatment of asylum seekers, especially in the DPD system, which functions for the state as the most economical and practical means for managing their presence, dealing with border issues, and limiting their access to social resources.

The usual way of understanding processes of social stratification and conflict including immigration and processes of ethno-racial domination within an Eliasian framework is to deploy Elias's powerful established-outsider framework (Elias and Scotson 2008). Although often mistakenly interpreted as separate from his magnum opus, *The Civilising Process* (2000), the discussion of established-outsider relations, focused on the fictionally named town of Winston Parva, in fact also forms a central part of that work, albeit in this case abstracted from a longer-term historical framework. Elias's approach takes as its point of departure 'humans in the round', so to speak, who are at once material, social, and psychological beings motivated by economic forces, social interdependencies and susceptibilities, as well as by emotions and drives rooted in their habitus. Such a broad framework allows us to understand and examine the multi-faceted ways in which ethno-racial discrimination in all its empirical manifestations takes place without forcing it into a singular theoretical straightjacket, be it a Marxist or Weberian emphasis on economic criteria, tied to accessing scarce resources, or as poststructuralists tend to argue a psychological propensity to Other rooted in Western modernity.

Although acknowledging that economic processes play a central role in his analysis Elias, nevertheless, regards Marxist analysis of class and economic power as reductionist. Differences in the organisation of physical power, state formation, and the development of self-value relationships based on pride and social distinction also play a part in different societies, although according to different degrees. Social superiority engenders the gratifying euphoria and emotional rewards that go with the consciousness of belonging to a group of higher value or possessing a higher status. The need for self-enhancement and looking down on the members of other groups appears as a ubiquitous feature of all societies according to Elias.

As we shall see below economic factors certainly play a role in the Irish State's treatment of asylum seekers, but so to do socio-psychological processes entailing the maintenance of power and status distinctions between citizens and outsiders. For Elias relations of superordination and subordination between dominant and disempowered groups are not fixed-frozen but may shift so that groups may lose their dominance to varying degrees. The material and socio-psychological dynamics underpinning discrimination are ultimately manifestations of a long-term conflict rooted in the struggles between survival units and the different levels of power that exist between them. Central to established-outsider relations, therefore, are not the characteristics of the groups themselves, whether 'race' as a physical marker or culture as a social factor is utilised. Rather, of fundamental explanatory importance is the unequal power ratio between these groups, itself determined by the way they are bonded together, their different degrees of organisation and cohesion and the function they have for one another. The discussion of power is prioritised over other conventional sociological taxonomies invoking class, race, religion, nationality, and so on. The latter are second-order categories that 'take on force' or explanatory significance when seen in relation to the former.

Nonetheless, although offering an incredibly powerful model amenable to concrete, empirical analysis, there are some conceptual limitations with the model, if taken too literally. It may be confusing to apply the established-outsider concept in certain contexts, while studying colonialism, for example, where of course the established groups had less power than the outsiders. Like the notions of class or race, the concept of established-outsider relations is equally prone to reification. Moreover, although more capacious than class, race, or gender and constructed partly to remedy the limits of reductive explanations in the light of broader conflicts of power, the established-outsider model, by its very generality, can sometimes hide the specific modalities and mechanisms of stratification processes, for example, the specificity of racial, gender, or class forms of domination, which have their own peculiar logic. It may also render invisible their contradictory intersection. This means that we may need to examine multiple established-outsider figurations, entailing groups that are established in some contexts and outsiders in others. For example, lower class Irish nationals are outsiders themselves in relation to higher ranking economic elites whose more secure socio-economic position, class codes, and behavioural norms and restraints may be expressions of their higher levels of economic and cultural capital.

Thus, although Elias argues that established–outsider relations are relations of power that require an investigation into concrete processes of interdependence between individuals and groups, the mechanism of ‘blame-gossip’ used by Elias in *Winston Parva* needs to be supplemented or at times replaced, when examining other concrete case studies entailing stratification, especially when examining the state and state power, which also entails examining questions of territory, sovereignty, and deportation, in addition to class and group status factors. Analysing the state as a complex organisation, partly shaped though irreducible to class conflicts, differs from a more straightforward organisational discussion of established and outsider groups in terms of the ‘minority of the worst and best’ as elaborated in *Winston Parva*. However, in all likelihood, such qualifications would have been accepted by Elias given his central focus on power which this analysis shares.

In addition, to his established–outsider framework, Elias also utilises a much-neglected multi-perspectival approach in his work, that is understanding the social world from the different vantage points of the main actors involved. This approach forms a key part of his We–I model (Elias 1991), but it is also central to the Game Models discussed in *What is Sociology?*:

If, rather more realistically, one also takes into account the fact that each participant in what is counted as one relationship has a different perspective on that relationship, one gets a good idea of the increase in complexity accompanying an increase in the number of people making up the web of relationships. The relationship between A and B, man and woman, student and teacher, secretary and boss is, when considered more precisely, not one but two relationships—that of A to B and that of B to A. (1978, 102)

The relationship between A and B, in this case the State and asylum seekers, constitutes two distinct relationships, one seen from the State’s point of view, the other from the asylum seeker’s perspective. However, given limitations of space, the focus of this chapter will principally be on the State’s view of asylum seekers and their limited function for it.

13.2 THE SYSTEM OF ASYLUM IN IRELAND

Ireland was the last of the EU 15 countries to shift from being a country of net emigration to one of net immigration, in 1996 just as the Celtic Tiger economy emerged. In 1992, there were only 39 applications for asylum: by 1996, this figure had increased to 1179, rising to 7724 in 1999 before peaking at 11,634 in 2002. The number of applications dropped back to 7900 in 2003 and began to decline thereafter, with just 3276 applications in 2015 (ORAC 2016). In 2018 Ireland received 3673 applications (Irish Refugee Council 2019). Between 1992 and 2018, there were in total just over 100,000 applications for asylum in the country. The majority of asylum seekers are from Africa and Asia, countries including Nigeria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Pakistan, adding a racialised contour to the discussion. Comparatively speaking, the number of asylum seekers arriving in Ireland has been low. Yet the state's response as we shall see has been highly regressive and restrictive.

Asylum seekers who arrived in the state after April 2000 are provided for through a system of dispersal and direct provision. Under this system asylum seekers are involuntarily housed around the country in hostels, prefabricated buildings, and mobile homes. In contrast to earlier asylum seekers who could access social welfare, they received €19.05 per adult and €9.52 per child per week in addition to the provision of three fixed meals a day and basic accommodation. However, after prolonged protests from both asylum seekers and NGOs, this was increased in March 2018 to €28.80 for children and €38.80 for adults. There are currently around 7700 individuals in the system.

13.3 INSTITUTIONALISATION, POVERTY, AND EXCLUSION

When the direct provision centres were initially introduced, it was envisaged that individuals would be housed there on a temporary basis and that claims would be processed within six months (NASC 2008; O'Connor 2003). However, as of March 2016, more than 1500 people had been in DPD for over three years (33 per cent of the total) and more than 600 (13.4 per cent) had been in the system for over eight years, with the average length of stay standing at 38 months (Irish Refugee Council 2016, 2). Given the lack of access to the means of representation in society many of the issues facing asylum seekers were expressed through NGO reports and academic policy papers. Various NGOs, as well as academic and semi-state

bodies, have documented the adverse living conditions of asylum seekers housed in DPD centres in numerous reports, all of which universally condemned DPD centres, but of which only a handful are cited here (Fanning 2002; Fanning et al. 2001; Faugnan and Woods 2001; Fekete 2000; Irish Refugee Council 2001, 2013, 2016; Lentin and McVeigh 2002, 2006; Loyal 2011a; NASC 2008; O'Connor 2003). Specific problems have been detailed in relation to accommodation, dietary provision, health, and employment. The standards of accommodation for asylum seekers vary greatly. Many live in sub-standard accommodations, often in cramped and overcrowded conditions (NASC 2008). In some centres, catering primarily to single adults, between four and six individuals share one room, and overcrowding is the norm. For example, in Viking House, which is in many ways indicative of other centres, 90 per cent of individuals shared a room with at least three others (Waterford Area Partnership, 2006, 32). The consumption of poor quality, high-carb, and high-fat food and the lack of dietary variety have been linked to both weight gain (up to 40 per cent in some cases) and weight loss as people become discouraged from eating (Friel et al. 2006). With reference to mental health, although some asylum seekers are likely to have had acute psychological problems before arrival (Begley et al. 1999; NASC 2008), the vast majority have either developed or exacerbated pre-existing problems as a result of living in these centres (Begley et al. 1999; NASC 2008; Waterford Area Partnership 2006). It has been estimated that 90 per cent of asylum seekers suffer from depression after having spent six months in these institutions (NASC 2008). They are also five times more likely than Irish citizens to be diagnosed with a psychiatric illness, including suicidal tendencies (Avalos et al. 2007).

The paltry weekly cash benefit precludes mundane purchases that ordinary citizens take for granted—from food and phone cards to medicine and bus tickets. Not surprisingly, since their inception DPD centres have been the target of almost universal condemnation by non-governmental organisations and other rights groups. Disempowering and dehumanising, and having well-documented negative effects on life chances, mental health, and well-being, these centres are regarded as unsuitable places to accommodate adults, let alone children. The Irish Human Rights Commission (2014), the Ombudsman for Children (2013), the Council of Europe, and the United Nations Human Rights Committee have all pointed to the DPD centres' transgressions on numerous equality directives, human rights treaties, and humanitarian norms. The Special

Rapporteur on Child Protection Geoffrey Shannon (2012), for example, described the system as amounting to institutionalised poverty, whereas the Fourth Report of Ireland from the European Commission on Racism and Intolerance (2013, 26) recommended a complete review of the system. In light of these adverse social effects, in 2014 the Irish Refugee Council initiated its national End Direct Provision campaign to highlight and publicise the problem. The continued long-term wait for claims to be processed as well as poor economic and social conditions also led many asylum seekers to protest in 2010 (Conlon 2013) and again in 2014 (Lentin 2015).

13.4 THE STATE

In *The Civilising Process* (2000) Elias had famously extended Weber's definition of the state from commanding a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence within a delimited and bounded territory (Weber 1978, 54), to a monopoly of violence and taxation as two principal and integrally connected means of ruling; they formed two sides of the same coin. Elias showed how the internalisation of restraints and the resulting transformation in behavioural codes were intimately connected with transformations in the division of labour, demographic shifts, societal pacification, urbanisation, and the growth of trade and a money economy. The expansion of the urban money economy facilitated, but also critically depended upon, the power and the monopoly of violence achieved by the central state authority.

More recently, Bourdieu (1994, 2014) has again extended Weber's definition of the state through an emphasis this time on its symbolic role rather than material or taxative function. Bourdieu notes two important aspects of the idea of the state. First, the state holds a monopoly over both physical and symbolic violence:

The state is an X (to be determined) which successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical and symbolic violence over a definite territory and over the totality of the corresponding population. (Bourdieu 1994, 3)

Second, the concept of a state is a reification; rather we should see the state as an 'administrative' or 'bureaucratic field' and a central part of the field of power. A matrix of intersecting forces and struggles and a site of

conflict and contestation, this bureaucratic field of power maintains a relative autonomy from other areas of social and economic life.

Despite its exaggeration of symbolic forms of domination at the expense of more material or physical forms (Loyal 2017), Bourdieu's theory has explanatory value when aimed at examining more restricted foci, for example, the Irish state's response to the arrival of migrants and especially asylum seekers. First, with regard to the importance of symbolic and categorical forms, all states classify and assign migrants into specific legal and political categories—or differentiated immigration statuses from the status of its own citizens. In Ireland, as in other countries, state classifications were used as both regulatory and status devices in the treatment and management of new arrivals. Rather than providing all residents with the same civil and political rights, bureaucratic classification schemes engendered systematic patterns of discrimination. The legal and administrative categories of 'asylum seeker', 'refugee', 'EU national', and 'work permit holder' were important in that they conferred different rights and entitlements. Processes of official classification conditioned the level of entry for all migrants as well as the variations within each of the immigrant status categories. These categorisations were used by state service providers during the period of the Celtic Tiger (period of economic growth in Ireland between 1994 and 2007) and after as a basis for judgments about individual entitlements to social, political, and economic support. Control over the process of administrative categorisation allows the state to impose its definition of an individual and situation—to mould not only careers and external perceptions but the self-identities and self-perceptions of marginal people who come to see themselves through the eyes of the dominant (Bourdieu 1984, 461; Elias 2008). This has been especially manifest in the treatment of asylum seekers who are warehoused in Direct Provision Centres that function simultaneously as Goffmanian total institutions (Loyal 2011b).

Second, again following Bourdieu, rather than a homogenous entity, it may be useful to see the state as a divided field of forces working in 'antagonistic cooperation' with tensions between various state departments vying to impose their definition of the social world. Most notably the Department of Justice, which has historically been and currently remains the dominant department for dealing with immigration and asylum, may differ in its ethos from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Department of Foreign Affairs which play a secondary role in immigration: the Department of Justice has historically been

security conscious and anti-foreigner; the Department of Enterprise has historically been concerned with meeting the country's economic needs and growth; while the Department of Foreign Affairs with sustaining Ireland's reputation abroad in an international state system partly based on recognition and prestige.

13.5 CONTINUITIES: INSTITUTIONS OF CONFINEMENT

Moreover, such policies of immigrant exclusion in Ireland did not arise anew, but follow established pathways or exhibit various path dependencies. Historically, state policy in relation to immigrants (or 'aliens', to use the original term) was dominated by three major criteria. First, economic cost/benefit considerations—what can be called a logic of capitalism. As Sayad (1999) notes from the point of view of the state and the economy, immigration and the immigrant have no meaning and *raison d'être* unless they 'bring in' more than they 'cost'. Second, by questions of social cohesion and ethno-national and religious identity—what we can refer to as a logic of national homogeneity. Third, by considerations of security, law and order—what can be referred to as a logic of state order and reproduction. This triptych of exclusionary forms of state social closure emerging from economic and ethno-national and security imperatives was evident in Ireland's treatment and reception of Jews at the turn of the twentieth century, of the recipients of Programme Refugees after World War II, and of Hungarians after 1956, Chileans in the 1970s, Vietnamese in the late 1970s, and Bosnians in the 1980s (Fanning 2002; Keogh 1998; Lentin and McVeigh 2002; Loyal 2011b; Ward 1996). The DPD system similarly reflects the interplay of these socio-economic logics. Its primary threefold rationale is (a) to keep asylum costs to a minimum in respect of meeting bare subsistence needs; (b) to segregate, render invisible, and confine ethno-racially distinct groupings away from the general citizen population whilst acting as a deterrent and reducing immigration to a minimum; and (c) to maintain a level of knowledge, through surveillance, on the whereabouts of asylum seekers as an extension of border control policy.

These patterns of exclusion did not apply only to aliens and outsiders. Rather, they resurrect, albeit in a modified form, processes of containment and confinement that have been a significant aspect of the state's repertoire for two centuries (O'Donnell and O'Sullivan 2012). Institutions of confinement in Ireland, followed a recurring operational logic with strict orders, regulations, and directions on the admission and classification of

indigent individuals and paupers, including the selection of diets as well as punishments for misbehaviour. Such institutions included workhouses (County Homes), psychiatric and mental hospitals, Magdalen Homes (Smith 2007), and reformatory and industrial schools that operated in Ireland from the eighteenth century up until at least the mid-1960s—the Magdalen Laundries still operating until 1996 (Smith 2007).

In a national context where prison was not the primary site of containment for errant individuals and incarceration rates remained comparatively low, such institutions functioned ‘as repositories for the difficult, the disturbed, the deviant and the disengaged’ (O’Donnell and O’Sullivan 2012, 5), playing a surrogate role as sites of social control and as part of the ‘carceral archipelago’ (Foucault 1977). The DPD system retains isomorphic, structural, organisational, and cultural homologues with such institutions, primarily in terms of a deeply entrenched predisposition towards the management of populations and regulation of human conduct. The vacated roles once played by criminals, paupers, deranged minds, unmarried mothers, and parentless children are played now by asylum seekers.

Nevertheless, despite these continuities and convergences, DPD centres differ from these past forms of coercive confinement in terms of the specificity of their developmental logic. First, they are unique in the sense that asylum seekers are perceived by the state as others from the *outside* rather than others from the *inside*. Second, they are run and controlled by the state in cooperation with private businesses rather than by the Catholic Church as the ‘self-appointed guardians of the nation’s moral climate’ (Smith 2007, 2)—though, strictly speaking, no institutions of confinement operated under the direct tutelage of the Church. Third, relating to the insider-outsider distinction, the DPD’s target population is not subject to what Foucault (1977) described as a ‘regime of transformation’. Although informed by imperatives of surveillance, examination, and control, these techniques are not directed towards behavioural change or normalisation in the sense of enforcing non-idleness and preventing mendacity. Rather, the opposite is the case. Asylum seekers are forced into idleness. Perceived by the state as having crossed territorial borders under false pretences or for so-called bogus reasons, they have an unwanted liminal presence. Such individuals breach ‘the identity between the human and the citizen,’ which ‘unhinges the old trinity of state-nation-territory’ (Agamben 2000, 20). From the perspective of the state, the strong but unstated implication is that these unwanted individuals will eventually be expelled from its sovereign territory.

Since the presence of asylum seekers is deemed temporary, disciplinary forms of rehabilitation are considered superfluous or inexpedient. The major purpose of the DPD is therefore not inspired by the Foucauldian idea of rehabilitating consciousness, governing the soul, or regimenting individuals (Dean 2010; Foucault 1977, 1980; Rose 1991); it is rather the more prosaic function of enacting symbolic and punitive deterrence, warehousing, and surveillance—via obligatory registration with the Garda National Immigration Bureau (GNIB) and compulsory daily signing-in at DPD centres—to facilitate an efficient regime of deportation.

13.6 STATE SOVEREIGNTY AND BORDER CONTROL

Such a regime of deportation has been possible since the power relation between the state and asylum seekers is so great. Given the stark levels of global inequality (Khondker 2011) which have increased with neo-liberalism, and as a surfeit of workers willing to live and work in developed European economies, including Ireland, the function that asylum seekers have for the state is minimal. They are not needed nor wanted. This is despite the fact that many are seen to possess levels of human capital. Instead, their ability to remain within a state is determined by both international pressures and internal constitutional checks, especially through the higher law courts (Joppke 1997; Loyal and Quilley 2018).

The defining structural feature of the modern nation-state is not only a monopolisation over violence and taxation as Elias (2000) rightly notes, but also the assumption of sovereignty over the population within its territory (Foucault 2003; Giddens 1985). As Soysal argues ‘the principle of national sovereignty ordains that every ‘nation’ has a right to its own territorially delimited state, and that only those who belong to the nation have the right to participate as citizens of the state’ (1994, 8). The extent to which the sovereignty of modern states has been undermined by globalisation is disputed (De Genova and Peutz 2010; Joppke 1997; Krasner 1999; Mann 1993; Sassen 1994). However, it is clear that there has been some shift in the meaning and exercise of sovereignty as a result of complex interdependencies between states, supranational institutions, and global markets and corporations (Bosworth 2008; Garland 1996; Harvey 2005). This weave of constraint is expressed most clearly in the proliferation of treaties, protocols, and conventions regulating the behaviour of states. In this light, states are certainly subject to an increasing range and intensity of diplomatic, security, reputational, and market pressures to

internalise such constraints in the fabric of national law and administration. Such constraints include legal obligations to honour a commitment to human rights, constitutional liberalism, and the rule of law. Ireland signed the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1956 in order to acquire international prestige within a tense Cold War context (Ward 1996). This commitment, as well as a number of other international obligations to meet basic standards in asylum and protect human rights, often exists more in rhetoric than in practice. Nevertheless, as rights have become both universalized and more concretely specified in case law, this enshrinement of rights has had significant bearing on national belonging, citizenship, and sovereignty.

In the light of such political and economic changes, the introduction of the DPD system in Ireland can be seen as an attempt by the state to reassert and revamp its traditional ability to monitor, control, and order migrants and their movements to regain ‘a monopoly over the means of movement’ (Torpey 2000). This attempt to reassert sovereignty and control was also demonstrated in the Citizenship Referendum held in 2004 which, with almost 80 per cent of public support, removed the automatic *jus soli* principle of citizenship (Conlon 2013; Lentin and McVeigh 2006). The relinquishing of the state’s capacity to regulate the movement of capital and to control European labour flows was counterbalanced by the simultaneous hardening of policies regarding the entry and regulation of non-EU migrants (Allen 2007). Such restrictions applied to all non-EU nationals—both to asylum seekers with reference to the 1951 Convention and to non-EU labour migrants—who were regulated through a rigid work permit system that was renewable on a yearly basis and provided minimum rights and entitlements in terms of residence (Allen 2007; Lentin and McVeigh 2006; Loyal 2003, 2011a). The adverse treatment of asylum seekers should perhaps not be interpreted as a manifestation of the state’s strength but, as Bauman (2004), Bosworth (2008), and Garland (1996) have all suggested, as demonstrating its weakness and the limitations of its sovereignty within the context of globalisation. As De Genova also notes:

Associated with the ascendancy of an effectively global, neo-imperial sovereignty (and a more general rescaling of various state functions and capabilities) a decidedly inverse relation may be detected between the distinctly waning fortunes and diminishing returns of nation-state sovereignty, as such, and the exuberant attention to ever more comprehensive and draco-

nian controls that states seek to impose upon the most humble cross-border comings and goings—and settlings—of migrants. (2010, 34)

In the context of what has become termed a migration crisis beginning in 2015 a number of states were pressed into accepting asylum seekers and refugees from Syria. Ireland reluctantly agreed to accept 2000. Compared to the million or so who entered Germany the figure was small, even when we take into account the different size of the population. The policy has been characterised as one of economic and social closure with arguments that immigrants take jobs and bring crime, terrorism, alien cultures especially in a context of neo-liberalism where the relationship between the state and citizen access to social welfare has been redrawn in a punitive manner. The state is therefore caught in a contradictory position. As Cohen notes with regard to the British State:

Politicians of all parties have simultaneously to yield to the majority of public opinion and the media (both stridently pressing for immigration restrictions), respect international treaties and human rights, and ensure that there is an adequate labour supply to sustain economic growth and balance the demographic overload towards older, locally-born dependants. The lobby groups that speak on behalf of migrant workers (churches, some migrant groups and human rights activists) as well as those demanding more restrictions and detentions in the wake of the increased threat and reality of terrorism, provide additional complications. (2004, 133–134)

There are established groups within the state that therefore pressure states and governments to be more restrictive, especially under nativist fears that they are losing control of borders.

In such a context, the DPD system should be seen as part of a wider state regime that seeks both to deter the arrival of asylum seekers and to control and regulate individuals already there: it is a form of ‘punitive containment as a government technique’ (Wacquant 2010, 204). Deemed a surplus population whose labour was not needed, asylum seekers have been dispersed to remote, peripheral areas (often in the countryside) where they are rendered increasingly invisible to the general population and are significantly less costly to accommodate. Such a policy supplements the border control policy already in place and various immigration acts—the most recent being the International Protection Act of 2015—while providing the state with constant information on the whereabouts of

the asylum seekers so as to facilitate their deportation in the event of an unsuccessful asylum application. Having their application denied is the likely outcome for more than 90 per cent of applicants—one of the highest rates in the European Union (Eurostat 2016; Loyal 2011; ORAC 2016).

It can therefore be argued that the punitive and prolonged treatment that asylum seekers are likely to receive in Ireland is not accidental but part of a deliberate deterrence strategy common to other state practices (Bloch and Schuster 2005; Calavita 2005; Joppke 1997).

Such degrading treatment of a transient and vulnerable group is possible because this group has been segregated and pushed ‘behind the scenes of general social life’ (Elias 2000) into remote rural locations, rendering them invisible to the general population, so that their adverse treatment does not offend contemporary humanist sensibilities. Significantly, however, their condition is explicitly designed to be visible to other would-be asylum seekers, especially through social and communication networks that are increasingly important in structuring migration processes (Arango et al. 1993; Morawska 2011). Here, DPD centres function as a ‘spectacle’ (Foucault 1977, 3–9, 32–71), a punitive display of sovereignty and unchecked power (Garland 1996, 460) providing compelling images of control and regulation that serve a clear politico-juridical function of deterrence.

13.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter suggests that the poor treatment and restrictive policies effected by the Irish State towards asylum seekers through the DPD system ultimately reflects the steep difference in power between them in terms of their function for one another. Historically, the Irish State has pursued a state ethno-national logic, requiring the exclusion and regulation of certain categories of individuals, based on cultural and security concerns. This is a regular and constitutive aspect of state formation. This has at all times been overdetermined by economic and cost considerations that have become even more pronounced in an era of neo-liberalism.

Moreover, through the liberal/internationalist lens of human rights, the stark difference between the treatment of migrants without territorial status and that of citizens makes it rather easy to assemble the case against a callous and indifferent state apparatus. This distinction maps onto ethno-racial and religious distinctions, making the notion that the state is intrinsically racist compelling (Agamben 1998; Goldberg 2002; Lentin and

McVeigh 2006; Omni and Winant 1994). Indeed, it must be recognised that all processes of nation-state formation involve coercion and violence on the one hand and insider/outsider distinctions on the other. The coercive suppression of competing (tribal, clan, religious) 'we-identities' has always been a precursor to the emergence of any 'imagined community' linking the nation-state and the individual (Anderson 2006). Therefore, immigration can only be grasped and interpreted through categories of state thought based on a binary division between 'nationals' and 'non-nationals':

It is as though it were in the very nature of the state to discriminate [...] to make the distinction, without which there can be no national state, between the 'nationals' it recognizes as such and in which it therefore recognizes itself, just as they recognize themselves in it (this double mutual recognition effect is indispensable to the existence and function of the state), and 'others' with whom it deals only in 'material' or instrumental terms. It deals with them only because they are present within the field of its national sovereignty and in the national territory covered by that sovereignty. (Sayad, 2004, 279)

Such views of an intrinsically racial state, however, are partial: they not only provide a restricted conception of a polymorphous entity carrying out everything 'from the provision of subsistence to the patronage of the arts' (Weber 1978, 58), but also tend to view the state as a free-floating entity that exists above a passive civil society, rather than being shaped by social resistance and struggles (Bourdieu 2014; Gramsci 1973). The new coalition government, under pressure from the Greens, argued that it will end the direct provision system which it now recognises as 'unjust'. Whether and how this will occur, given the multiple functions the system performs for the state, including cost, deterrence, and border control, will be seen.

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Thoughts on Describing Established and Outsider Figurations in Inner Mongolia

Merle Schatz

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Norbert Elias and John L. Scotson have examined in the early 1960s the relationship between established and outsiders in a study on neighbourhood relations in the English community called Winston Parva (Elias and Scotson 2017; the study “the Established and the Outsiders” was first published in 1965). Members of the long-settled group considered themselves to be the established; they were more powerful and were able to frequently convince newcomers to be inferior and weaker in comparison (2017, 8). The main distinction between the two groups was the length of residence, as the two groups were not distinguished by nationality, race, occupation, income level or education (2017, 10). Strong emotional barriers are seen as one essential aspect of the extremely rigid attitude of the established towards the outsiders; closer contact with them was a taboo, even if the balance of power between the two sides decreases over time

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_14

depending on the situation (2017, 17). The model of the established–outsider figuration serves as an ‘empirical paradigm’ that can contribute to a better understanding of the structural characteristics of more complex figurations of the same type, such as between Mongolians and Chinese in Inner Mongolia, and give insight into the reasons why they function and develop differently under different conditions (2017, 10). Here, Mongolians and Chinese live together on the same territory.¹ A clear power gap between the two groups can be identified: the Chinese claim to be the established and that thereby they are in power to determine and enforce political, economic and cultural rules. The Mongolian group is aware that there is a political power superiority of the Chinese. However, there are important differences compared to Winston Parva that allows to look deeper into this specific established–outsider figuration: the Mongolians do not accept their status as outsiders, to which they are assigned by the established, for various reasons, and they are convinced that the Chinese are not entitled to claim power advantages. Rather, the Mongolians themselves claim to be the ‘real’ established in the region, referring to their right to the territory they have inhabited and cultivated for centuries. They also stress the legal right of Chinese national minorities to use and protect their customs and cultural practices (Constitution of the People’s Republic of China 2007).

Minority law, customary law, notions of one’s own superiority and the inferiority of the other group, as well as everyday experiences of daily interaction or, expressed in other words, institutions, values and everyday practice, play a decisive role in the continuous struggle for power and status on both sides. However, if the situation in Inner Mongolia is understood simply from the perspective of political power constellations and their rigorous enforcement, with the clear result that in this respect the Chinese clearly are the established, then this would hardly offer deeper insight into the specific structural characteristics because official regulations regarding status and law cannot simply be translated onto other groups, as they are often not compatible with their local everyday practices and values (Zhang 2012). Subliminal conflict potential therefore is born in actual social interactions and the negotiation processes between the actors involved at local level. Especially here, it is important to look at the structural peculiarities if one wants to understand how complex the challenges of social interaction between Mongolians and Chinese in Inner

¹When I talk about Mongolians and Chinese, I refer to the information of my informants and to observations during my fieldwork in China over the last ten years.

Mongolia are. When imposed political established and outsider relationships regulate coexistence but do not reflect the real needs and interests of the people, it obscures the understanding of the situation even more.

In numerous situations of peaceful coexistence, different ideas about the other do not play an important role in either of both groups. In situations of conflict, however, even if the subject of the conflict is insignificant, this can change. Different contextual models exist both in the perception of the other and in the social relationship with regard to the shared territory. In situations of conflict, the emphasis on differences is a result of these different context models and a necessity in order to strengthen the position of one's own group and to make the demarcation from the other group clear. Contrary to the statement that by probing into experiential aspects of established-outsider figurations, one may reach layers of human experience where differences of cultural tradition play a lesser part (Elias and Scotson 2017, 22); it becomes clear that it is precisely these cultural traditions that become relevant as soon as communication in everyday life between Mongolians and Chinese is negative, and when the other is perceived as a threat and stigmatised as an outsider.

14.2 INNER MONGOLIA

The Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region (Chinese: Neimenggu, 内蒙古) was founded in 1947 and is one of the five autonomous regions in China, along with Xinjiang, Guangxi, Ningxia and Tibet. These comprise about 60% of the Chinese territory. According to the 2010 census, Inner Mongolia has a population of 24.7 million people: 79.54% Han Chinese, 17.11% Mongolian and 3.36% of other nationalities (*minzu*, 民族) such as Manchus, Hui or Koreans. The Chinese term *minzu* can be translated as 'people', 'nation', 'nationality' depending on the context. The nationality of the Han is distinguished from the other 55 nationalities, which are called the national minority (*shaoshu minzu*, 少数民族), because they are outnumbered by the Han. The Mongols of China are one of the 56 officially recognised nationalities in China and are subject to the influence of the state's minority policy. The fact that Inner Mongolia is predominantly inhabited by Chinese is the result of China's continuous settlement policy. This settlement policy is the reason why, from Mongolian perspective, Chinese are considered as the immigrants, the 'newcomers' to the territory.

14.2.1 *Chinese Settlers in Inner Mongolia*

The year 1691 is well suited for a periodization of Inner-Mongolian history, as it stands for the loss of Mongolian independence and marks the beginning of the Chinese colonial era in Mongolia: the Qalqa declared their submission to the Qing Emperor and remained loyal subjects throughout the dynasty. Already in the first half of the seventeenth century, the Qing government had begun an administrative reorganisation of Inner Mongolia, which resulted in a new political structure in 1691. The old tribal areas were organised by new banner boundaries that had to be strictly adhered to in order to prevent powerful Mongolian tribal chiefs from extending their rule. In the eighteenth century, Chinese settlers were allowed to settle in Mongolian areas under the motto ‘borrow land to feed people’ (jiedi yangmin, 接地养民). In many cases this led to ethnic mixing and great dissatisfaction due to unequal treatment, forced by the programme ‘separate administration of the Mongolians and Chinese, coexistence of banner and circles’ (Chinese: Menghan fen zhi, qixian bingcun, 蒙汉分治, 旗县并存) (Taveirne 2004). While the eighteenth century was marked by a cultural boom, the nineteenth century was a period of economic and social decline for Inner Mongolia. The Mongolian people were increasingly regarded as a subjugated colonial people. High tax burdens, which the nobility demanded for their extravagant needs for culture and luxury goods, led to an impoverishment of the Mongolian population. Social tensions arose, and aversions between the two groups were increased (Bawden 1989, 9; Kämpfe 1986, 426, 429; Veit 2005, 388). A simultaneous settlement of Chinese farmers in Mongolian pasturelands, legitimised by state policy, promoted an ‘explosive colonisation’ of Inner Mongolia, which was perceived as an increasing threat by the Mongols (Lattimore 1969, 119; Kämpfe 1986, 433; Veit 2005, 389). Driven by a fear of annihilation by the Chinese, the Mongolian nobility reacted in a counter-movement that culminated in the declaration of independence of Outer Mongolia from the Qing government on 29 December 1911. The inability of Inner Mongolia to achieve similar independence or unification with Outer Mongolia led to two separate paths for the Mongols. Outer Mongolia expelled most of the Chinese. Inner Mongolia, however, had to put up with millions of Chinese and the militarised Chinese administration. At that time, Inner Mongolia had a population of about 2.5 million, including about 875,000 Mongols (Atwood 2004, 246). Territorial redistributions and the further settlement policy changed this ratio from about

80% Chinese to about 17% Mongolians today, with a population of about 24.7 million people. Living together on the same territory and as citizens of China made Mongolians and Chinese so-called cultural neighbours.

14.2.2 *Cultural Neighbourhood*

Key features of cultural neighbourhood (Gabbert and Thubauville 2010) are patterns of social and spatial organisations such as common living spaces, customs and communication methods as well as the knowledge of the ‘other’. Cultural neighbours are aware of and interested in each other they meet, get used to each other and develop a close contact to the differences and commonalities of the other (Gabbert 2014, 15). Marriages between Mongolians and Chinese are not uncommon, as they are respected as equal spouses. Members of both groups share housing, attend religious and cultural festivals and often visit the same educational institutions. Many Mongolians are bilingual, members of both groups go to the same restaurants and shops; they do business with each other and there is a lot of tourist activity for visiting the ‘places of the other’. The assumption that there is only a strong separation and aversion between the two groups due to mass settlement and historical experience is wrong and too simple: the creation of a Han-dominated multi-ethnic China is not only a state project, but is also accepted by minorities who benefit from China’s economic development (Bulag 1998, 195). There are also Han Chinese who change their ethnicity from ‘Han’ to ‘Mongolian’ in order to benefit from minority rights (Almaz Khan 1996, 145). The fact that kinships, friendships and sympathies exist for the cultural neighbour and that trade relations are maintained shows that the other is not perceived as a danger or negative adversary only. Moreover, it is not always known when who sympathises with whom. Mongols sometimes have difficulties in dealing with the Co-Mongols who appear to be ‘on the Chinese side’. Chinese find it difficult when Mongolians insist on their cultural habits but live and work in a ‘Chinese-dominated society’ or when Co-Chinese change their status to Mongolian. A clear group membership and group characteristics exist in the mind, but often not in the interactions of daily life, where professional or social activities are carried out equally by members of both groups (Schatz 2014). When people’s social functions and interests become more and more contradictory, often a peculiar division in behaviour and feelings are observable, a ‘simultaneous’ of positive and negative elements, a mixture of partial affection and dislike (Elias 1997). An unequal balance of

power is typical of established–outsider relationships, as in Inner Mongolia. The example of Chinese language policy shows that access to politically relevant areas is controlled by language: Chinese is the language of the high variety, which is used in all important social positions (offices, authorities, educational institutions, public institutions), while Mongolian as the language of the low variety is shifted to use among friends or in the family. Similarly to Winston Parva, where the established had occupied important social positions and thus maintained their superiority of power by excluding members of other groups, this can also be observed for Inner Mongolia. In offices that issue important documents, the staff should be proficient in both official languages of the region. In practice, however, this is not the case, and only if Chinese is spoken and written, the documents are processed. Exclusion and stigmatisation of the outsiders are powerful weapons with which the established group asserts its identity, secures its primacy and bans the others to its place. This mechanism can be observed very well in Inner Mongolia, looking at the language policy which is one of the many reasons that contribute to the negative feelings of Mongolians towards Chinese (Schatz 2012; 2014).

A cultural neighbour can be a helper or a friend, but also threatening or even harmful, depending on the situation. In any case, whether friend or foe, in a cultural context the neighbour can be seen as the familiar other who is both near and far (Gabbert 2014). The example of the conflict over grassland in Inner Mongolia makes it clear that these figurations determine whether and how the borders to the other are constructed. In situations of conflict, the cultural neighbour is an unworthy outsider, and only one's own group is the legitimate established one. The associated convictions of being the better, wiser, more superior and stronger group are absolutely necessary for the legitimization of one's own established status.

14.3 TERRITORY, ECONOMY AND THE IGNORANCE OF THE OTHERS

With the Law on National Regional Autonomy (1984), China's autonomous regions were granted extended rights in the areas of economic development, education and culture (maintenance of their own language, customs and habits), as well as for the protection and management of their resources (Constitution of the People's Republic of China, Article 4). The law also provides that, firstly, the autonomous authorities have the right to

adopt local laws relating to the political, economic and cultural characteristics of the place (People's Republic of China Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law), secondly, that autonomous authorities manage and protect the natural resources of their region and give them priority in the development and use of these resources (People's Republic of China Regional Ethnic Autonomy Law, Article 28) and, thirdly, that autonomous authorities should protect and improve the habitat and ecological environment, for example, by preventing pollution (Article 45). In addition, the state must take precautions that respect particular national minorities when resource extraction or construction projects take place in their regions (Article 65, 66; for details, see Zhang 2012).

14.3.1 *Grassland*

Northern and Western China are home to some of the world's largest grassland resources, with over 50% of this grassland being in Inner Mongolia. The areas are used by Mongolian cattle breeders for their horses, sheep, goats, camels and cattle and are considered the most important areas for animal breeding in China with a long tradition of producing meat, milk, wool and fur (Liu 2017, 6). The ecological function of Chinese grasslands for biodiversity protection, soil conservation, soil fertility and regional climate development has been well described (Suttie et al. 2005; Liu 2017; Pfeiffer et al. 2018; Han et al. 2018; Wang et al. 2018.). In addition, the protection of the grasslands in Inner Mongolia means for the Mongolians the preservation of their economic and cultural habits which is important for the social stability of their group (Kang et al. 2007). The seasonal migration usually pursued by Inner Mongolia's cattle breeders allowed the grasslands to regenerate for long periods after they had been grazed. In addition, the cattle breeders could draw on their ecological knowledge to make decisions about where to move their animals for food and water. The nomadic system of animal husbandry has always contributed to the sustainable management of the Inner-Mongolian grasslands because it meant an efficient and careful use of grassland resources.

Since the second half of the twentieth century, Inner Mongolia has been one of the focal points of grassland degradation in China. While it was about 10% in the 1970s, it increased to 30% in the 1980s, 50% in the 1990s and about 90% in 2000 (Liu et al. 2018). In the period from 2000 to 2010, 61.5% of degradation occurred due to new economic developments, political changes, climate change and increasing human

intervention; the regions in central, eastern and north-eastern Inner Mongolia were particularly affected (Xie and Sha 2012). With the turn of the millennium, there was an increased implementation of government-controlled environmental projects in the northeast, aimed at restoring grasslands or converting them to other uses, but the general decline continued (Nelson 2006; Hu and Nacun 2018, 12).

On the Chinese side, climate change and overgrazing have been seen as the driving forces of grassland degradation in the last 30 years. Recent work has shown, however, that government policies that have led to privatisation of land use rights and land restrictions in environmental projects have contributed to the significant negative changes (Nelson 2006). The political interest in avoiding a ‘tragedy of the commons’ was in focus here (Cao et al. 2018). Pastoral rights negotiated and allocated at the household level should allow for higher productivity, better condition of grazing land, concentration of livestock farmers and better potential to adapt to future climate change. The resulting classification and allocation of grazing land have led to spatial and economic imbalances between grassland production and access to feed animals. In addition, agriculture has spread to grassland regions that are unsuitable for this purpose. Both of these factors led to a collapse of the traditional mobile grazing practices that had previously enabled Mongolian cattle breeders to move freely and flexibly with the climatic and topographical conditions of the grasslands (Hu and Nacun 2018; Hua and Squires 2015; Nelson 2006). State (Chinese) land policy decisions here did not correspond to the traditional (Mongolian) management strategies and led to economic and ecological mismanagement of the common resources. Increasingly, the Mongolian cattle breeders concerned began to compete for regulated access to land and water. This also did not correspond to their traditional way of life, where they cultivated relationships with each other that enabled them to survive in the grasslands (Conte and Tilt 2014, 80).

The privatisation of territory also conflicts with the official minority legislation, which aims to protect and preserve the use of the territories and the traditional economic forms of the Mongols in Inner Mongolia. Both the grassland management, which is wrong from a Mongolian point of view, and the social and economic changes that go hand in hand with it generate negative feelings towards the Chinese. On the other hand, if ethnic autonomy cannot generate economic development according to Chinese understanding and if it is seen as an obstacle to the development of the economic prosperity of Chinese society, then it becomes a matter of

interpretation. Relevant economic areas that are dependent on territory and its resources are then embedded in new narratives. In connection with Inner Mongolia, minority tourism and green energy are emphasised as strong economic forces in the region. The National Tourism Administration of China is responsible for the development of tourism in the country, since 2018 it merged with the Ministry of Culture to form the Ministry of Culture and Tourism. This ministry is responsible for cultural policy and activities as well as tourism in China, which is often closely linked to economic development. In the city of Manzhouli in Inner Mongolia, for example, a pilot zone is being established to promote the ‘New Silk Road Initiative’ as part of tourism innovation projects (Chinadaily 2018). If the Chinese side keeps the Mongolian cultural neighbour out of this discourse at the levels of globalisation, economic growth and competition and shifts its economic role to minority tourism, then it negates the potential power of the Mongolians to participate as an equal part of Chinese society in sustainable, possibly better resource management. The knowledge of the cultural neighbour is ignored, the Mongolian group remains an outsider. Even though solar and wind energy plants are used to promote the positive benefits of Inner Mongolia for China’s green image and its new energy projects, the focus is not on the group of Mongolians, but solely on the territory that is being claimed. Wind and solar plants, which extend over many square kilometres of grassland, also mean that cattle breeders can no longer cultivate ‘their land’. In Ulanqab in Inner Mongolia, for example, the world’s largest wind energy plant is located on an area of 3800 km² (Richard 2019). Large-scale solar plants are also being built in Inner Mongolia, all in connection with the so-called Northeast Asian Super Grid project. This is an energy transmission network project between China, Mongolia, Russia, South Korea and Japan. Conventional and particularly renewable forms of energy such as wind, water and solar power are part of the network (Renewable Energy Institute). In January 2019, the idea ‘A New World: The Geopolitics of Energy Transformation’ was presented at a meeting of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA 2019), which is also supported by the Renewable Energy Institute:

The accelerating deployment of renewables has set in motion a global energy transformation that will have profound geopolitical consequences. Just as fossil fuels have shaped the geopolitical map over the last two centuries, this global energy transformation driven by renewables will alter the global distribution of power, relations between states and regions, the risk of conflict and the social, economic and environmental drivers of geopolitical instability. (IRENA 2019)

On the Chinese side, the realisation of this ‘new energy world’ is, among other places, taking place in Inner Mongolia, since it is the border region to Russia and Mongolia and, moreover, with its vast grassland areas is particularly suitable for wind and solar energy production. Against this background, the Chinese interest in resources and territory in Inner Mongolia is placed in the context of economic development, climate change, social development, modernity and globalisation. The Mongolians of Inner Mongolia are seen as backward, disruptive and a threat to these developments because they defend their territory, which they see threatened both by new energy projects and by the existing Chinese mining policy, which provides important resources for renewable energy technologies. In dealing with ecological challenges, it is clear that different ideas about a common economic future and corresponding knowledge about resource management lead to different wishes and actions. The ‘better knowledge’ is always the subject of negotiation, the other is perceived as stupid, ignorant and bad. According to Elias, making one group bad by the other group is a function of the specific figuration that both groups form with each other (Elias and Scotson 2017, 13). Moreover, one group can only effectively stigmatise the other as long as they are in positions of power to which the stigmatised group has no access (2017, 14). If Mongolians have access to the same territory and demand their own management rights, then this means a potential loss of power on the Chinese side, who will react accordingly and effectively. Political and military superiority are their powerful advantage then.

14.3.2 *Mining*

According to the Mineral Resources Law of the PRC, all mineral resources belong to the state (Mineral Resources Law of the People’s Republic of China, Article 3). China has a monopoly position with about 95% of world rare earths production. Rare earths are used for permanent magnets, in the glass and ceramics industry, in the chemical industry, in the environmental and electronics industry: hybrid cars, wind turbines, energy-saving lamps, plasma screens, hard disks, smartphones and military applications are just a few examples. As the worldwide demand for rare earths increased, for example, in the electrical industry or in connection with renewable

energy technology, the demand for rare earths grew accordingly (Wübbecke 2012). In connection with the ‘Made in China 2025’ strategic economic plan adopted in 2015 (Zhōngguó zhìzào 2025, 中国制造 2025), it is not expected that there will be a decline in the mining of rare earths. The focus of the ‘Made in China 2025’ strategy lies on own technological inventions in order to replace technology imports. By 2025, the share of Chinese manufacturers of ‘core components and important materials’ in the domestic market is expected to rise up to 70%. China is to become a market-leading high-tech producer in the fields of telecommunications, robotics, renewable energy vehicles, high-tech equipment for space travel, maritime and rail transport (Wübbecke et al. 2016). The Chinese government is therefore called upon to uncover the need for its own economic growth and thus achieve national economic and social goals, such as raising the standard of living and level of education nationwide. Mine production quotas have been set at 73,500 tons and 46,500 tons for the first and second half of 2018, respectively. This represents an annual increase of 14% over the combined 2017 quota. Illegal and undocumented rare earths production continued despite government efforts (U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Commodity Summaries 2019). According to the Chinese Rare Earths Society, every ton of rare earths mined releases about 9600 to 12,000 cubic metres of waste gas-containing dust concentrate, 8.5 kg of fluorine, hydrofluoric acid, sulphur dioxide and sulphuric acid: added to this are around 75 cubic metres of toxic wastewater and around one ton of radioactive waste (EWI 2011). The environmental impact is therefore very high, so that the Chinese government has initiated programmes to increase the environmental requirements of the mine operators and monitor compliance with the stricter laws. Mine closures have already occurred in this context (Steen 2016). The balance of power between the two groups, however, has not been shifted either by the Mongolian group’s behaviour of public protest, which has been occurring for several years, or by the Chinese environmental protection measures. Both of these ‘new behaviors’ are taking place within the already existing, established legal framework, which is aimed at further establishing the Chinese.

The mines of the Bayan Obo mining area in western Inner Mongolia contain the largest deposits of rare earths found to date, and 45% of world production comes from here. The destruction of the soil and the pollution caused by the mining of rare earths causes local Mongolian cattle ranchers to fall ill. They also lose their sheep and cattle because thousands of holes and pits left by the mining companies are a danger to the animals, and the

land is heavily polluted and no longer available as a source of food (UNPO.org 2015). The area has been destroyed in the long term and can no longer be inhabited and farmed by the cattle breeders. Numerous reports testify to increasing conflicts between cattle ranchers and Chinese mine workers, especially whenever people or animals are killed by mining on the Mongolian side. With reference to the legislation, the government of Inner Mongolia repeatedly calls on the local authorities to comply with government guidelines for the protection of the environment and people's livelihoods:

In mining mineral resources in national autonomous areas, the State should give consideration to the interests of those areas and make arrangements favourable to the areas' economic development and to the production and well-being of the local minority nationalities. (Mineral Resources Law of the People's Republic of China, Article 3)

There are protests by livestock farmers who complain to the local authorities about the land taken away without compensation, the massive environmental damage and the fact that they are prevented from carrying out their traditional farming methods, that is, they are no longer able to earn a living according to their habits (Qiao 2018). They point out that, according to existing contracts, they are allowed to use the land and, according to existing law, to maintain their traditional way of farming. But it is precisely the land use of the cattle herds that is viewed critically on the Chinese side: as part of the 'Live-stock Grazing Ban' programme, members of local authorities took away numerous animals from the herds of the Mongolians (SMHRIC 2018; UNPO.org 2017). The programme is the Chinese government's response to grassland destruction, which is seen as a result of high livestock numbers and overgrazing. The withdrawal of animals is intended to regulate how large the herds may be, so that the grassland is not destroyed by them. Mongolian cattle breeders, however, are dependent on a high number of animals, since fluctuations can occur again and again. They use meat, meat, bones and milk for their own food or for sale. They use the skins in their yurts, make clothes for their own use or sell them. With dried dung, they heat the oven in the yurt. If Chinese authorities take away the animals, then this means a cut in the 'life insurance' of the Mongolians, who cannot manage without the animals. In addition, the idea that the animals are to blame for

grassland mismanagement meets with great incomprehension among them, as they have been cultivating a functioning grassland economy with the animals for centuries. On the Internet, there are numerous documents documenting protests against these Chinese interventions (Qiao 2017). Videos show how Mongolian cattle breeders throw themselves in front of the cars to prevent the animals from being picked up during the grazing ban (SMHRIC—20170414). In addition to the Chinese, those Co-Mongolians who work for the Chinese authorities are regarded as renegades of their own group and are perceived particularly negatively here.

14.4 SIMILAR PROBLEMS: SAME FIGURATIONS?

The Mongolians' knowledge of the Chinese law and their own experiences with Chinese legal practice generate resentment, defensiveness, distance and anger towards the Chinese, who are all perceived equally negatively as a group. Their unwise economic practices that destroy the country, their disrespect for fellow human beings and their ignorance of the minority law disqualify the Chinese completely as being the established. Different ideas, values and connections to the grasslands, that is, different figurations, shape the incommensurable positions that are emotionally defended.

On the Chinese side, the territory is perceived and used as a profitable resource in the context of China 2025: modernity, globalisation and economic growth. The achievement of the national goals would mean prosperity and the improvement of the living standards of the Chinese population, a goal that should be supported by all citizens of China, a future dream of a country that should be shared by all and especially also realised by the youth (Xinhua 2013). The Chinese Dream (Chin.: *Zhongguo Meng* 中国梦) propagated since 2013 is about prosperity, collective effort, socialism and national honour.

On the Mongolian side, however, the territory of Inner Mongolia is perceived in connection with their own cultural roots and a Mongolian history and identity. The preservation of their own group is uniformly connected with the grassland, which they know how to use respectfully and sustainably. If this territory is destroyed, then the Mongolian group will also be destroyed. The deep connection with the grassland, the pasture farming and the grassland management in harmony with the animals

are a valuable part of the Mongolian reality of life. The power of nature is closely connected with historical roots and Genghis Khan, who on horse-back, armed only with bow and arrow, according to the legend, unified the Mongolians and founded a world empire of which China was only a part (Yuan Dynasty 1269–1368). It is not so much the historical facts, but rather the idea of the tradition of a Mongolian group with its own way of life and the conviction of a legitimate claim to the grasslands that play the essential role here for their certainty of being the truly established group. According to Elias and Scotson, the conviction of the established superiority of power is based on the strong cohesion between families that have known each other for two or three generations—in contrast to the immigrants, who were strangers not only to the established but also to each other (Elias and Scotson 2017, 11). For the Mongolians, the Chinese settlers who settled over the decades are the newcomers. What unites the Chinese in their view is their citizenship and their bad behaviour. What unites the Mongolian group, on the other hand, is Genghis Khan, who united the inhabitants of the felt tents and created their cohesion in spirit up to today. The fact that the group of the Mongolians is actually not so uniform is faded out (Khan 1996). It also ignores the fact that group members on both sides have repeatedly developed a great deal of understanding for the other group and sometimes also sympathise with the others (Schatz 2017). Elias speaks of an open or latent ambivalence:

In the relationships of individual people as well as in those of different functional layers, a specific dichotomy or even a multiplicity of interests becomes all the stronger the further and richer the network of interdependencies becomes structured, into which a single social existence or a whole functional class is interwoven. Here, all people, all groups, states or classes, are dependent on each other in one form or another; they are potential friends, allies or partners in action; and they are at the same time potential opponents, competitors or rivals. (Elias 1997, II, 239)

A one-sided, negative view of the other, while at the same time raising one's own, is necessary, because group charisma and group shame are an essential aspect of established and outsider relations. This is not about popularity, but solely about power, status and prestige.

The structural idiosyncrasy of established–outsider figuration in Inner Mongolia points to a self-confident certainty about power, law and knowledge about the region in both groups. Neither group feels inferior nor

inferior. But they experience different treatments. In addition to different ideas about the meaning and purpose of an economy, both groups have different references to the value and benefit of the territory and also very different perceptions of time. The pace of an economic power to be realised in 2025 is not the pace of Mongolian cattle breeders, who have to orient themselves seasonally to external parameters such as climate, weather, nature. Cultural neighbours are very distant, and their ideas, conceptions and values do not match. They are so distant that they perceive each other as enemies, as a danger and as a threat. This leads to accusations: both sides accuse the other side of thinking only of their own group and not of looking at the big picture. At the local level, members of both groups enforce their translation of an idea of the Chinese nation. But a mere translation and realisation of ideas and conceptions is difficult—as the numerous disputes, stigmatisations and resentments at the local level show—because they create conflicts due to the actual social and cultural incommensurable positions. In order to demonstrate their own superiority, both groups switch between very different narratives at different levels. Basically, an evasive communication has been established that serves self-preservation and thus simultaneously provides the other with arguments for blame. Differences, which are emphasised or constructed for the purpose of differentiation from one another, characterise the dynamic cooperation and maintain their inevitable but specifically asymmetrical mutual dependencies.

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Generational Figuration and We-Group Formation in the Palestinian West Bank Since the 1970s

Hendrik Hinrichsen

15.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter I will explore how, over the course of the last four decades in the Palestinian society of the West Bank, an established–outsider figuration of generations has emerged. I will examine the specific relationship between the so-called Intifada Generation which was deeply influenced by the political mobilisation of the 1970s and 1980s in the Palestinian territories, and the subsequent Oslo Generation whose members were born or grew up during the Oslo peace process in the 1990s. As I will show, the most characteristic feature of the relationship between these generations is that the Oslo Generation, as opposed to the Intifada Generation, has experienced a generational reduction of life chances and ‘opportunities for meaning’, which corresponds to the figuration of generations discussed by

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_15

Norbert Elias in his *Studies on the Germans* (2013, 348). Therefore, this article particularly focuses on discussing the development of a specific generational relationship in the West Bank with reference to Elias's concept of the figuration of generations.

I will proceed as follows, first I will outline the formation of the Intifada Generation as a historical generation. The First Intifada (1987–1993) was the culmination point of a process of mass mobilisation against the Israeli occupation which grew up in Palestinian society in the occupied territories during the 1970s and 1980s. As I will show, the Palestinian activists and participants engaged in this mass mobilisation form a historical generation in the sense proposed by Karl Mannheim (1952). The members of the Intifada Generation share common experiences and developed a generational we-image as well as feelings of belonging. After this, I will outline how the formation of the Intifada Generation was linked to a closing gap between different class groupings, especially between people living in the areas of the refugee camps, who tend to belong to the lower segments of Palestinian society, and the urban middle classes. This closing gap in the figuration of classes fostered the possibility of the formation of a generational we-group. I will discuss how the gap in the figuration of classes increased again after the Oslo peace process from the mid-1990s onwards. The Oslo Accords, and the institution-building and social transformation processes it entailed, resulted in a renewed marginalisation of people living in the refugee camp areas in terms of economic and social status. The emergence of the historical Intifada Generation, and the social transformation processes in the course of the Oslo process, then contributed to the creation of a specific relationship between the Intifada Generation and the subsequent Oslo Generation. With reference to Elias's work on established–outsider figurations of historical generations, I will discuss in detail the generational decrease in life chances and opportunities for meaningful lives, and the asymmetrical power balance between the generations which to this day still contributes to the internal differentiation and fragmentation of Palestinian society.¹

¹ In addition to insights gained from the relevant literature, my arguments are mainly based on empirical findings from the research project 'Belonging to the Outsider and Established Groupings: Palestinians and Israelis in Various Figurations' which my colleagues and I carried out in the West Bank between 2010 and 2015 (Reference number: RO 827/16). The project was funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and supervised by Gabriele Rosenthal. My colleagues and I conducted group discussions, participant observations and biographical-narrative interviews ($n = 108$). I personally spent a total of 11 months in the

15.2 FORMATION OF THE INTIFADA GENERATION IN THE 1980s

15.2.1 *Political Mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s*

The First Intifada was the culmination point of a process of mass mobilisation against the occupation of the Palestinian territories of the West Bank and Gaza by Israel, which has held these territories since winning the 1967 war against the neighbouring Arab states. Mass mobilisation took place in Palestinian society in the occupied territories during the 1970s and 1980s. The period of heightened tensions and violent conflict between the Palestinians, the Israeli army and Israeli settlers, roughly between 1987 and 1993, is referred to more specifically as the First Intifada. It was characterised by mass demonstrations and rioting, but also by strikes, tax boycotts and boycotts of Israeli goods. The rebellion broke out in the refugee camps, first in Gaza, then in the West Bank, before spreading to urban areas and villages (Yahya 1990). In general, this period in Palestinian collective history has been well researched. I can only point to a few key aspects here that are relevant to the formation of a historical generation and the specific relationship which developed between the Intifada Generation and the Oslo Generation.

The process of political mobilisation reached increasingly broad sections of society, especially in the 1980s. An important feature was that different groupings and segments were drawn into its momentum—including groupings that had not previously been involved in resistance to the Israeli occupation. It inspired young people from the refugee camps and poor inner-city areas, who often spearheaded widespread rioting and skirmishes with the Israeli army and Israeli settlers (Kuttab 1988). But it also mobilised urban professionals (teachers, lawyers, nurses, etc.), urban traders and shop owners (Tamari 1990), and many Christian majority villages and areas (Qumsiyeh 2011). The formation of alliances between different groupings was reflected in the civil society infrastructure of the mobilisation. The demonstrations, strikes and boycott campaigns were often coordinated by informal community committees (such as agricultural committees or women's committees), which have since been the subject of sociological research (for an overview, see Jean-Klein 2003).

field. The material collected was mainly used to carry out biographical case reconstructions (Rosenthal 2018).

One of the interesting effects of the committees was that they established links and deepened existing connections between the refugee camps, the rural population and the urban classes (Robinson 1993). This political mobilisation—especially within the committees but also outside them—led to the formation of a historical generation, which became manifest in different sections of Palestinian society and brought them closer together.

15.2.2 *The Intifada Generation*

Scholars have pointed to the generational formation that took place during the Intifada (Hasso 2001; Collins 2004; Lybarger 2007). In the literature, the Intifada Generation is sometimes discussed explicitly in terms of Karl Mannheim's concept of historical generations. Karl Mannheim argued that a generation is formed by members of a society who experience certain historical or social events or social phases together, with the same 'similarly "stratified" consciousness' (1952, 297). The shared experience of a historical phase leads to the emergence of generational we-images and we-feelings, and to the formation and integration of generational communities (*Vergemeinschaftung*).

The members of the Intifada Generation are those people who were born in the Palestinian territories between 1960 and 1970, who participated in the political mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s, and who were politically socialised through it. They very often experienced imprisonment, interrogation and sometimes torture. The key generational experience of the Intifada Generation was a 'resistance project' that created feelings of autonomy and solidarity. The common experience of this historical phase still forms the basis of a generational we-feeling and a generational charisma. Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal note that the First Intifada 'still stands as the preeminent event in the Palestinians' recent history, galvanising a sense of community and nationhood' (2003, 303). To this day, having participated in the First Intifada, whether by rioting in the streets or working in the committees, adds to one's own status in Palestinian society.² Moreover, as I will show, the First Intifada deeply influenced the professional and social networks of members of this generation.

² Julie Peteet (1994), for instance, discusses how the power chances of young men, and the respect they enjoy in their families, in their neighbourhood or in public, are greater if they have been involved in resistance activities, been imprisoned by the Israelis, or been beaten by Israeli soldiers.

The data we collected in the West Bank³ and the empirical analyses of Palestinian biographies which we carried out in the frame of our research project also show clearly that a historical generation, in the sense proposed by Mannheim, was formed as a result of the political mobilisation during the 1970s and 1980s. To illustrate this briefly here, I will quote a passage from a biographical-narrative interview with Muna (born 1968) which we conducted in spring 2014. Muna, a woman born in Bethlehem, is speaking about the student committees in which she was active during the 1980s:

Whenever we used to hear about confiscating a land we used to go to that land and get it prepared in order to have it ready for agriculture because a neglected land [...] exposes more to get confiscated [...] it was good, it sharpens the personalities of young students [...] we were young and matters of occupation and matters of confiscating land [...] but when you do something you feel that oh my god I'm brave I did this and that, I did something for my country. Everybody was supposed to get involved in these student committees now whenever I meet my colleagues and my mates in my age we remember all those days [...] and we look at ourselves as braver than the others in this generation. (Muna 2014)

This quotation clearly shows Muna's generational we-image. It gives an impression of the we-feelings and the feelings of pride and solidarity connected with this past experience. It shows that this phase in Muna's life still gives her a feeling of political fulfilment and meaningfulness. Also interesting is Muna's comment on the successor generation: she says that her generation was 'braver than this generation', which indicates a figuration with people of the younger generation. I will return to this aspect below.

15.3 SHIFTS IN THE FIGURATION OF CLASSES AND THE OSLO PROCESS

15.3.1 *Closing Gap in the Figuration of Classes in the 1970s and 1980s*

The political mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s was accompanied by an interrelated development in the figuration of classes which supported the formation of a historical generation. There was a narrowing of the

³The empirical analyses presented in this article are based on data collected in the West Bank. To what extent these results also apply to Gaza would be the object of a separate discussion.

asymmetry in the figuration of camp dwellers and urban long-time residents, which until then had been characterised by very different life and power chances and the stigmatisation of camp dwellers. An important factor, for example, was that after the occupation of the West Bank the Israeli administration granted Palestinians access to the Israeli labour market. After 1967, the occupation policy of the Israeli administration had led to the integration of the Palestinian territories in the Israeli economic area. While this integration was generally asymmetrical, it meant that the Israeli labour market was open to Palestinians. Because the wages were comparatively high, this quickly had a deep influence on the structure of employment for Palestinians in the occupied territories. Especially people living in the refugee camps or in rural areas profited from this development (Peretz 1977, 64): ‘Consequently, many lower-class families began, for the first time, to enjoy some measure of prosperity and financial security’ (Heller 1980, 194).

In the 1970s and 1980s, a higher income and better living conditions made it easier for the refugees to balance political involvement and the realisation of other life chances. As shown by the interviews and empirical analyses of Palestinian biographies for this period, it was possible to spend several years in Israeli prisons and yet still be able to buy a house outside the refugee camp, pay dowries for family members or help siblings to get a university education, for example (Hinrichsen 2017; 2020). These developments resulted in more equal living standards, with an erosion of differences between refugees and long-time residents due to the widespread political mobilisation and its effects on the Israeli occupiers. As George Bisharat put it, shortly after the First Intifada, ‘ultimately the distinction between the refugee and the non-refugee communities in the region [...] has been eroded by socioeconomic forces and political developments’ (1994, 183). These developments contributed to the possibility of a unifying generational we-image and encouraged generational we-feelings that encompassed different societal groupings in Palestinian society.

15.3.2 Social Transformations in the Course of the Oslo Process in the 1990s

The gap in the figuration of camp dwellers and urban long-time residents was widened again in the course of the Oslo peace process and the subsequent social transformations in the Palestinian territories.

The core agreements in the Oslo Accords were ratified between 1993 and 1995. The arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians included mutual recognition of the PLO and Israel, establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as a quasi-state bureaucracy, and the division of the West Bank into different administrative and security zones. In the mid-1990s, the division into zones resulted, for the first time since 1967, in the withdrawal of Israeli soldiers from most Palestinian cities. The setting up and maintenance of the PA institutions was, and still is, heavily financed by the international donor community. In the course of the 1990s and 2000s, the Oslo peace process contributed to what Lisa Taraki has called ‘transformations in the class structure, primarily the consolidation of a new and aspiring modernist middle class’ (Taraki 2008, 62). This new urban middle class with a relatively high income is mainly found in Ramallah and finds employment in the bureaucracy of the PA and the NGO sector (Hilal 2010, 32). The latter was much expanded and ‘professionalised’ in the course of the Oslo process, leading to a general transformation of civil society in the West Bank and the disappearance of the committees of the First Intifada (Jad 2008, 100). While people in the refugee camp areas (and in rural areas) had been actively involved in the civil society committees in the 1980s, in the new, professionalised NGO sector they were marginalised. The Israeli labour market, which had been important for assuring the incomes of the lower classes, including many refugees, was successively closed to Palestinians in the 1990s (Miaari and Sauer 2006). And because of the division of the West Bank into zones which was part of the Oslo Accords, a division which still exists today, the refugee camp areas were more frequently affected by Israeli military operations, such as coming to arrest people during the night. Thus, while a new urban middle class was growing up, the status and life chances of people in the refugee camp areas changed for the worse. The Palestinian sociologist Jamil Hilal summarised the result of these developments as follows:

It is worth noting that class and status distinctions based on wealth and position have never been as glaring as they have come to be in recent years. [...] In the 1st Intifada, the glaring distinctions were largely between the occupier and the occupied. Now, they are very noticeable between different segments of the occupied and besieged population. (Hilal 2014)

As clearly shown by the interviews, informal conversations and other data, these developments in the figuration of classes are reflected in the

we- and they-images of the population of the refugee camp areas, as well as those of the urban middle classes. For example, young refugees today cultivate a we-image of marginalised fighters, and a they-image of depoliticised and wealthy city dwellers who live at the expense of the Palestinian cause, while young members of the urban middle class stigmatise camp dwellers as ‘wild’ or ‘simple’, for example. An important finding for my argument in this article is that a generational difference can be observed when we consider who resorts to these mutually disparaging we- and they-images. In other words, both for the people in the refugee camp areas and for the new urban middle class, we can say that the class figuration is reflected in the we-images of the younger generation (born 1985–1995) much more than in the we-images of the Intifada Generation (born 1960–1970). There is a clear indication here that shifts in the figuration of class groupings have led to the creation of generational differences, and that these have contributed to the emergence of a figuration of generations which runs across class groupings, and which I will now look at more closely.

15.4 NASCENT FIGURATION OF THE INTIFADA GENERATION AND THE OSLO GENERATION

15.4.1 *Elias’s Established–Outsider Figuration of Historical Generations*

The social transformation processes which were set in motion by the Oslo Accords in the 1990s are interrelated with the emergence of a specific relationship between the generations. The Intifada Generation and the Oslo Generation, whose members came of age during the Israeli–Palestinian ‘peace process’ in the mid-1990s, form an established–outsider figuration, to borrow the terminology of Norbert Elias. Since Elias’s work on figurations of generations is often referred to here, I will give a brief account of his ideas.

In the essays collected in *Studies on the Germans* (2013), Elias discusses the interrelations between generational we-groups and groupings within the framework of his figurational sociology, and interprets them as unplanned, tension-laden processes which the people involved are usually not aware of (Elias 2013, 344, 349). Thus, Elias regards generational conflicts as a variant of established–outsider figurations (2008). He sees later

generations as being in an outsider position with regard to preceding generations, which means that, in comparison to preceding generations, they experience a ‘cutback in life chances and chances for meaning’ (2013, 350). Elias has in mind here the classical mechanism of established–outsider relations: because of their long-term residence (here: age), and thus better chances for group integration and higher status positions, the older generation group closes these positions to subsequent generations (mostly unintended and without the people involved being aware of it), and the balance of mutual dependencies tips in favour of the older generation. However, Elias discusses not only life chances, or social positions linked to political influence, but explicitly also opportunities for meaning (Elias 2013, 347–349, 352–354):

For the younger generations, life chances become more limited, especially those chances with which individual feelings of meaningfulness are connected. At the same time, the pressure of established groups on outsider groups increases, one but not only example being the pressure of the higher-ranking older generations on the younger ones dependent on them. (2013, 347)

Regarding opportunities for meaning, Elias speaks of a ‘meaning-bestowing function of the battle for one’s own political ideals’ (2013, 354) and remarks that for the subsequent generation the loss of life chances and opportunities for meaning becomes manifest ‘in what is rather vaguely called the “feel of life” in a period’ (2013, 348). Moreover, in established–outsider figurations, the ambitions, reputation and standards of measurement of the outsiders are generally influenced by the established (Elias 2010). The we- and they-images of the established and the outsiders are not only expressions of the figuration but also instruments of power within the figuration (Elias 2008, 10).

The results of our empirical studies show that in the West Bank there is a figuration of historical generations, in the sense discussed by Elias. The Intifada Generation, which was constituted as a historical generation in the 1970s and 1980s, is entangled with the Oslo Generation in an established–outsider figuration. Compared to the established Intifada Generation, the members of the Oslo Generation have lower life chances and fewer opportunities for meaning. The members of these generations are interconnected in their patterns of interpretation, their we- and they-images, and their stigmatisations. This finds expression, for instance, when

members of the Oslo Generation are measured, and measure themselves, against the ‘achievements’ of the Intifada Generation and the battles it fought in the political mobilisation of the 1970s and 1980s. Below I will look at different aspects of this figuration of generations.

15.4.2 *Generational Differences in Respect of Life Chances*

An example of life chances open only to members of the Intifada Generation is that during the development of the PA in the mid-1990s, a number of activists from the First Intifada were integrated into the PA, especially those who had served prison sentences. When ministries, security services and other government organisations were set up during the creation of the PA in the 1990s, this resulted in a large number of positions that needed to be filled. The number of people employed by the PA quickly exceeded that of the body under the command of the Israeli army that was previously responsible for administering the Palestinian territories (Giacaman et al. 2003, 64). People were given jobs as ‘compensation for revolutionary heroism, current political support or both’ (Giacaman et al. 2003, 64). This can be seen in the way people were chosen to work in the newly created Palestinian security services. In connection with the concentration of ‘locals’ in certain security services of the PA, such as the preventive security service, Nigel Parsons comments that these people had a ‘fairly uniform experience of the first intifada’ (Parsons 2005, 154). In particular, this applied to those who had spent time in Israeli prisons, regardless of what party they belonged to (Taraki 2008, 69). Thus, a part of the Intifada Generation was co-opted by the PA. However, these chances for members of the Intifada Generation were linked to the creation of the PA in the 1990s and the opportunities this opened up. Today, similar engagement in resistance and the incarceration of members of the Oslo Generation would not result in this kind of gratification.

The difference in the life chances of the Intifada Generation and the Oslo Generation can also be seen in other income chances. The Israeli labour market, which had done so much to improve the life chances of the lower segments of society in the 1970s and 1980s, especially for people living in the refugee camps, or in rural areas, was gradually closed to Palestinians from the 1990s onwards. As already mentioned, the closing of the labour market especially affected the people living in the refugee camp areas, and further reduced their life chances in comparison to members of the new urban middle class, who were already better off. But the closing

of the labour market also had an impact on the different life chances of the Intifada Generation and the Oslo Generation in the camps. It meant a relative loss for the Oslo Generation as compared to the Intifada Generation. For the members of the Intifada Generation, it was much easier to balance political involvement and the realisation of other life chances over a crucial period of their life spans.

There was also a reduction of life chances in respect of status or reputation. Some authors point to the decreasing societal reputation of political imprisonment from the 1980s and 1990s to the present day (Johnson and Giacaman 2013, 69). Moreover, one can speak of a decrease in ‘political marriages’ (Johnson et al. 2009, 16), in which partners are chosen on the basis of shared political activism and shared orientations. Finally, a general decrease can be observed in the reputation of political parties, and an ‘exodus from politics’ among young Palestinians (Høigilt 2016, 466). All these aspects show that political involvement during the 1970s and 1980s was bound up with greater life and status chances than in the 1990s and the following years.

15.4.3 *Generational Differences in Opportunities for Meaning*

I will now look more closely at the decrease in ‘opportunities for meaning’ (Elias 2013, 348) from the Intifada Generation to the Oslo Generation. For this purpose, I will refer more explicitly to the empirical studies carried out by my colleagues and myself. The passages from interviews and extracts from detailed case analyses clearly show generational differences in opportunities for meaning. And they show how *following* the Intifada Generation is *constitutive* of the way opportunities for meaning are experienced by the Oslo Generation.

Let us look first at the perspective of the Intifada Generation on the figuration of generations. Abu Yousef was born in a refugee camp in the West Bank in 1964. His parents have fled to the West Bank from the area around Gaza in the course of the Israeli-Arab War in 1948–49. He left school when he was 17 and began to train as a plumber. After a short time, he got a well-paid job with a firm in Jerusalem that was managed by an Israeli Jew. He had been politically active during his school days. He joined the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and worked in its party groups in the refugee camp. And, like his siblings, he was involved in the street battles and confrontations with Israeli soldiers in the area close to the camp. During the 1980s, he was arrested several times and

sent to different Israeli prisons for a total of about two years. I will quote a passage from the interview with Hafez conducted by my colleague Ahmed Albaba and myself in autumn 2013, in which Hafez speaks about his son's involvement in protests against the nightly incursions of the Israeli army in their neighbourhood:

My son, those things, I myself have made an experience and this experience our experience is different from your experience [...]. The experiences regarding the Intifada it was not unsuccessful the experience in seven eighty-eight the first experience but today [...] you can't say I go throw stones and you get six seven month of imprisonment it is too bad it is not worth it how will it benefit you those things. (Hafez 2013)

Abu Yousef refers to a generational *We* of the First Intifada, which, in his words, was not unsuccessful. And he refers to a generational *They*—including his son and others—who cannot do the same. This is an example of the dialogue between historical generations that occurs in families, but also in neighbourhoods and other social spheres. This kind of dialogue creates—often unintentionally—a generational hierarchy: a generational hierarchy where the previous generation has ‘done its duty’ and the successor generation has not been able to do anything comparable. We also see how Abu Yousef, as a member of the Intifada Generation, assumes that his son and his son's friends regard his generation as a model. This inter-generational dialogue structure ran all through the interviews conducted by my colleagues and myself, and I saw it clearly in many informal conversations and observations. This hierarchisation of the generations, which is not intended, but which is nevertheless implicitly expressed in the inter-generational dialogue, can also be seen in a frequent statement made by members of the Intifada Generation: ‘We served at the right time’, implying that now is not the right time to ‘serve’, and underlining the fact that they did indeed serve.

The experiences and patterns of interpretation that we observed in our interviews and conversations with members of the Oslo Generation reflect the implicit hierarchy between the generations. For example, young men from the refugee camps say how they know from their own experience that today no one respects you for being a martyr or going to prison. This shows the difference between the generations in respect of life chances and opportunities for meaning. Moreover, the patterns of interpretation of the Oslo Generation tend to romanticise and idealise the political mobilisation

of the 1970s and 1980s. To illustrate this, I would like to quote the words of Iyad (born 1987), a member of the Oslo Generation, who was brought up in Ramallah and has lived there since the 1990s. His family came from a village near Hebron, and his parents moved to Ramallah in the 1980s. Iyad's father spent a total of one and a half year in prison during the First Intifada. In the mid-1990s, when the Palestinian National Authority was being set up, Iyad's father was given a job in the new police force. With reference to the phase of political mobilisation in the 1970s and 1980s and his father's role in it, Iyad says in the interview:

Their life [that of his father and his father's colleagues] was more interesting and more activity because the Jewish were against them (2) for them like if you go in the street doing marching and this thing maybe you get arrested maybe you get kicked by the Jewish you didn't know you didn't know what gonna happen to you.

Interviewer: Do you think it was more adventurous?

Yeah it was more beautiful, I mean you do something like and you didn't know what's gonna happen to you for them like we go maybe in this year we march maybe not in Ramallah we march in Jenin we have fun we have dinner together my father get arrested three times. (Iyad 2010)

Iyad's formulations reflect the widespread tendency to romanticise the political activities of the 1970s and 1980s, and shows how the great dreams of the Oslo Generation look back to the Intifada Generation. We can see clearly here how the opportunities for meaning are very different between the generations.

The figuration of the Intifada Generation and the Oslo Generation also involves stigmatisation of the Oslo Generation by the Intifada Generation. Especially middle-class members of the Oslo Generation in Ramallah, where nightly incursions by the Israeli army are relatively rare, feel this stigmatisation. The statement made by Muna, a member of the Intifada Generation, quoted above, shows that they are considered 'not as brave as the Intifada Generation'. Or the Oslo Generation is regarded as not being a 'real successor youth', or as being occupied with 'just doing parties'. For the members of the Oslo Generation, this creates a kind of dilemma in which, in a social phase of general demobilisation, it is necessary to accept either risking one's own future life chances or being stigmatised for making no 'contribution to the Palestinian cause', with corresponding feelings of guilt. A passage from an interview with Mariam (born 1990), a member of the Oslo Generation, highlights this:

Either you are disappointed because you do something and nothing changes or it will cost you or you don't do anything and people are disappointed because you don't do anything for the country. (Mariam 2015)

This stigmatisation adds to the hierarchy of generations. It contributes to the differences in life chances and chances for meaning.

The passage from the interview with Mariam, as well as the other extracts discussed here, indicates that members of the Oslo Generation are (to some degree) aware of the differences in life and status chances, and opportunities for meaning, arising from political involvement in the 1970s and 1980s as compared to the period from the 1990s to the present day, and that this makes them reluctant to become politically involved, or makes them feel that political involvement is unappreciated, isolated or in vain (Hinrichsen 2020). In this way, the generational relationship (in conjunction with shifts in the figuration of class groupings) contributes to making broad social mobilisation and collective action in the current situation in the West Bank more difficult. The generational differences in life and status chances, and opportunities for meaning, are part of the present internal differentiation and continuing fragmentation of Palestinian society.⁴

15.5 CONCLUSION

In this article I have discussed how, in the course of social transformation processes in the West Bank over the past four decades, an established–outsider figuration of historical generations has come into being.

The political mobilisation in the Palestinian territories in the 1970s and 1980s led to the constitution of an Intifada Generation as a historical generation in the sense proposed by Karl Mannheim. The members of the Intifada Generation share a we-image and we-feelings, group charisma and networks, which find expression in the life chances and opportunities for meaning available to members of this generation. These opportunities

⁴There has been no broad political mobilisation among members of the Oslo Generation in the West Bank, comparable to the social power of the First Intifada, despite the continuing, even if modified, Israeli occupation, and the widespread dissatisfaction with, and contempt for, the PA (see the discussion in Hilal 2015). There have been attempts at mobilisation, such as the campaigns and actions associated with the so-called new youth movement (Maira 2017), including renewed civil society activism among young Fatah supporters in the Oslo Generation (Høigilt 2016), but up to now these have had no broad and lasting social impact.

were also bound up with a closing gap between different class groupings, especially between people living in the areas of the refugee camps, and the urban professionals and urban middle classes. The closing gap in the figuration of classes fostered the possibility of shared generational experiences, and the development of generational we-images. The Oslo Accords in the mid-1990s, and the resulting social transformation processes, brought about a renewed (relative) marginalisation of people living in the refugee camp areas, and a renewed asymmetry between the class groupings. These developments led to the creation of a specific relationship between the Intifada Generation and the Oslo Generation. Following Elias, I have called this relationship between the generations a figuration of historical generations. The Oslo Generation is embedded in an asymmetrical power balance with the predecessor generation of 'fighters' and 'activists' of the Intifada Generation. The members of the Oslo Generation, as members of a successor generation, experience a generational decrease in life chances and opportunities for meaningful lives. I have shown how the we- and they-images and the patterns of interpretation of the generations are entangled, and how the Oslo Generation measures itself, and is measured by others, against the Intifada Generation. A crucial constitutive factor of the Oslo Generation is therefore the fact that it *follows* a different generation. To this day, the relationship between the generations, and generational differences in life chances and opportunities for meaning, are part of the internal differentiation within Palestinian society in the West Bank.

I have analysed the development of an established-outsider figuration of historical generations, where the established position is linked to have been of a certain age during a particular phase of the society's collective history. And I have shown how, in this case, the development of the figuration of generations was intertwined with a shift in the figuration of classes. This study offers an insight not only into the way figurations develop and are transformed, together with the corresponding we-groups and groupings, but also into the *interrelationships* between different figurations.

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The Israeli National Habitus and Historiography: The Importance of Generations and State-Building

Alon Helled

16.1 INTRODUCTION

No society is conflict-free. Either considered modern or postmodern, contemporaneity has been dealing with political, social, economic and sanitary crises. Our troubled times resonate the processual course of our civilisation, often contradictory and rather shift. In Eliasian terms, civilisational stances as well as de-civilisational ones can occur simultaneously, inasmuch as all social changes comprise psychogenetic and socio-genetic aspects. In other words, the tracks on which cultural individuality and institutional collectivity move forwards or backwards are complex and not always linear. No sociopolitical element reflects this complexity more than national identity, shifting between patriotism and nationalism, ethnos and demos, state elites and governed crowds (Viroli 1995; Malešević 2019; Tamir 2019). The need to build a durable collective identity in the national

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_16

context has often been entrusted to scholars and intellectuals by political elites. Their role in shaping identity is of great significance especially in contexts wherein high degree of conflictuality exists.

The case of Jewish and Zionist historiography exemplifies the combination of state-building and nation-building as the two are mirrored in historiographical production as well as in the lives of Israeli historians. Some extremely valuable works have been published on the role of contemporary historians within an institutional framework. A transversal conclusion is that historians' intellectual endeavours are often inspired by, or at least coincided with, the demand of political agents who seek to celebrate the nation-state.¹ Our investigation offers some general lines of how to categorise different, yet mutually recognisable, groups of historians in Israel. By using several sociological concepts, the enquiry underlines socially relevant biographical facts which overcome the traditional dichotomies between the academic 'ivory tower', society and politics.

The Israeli case study sheds light on how national politics encounters history and continues to provide relevant insights on national identity-making. In other words, the aim is to answer the following question: what do Israeli history, historians and politics have in common and what influences them and how? Though existent academic literature takes account of the ideological engagement of such historians as public or court intellectuals (Myers 1995; Conforti 2005, 2006, 2011; Penslar 2007; Sand 2009, 2011)—which exemplify the 'primordial relationship' that historians seek to foster with power in order to convert intellectual capital into social and sometimes political capital—it often lacks reference to the sociopolitical generational features of Israeli historiography. Historians may be the first ones to have the professional skills and cultural capital to select factual events and extract from them 'historical coherence' and thus translating them into 'general knowledge' on which an 'imagined community' is based (Anderson 2006). Yet, national identity is not a once-and-for-all set of properties. It changes within and according to sociopolitical conditions and has a lot to do with generation-anchored characteristics. Generations, conceived not only as a mere statistical age-based group, permit 'a true historical perspective' featuring 'an awareness of the social setting of historical events' (Mannheim 2003, 26), and facilitates contextualisation.

¹The following works were highly stimulating for the research: Kaplan (1995), Dumoulin (2003), Behr (2011), Charle (2013).

This approach traces patterns of causality over a rather long period of time, delineates social circumstances and provides insight regarding interpersonal relations. Moreover, it takes into account the mechanisms shaping collective identity as a 'socially useful' set of interiorised dispositions, that is to say the habitus. Hence, historians themselves (as all social agents) depend on time, place, culture and interests as is the historiography they produce. Here enter the dialectical interdependencies between identity and habitus (i.e. the set of socially relevant dispositions and practices interiorised by individuals) as inseparable parts of both historians (i.e. biographies) and the general survival unit (i.e. the Eliasian figuration, conceptualised as a societal structure of reference) to which they belong (i.e. the Israeli nation-state). After all, they are socialised into it and provide informative and cognitive materials to others. That is to say there exist constant inter-crossings between fields (the historiographic academic and intellectual and the public, social and political)² that suggest relational and situational dynamics of change and preservation affecting the two-way relationship between the national survival unit and the habitus it fosters.³ Furthermore, as far as Israel is concerned, survival by itself has been a powerful engine, not to say a moral imperative, to justify Jewish nationhood and statehood, especially in the aftermath of the Holocaust, which still represents the pinnacle of troubled catastrophic times in Jewish history.

Therefore, the chapter contributes to the understanding of the construction of Israeli identity and citizenship via the empirical study of professional historiography as a part of both greater Israeli academia and society. By providing generation-based ideal-types of historians, we dialectically trace the division lines in Israeli identity as a sociopolitical and institutional construct. Inasmuch as global, geopolitical and domestic troubled

² Here we adopt Bourdieu's definition of the concept: '[...] a field of forces, whose necessity is imposed on agents, who are engaged in it, and as a field of struggles within which agents confront each other, with differentiated means and ends according to their position in the structure of the field of forces, thus contributing to conserving or transforming its structure' (Bourdieu 1998, 32).

³ The two-way relationship is constructed between so-called objective structures (the social fields of autonomy and power) and subjective structures (the habitus) in order to trace socially relevant dispositions, together with the political power ratios that they have created. The goal is to combine the overlapping interpretations (both reflexive) by Elias and Bourdieu of the concept 'habitus' as principles of distinct and distinctive practices by individuals and as the widely accepted behavioural norms which derive from the national political culture and collective identity.

times affect Israeli politics and society, its national habitus keeps swinging as a pendulum between the contentious and seemingly unbridgeable conceptions of Israeliness (consecrated by Palestine-born Jews, i.e. the ‘Sabras’), namely the ethno-civic conception and the republican-liberal models of statehood and peoplehood (Kimmerling 2001; Shafir and Peled 2002).

16.2 GENERATIONAL PERIODISATION BETWEEN MACRO AND MICRO

Rather than a specific methodology, this chapter wishes to offer scholars a general framework enabling them to trace processes and analyse social phenomena. Inspired by a four-year-long doctoral research on Israeli historians,⁴ the chapter is based on a methodology that combined the examination of secondary materials (historiographic production), ethnographic and prosopographical approaches (participant observation), construction of biographies and 20 in-depth semi-structured interviews involving key-historians working in Israel.⁵ The latter were conducted through storytelling and then accompanied by process-tracing in order to verify collected information without neglecting the subjective perception regarding personal experiences and the sense of belonging. The multifaceted enquiry privileged the generational construction of Israeli Jewish historiography in light of the Eliasian concepts of habitus and survival unit as well of Bourdieu’s field theory and his use of the notion of habitus. Nonetheless, beyond a rich mixed-methods approach, the case study has testified the importance of an indicative sociopolitical periodisation, hence, neither exclusive nor exhaustive. Therefore, it does not mean to reduce the irreducible, that is, personal individual experiences, to a normative system but rather to offer a mid-range scale of analysis where collected biographical data permits the sociological categorisation of biographies in

⁴The doctoral dissertation: ‘Engraving Identity: The Israeli National Habitus through the Historiographical Field’, supervised by prof. Gisèle Sapiro (Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales) and prof. Marco Tarchi (University of Florence) was defended in *viva voce* in Turin on 28 November 2019.

⁵All interviewees were associate and full professors from different Israeli universities in order to facilitate career trajectories and long-term professionalisation. Interviews lasted from a minimum of 50 minutes to 145 minutes. All were held in Hebrew (except one interview that was partly conducted in English). Interviews were then registered, translated and edited by the author.

wider and dynamic social relations, namely the situational ‘social surface’ (Bourdieu 1986, 69–72) that eschew anachronistic rationality-led distortions of social behaviour (Levi 1989). Consequently, it traces different social trajectories and typical forms of social attitudes and status.

The use of the habitus within the processual analysis situates Israeli historians in their irreducible practices, unpacks their social proprieties and provides plausible ideal-type representations of the field in which they operate.⁶ In other words, the analysis juxtaposes personal biographies and historical factuality in Israeli chronicles. Although there are clear interrelations between the two, we commence a short view of key moments in Zionist, later Israeli, history and then proceed with some selected generational biographies of Israeli historians. The following diachronic subdivision enables us not only to surpass the mere narration and organisation of facts but also to provide sociopolitical validity in processual terms:

1. 1918–1948: This period commences with the end of the First World War, the partition of the Ottoman Empire, through the British Mandate in Palestine and concludes with the aftermath of the Second World War and Israeli independence. These decades are of great importance, since they comprise the major waves of Jewish immigration to Palestine (the so-called III–V *Aliyot*) and the territorial intensification of the Zionist enterprise with Palestine as the only possible ‘national home’ for Jews, following the Balfour Declaration (1917). Moreover, it sees the sociogenesis of Israeli academia to be with the foundation of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the institutionalisation of scientific disciplines (1918 onwards). Known as *Komemiyut*, Israel’s acquisition of independence was characterised by the generation of nationally acclaimed heroes and pioneers who forged the ‘Sabra model’ (Palestinocentric nativism) as an ideal-type Jew in his/her fight for independence.
2. 1949–1976: This period opens with the first steps of the nascent Jewish state and advances through the second generation of historians. It includes significant events such as the Eichmann Trial (1961), the first public account on the Shoah, as well as the Wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973. Moreover, it attests the expansion of academia in Israel with the opening of new universities and research institutes.

⁶On the definition and methodological value of such ‘ideal-types’, see Gaxie (2013).

The period of *Mamlakhtiyut*⁷ is characterised by the consociational (power-sharing) ‘republican civic-political ideology’ which has shaped a state-led national habitus that guaranteed social cohesion.⁸ With fully gained sovereignty, the latter faced the decade of economic austerity (1949–1959) and the hardships of the melting-pot policies (i.e. refugee absorption camps in the 1950s and the creation of development towns in periphery). This period institutionalises the pioneering achievements of labour-Zionism and celebrates Israel’s military strength (at least till the 1973 Kippur War).

3. 1977–nowadays: This period of most recent contemporaneity witnesses the decline of the quasi-hegemonic socialist Zionism (Ben-Gurion’s political heritage), culminating in the so-called *Ma’apah* (lit. Radical change, i.e. the victory of the centre-right party Likud, led by Menachem Begin, in the 9th legislative elections in 1977). In addition, in these decades, the Israeli public sphere becomes an arena of growing manifestations of ethnically based social cleavages between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Israelis (already surfaced in the Wadi Salib protest (1959) and in the foundation of the Israeli Black Panthers movement in 1971). Such tensions testified political and cultural fragmentation within Israeli society, as well as deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation which took form in tandem with the geopolitical developments, namely the 1982 Lebanon War and the First Intifada (1987–1993). The period also covers the political hardship of Israel’s peace processes with neighbouring countries, the Oslo Accords with the Palestinians and the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin (1995). It is reasonable to consider the current state as a consequence of the ‘banalisation of nationalism’ *vis-à-vis* post-modern and post-ideological stances (Billig 1995; Skey and Antonsich 2017). Yet, the fragmented sociopolitical Israeli fabric

⁷The term usually refers to Ben-Gurion’s dogmatic approach to guarantee political unity between different Zionist factions (Left\Right or religious\secular) in name of the Israeli and Jewish peoplehood. Not only did that approach mean the *cōnūbium* between socialist-oriented universalism and the centrality of religion in Israeli public rituality but it also meant the transition from a movement-based public system (e.g. welfare, health and education) to a state-based one (including party-related research institutions to be incorporated into universities).

⁸See Bareli and Kedar (2011). We adopt and use the term outside its original yet strict meaning that of institutional policy aimed to secure democracy, the rule of law, political participation and emphasise its weight as a source of shared civic values and collective identity.

reveals contradictions and peculiarities. Such a chaotic phase may be best described by the Hebrew term *Artzyiut*. The latter denotes materiality, worldliness, tangibility and corporeality in opposition to solemn and unquestionable ‘spirituality’ of the Jewish nation-state.

16.3 HISTORIOGRAPHIC GENERATIONS AS SHAPERS AND PRODUCTS OF THE ISRAELI NATIONAL HABITUS

The short view of key events in Israeli history frames biographies within their context, while the latter serve as examples for some of the structural changes in Israeli society. Therefore, it is possible to trace a continuum between the macro and micro levels, hence, permitting the construction of historiographical generations out of sociopolitical generations. The following are generational ideal types, based on the development of academia, personal career trajectories and sociological features.

16.3.1 *The First Generation of Historians*

The opening of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (founded in 1918 and inaugurated in 1925) symbolised the revival of Jewish thought and intellectual life in Palestine which followed the scientific paradigms of nation-building that were being imported from nineteenth-century central Europe (where the majority of scholars immigrated from). The first chairs of Jewish History were established in 1926–1928. Certainly, the peculiarity of establishing two separated history departments: a general one (Eurocentric) and a Jewish one (dedicated to national studies).⁹ Despite ideological differences (originating from Zionism’s inner currents: socialist, liberal, lay, religious, etc.), the so-called Jerusalem School sought to revitalise the spiritual connection between Jews, Judaism and the Land of Israel. Professionally trained in *Mitteleuropa* between the Austro-Hungarian, Russian and German Empires, the first generation of

⁹It is noteworthy to mention the philological approach to history studies imported from German universities, especially. Moreover, the division of the two history departments attest the twofold autonomisation of the discipline, since Jewish history not only wished to concentrate on national (Hebrew and Jewish in Diaspora and in Palestine) but it also wished to differentiate itself from Jewish theology, philosophy and archaeology. In the first decades of the Hebrew University, see Selzer (2013).

‘Israeli’ historians: Ben-Zion Dinur (1884–1973), Yizhak Baer (1888–1980), Joseph Klausner (1874–1958) ending with Shmuel Ettinger (1919–1988) opted for a deterministic communitarian modernity, historicist and nationalist in its vision entailing individuals to be identified by ethnic, linguistic and other cultural criteria (Sternhell 2010). In their endeavour to reconstruct the history of ancient *Eretz Yisrael*, they began with what can be called the creation of a new ‘survival unit’, separated from the Jewish Diaspora in time and space. To paraphrase Elias’s words, they initiated a developmental process structuring a new frame of societal reference and ‘conscience-formation’, different from ‘the traditional ethos of attachment’, ‘a protection unit on which depends their physical and social security in the conflicts of human groups [...]’ (Elias 2001, 178, 208). For the roots of the Jewish people to be rediscovered, they started a philological operation concerning ancient Palestine and the sociopolitical relationships of Jewish communities in Diaspora. To put it another way, their scholarly work focused on culture, religion, political organisation and so on; all studies that had already been done in Europe but in novel connection with the land of Palestine. By doing so, not only did they establish the new academic field of Jewish History in pre-independent Israeli academia but also they equally grounded and justified Jewish existence and deserved statehood in that territory. The latter came to support Israel’s unity and uniqueness *vis-à-vis* other nation-states, following the narrative of ‘light unto the nations’, as well as to endorse the country’s role in being the cultural centre of Judaism.

Public resonance and official acknowledgement were soon to follow. One figure deserves special attention: Prof. Ben-Zion Dinur. Born in 1884 in Khorol, Russian Empire, Dinur (born Dinaburg) received a religious (Hasidic) education in different *yeshivot* (rabbinical schools) and even became a certified Rabbi (1902). However, he was equally interested in *Haskalah* (Jewish enlightenment) and espoused Zionism. He studied Roman history in Berlin (supervised by Michael Rostovtzeff and Eugen Täubler), Bern and Saint Petersburg. He immigrated to Palestine in 1921 and served as a teacher (1923–1948) and as head of the Jewish Teachers’ Training College in Jerusalem. In 1936, he was appointed lecturer in modern Jewish history at the Hebrew University and became a full professor in 1948. He was inspired by Herzlian thought and the works by Jewish historian Simon Dubnow (1860–1941). His social and intellectual abilities soon placed him within local intelligentsia where he got close to David Ben-Gurion. The latter endorsed Dinur’s candidacy to the first Knesset on

the MAPAI list (that of Labour Zionists). After being elected, he served as Minister of Education and Culture in the third to sixth governments (1951–1955). Among his political achievements, one can point out: the 1953 State Education Law, which neutralised factionist and competing education networks (the formalisation of *Mamlakhtiyut*), the initiation of the Israel Prize in 1953 (he himself was awarded twice: in 1958 and in 1973) and the establishment and headship of Yad Vashem (1953–1959). He became professor emeritus in 1952 and died in 1973. Dinur's exceptional political career may be considered the first, not to say exemplary, 'ideal-type' of a politically engaged academic who invested his intellectual capital in active and formal politics. His outstanding career, though by no means representative, delineates the highest trajectory of academics at that time and set the bars of accomplishment for future historians.

16.3.2 *The Second Generation of Historians*

As Israel was establishing its autonomous identity from diasporic Judaism, it slowly began addressing the years of *Komemiyut*. The Hebrew University lost its academic monopoly with the opening of other universities, especially in relation to Tel Aviv University (1956),¹⁰ but succeeded in 'exporting' the academic division between general and Jewish history to the nascent university (Cohen 2014). Though the historiographical training at the Hebrew University remained prevalent, an alumnus and lecturer, the historian Yisrael Kolatt (1927–2007) formalised a new academic interest for the founding fathers of Israel, especially connected to the ideological world of labour Zionism. He was later followed by historians Yosef Gorny (1933): a Hebrew University graduate and Anita Shapira (1940), a Tel Aviv University graduate. The two were born in Warsaw (Poland) and lived the dramatic events of the Second World War. Moreover, both were officially trained in general history studies in Israeli academia and eventually combined their studies with Jewish studies. They were the first ones to establish 'Israel Studies' within the historiographic field of ancient *Eretz Yisrael* studies. Their interest was soon shared by 'Sabra' historians such as

¹⁰The latter had only been preceded by Bar-Ilan University (founded in 1955) which was aimed to offer high education to the orthodox Jews in Israel.

Zeev Zahor (1941–2017), Yoav Gelber (1943), Yaacov Shavit (1944) and Israel Bartal (1946), among others.¹¹

With the numeric increase in historians specialising in pre-Independence Israeli history, variations in topics of research became part of the discipline (e.g. military history, Jewish immigration, ideological movements etc.). For instance, key ideologues such as Brenner, Katznelson and David Ben-Gurion were gradually ‘historicised’ into their biographies, a genre still appreciated and practised in Israel (Halamish 2013). That is to say that the majority of them embraced the state-centric national habitus and focused on the personas who delivered it into the Israeli survival unit. This generation of historians could also be professionally distributed between different academic institutions, that is, Haifa University (1963), which had been planned as a humanist studies centre *vis-à-vis* the scientific Technion, and Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (1969) which was aimed at improving the conditions in Israel’s periphery by providing public higher education. They represent the so-called Ivory Tower, but still have had much to do with public engagement and are often characterised as ‘public intellectuals’ due to institutional acknowledgement.¹² The biography of prof. Anita Shapira exemplifies the abovementioned cases.

Born in Warsaw in 1940, Anita Shapira immigrated to Palestine in 1947 and grew up in Tel Aviv in precarious economic conditions. She studied general and Jewish history at Tel Aviv University. After obtaining her master’s degree (1968), her professor, Shlomo Na’aman (1912–1993), recommended her to pursue doctoral research abroad, but she was unable to do so, due to family and economic constraints. She thus began working (only for few years) as a high school teacher. She later returned to Tel Aviv University and completed her PhD in 1974 under the supervision of prof. Daniel Carpi (1926–2005). Her dissertation entitled ‘The Struggle for Hebrew Labor, 1929–1939’ became a book in 1977. She was appointed a full professor at Tel Aviv University in 1985, and became a member of the

¹¹That is not to say that all these historians maintained Zionism and Israel as the sole object of research (as in-depth structured interviews attest, as long as the complete list of publication of each historian). The case of Bartal, the youngest member of the ‘Jerusalem School’ in the 1970, clearly shows a prevalent focus on diasporic Jewish history, while in Shavi’s case the list is eclectic (e.g. history of the political Zionist right, African-American social history, Jews and Darwin, etc.).

¹²The literature on intellectuals is immense. For two different interpretations, see Posner (2001) and Matonti and Sapiro (2009). On the highest acknowledgement for scholars in Israel (the Israel Prize), see Ben-Amos (2004).

Planning and Budgeting Commission of the Council for Higher Education in Israel (1985–1989), served as dean of the Faculty of Humanities (1990–1995) and was the first woman ever to be nominated to that position. She held the Ruben Merinfeld Chair for the Study of Zionism (1995–2009) and headed the Chaim Weizmann Institute for the Study of Zionism at the university (2000–2012). Outside the academic field, she chaired the board of Am Oved Publishing House (1987–1990) and directed the Israel Democracy Institute (2008–2013). Since 1988, she has been a board member of the Zalman Shazar Institute for Jewish History. She founded the Yitzhak Rabin Center for Israel Studies and was the centre's first director (1996–1999). From 2002 to 2008, she was president of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. She received the Israel Prize for History in 2008.

Similarly to the generation that had preceded the second generation of Israeli historians contributed to the nationalisation of Jewish history and initiated the interest in Israeli history. The latter, anchored to both Zionism and Zionism, left aside Jewish Diaspora and concentrated on the nascent nation-state. Hence, the first steps of the survival unit were codified as scholarly knowledge on which the Israeli national habitus would increasingly be based.

16.3.3 *The Third Generation of Historians*

While the first generation can be labelled as 'founders of Israeli academia', and the second categorised as 'builders of Israeli pre-Independence history', the third generation has no precise classificatory position. On the one hand, it comprises those historians who have contributed to the continuous edification of Israel's sense of belonging and, on the other, those who work on Israeli history critically and wish to preserve the Zionist *acquis* yet to put it in a broader perspective. That is to say, not only to consider the Zionist enterprise under the geopolitical magnifying glass alone but also to research the social and economic domains of Israeli life in relation to the country's more recent contemporaneity. The fact is not important by itself, but it certainly reflects the plurality of voices in Israeli academia and greater society; a radical change from the monolithic social order of Israel's first decades. Some historians imported new paradigms and scientific interests (e.g. area studies, gender studies, cultural history, etc.) to Israeli historiography. They confronted their works with other academic disciplines, mainly sociology and law, despite epistemic and

methodological differences. This can be explained by the increase of historians' interest in socially relevant issues, as well as by the interest of sociologists to use archival materials and to add different empiric evidence to sociological research. It thus demonstrates the broadening of interdisciplinary research, although the traditional separation between 'general' history, Jewish history and Middle-Eastern history has yet to be overcome.

Nonetheless, Haifa University initiated a specific department of Israeli Studies, while Ben-Gurion University presents the only case of incorporation of Humanities and Social Sciences into the same faculty. But these changes did not occur in a calm academic environment. Tensions concerning historiographic 'truths' related to the Israeli–Arab conflict and later Zionist action during the Holocaust, surfaced when journalist and historian, Benny Morris (1948) published his article 'The New Historiography: Israel confronts its past'.¹³ The author coined the label of Israeli 'new historians',¹⁴ attributing to some scholars an objective historiographic approach *vis-à-vis* ideologically engaged historians. Many of the second-generation historians took immediate issue with the former's stand, accusing him and the other labelled scholars of postmodern and post-Zionist agendas.¹⁵ The academic and political case challenged the academic establishment and its statehood-based historiography. Since Israeli 'new historians' emerged, the pertinacious debate over ideology and subjectivity has never truly ceased. The polemic brought about different career trajectories within the same scholarly group. Whereas Morris kept producing a traditional objectivist historiography, mitigated much of his early radical stands and changed research interests,¹⁶ Ilan Pappé (1954) radicalised his views

¹³The article was published in the American Jewish magazine *Tikkun* 3/6 (1988) and soon became a book, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem 1947–1949* (1988, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

¹⁴The label refers to the group of scholars who have re-elaborated Zionist/Israeli history—once new archival materials became accessible in the 1980s. In addition to Benny Morris, we must mention, not exhaustively, historians Ilan Pappé, Simha Flapan, Avi Shlaim, as well as sociologist Baruch Kimmerling. Yet neither these scholars nor those who would be inspired by them later on (e.g. Idith Zertal, Shlomo Sand, Uri Ram, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin) can be labelled as a homogenous group due to biographical differences and very different career trajectories.

¹⁵Poignant criticism regarding the 'new historians' is in Shapira (1995); see also Friling (2003).

¹⁶Benny Morris later denounced the anti-Zionist approach of other new historians and identified himself a Zionist. He especially criticised Ilan Pappé's inaccurate and ideologised analysis of events in the latter's 2004 book *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two*

on Israeli history and politics, following his defence of Teddy Katz's controversial master's thesis on the Tantura Massacre, which subsequently led him to leave Israel and move to teach at Exeter University in 2007.

In this regard, the historiographical debate mirrors the greater change in Israeli society. As suggested by Gutwein (2001), individualism and privatisation of memory have triumphed over the once *Mamlakhti*, republican and collectivistic, spirit of Israeli citizenry, from both the political ends. Inasmuch as scholarly taste and research interests attest a shift from a macro-led history to a micro-history, whose emphasis is centred on the single individual, the compactness of the national Zionist habitus and its attachment to the Jewish nation-state survival unit may seem to undergo fragmentation. Nevertheless, while the impasse between ideological stands persists, there have been emerging a novel generation of scholars who 'escape' politicised historicism. Likhovski (2010) characterises the latter as 'post-post-Zionists historians' that have produced a more micro kind of Israeli historiography after abandoning the grand geopolitical and controversial issues, namely the 1948 War and Israel and the Holocaust, which had been studied by new historiography. The apparent scholarly escapism stands against both hot and banal nationalism (Billig 1995), as well as against the polarisation of social cleavages (socioeconomic, religious, ethnic etc.). As many other contemporary statehood-based survival units, Israel is in constant relations with 'other outsider strata or survival units which, on their part, are pressing from below, from their position as oppressed outsiders, against the current establishment' (Elias, 2000, 382). In this respect, Israeli national historiography, Jewish and Zionist, has reflected the society which it sought to understand and construct, therefore, demonstrating different reactions to all troubled times.

16.4 CONCLUSION

This chapter presents the world of Israeli historians working on Israeli history as both theorists and practitioners of the national survival unit in which they live, operate and whose habitus they experience and contribute to foster. Their intellectual and social biographies are thus interconnected

Peoples (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press). Morris eventually abandoned the Israel-Palestine historiography and began focusing on late Ottoman and early Turkish history (see e.g. Morris et al. 2019. *The Thirty-Year Genocide: Turkey's Destruction of Its Christian Minorities, 1894–1924*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

as they inter-cross different fields. Israeli historians' biographies exemplify trajectories which often combine academia and politics, and are identified with macro-generational elements, though without any social or ideological determinism, inasmuch as there is no one 'ideal-type' of historian. In other words, this prosopographic approach leaves aside neither personal biographies nor professional training. Such an enquiry requires periodisation and contextualisation in order to provide generalisable processual frames. Not only does it enable to surpass the mere narration and organisation of facts, but it also delineates different junctures in the establishment of Israel's 'survival unit' without forgetting its relevance to the individually interiorised national habitus. The aim is not to argue that all Israeli historians have been equally politicised but rather to trace back the different 'ideal-typical' profiles that have been stratified and that are present, to changing extent, in Israeli national historiography.

First-generation historians set the rules, not only of scholarly work but also of the structural academic model to follow; academia and politics seem to have been much intertwined. Their social role of being Zionist entrepreneurs and founders of the Israeli identity-based sociopolitical 'habitus' was later 'inherited' as a legacy by the second generation of Israeli historians who still reflects some of the former's attachment to the uniqueness of Jewish, and consequently Israeli, history. The full edification of the academic system (e.g. the establishment of different universities and the inauguration of pre-Israel history as a legitimate subject for historiographic work) has attributed to some historians the label of 'public intellectuals', with no need to enter politics in terms of career choice and posited them alongside the nation-state and its politics (as most of them were identified as supporters of the governing left-wing Zionism). This strongly identifiable category cannot be so easily applied to the third generation of Israeli historians because of the fragmentation of Israeli historiography as a monolithic field. Changes regarding methodology and paradigms brought tensions about. However, what commenced as an intellectual revolution, that is, Israel's 'new historians', did not demolish the structures set by the second generation of historians. Yet it refracted the once one-sided approach and revealed multiple possible directions for Israeli historians to take. It seems there is no more ideal-type to fully model Israeli historiography.

Nowadays' Israeli historiography is characterised, on the one hand, by the echoes of post-and even post-post-Zionism, with practical 'lessons' learnt mostly in Haifa and Ben-Gurion universities; and on the other, by

the attempts to combine greater self-critique with the maintenance of Zionist-anchored academic work. Of course, that is not to say that the historiographic generations can be so dichotomised, considering that each case offers a wide range of possibilities (including personal backgrounds and scientific approaches). This multitude reflects the wider universe of Israeli politics and society. Though no specific categorisation is possible, the fact that different debates have taken place, thus implying some degree of mutual recognition (at least within academia), further strengthens the initial assertion on the importance of content-context analysis.

In conclusion, Israel's national historiography reveals generational dialectics reflecting the country's national habitus and the survival unit which holds and fosters it. The case study permits contextualisation by applying general facts to the scholarly category. Only by combining the macro-level of the political\societal occurrences with the more micro-level of a specific group can we reconstruct the role politics plays in academia (and probably vice versa). This trajectory-led analysis is a valuable tool and is highly interdisciplinary as it entails the wholeness of politics and society alike. Historians re-interpret history and the meaning of events. The professional endeavour is accompanied by craft but also by biographical and social features. Like the historiography they produce, Israeli historians shape as much as they are shaped by their own life experiences and thus portray what and how people perceive and evaluate the past as well as the national identity. Moreover, the case enables us to contain the conditions of the complex mechanisms and forces of civilisation and socialisation of the Israeli national habitus into the structure of the nation-based survival unit.

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The Established and the Outsiders: An Incomplete Study?

Reinhard Blomert

17.1 A CUCKOO'S EGG AMONG THE WORKS OF NORBERT ELIAS?

In 1965, the publishing house Frank Cass & Co began a new series with the title 'New Sociology Library'. The publisher, who gave the supervision into the hands of Norbert Elias, was Frank Cass born in 1930 in London as a child of Jewish parents of Russian-Polish extraction. When the war led to his evacuation to a Welsh town, he had to adapt to the world of a mining community, where he felt 'warmly welcome and received help from his neighbours' (Holmes 2009). In 1957, when he was 27, he founded his own imprint in London, publishing history and social science books of which copyrights had expired. Later he published new research—among them the study discussed here—as well as biographies and military histories and, following his purchase of Woburn Press, also literature. He started publishing academic journals, among them journals on slavery and

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,

https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_17

abolition, immigrants and minorities or Jewish culture and history and Holocaust studies. In his obituaries, he was described as someone who ‘particularly enjoyed his role as unofficial publisher to the Anglo-Jewish community’ (Freedland 2007, s. a. Black 2008). With all this in mind, it is clear why he was a publisher with an interest in the book that he published under the title *The Established and the Outsiders*. He might not only have felt solidarity with a fellow Jew, who had been expelled, but would also have trusted in the name of the sociologist at that new department of the University of Leicester. He gave him the chance to establish a series of social science books under the title ‘New Sociology Library’.

Only when the book was published in 1965, it ‘was not widely read at the time’ (Mennell 1989 [1992], 116). In the 1990s, Cass sold the title, and the second edition from 1994 was published by Sage Publications with an introductory essay that had originally been written for the Dutch edition from 1976 (Wilterdink 2002, 318). Since then, it has come to be used as a ‘classic text’ because of its ‘apparent analytical utility to a wide variety of empirical cases’ (Hughes et al. 2018, 4). The German translation, which was also reissued with the new introduction before the second English edition, was and still is very frequently quoted and used as a theoretical underpinning for studies on the integration of migrants (see Treibel 2017).

On the cover of the original edition, Elias’s name appears first and John Lloyd Scotson’s name is beneath it in equal-sized letters (Elias and Scotson 1965, cover). On the cover of the second edition, Scotson’s name is also in the second row, but it is written in smaller letters. The announcement ran as follows:

The Established and the Outsiders is a classic text from one of the major figures of world sociology. In Norbert Elias’s hands, a local community study of tense relations between an established group and outsiders—with no other discernible difference between them—becomes a microcosm that illuminates a wide range of sociological configurations including racial, ethnic, class and gender relations. The book examines the mechanisms of stigmatisation, taboo and gossip, monopolisation of power, collective fantasy and ‘we’ and ‘they’ images which support and reinforce divisions in society. Developing aspects of Elias’s thinking that relate his work to current sociological concerns, it presents the fullest elaboration of his concepts [...]. (Elias and Scotson 1965, cover)

The description as ‘a text from one of the major figures of world sociology’ does not mention Scotson’s role at all. Thus, it is suggested that Elias is the sole author of the book. Writing in 1989, Mennell remarked of the second author Scotson: ‘A sociological enquiry into community problems written in collaboration with John L. Scotson’ (Mennell 1989 [1992], 116). Here, Scotson appears as a ‘collaborator’. Michael Schröter, who translated and edited the text in German, did address that question in his editorial note in 1990 but not especially prominently when he began his translation of the introduction with: ‘*Zusammen mit einem Schüler und Kollegen, der zuvor Lehrer am Ort war, habe ich um 1960 eine kleine englische Vorortgemeinde untersucht*’ (‘Together with a student and colleague, who had been teacher at that place I studied a small English suburban community around 1960’, author’s translation). This sentence cannot be found in the English version of that introductory essay from 1994.

In a collection of Elias’s works, Mennell and Goudsblom wrote in 1998: ‘Elias’s first reference to the established–outsiders distinction was ‘in the report on an empirical study, carried out with John L. Scotson. While Scotson collected the field data, it was Elias who did the conceptual and theoretical work’ (1998, 25).

The editorial note of the German edition of the *Collected Writings of Elias* by Nico Wilterdink also contains this formulation; he refers to the text, ‘which originated in the collaboration between Elias and Scotson’ and was ‘in conceptual design and text arrangement entirely the work of Elias’ (own translation: the original German reads ‘*in Konzeption und Textgestaltung ganz das Werk von Elias*’, Wilterdink 2002, 318). This is a vague formulation; it conceals the question of the authorship with the word *ganz* (entirely), which implicitly gives the impression of scaling down Scotson’s role to that of a mere informer. So, the book is edited as a work by Elias as in Volume 4 of the *Collected Writings* John Scotson’s name only pops up in a supplementary capacity (‘with John L. Scotson’). What is omitted in these formulations is the question of authorship. The suggestion of the second English edition was that Elias was the main author. But Scotson did not merely deliver the data; the core of the text is his master’s thesis.

For some time, it was impossible to know who contributed which part exactly. Indeed, this was only possible when John L. Scotson’s sons got their father’s legacy and found a typescript of the study on ‘The Established and The Outsiders’. This prompted them to ask the Elias community whether they would be interested in it, upon which Jason Hughes and

Michael Dunning compared the Scotson thesis and the book. Thus, it emerged that the main corpus of the book was nearly identical to the thesis. In the book version, there are a lot of enrichments to the text with theoretical and historical reflections. The annexes with the initials 'N.E'. were by Norbert Elias alone.

Looking at the main corpus of the book, we find detailed research on intergroup tensions in the mode of empirical sociology, a thick description of kinship and neighbourhood connections, child care, juvenile behaviour and delinquency, with 'demographic tables and the results of attitude surveys, gossip, teen-age behaviour, social ostracism' (Elias and Scotson 1965, cover) and even the lyrics of a song. The work also includes snippets of conversations with some of the inhabitants' idiomatic speech. It reveals that the author was an intimate observer of the investigated subject. Scotson was at that time a lecturer at Loughborough College of Further Education and studied economics and government at the University of Leicester, where he completed his master's degree. He had spent some years teaching in secondary schools 'in the Midlands' (Elias and Scotson 1965, cover). And when the author writes, 'If one worked for a while in Winston Parva one was left in no doubt about them' (Elias and Scotson 1994, 5), it is clear that the 'one' was Scotson who knew the case from his insider knowledge:

One of the authors had worked there for a number of years and knew it from close personal experience. He carried out interviews of every thirtieth household on the electoral register in each of the three zones ... He organized for a time a local youth club and taught at school there. (Elias and Scotson 1994, 3-4)

Elias was at the time a reader at the university with the title of professor of sociology. His part was to supervise and help his student and colleague. Scotson himself writes in the introduction to his thesis, where he states that Elias 'patiently guided' and 'encouraged the progress of the work' 'from the earliest discussions'. Such 'consultation' and 'frequent meetings' are not unusual for an academic figuration (Scotson 1962, I; see also Hughes et al. 2018, 6 ff.). At the first glance, it may therefore seem unusual that the book was not published under the name of the author, but under both names, the name of the author and the name of his supervisor. But, in comparison to the thesis, we find a lot of enrichments that make sense of all the findings or, as Hughes et al. write, 'Elias was able to

contribute theoretical insights into the sociological problems being unearthed' (2018, 7). Elias gave inspiration to the book that 'clarified the theoretical concepts of social investigation and illuminated the relationship between theory and actual social situation'.

It may have been a common practice in English academia, to turn a postgraduate thesis or excellent master's thesis into a book jointly written with the supervisor. But looking at the sober thesis and the enriched book, and looking at Scotson not as a student, but as a colleague, which he also was already at the time when he wrote that thesis, the case is less difficult to understand: it was a book, written in a division of labour by two colleagues.

On the question, why the name of Scotson was scaled down in the second English edition, we can thus only guess. In Frank Cass' edition, the names stood equally and alphabetically as authors, and in the second edition, the name of Scotson was only supplementary. The German translation, where the names stood equally abreast, was published in the year when Elias died. We do not know whether and how he attended the German edition. But he was surely not involved in the second English edition, which came out four years later. We do not know how this was done, but we might speculate that it was the idea of the Sage publisher, who was especially interested in the publication of the book of a sociologist, who had now acquired a worldwide reputation, as the above-mentioned announcement underlines. It is clear that he would not have published the book of an unknown teacher who did not have an established academic career.

What was Elias's motivation to make a joint book out of that text? Why did he take interest in that project? Stephen Mennell remembers the situation that Elias found himself in at the time: no one in England was interested in historical sociology, which had been his approach and the scientific frame of his works until then and also later on. It seems that he felt forced to publish something that would help 'to justify his claim not to be simply an historical sociologist but to have developed an approach applicable to present day problems too' (Mennell 1989, 116). The book would serve this end and be in keeping with the English sociological discourse of the time, which embraced community studies, neighbourhood problems, and postwar issues of social psychology.

Stephen Mennell points to Elias's interest in established and outsider relations 'since his childhood life as a Jew in Germany' and interprets it as 'a vehicle for the theoretical elaboration of ideas which had been in his

mind at least since the 1935 essay on the Huguenots' (Mennell 1989, 21). Indeed, the issue was already evident in an article for a Jewish community in Mannheim from 1930, where he addresses the gap that came up during the Weimar years between the Jewish and the Christian bourgeoisie and a growing feeling of competition after the end of the monarchy in the unsafe state of Weimar. And it was even identifiable in one of the anecdotes, which he had published in a Berlin magazine in the Weimar time, where he pointed to the ostracism of an Athenian citizen, who had done nothing wrong (Elias 2002 [1924]).

His feelings of a Jew surely provided a general context for his concern with established-outsider relations. But he was also an outsider in England and in the community of English universities. Since he had learned English late and was already 57 years old when he got the post of a lecturer at the Department of Sociology in Leicester, he was an outsider at the university as well. He may have been a good teacher, since he had always seen himself as a teacher whose role it was to pass the torch of knowledge to the next generation. The number of disciples of his who subsequently came to prominence (e.g. Martin Albrow) attests to his pedagogic success. But of course, he had to establish his name in the corpus of the English world of sociology, as all his writings before had been in German.

And finally, it might be not too far-fetched to speculate that the book would have been intended also to keep up with the sociological discussions of the time. In 1950, his old Frankfurt rival Theodor W. Adorno had published his *Authoritarian Personality: Studies in Prejudice* together with three colleagues, a book, which had had a strong influence on American social sciences. Nathan Glazer, full of admiration, had written, 'no volume published since the war in the field of social psychology has had a greater impact on the direction of the actual empirical work being carried on in the universities today' (Glazer 1954). In this book Elias implicitly gave a sociological answer to Adorno by convincingly showing that prejudice is not a personal shortcoming, not a personal fault, as Adorno's American study on authoritarian personality had suggested, but instead something that is constructed as part of a social mechanism of group cohesion.

Then we can reconstruct the situation as follows: the author of the text corpus is not Elias but Scotson. Elias would never have applied a sober empirical frame like that. But he had given that corpus a broader theoretical scheme, with historical and theoretical reflections, that were integrated as enrichments into the main text of the book. The publisher would have liked to publish the book of a prominent sociologist, and Scotson might

have been satisfied that his thesis would be printed. And for Elias, the text could act as a bridge not only to the English but also to the American and indirectly to the German sociological public.

17.2 THE CRITIQUE: A THEORETICAL STRAITJACKET?

When Daniel Bloyce and Patrick Murphy scrutinized the book in 2007, they had the impression that Elias had ‘allowed his (own) concerns to cloud his assessment of Scotson’s’ part by ‘overriding’ the data that Scotson had gathered. And indeed, looking at the original, as far, as we know it, the aim of the study was to reconstruct the occurrence and sources of juvenile delinquency, while Elias had tried to expose the ‘heuristic value of his concepts of the established and the outsiders’ (Bloyce and Murphy 2007, 4). Whether this was an ‘overriding’ of the Scotson thesis, and an ‘example of the way in which intellectual commitments—in much the same way as ideological commitments—can lead to a level of involvement that detracts from the adequacy of the emerging explanation’ (Bloyce and Murphy 2007, 4), seems questionable. It is part of the process of academic papers that they may change the focus of the conception and show a new direction or an adjustment to new facts. Nonetheless, their detailed critique takes Elias’s sociological devices seriously, and some of Bloyce and Murphy’s critiques read like a good advisor’s opinion.

First, Winston Parva had three zones, one middle-class zone (zone 1) and two mostly working-class zones (zones 2 and 3). The study insufficiently describes the power relations, as the inhabitants of Zone 1 felt superior to the inhabitants of Zone 2, the ‘villagers’, and of Zone 3. Bloyce and Murphy therefore ask why the authors focus on the relations between Zones 2 and 3 and call the inhabitants of Zone 2 ‘the established’, while ‘the real established’ lived in Zone 1.

Second, while the people of Zone 2 accepted their own inferiority to those of Zone 1 and to the tinier middle-class group in their own zone (12), Bloyce and Murphy question whether the people of Zone 3 really accepted their status of inferiority, as Elias and Scotson suggest: Did the people of Zone 3 not come to dominate the Hare and Hounds pub and did they not conquer the working men’s club, both located in the village?

To the first point of critique, Scotson and Elias give the answer that the difference between Zone 1 people and the people of Zones 2 and 3 is not surprising, and the more interesting question would be, how to explain the difference in social status between two working-class neighbourhoods.

The second point also has weight, but the reproduction of the answers of the interviews are not to be doubted, where they found this as self-estimation of the people of Zone 3.

Whatever Bloyce and Murphy put into question, they also see the book's great merits:

The Established and the Outsiders can still be seen to constitute something of a break with the approach to community studies that prevailed at the time it was written. The authors' approach diverged from the persuasive tendency to romanticise the notion of community, a tendency dating back at least as far as Tönnies and, indeed, one that is still common today. It was also at explicit variance with the functionalist paradigm that had hitherto been dominant. Their analysis shifted the balance away from a one-sided preoccupation with processes of integration to one that took more account of social conflict. In their Preface to *The Established and the Outsiders*, Elias and Scotson (1965, ix) wrote that, as their study proceeded, they gradually became aware that some of the problems they were addressing 'had a paradigmatic character: they threw light on problems which one often encountered on a much larger scale in society at large'. (Bloyce and Murphy 2007, 5–6)

Bloyce and Murphy's characterization of the then-prevailing studies as having a 'persuasive tendency to romanticise the notion of community' (the inhabitants of one part of Winston Parva named their area 'the village') seems unconvincing. The relevance of territoriality in England is well known, as there—in contrast to Ireland—regional and local affiliations (to neighbourhoods) have always been more important than blood relationships (see, e.g. Schröder 1997, 11). But they are right to accentuate that the Elias and Scotson study shifts away from processes of integration to the role of social conflict.

Moreover, when one considers the characteristic tools Elias worked with, a suspicion arises. Yes, we find personal pronouns as perspectives for sociological insights, as we know from *What is Sociology?*, we find group charisma and group disdain as descriptions of the types of relationships, which was a sociological answer to Adorno's individualistic approach to prejudice, and we know that the issue of his group charisma was a concern of his at that time, as he gave a paper at the Max Weber Congress of Sociology in 1964, a year before the book was published. But the lack of historical processual methodology is striking and raises questions.

As Elias once explained, his understanding of method was dependent ‘on the object of investigation’, but it is clear that he always advocated historical sociology, which is sometimes called process-sociology. Time was an important factor in understanding social relations and relations between societies. His concepts of civilization and habitus or national mentality and national character are built on reconstructions of historical events and historical formations of states and personalities and the consciousness of societies. There are very few exceptions in his works that do not apply this method, one of which is the above-mentioned essay on ‘The Expulsion of the Huguenots from France’, written in 1935 in Paris, two years after he himself had been expelled from Germany. While Mennell and Goudsblom state that ‘in this essay and the more comprehensive theory of the established–outsiders relationships it anticipates, Elias cannot completely disguise his powerful sympathy for outsiders of every kind’ (1998, 9), Bloyce and Murphy see this as ‘a further indication of the difficulties of moving from the principles of the involvement/detachment thesis to its application’. This may be so, but the text about the Huguenots was not conceived as a scientific work, as it was published in a literary context, a collection edited by Klaus Mann in Amsterdam. The fact that Elias also saw himself as someone who contributes also to contemporary literature—as a literary author or poet—may not be common knowledge. Yet, his first publication after his dissertation was a collection of anecdotes for the *Berliner Illustrierte Zeitung* in 1924 (Elias 2002 [1924])—a literary product. He also wrote ballads and poems, which form one volume in his *Collected Writings*.

A more relevant question, it seems to me, is how Elias came to support stationary descriptions like the established–outsider distinction and addressed them as a ‘universalism’ and as of ‘paradigmatic character’? He—or they—might have recognized this when they wrote, that ‘it would have required a prolongation of the research beyond its allotted time to investigate the long-term effects of this “experiment” on the relationship between the two neighbourhoods and especially on the traditional image which the established residents had formed of the outsiders’ (Elias and Scotson 1965, 85). And Elias stated: ‘We should not handle this problem as a problem of now and here. [...] It is important, to see groups and their processes in the court of time, if one wants to understand, what it will say, that human beings distance from another group as “they” form their own “we-group”. There are a lot of variances of segregation, and a lot of examples of polarization with different backgrounds’ (Elias Introduction in Elias and Scotson 1994).

It is interesting to note that he cites in a longer part of this 1994 introduction the examples of the Burakumin of Japan and the Indian figuration of castes as cases of very great power differentials. Both figurations belong to the 'longest group processes of its kind of which we have some written documentary evidence' (Elias in Elias and Scotson 1994, xviii). While the Burakumin appear to be descendants of low-ranking occupational groups, such as those associated with death, childbirth or animal slaughter, the Indian caste system originated in the conquest of the former population of India by conquerors from the north (Elias in Elias and Scotson 1994, xlviii). So instead of the psychological fact of distancing, he detects the model of social distancing (Park 1924), which in the case of the untouchable ('outcasts') fitted into the sociological model of *Überlagerung*, which he knew from his time in Frankfurt (Rüstow 1950).

When Karl Mannheim went to Frankfurt in 1930 to fill the position of the sociological chair at Frankfurt University, Elias went with him as his assistant. The previous holder of the chair had been Franz Oppenheimer, a sociologist from the discipline's very beginnings, who had, in a way, 'created' the sociological *Überlagerungstheorie* (theory of superposition), using concepts of the Vienna School of anthropology which posited that most domination relations are essentially superposition relations of one people over another or, as the English say, of one race over another: mobile warrior and equestrian people conquered the territory of a locally bound, peaceful peasant people and nomads came to dominate over residents, a process in which integration was not in the dominating group's interests. History is full of many such cases, and English history in particular is a chronicle of invasions of conquerors—Romans over Britons, Anglo-Saxons over Celts, Danes and Vikings over Anglo-Saxons, and finally, Normans over Anglo-Saxons. In all these cases, the goal was not integration but rule. One was a servant people, dominated and ruled by the other and protected from other rulers. It is a very reasonable and understandable model to apply to the whole history of the British Isles, which was 'essentially a chronicle of invasions' (Shultz 1971). But ruling groups did not remain rulers; the Romans came to rule and exploit the island and make it into a part of their world empire. Shultz writes: 'Roman rule became urban and efficient, but remained alien and therefore only temporary in its effects' (1971, 4). 'The Anglo-Saxon settlement established the fundamental character of Englishmen more than any other influx of immigrants, for it brought about more permanent results in racial composition than either the Celtic and Roman conquests that preceded, or the Norman invasion that was to follow. From the Anglo Saxons England received its

name, its language, its largest ethnic group, its shires and, for the first time, political unity as a single kingdom' (Shultz 1971, 10). What is interesting here is the temporal element; some instances of the rule are durable and some are not and integration is not necessarily always the outcome.

It is this model that was taken up by Karl Mannheim in his Hobhouse lecture in 1934 on 'Rational and Irrational Elements in Contemporary Society'. He stated that ethnologists and sociologists have shown that:

[...] all the highly developed cultures in history originated from the forcible conquest of autochthonous communities, mostly peaceful peasantries, by nomadic peoples. This element of coercion penetrated so deeply into the otherwise pacific peasant society that it dominated its whole structure. It is because this contradiction, which underlay the original social situation, has never, from the earliest times until today, been eradicated, that contemporary society is still so very antithetical in character. (Mannheim 1934, 24–25)

But Elias, who was very familiar with French history, was at that time not all that familiar with English history, where the principle of territoriality was the norm (Schröder 1997, 1); he only briefly mentioned that model in his introduction. In the case of Winston Parva, there was obvious competition of rank and power between groups that did not discernibly differ other than regarding their time of residence in a territory.

17.3 A LONGER-TERM PERSPECTIVE ON ESTABLISHED AND OUTSIDER RELATIONS: THE POWER BALANCE MOVEMENT IN THE CASE OF REFUGEES AFTER THE WAR IN GERMANY

The study of Elias and Scotson shows that group cohesion is a medium of power. It thus points out that it was not race, colour, nationality, or income but the length of continuous residence in a community that made the difference. This is what reinforced high degrees of group identification. And it is what endowed inhabitants with their strong feelings of pride and of belonging to a group of greater value: long-term cohesion devolved, so the study says, into a belief in divergent human value. The newcomers possessed no inner nexus. Coming from different regions in England—because they were looking for better incomes or because their factories had been moved to Winston Parva after 1940—these workers had brought with them their own personal sense of dislocation, of transplantation.

Thus, with a sense of collective shame, they accepted their roles as members of a group of lesser value.

Elias's interest was in showing that not 'all could be reduced to questions of control over economic power resources in the Marxian way', as Stephen Mennell has put it. The study provides a model for the process of excluding groups that are viewed as 'different'. As examples of such 'outsiders', Elias himself notes in his preface Jews, Blacks or homosexuals, and hints at the power of established groups to stigmatize them as deviant. Backed by group consent or 'group charisma', established groups have the power to debase others whereas members of outsider groups cannot respond in a similar fashion: a member of an outsider group cannot put a member of the established group to shame (Elias and Scotson 1965, 102).

Apart from its special purpose of showing something different from the mainstream of that time, the study may be surprising to readers of Elias, for it does not attempt to place the community in a broader and deeply rooted figurational context. This might be acceptable, as the empirical research was restricted by its frame. But it also offers only a mere stationary image where we would have expected a fully fledged figurational process. While he mentions time as a factor in his introduction of 1994, the study had by then been completed, and the two sociologists never returned to the community they had studied to learn how its figuration might have changed. From an Eliasian point of view, the study must be considered incomplete. We have seen enormous change since the 1950s, when the book was written: although the anthropological generalization of the established-outsider constellation still holds true and will continue to do so throughout time, the fate of the particular groups that were linked to this interpretation has changed. For instance, while the Jews felt secure in the *Kaiserreich*, as part of the middle class in opposition to the ruling aristocracy, they fell behind in the Weimar republic as the Christian bourgeoisie saw them now as competitors. Elias showed that a power balance is not fixed but changes with social and political circumstances. Indeed, having survived far worse persecution and even partial annihilation, the groups he invokes as examples have undergone a process of advancement and social and international acceptance. They have gained in power, so that, to a certain degree, groups of former outsiders have become powerful members of the established.

Today, some mayors of major European capitals are homosexual—the former mayor of Berlin became renowned for saying 'and it's a good thing'. Light has been shed on long-hidden lives in a great wave of

literature, theatre, and films on gay, lesbian, and queer people, who now find themselves at the centre of attention within the public sphere. And Israel, as the new state in which Jewish people have carved out a homeland for themselves, has transformed their position in the world, supported by a powerful group of states such as the USA and Germany. This does not mean that homophobia and anti-Semitism no longer exist, but it is obvious that there has been a change. And the election of a man of colour as president of the United States sends a strong signal that much racism in the USA has been overcome. But not all groups have undergone this process of emancipation—looking at the Sinti and Roma people, we detect nothing more than a change of name: we simply no longer use the word ‘gypsy’.

We do not know whether we would find a different power figuration in Winston Parva today, but if this were so, the book should have been called *Established and Newcomers*. In the following pages, I will give an example of one such difficult process of integrating newcomers that parallels that of the Winston Parva figuration. My example concerns the fate of the 12 to 14 million refugees in postwar Western Germany. I view my commentary as an addendum to Elias’s book; such a power constellation may well be fixed for generations, but it can nonetheless change over time.

Between 1945 and 1950, from northern Königsberg to southern Besarabia westward, 12 to 14 million people fled or were expelled from former German regions or German settlements in Eastern Europe. They came on foot, by horse-drawn wagon, or cattle cart, with no real belongings and few personal effects. Two million did not survive the trek. Germany had lost a quarter of its territory, so the arrival of these large groups amounted to a 100% population increase in some regions—without, however, a commensurate doubling of necessary foodstuffs or living space. The administrations of all four military zones thus had to cope with severe shortages of food, housing, and clothing. A full 70% of the displaced were sent to the countryside, where they were forced to live in sheds and huts. Many of them were undernourished or ill, and up to 3% of them died as a result. In some regions, the population increased by 25% within the space of five years; however, in parts of the French military zone far away from the Eastern German border, it was no more than 1% (Table 17.1).

Discrimination was routine—the strategies of demarcation and distinction were similar to those found in the case of Winston Parva. The outsiders were treated as persons of lesser worth. They were seen as *Flüchtlingspack*

Table 17.1 Numbers of refugees accepted in the occupied zones of Germany, Status: December 1947, (Johannes Dieter Steinert, 1995, 561)

<i>Region</i>	<i>Refugees and displaced persons</i>	<i>Percent of total population (%)</i>
Soviet-occupied zone	4,379,000	24.3
American-occupied zone	2,957,000	17.7
British-occupied zone	3,320,000	14.5
French-occupied zone	60,000	1.0

(‘refugee low lives’) and, although these people were actually Germans, they were called *Polacken* (Polaks) because some of them had come from regions where Poles lived. They were ridiculed because of their dialect when, for instance, a distinctive articulation of the letter R made them stand out. For, as Hannah Arendt said: ‘The authority of a group is always stronger and more tyrannical than the strongest authority of a single person can ever be’ (*‘Denn die Autorität einer Gruppe ist stets erheblich stärker und tyrannischer als die strengste Autorität einer einzelnen Person je sein kann’*.) Their settlements were dubbed ‘Little Moskau’ or ‘Paprikaville’ and so on; they were barred from associations and guilds, even from local fire brigades. Hence, they established their own communities, for example, as gardeners and caretakers of allotments (Kossert 2009, 133–135). Physicians from this group who began to practice in the 1950s were called *Flüchtlingsdoktoren* (‘refugee doctors’), and local people sent for them only when the normal physician was away. Religious differences also established lines of demarcation—the Eastern refugees brought with them a new religiosity, most of them being far more pious than the inhabitants of the established communities into which they came.

Discrimination went as far as to render all feelings of mourning for the lost homeland taboo. Neither the East German administration nor the Western public was interested in the public expression of, or comment or reflection on, such fates. These sentiments were articulated only in literary works or in venues where the displaced gathered amongst themselves. Fearing ‘revanchism’, the East German administration did not want to create problems with their Eastern European neighbours over the recognition of postwar boundaries.

The Western media showed no interest in such issues, as the established had a firm grasp on most of the posts in radio and the print media. The reasoning here was what Günter Grass identified as German guilt: guilt for

the war and the agonies and persecutions that Germans had perpetrated on the populace of Eastern Europe. But why then, of all people, should the displaced of Eastern Europe carry the burden, being neither better nor worse, but a group as heterogeneous as the Western established group? Of course, there were Nazis among them, but also Social Democrats, Christians, and members of the Catholic resistance, just as there were in Western parts of Germany. Issues of expulsion were tacitly considered off-limits—just as those of discrimination and demarcation were in such circles. It was only one year before the turn of the century, when W.G. Sebald (1999), a British author of German extraction, began to write about the cruelties of the Allied bombing of German towns, with their hundreds of thousands of civilian victims, did public interest begin to evolve and the taboos surrounding such reflection gradually begin to be lifted.

While the many groups of the expatriated came from very different regions—with thousands of kilometres lying between their original towns and villages and equally distinct histories—they now shared the fate of being exiles, as well as that of being newcomers in the settlements of the established. Thus, it was the policies of the Allies, and later those of the German civil administration rather than common origins that welded them together: these exiles felt strong bonds to their homelands, and, although the American and East German administrations strived for a ‘total fusion’ of the *Vertriebene* (‘displaced people’) with established inhabitants—in order to forestall the formation of a group of irredentists—integration was neither desired nor pursued by the West German civil government. Instead, they attempted to instrumentalize these people for their own political goal of regaining the lost Eastern territories—a goal they hoped to attain upon the defeat of communism.

The American administration did not allow the formation of refugee-specific political parties; in fact, even charitable organizations were forbidden. Some, however, managed to establish such charitable associations under the auspices of the church, and with the beginning of the German administration, all such organizations were supported as a matter of policy—the goal being to enable expatriates to preserve their cultural identity and thus serve as guarantors of German territorial claims. The internal mission of such organizations was to help provide the exiled with accommodation, to aid them in realizing their property claims, or help them to find lost family members. But most of these people—who came from the countryside and towns such as Breslau or Königsberg alike—had themselves been landowners, entrepreneurs, manufacturers, or craftsmen; they

therefore did not take the bait of discrimination. Having fled with very few of their own belongings, they could de facto be categorized as ‘poor’; they did not, however, allow their spirit to be broken. They retained their self-esteem. They did not accept degradation at the hands of the established, and so collective shame could not take effect. And yet, helpless as they were, they were unable to respond in kind: As Elias put it: ‘Stigmatisation [...] can have a paralyzing effect on groups with a lower power ratio, [...]. It may, for a while, cripple the ability of groups with a lower power ratio to strike back and to mobilise power resources within their reach’ (Elias and Scotson 1994, 20–21). They kept themselves at a cultural distance and retained their pride, at the expense of being accepted only within their own group.

As Michael Schwartz (Schwartz 1995) writes, the very necessity of rebuilding their social standing from nothing demonstrates the potentially dynamic social consequences of this mentality. They worked hard to reestablish their former social positions but were forced to reorient themselves within the society of the established and to position themselves within a new industrial environment. Most of the first generation of refugees were unable to compensate for their disadvantages as refugees. A disproportionately high number of the displaced were without work (Kossert 2009, 94). Yet soon they had gained a reputation as industrious workers with a strong moral code, a circumstance that speaks to what sociologists call ‘over-assimilation’.

When, in the early 1950s, the displaced were provided with a *Lastenausgleich*, that is, compensation for their lost property, contractual agreements stipulated that such compensation did not represent a deed of disclaimer on the part of the recipients: They were not renouncing their property rights per se. When they were provided with low-cost building loans, they began to establish new and separate communities; having houses of their own helped them regain self-esteem and attain social acceptance. Small towns—such as Waldkraiburg, Traunreut, Geretsried, or Espelkamp—emerged as refugee colonies. The establishment of such settlements furthered the growth of individual and group self-awareness. However, such policies were thus not without paradox, as some local administrations withheld building permits, looking to forestall the establishment of such concentrations of refugees, or because they wished to hinder the integration of the displaced and thus prolong their hopes of an imminent return to their homelands. When the Ministry of Displaced Persons closed its doors in 1969, with Germany’s ‘economic miracle’

nearing completion, sociologists began to declare the younger generation of the displaced 'integrated'. Yet, group-specific disadvantages did not disappear until the third generation.

The ethnologist Tolksdorf has developed a model of integration that is applicable to this case. The first phase was marked by a culture shock, and the second by cultural contact. In this second phase, dialect played a major role. At school, the children of the displaced were not able to speak in their own family dialects and thus begin to speak *Hochdeutsch* ('high German'), while the children of the established continued to speak their own dialects. In this way, the displaced contributed to an extinction of dialect. In the third phase, a return to the cultural values of the refugees gained ground, while at the same time the willingness to integrate—without losing sight of 'homeland values'—increased. Thus, the last phase is acculturation, a form of integration in which the outsiders' own cultural background melds with elements of the new culture of the established. This phase is marked by an increase in self-esteem.

As the refugees increased in standing and acceptance in their new surroundings, they increasingly lost sight of the goal of regaining lost properties left behind in their former homelands. As new policies *vis-à-vis* Eastern Europe were introduced in the era of Willy Brandt, political instrumentalization of the refugees came to an end. And as the gap between Eastern European development and that of the German Federal Republic widened, the wheels of the integration machine turned, with refugees identifying more and more with their new habitat. The last remnants of reminiscence and cultural heritage were reduced to mere folklore.

Going back to *The Established and the Outsiders* from Winston Parva, a process sociological approach would have urged the two sociologists to go back to their field after a time—which they did not and could not do. Here I have presented as an alternative approach an integration story of the war refugees from former parts of eastern Germany, which lasted about three generations. It might serve as an example of a middle-term integration process. The striking difference here is that the newcomers didn't accept the role of outsiders, that the established tried to press on them. Though these millions also were not from one original place and did not come at the same time, they learned to act politically as a unity and at the same time to integrate individually.

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PART IV

Conclusive Reflections



Some Political Implications of Sociology from an Eliasian Point of View

Stephen Mennell

18.1 INTRODUCTION

To begin with a personal anecdote: back in 1962, when I was 17 or 18 years old, the headmaster of my school, Huddersfield New College, organised a dinner one evening for ‘sixth-form’ students—that is, those in their last two years at school, nearly all of whom were aiming shortly to go to university. He had invited a friend of his to be the after-dinner speaker, a professor from the University of Sheffield. Neither I nor any of my contemporaries can remember much about what he said, except that his title was ‘The purpose of the exercise’. Which is to say, his talk was vague waffle. The one thing I remember clearly, though, is that he dwelt on the increasing complexity of society. I remember that because, when questions were invited, I, as the resident big-mouth, asked a question to the effect that if society were becoming so complex that it became beyond the grasp of ordinary people, how would democracy continue to be possible?

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F. Delmotte, B. Górnicka (eds.), *Norbert Elias in Troubled Times*,
Palgrave Studies on Norbert Elias,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-74993-4_18

Looking back from the vantage point of the world in the first quarter of the twenty-first century, that looks to me like a pretty prescient question for an 18-year-old at the time; nearly half a century later, after the financial crisis of 2008, the Great Recession, Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and the appalling Trump, it may seem an obvious question.

The question was still in my mind when, as a university student, I encountered the discussion among sociologists and political scientists about ‘the social bases of democracy’. And yet again when, I first encountered the ideas of Norbert Elias. As I have recalled (Mennell 2006, 2017a), I recognised his brilliance when I was translating *Was ist Soziologie?* (Elias 2012a), and particularly chapter 3, the ‘Game Models’. I was astonished to find a series of models dealing specifically with increasing complexity and the resulting greater difficulty that people have in making sense of the web of interdependences in which they are caught up. (It is almost beside the point that here, in a way susceptible to theoretical–empirical test, Elias also solves all the problems of sociological theory that my earlier teacher Talcott Parsons had tried in vain to solve through his conceptual castles in the air.)

At first glance, Elias did not—perhaps still does not—look much like a source of political inspiration. But, as he said at the beginning of the film about him made in 1975 by Bram de Swaan and Paul van den Bos for VPRO television in the Netherlands,

Our human world is still to a large extent an undiscovered world. We do not really understand ourselves. And that is the central task, as I understand it, of sociology—to gain more certain knowledge of the human level of the universe which we form with each other. Let us try: my own feeling is that we shall be able to produce more knowledge that has practical applications than we have today.

Or, as he repeatedly wrote, our task is *to improve the human means of orientation*:

For, at present, almost all social beliefs, almost all programmes of social action—and not a few sociological theories themselves, as I have said—are geared to the notion that what happens in human societies can all be explained in terms of acts of will, of the deliberate actions and decisions of human beings as individuals and groups. Many social beliefs, a multitude of ‘isms’, are cut according to this pattern. The emotional attraction or, alternatively, the emotional revulsion and hatred they arouse can be very strong

indeed. Often enough, their fantasy-content outweighs by far their reality-orientation. At this level of our societies, where dangers are very great and almost uncontrollable, social standards not only allow, but demand, a high emotional involvement, a high affectivity of thinking, a lower control of personal feelings both in social practices and in the means of orientation connected with them. Correspondingly low is the ability to control the social processes that are kept going by the intertwining of these practices with their boomerang effect on the actors themselves. (Elias 2007, 163–164)

To improve the human means of orientation, I would argue, is a very political objective (to that extent, I agree with Dunne 2009). We tend to think of Elias and Eliasians as ‘relatively detached’, unemotional. Yet, if the style is very different, I think it can be seen that fundamentally there underlies Elias’s work an ‘emancipatory motive’, to use a term made popular by Jürgen Habermas. In his more detached way, Elias said that sociologists had to be ‘myth hunters’ (Elias 2012a, 46–65).

Elias saw the goal of ‘process sociology’ as helping to tame the wild social forces which interdependent people inevitably generate in society, and as far as possible to harness these by-products of social interdependence for the common good. There is still much merit in Comte’s old slogan *savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour pouvoir* (Comte 1949 [1830–1842], vol. I, 201).¹ The slogan by no means points to a few simple solutions for the problems of social life. It serves instead to make us conscious of the ever-renewed agenda of problems behind which lag our social understanding and capacity for foresight. And without foresight, an effective morality in politics is not possible.

18.2 THE INSPIRATION OF THE GAME MODELS

Back to the game models. They consist of three groups. The first models involve only two players, and resemble real games like chess; as more players are introduced, team games like football are called to mind; but the third group of models are too complex for real games and are actually based on Elias’s studies of state-formation processes.

In each group, Elias imagines first that the power ratio between players is very unequal, and then looks at what happens if the balance between

¹ Comte’s problematic last word has to be translated as ‘to enable’ or ‘to make possible’ rather than as ‘to control’ or ‘to have power’. To speak of ‘democratic control’ would be acceptable.

them becomes relatively more equal. Even a game played by just two people yields interesting insights. When one player is much stronger than the other, the stronger has a great deal of control over the weaker and can actually force him/her to make certain moves. Yet, at the same time, the weaker player has some degree of control over the stronger, to the extent that in planning his own moves the stronger player has at least to take the weaker's into account. Both players must have *some* strength or there would be no game. Nevertheless, because one player's strength or skill so considerably exceeds the other's, the more powerful player can to a large extent control *the course of the game itself*, not only winning, but virtually dictating how he or she will win and how long it will take. (In real political systems as opposed to games, that could include the ability to shape the rules of dispute or to write the constitution.)

However, if, for whatever reason, their strengths in the game gradually become more equal, two things diminish: the stronger player's ability to use his or her own moves to force the weaker to make particular moves, and his/her ability to determine the course of the game. The weaker player's chances of control over the stronger increase correspondingly. But, as the disparity between the players' strengths is reduced, the course of the game increasingly passes beyond the control of either. As Elias explains:

Both players will have correspondingly less chance to control the changing figuration of the game; and the less dependent will be the changing figuration of the game on the aims and plans for the course of the game which each player has formed by himself. The stronger, conversely, becomes the dependence of each of the two players' overall plans and of each of their moves on the changing figuration of the game—on the game process. The more the game comes to resemble a social process, the less it comes to resemble the implementation of an individual plan. In other words, to the extent that the inequality in the strengths of the two players diminishes, there will result from the interweaving of moves of two individual people a game process *which neither of them has planned*. (2012a, 77)

'Unintentional human interdependencies', he writes, 'lie at the root of every intentional interaction' (Elias 2012a, 90). People's 'definitions of the situation' do not come from nowhere: they, with the purposes people pursue on the basis of them, *and indeed the people themselves*—their habitus—are shaped over time in figurations of interdependent people. The full force of how their actions interweave to produce 'compelling trends'

which no one has planned or intended, and which then constitute and constrain the perceptions, purposes and actions of people, can only be fully understood in developmental perspective. Or, as Joop Goudsblom wrote, 'In the development of human societies, yesterday's unintended social consequences are today's unintended social conditions of "intentional human actions"' (1977, 149).

Elias steadily increases the number of players, through models resembling team sports, until it is no longer possible for everyone to play directly against everyone else. With increasing complexity, the game process becomes opaque; it is difficult for individual players to make sense of what is going on. The solutions may be segmentation into separate games or, more likely, stratification into 'multi-person games on more than one level', where it is difficult to think of counterparts among real-life sports (unless the various 'divisions' of national and international football leagues may serve as an aid to imagining the dynamics of the processes involved). The 'oligarchic' and 'increasingly democratic' models are plainly derived from Elias's studies of court societies and state-formation processes. Top-tier players in an oligarchic regime thought that they knew how everything worked in their courts, and therefore in the wider society, but in fact many more power ratios beyond their own circles were in play. In the relatively more democratic model,² the top-tier players come to be more like spokesmen for their followers on the lower tiers. The course of the game becomes still less susceptible to control and direction from any quarter, and more than ever people find themselves subjected to 'compelling social forces'. This is reflected, though not very lucidly, in people's consciousness, in the way they think about themselves and 'society'.

Instead of players believing that the game takes its shape from the individual moves of individual people, there is a slowly growing tendency for impersonal concepts to be developed to master their experience of the game. These impersonal concepts take into account the relative autonomy of the game process from the intentions of individual players. A long and laborious process is involved, working out communicable means of thought which will correspond to the character of the game as something not immediately controllable, even by the players themselves. Metaphors are used which

² Elias examines the process of transition from an oligarchic to a more democratic model in Britain between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries in Elias and Dunning 2008, 9–23.

oscillate constantly between the idea that the course of the game can be reduced to the actions of individual players and the other idea that it is of a supra-personal nature. (Elias 2012a, 86–87)

18.3 THE PROBLEM OF IDEOLOGIES

This takes us into the field of ideologies on the one hand and the We–I balance on the other (Elias 2010, 137–208). What followers of Elias see as the false dichotomy of ‘individual versus society’ is not just a problem in sociology—a false dichotomy that many mainstream sociologists seem still to teach their students, *faute de mieux* as they see it. It is also a problem in practical politics and political thinking. The classic Western political ideologies of the last two centuries can fairly easily be located along a We–I continuum. The connection between the two—political ideologies and sociological theory—is hardly surprising, given that the same social thinkers of the past had a formative influence on both (as brilliantly discussed by Goudsblom 1977, 154–171). Figurational or process sociology, with its strong emphasis on the ubiquity of chains of social interdependence and the consequential ubiquity of power ratios in the relations between people and groups of people, tends to be associated with the left of centre socialist or (more usually) moderate social democratic traditions, with their concern for collective welfare and greater equality—not to mention their sympathy for less powerful *outsiders* (Elias and Scotson 2008). That is not to deny that there are affinities with the other historic ideologies. Arguably, sociology as a whole had some roots in the classic old-style conservatism of the traditional, paternalistic landowning elites, with their vision of society as an organic whole (but with a certain blindness to power relationships). Thinkers like Bonald and de Maistre used to be mentioned among the minor founding fathers of sociology. Elias pointed out that in the nineteenth century, members of the landowning elites often initiated reforms for the benefit of the working class—such as curbs on child labour and the length of the working day—as part of their struggle with the rising entrepreneurial class. But this tradition now seems to be more or less extinct.

As for the hydra-headed beast known as liberalism, process sociologists (and sociologists in general) tend to feel sympathy with the strand known as ‘social liberalism’, which pursued general rights of citizenship and played a part in the rise of mass education, social security and welfare state provisions (see De Swaan 1988; Marshall 1949).

But it is difficult to feel any affinity at all with the extreme radical neo-liberalism which for the present represents the spirit of the age across the Western world. Emanating especially from the USA is a fervent belief in ‘the freedom of the individual’, whatever that means.³ But individuals are not the separate ‘atoms’ of society: the ‘freedom of the individual’ is a philosophical myth, because, as Elias succinctly pointed out, ‘there are always simultaneously many mutually dependent individuals, whose interdependence to a greater or lesser extent limits each one’s scope for action’ (2012a, 162). The exercise of choice by one person or group may constrain or foreclose the choices available to others.⁴ Certainly freedom of choice is to be valued, but the social costs of providing choice have to be considered, and in the end various considerations have to be weighed in the exercise of political—that is, collective—judgement. Such a view is inevitable once one moves away from the (classical) liberal notion of ‘society’ standing over as something apart from its component atoms, separate ‘individuals’ each independently exercising a monad-like judgement unaffected by others.

The radical neo-liberal economics that was propagated especially by the Chicago School in effect denies this principle. It is epitomised by the ‘Friedman doctrine’ that corporations need only pursue the sole goal of maximising ‘shareholder value’, to the neglect of any other wider consideration of their employees, customers, social responsibility or other costs and consequences (Friedman 1962). This is an abnegation of previous and more sophisticated economics (Mennell 2014). It is also based on an extreme form of individualism, otherwise known simply as ‘selfishness’, a denial of the need for foresight and for the rational anticipation of

³In my view, this has infected even American sociology, setting up what I have called an epistemological barrier to transcending the philosophoidal notion of ‘individual *versus* society’; see Mennell 2017b.

⁴Let me give one everyday example, from my days as a young politician. There were in the city of Exeter six local authority high schools, including just one for boys only and one for girls only. In the 1980s, it was proposed that the two single-sex schools be amalgamated, and there was vociferous protest from supporters of the girls’ school that this scheme would eliminate parents’ choice of single-sex education. But there was little evidence that the number of parents choosing single-sex education was sufficient to fill the two schools, and in the meantime, parents who had opted for coeducation at any of the other four schools were finding their children directed, against their choice, to one or other of the single-sex schools. (I used this concrete example in a discussion of differences between social democratic and liberal ideologies during a period when I was myself active in British politics—see Mennell 1986).

unintended consequences. It embodies, too, a deliberate refusal to acknowledge the operation of *power*. As the political scientist Karl Deutsch remarked, ‘Power is the ability to talk instead of listen [and] the ability to afford not to learn’ (1962, 111). The social function of the economics profession for that last half-century has been to provide an ideology justifying social irresponsibility and unaccountability for the powerful.⁵

Yet we must not lose sight of the fact that modern ideologies are never built exclusively out of emotionally appealing fantasy (in the technical sense of fantasy). Besides affective or value-laden orientations, they always contain a lot of empirical information. In the case of neo-liberalism, economics provides plenty of that. The factual elements are in principle testable in a theoretical–empirical way. On this rests the social scientific responsibility of ‘myth-hunting’ (and myth-busting). That is part of our pursuit of more reality-congruent knowledge—though Florence Delmotte (2018, 4) has asked whether we are just being quixotic in believing it possible to achieve ‘increasingly reality-congruent knowledge’ in this age of Twitter-feeds and so-called fake news and alternative facts.

I, for one, am not ready to abandon that goal. But even if we stick to our guns as myth-hunters, this raises two disturbing thoughts.

First, is the process of theoretical–empirical research, and the more reality-congruent knowledge that it produces, enough to reduce the affective component of political beliefs? Can people even absorb ‘facts’ that run counter to their emotional impulses? The question is raised, for example, by the 2016 Brexit referendum campaign in the United Kingdom, when the cabinet minister Michael Gove proclaimed that the British people ‘have had enough of experts’ (quoted widely, including in the *Financial Times*, 3 June 2016). Such a remark suggests that there has been a decline in levels of public *trust*, which sociologists such as Piotr Sztompka (1999) have shown to be so fundamental to democratic politics—probably much more important than the sub-Parsonian ‘shared values’ that have become a favourite cliché among politicians. On the involvement–detachment continuum, politics will always be more ‘involved’ than the social sciences. We might hope that long-term civilising processes would help to tame the wild emotional impulses that still underlie much of political life (as they seem to do with more success in the individual civilising process of

⁵ My friend John Sheehan, formerly of the School of Economics at UCD, protests that this is less the fault of academic economics as taught in university departments of economics than of economics as it is propagated in the business schools. Perhaps!

parent–child relations: Elias 2008). But civilising processes are by definition largely unplanned, blind social processes that cannot be implemented by rational will—even if we may try to nudge politics a little more towards relative detachment, or in other words, to make politics become a bit more civilised. There are many forces tending in the opposite direction. We always have to remember that affective fantasies are fostered by conflict and danger. Politics, by definition, involves conflicts of opinion, and even peaceful competition can generate emotional barriers to rational thought; it has been reported that in the British Parliament, even if the Opposition points out a spelling mistake or grammatical error in legislation, the government will resist changes for fear of appearing to give way to their opponents (Hardman 2018). As for *danger*—real or perceived—and the consequent *fears* experienced by those caught up in it, emotion may create an absolute barrier to rational, relatively detached thought (see Elias 2007, 105–178). Whatever the long-term trends, in the short term at the present day many human beings are facing rising, not falling, dangers and fears.

The second thought is even more disturbing: if at least the factual components within ideologies are susceptible to theoretical–empirical testing, are not questions raised about the democratic assumption that one person’s opinions are as valid as any other’s? When one stops to think about it, that is a rather preposterous assumption. Again using Brexit as an illustration, one has only to watch the ‘vox pops’, the expressions of opinion by people in the streets on British television, to see at once the unbelievable level of profound ignorance of even the most basic facts about the European Union.⁶ One may argue that they have been intentionally rendered ignorant by powerful vested interests (see Barnett 2017)—forces that may be unable to ‘monopolise the means of orientation’ like the medieval church once was, but able to some extent to manipulate public opinion. In Eliasian terms, one could speak about increasing disparities in power over the means of orientation, contradicting early aspirations towards the internet and social media promoting great equality in that respect. Yet the opinions of the ill-informed weighed as much in the referendum result as those of the well-informed. One could make the

⁶ Google reported that, on the day after about 34 million people had cast their votes in the June 2016 referendum, the most frequent search term emanating from Britain was ‘What is the EU?’: (https://trends.google.com/trends/story/GB_cu_EoBj9FIBAAj9M_en) (accessed 21 November 2018).

same point, *a fortiori*, about the election of Trump. Should our role as myth-busters extend to busting the foundational myth of democratic politics, that one person's opinion is as valid as any other's?

I raise these disturbing thoughts because they usually remain unspoken and unspeakable. Unspoken for the most part, that is, in day-to-day political controversy, but they have been debated by political thinkers since ancient times: *vide* Plato's wish for government by experts or 'epistocracy'. More recent, and more directly relevant, is Jason Brennan's (2016) argument that many political questions are too complex for voters to understand; and he goes so far as to advocate an examination to screen out citizens who are badly misinformed. David Runciman (2018) refuses to go in that direction—'experts' with political power have made catastrophic mistakes too—yet he recognises that, however uncomfortable they may be, such questions need to be discussed in the light of the rapid changes and spiralling complexity that mark the contemporary world order. Such questions are obviously highly germane to something like the British referendum on membership of the European Union in 2016. Opinion polls in the years before the referendum showed that EU membership was not very high at all among the political preoccupations of the public. Yet an extremely simplified question—'Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?'—clearly tapped into layers of nationalist feeling and economic resentment that had remained below the surface. The problem was that, subsequently, it also emerged that very few of the public, or even of the politicians who had advocated withdrawal, had much grasp of the complexities of, for instance, international trade law that the decision raised. Meanwhile, the Remain campaign did little to explain how and why it would be so complicated to leave the EU, and nothing at all to counteract the emotional appeal of the Leave case. Two days before the referendum, almost 200 political scientists from British universities (Renwick et al. 2016) wrote to the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* to protest that 'A referendum result is democratically legitimate only if voters can make an informed decision. Yet the level of misinformation in the current campaign is so great that democratic legitimacy is called into question'.

18.4 REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

One problem underlying the popular conception of democracy—‘one person’s opinion is as valid as any other’s’—is an implicit *homo clausus* assumption (to use Elias’s term).⁷ That is, each individual is assumed to be looking out on the world and independently trying to make sense of it. This myth is hard to challenge; voters typically find it very insulting if it is suggested that their opinions have been shaped by manipulation of their emotions and the skewing of information available to them by players more powerful than they are themselves.

The classical theory of liberal democracy indeed is analogous to—and has shared intellectual roots with—the economists’ model of ‘perfect competition’, which is an ideal-type long known to be rarely observable in the real, empirical world of the modern economy. Even if this vision of opinion-formation processes were realistic, opinions would still be a blend of ‘the passions and the interests’, to borrow the title of Hirschman’s (1977) reconstruction of the development of economic thought since the eighteenth century.

The ‘passions’ in politics are represented by emotionally charged fantasy, expressed today especially in questions of ‘identity’, in feelings that are relatively highly ‘involved’ emotionally. Although in this context ‘identity’ generally means identification with groups of *other people* (communities, classes, nations, ethnic groups, co-religionists, whatever), the individual person’s sense of identity is usually seen as not open to dispute or rational debate. Yet, as already noted, even the most emotionally charged identities and ideologies contain some factual, empirical information about the world that is potentially testable and amendable in the light of such tests. The emotional charge may nevertheless raise a barrier to the acceptance of evidence contrary to prevailing belief; this is fertile soil in which to plant what has come to be known as ‘fake news’.

The ‘interests’ component of political opinions require relatively more detached judgement of, reasoning about, and concentrated attention to, factual complexities and interdependencies. The tension between the passions and the interests is the tension between involvement and detachment; like the supposed individual–society dichotomy, the

⁷For Elias’s fullest discussion of *homo clausus* as a mode of self-experience developing in Europe since the Renaissance, see his 1968 Afterword to *On the Process of Civilisation* (2012b, 512–519, 522–526).

involvement–detachment polarity is equally relevant to politics as it is in the sciences. Both are continua, fluctuating balances, not dichotomous choices. The taming of political passions, the gradual tilting of the balance towards the relatively detached pole—where it occurs—is part of a civilising process. The rationalisation of political discourse is, like rationalisation in general, a process of *emotional* change associated with *social* changes (Elias 2006, 102–103). It depends, among other things, on the fortuitous development of a relatively even balance between the main protagonists in a political system, a diminution of the dangers and corresponding fears that they pose to participants, and this does not happen everywhere. Elias (in Elias and Dunning 2008, 9–23) illustrated this process through an examination of how the cycle of violence that broke out in the English Civil Wars of the seventeenth century gradually underwent pacification through the ‘parliamentarisation’ of conflict between two relatively equally strong factions of the landowning class, the incipient political parties of the Whigs and Tories. Arguably, however, such a two-party system, perpetuated to this day in the United Kingdom (and in the USA) by the ancient first-past-the-post electoral system, is less stably pacified than multi-party systems arising from various forms of proportional representation, because such a duopoly is more likely to promote ‘winner takes all’ both as a practical political outcome and as a political culture or state of mind.

Liberal democracy is *not* the default setting for human society, *pace* philosophers such as Fukuyama (1992 [1989]). Moreover, processes of democratisation, where they do occur, are reversible: as Elias observed ‘The armour of civilised conduct would crumble very rapidly if, through a change in society, the degree of insecurity that existed earlier were to break in upon us again, and if danger became as incalculable as it once was. Corresponding fears would soon burst the limits set to them today’ (2012b, 576). In a political context, growing disparities in the power ratios between classes, creeds, regions and nations may well contribute to such reversals.

The possible rationalisation of political discourse raises difficult questions. It is rarely argued that, in the real world, every citizen has equal capacity for relatively detached judgement, reasoning, attention and consequent foresight. This indeed was the root, historically, of elites’ disdain for the very concept of democracy, and more practically of objections to universal suffrage.

At the time when extensions to the suffrage were being hotly debated in the mid-nineteenth century, John Stuart Mill wrote that ‘Democracy is not the ideally best form of government unless [...] it can be so organised that no class, not even the most numerous, shall be able to reduce all but itself to political insignificance’. But, he argued, that evil could not be prevented by limiting the suffrage. Rather,

Among the foremost benefits of free government is that education of the intelligence and of the sentiments which is carried down to the lowest ranks of the people when they are called to take a part in acts which directly affect the great interests of their country. [...] People think it fanciful to expect so much from what seems so slight a cause—to recognise a potent instrument of mental improvement in the exercise of political franchises by manual workers. Yet unless substantial mental cultivation in the mass of mankind is to be a mere vision, this is the road by which it must come. If any one supposes that this road will not bring it, I call to witness the entire contents of M. de Tocqueville’s great work⁸ [...] Almost all travellers are struck by the fact that every American is in some sense both a patriot, and a person of cultivated intelligence; and M. de Tocqueville has shown how close the connection is between these qualities and their democratic institutions. (Mill 1861 [1972], 277)

One would be very surprised to hear such a favourable view of ‘every American’ citizen today, but it does not follow that Tocqueville or Mill were just plain wrong about the ‘substantial mental cultivation in the mass of mankind’ brought about by the exercise of universal suffrage. Rather, it may conceivably be the case that that process has been greatly outstripped by processes of what is often called ‘complexification’ (horrible word!). Many other countervailing processes may be at work in various countries too. For instance, over the last half-century, Britain has experienced a drastic hollowing out and diminution of local government (both by the privatisation of local services and by their subsumption into the functions of central government); Tocqueville set much store by the practice of local government as a ‘school for democracy’ in America.

Then there is the question of the information on which people make their choices. In economics, one explicit condition in the model of perfect

⁸The allusion is of course to Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1961 [1835–1840]). Tocqueville, it should be noted, was observing American society when, in the age of Andrew Jackson, equality was at its greatest.

competition (rarely fulfilled in the real world apart from in some commodities markets) is that there is ‘perfect knowledge’—all the relevant knowledge is known to everyone trading in a market. Something similar seems to be implicit in the classic model of liberal democracy, and it is equally unlikely there. In the new ‘digital age’, the world is often said to be awash with information, yet its distribution appears to be as spectacularly unequal as is wealth. Inequalities in information—as well as disparities in the amount of attention that people pay to political issues and in their capacity for understanding them—necessitate a significant degree of trust between the more informed and the less informed. More exactly, it necessitates a stable balance involving a degree of autonomy for ‘elites’ from the pressures of non-elites as well as responsiveness of elites to the demands of non-elites (see my discussion of the mid-twentieth-century literature on the social foundations of democracy in Mennell 2017c). Traditionally—from the early stages of the development of representative government (from the eighteenth century to the twentieth century, according to the country)—this was achieved by the formation of political parties. They were the outcome of the process of stratification into multi-level ‘games’, discussed in Elias’s third group of game models. Political parties have, or had, the function of ‘interest aggregation’ (Almond et al. 2004, 634–684), in which the political demands of various groups are packaged into policy programmes, each bundle having some degree of ideological consistency, with a view to using them in electoral competition or to make demands upon government. This bundling made it less necessary, where there was an adequate degree of trust, for every individual to pay close attention to political detail, that being in effect delegated to specialists and experts.⁹

‘Trust’, however, is not as simple a matter as the word may suggest. As implied in the idea of the parliamentarisation of conflict, it also involves the growth of emotional restraint and *relative* detachment in politics. The roots of this idea run back a long way in social thought: they can be found, for example, in Tocqueville and in Georg Simmel’s idea of *die Kreuzung sozialer Kreise*, usually translated into English in terms such as ‘cross-cutting cleavages’ (see Coser 1956). It helps if people who are in conflict with each other in one social context (say politics) are allies in another

⁹That effect is more pronounced under first-past-the-post electoral systems than under proportional representation systems. Under PR, the public is aware that they also have to pay attention to the coalition-building phase that follows most elections.

(e.g., in their church). Elias's 'Index of Complexity' (2012a, 96) is designed to demonstrate the huge potential variety of such ties, even in relatively small groups. More important, however, this can all be seen as part of an overall long-term (but reversible) civilising process in which, as Elias stresses, the lengthening of chains and denser webs of interdependence plays a crucial part in promoting more habitual self-restraint, the tilting of the balance in people's habitus between *Fremdzwänge* and *Selbstzwänge*.

There are signs in many countries that the degree of trust in traditional parties of government has been declining; the rise of various 'populist' movements in the second decade of the twenty-first century is a sign of that, though it is by no means a brand new phenomenon. Indeed the symptoms of distrust of authority in many areas of society have long been evident, notably in universities since the student movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. A characteristic of such movements is the demand for greater 'transparency' in decision-making. That may or may not be a good thing in itself but it is better seen as a sign of, rather than as a solution to, lack of trust. For one thing, greater transparency often has the side-effect of creating more bureaucracy with its own layers of opacity (see Collini 2018).

18.5 CONCLUSION

The question of transparency brings us back to the question of what contribution, overall, sociology has made to helping humanity to understand the complexities of life today—to improving the human means of orientation. Many mainstream sociologists, with their relatively involved today-centred orientation, are today probably content to win the research grants they need to generate information relevant to the solution of specific problems identified by politicians. On the other hand, figurational or process sociologists generally claim to be relatively detached and attempt to set today's problems in long-term perspective, and thereby to improve people's broader understanding of the society in which they live—how it works, and why.¹⁰ They face substantial obstacles, not least because of the

¹⁰ I am reminded of the distinction that my former Head of Department at the University of Exeter drew in his history of sociology (Mitchell 1969) between what he called the 'fact finding' and the 'speculative' traditions. That was a most unfortunate static polarity. Again, it is better seen as a continuum. Even the most empirically focused of researchers jib at the

difficulty of discharging (like static electricity) the strong emotions found in the political field. Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh (1978) wrote about the prevalence of 'blame attribution' as a means of orientation, and the social sciences as a 'potential improvement'. The most popular reflex when people try to make sense of something unwelcome they did not foresee is to ask who is to blame for it. This is a paradigmatic example of individualistic thinking. Sometimes, of course, someone *is* to blame, especially when they are extremely powerful. But even where the power ratios are very unequal, the more powerful may benefit from the sheer complexity of society camouflaging the chain of causality, when people at large instead blame the impersonal forces of 'the system' (or 'the market'). This is a clear illustration of what Elias called the constant oscillation 'between the idea that the course of the game can be reduced to the actions of individual players and the other idea that it is of a supra-personal nature'. I think we have to recognise the failure, broadly speaking, of the social sciences to penetrate popular consciousness. The exceptions are psychology and economics—both disciplines that are extremely individualistic in their fundamental assumptions. People at large still tend to think psychologically rather than sociologically.

These questions underlie many of the contributions to this volume. The book's overall purpose has been to show how relevant a process-sociological approach is to 'current affairs' today, notably topics such as social inequality, the rule of law, human rights, violence, migration, multiculturalism, indigenous peoples and the future of democratic government. Too often, Norbert Elias's writings and the research tradition stemming from them have been seen as a species of 'historical sociology' and therefore unrelated to present-day social problems. On the contrary, it is precisely the long-term perspective inherent in this tradition that makes it highly relevant to understanding and mitigating today's social and political problems.

Acknowledgements I am grateful to Andrew Linklater, Nico Wilterdink and Godfried van Benthem van den Bergh for their comments on earlier drafts.

idea that they are mere fact-finders; some element of theory is always necessary to make sense of data. And the term 'speculative' would be repudiated by followers of Elias, who see their enterprise as solidly 'empirical-theoretical'.

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